

REVELATION NOTES

The book of Revelation has been avoided by many because of its dark, obscure language. The book seems too hard to understand, and there have been many attempts to interpret the meanings of the symbols and try to bring some order to what appears a chaotic writing.

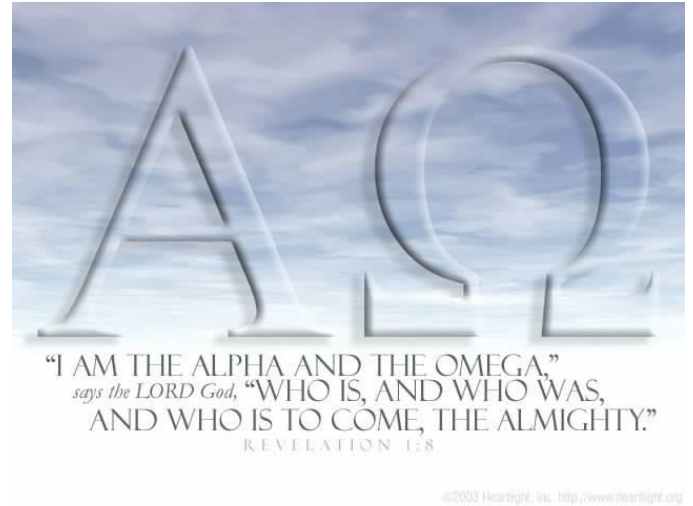
But we know that God's word is accessible for anyone who wants to know God's will. So, maybe we've made this book harder to understand than it needs to be. By remembering the historical, political conditions in which John wrote the book, by using the rest of Scripture to help us interpret the book, we are given a message that is at the same time both familiar and new. It's new, in the way the story is presented. We don't often think of the familiar Christmas story in terms of a dragon attempting to eat the baby Jesus. We know that evil will be punished, but don't often think of it in terms of mountains falling into the sea, and rivers turning to blood. At the same time, this is still the gospel. Those who have been grafted into the body of Christ are cared for. In John 10:28-29 Jesus explains: I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. Revelation is a whole book that expands on this theme and presents it in more detail.

There have been some who find fantastic stories in Revelation. Some interpreters take Revelation very literally, holding that there will indeed be locust with the power of scorpions. Perhaps this will happen literally, but the message of Revelation is also subtler, as is so often the truth. When we look around us, we already see the consequences of evil. Punishment for evil begins right now for many, which is the teaching of Revelation. At the same time, blessings for believers begin already now. But both blessings and punishment happen in more normal ways than the graphic descriptions of Revelation. To read Revelation in a more balanced, non-literal way may seem less exciting. It won't be as titillating, but it will be more real. To read the book of Revelation in this balanced, non-literal way will allow Revelation to apply to you right now, not just some day in the future, and this current understanding of the book will make its message even more exciting. Revelation uses the strange imagery to communicate the scope of the battle between good and evil, that the battle is on a God-sized scale, beyond human understanding. But the imagery also teaches truth that we can apply right here, right now. God, right now, is protecting His children. God, right now, is holding back His rage on those who attack His children. But that rage could explode at any time, so the wicked had better beware. Understanding the Revelation in this way helps us to watch the world around us with heavenly eyes and see the hand of God at work in everything. That's exciting!

Most of the information in this packet came from two sources. ? "The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Book of Revelation", by Robert H. Mounce ? "More Than Conquerors", by William Hendricksen Naturally, there is a lot more in those books than is found here, so if you want to know more, these two are highly recommended. Read the book of Revelation with courage, both to understand the message of the book, and to remain faithful in a world that hates Christians, knowing that, in the end, the King wins, and we get to go home with Him.

PROGRESSIVE PARALLELISM

William Hendricksen developed the idea of progressive parallelism. By comparing the contents of the various chapters, he came to understand that Revelation is divided into 7 sections (7 being very appropriate for the book.) Each section tells the entire story of the New Testament church, in a different way, using different imagery. So, each time we begin a new section, we begin back at the beginning of the Church, with Jesus first coming. But, each section also moves the story further along. So, as we move through the book, we're also moving, with each section, further into the future. The seventh section goes further into the future than the sixth, and the sixth further than the fifth, and so on. Reading Revelation in this way helps us to both understand past and current history, and the events that are yet to come in the future.



THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

- The Christ-indwelt Church in the World, ch 1-3
- The Church suffering trial and persecution, ch 4-7
- The Church Avenged, Protected, Victorious, ch 8-11

CHRIST AND THE DRAGON

- Christ opposed by the Dragon and his Helpers, ch 12-14
- Final wrath upon the Impenitent, ch 15-16
- The Fall of Babylon and the Beasts, ch 17-19
- The Dragon's Doom, Christ and Church Victors, ch 20-22

SUMMARY OF EACH ACCOUNT OF THE CHURCH'S STORY

1. Chapters 1-3

Jesus, the Keeper of the Church, commends His Church in it's faithfulness. At the same time, Jesus, the Purifier of the Church, warns His Church to remain faithful, to give up it's impure ways.

2. Chapters 4-7

The Church begins this age with the life, death and resurrection of Christ, the Lamb who was slain. The church is pure, and the prayers of the Church are treasured. But the Church suffers, as seen with the horses, both because of Christ, and because it still exists in a broken world. But in the end, all those who cause the suffering of this Church will themselves suffer unimaginably. God's wrath will be poured out on the wicked. The Church, however, is always safe, because they bear the name of God. They will be brought through.

3. Chapters 8-11

The Church is waiting for the judgment of God, the judgment that will release believers out of the suffering world into heaven, and the judgment that will send the wicked to torment. The judgment happens even now, as seen through the trumpets. But as we near the end of the world, the judgments will grow in intensity. The Church will be kept safe, though it will have to go through a terrible time of persecution, so terrible that it will look like the Church has actually died. But it will not remain dead. Instead, it will rise in victory when the full splendor and glory of God is revealed.

4. Chapters 12-14

The Savior who would save the world comes from the Church, the people of God. When the Savior comes, the devil is strikes even harder to destroy God's people. He uses secular governments. He uses false religions. But the Church is protected. Many give their allegiance to Satan, but some do not and remain faithful to God. Their faithfulness to God makes life very hard on earth, but their faithfulness, through Christ, is what will keep them safe in the end.

5. Chapters 15-16

The judgments of God are poured out on the wicked throughout life, but more fiercely at the end of the world, as seen with the judgments of the bowls. But in spite of the judgments, the wicked continue to fight against God. There are many skirmishes, battles and wars throughout the history of the Church, but they climax with the one great battle, the battle of Armageddon. This is the last, great attack of Satan on the Church, but the Church is protected and Satan's forces are defeated through the divine power of God.

6. Chapters 17-19

Since the beginning of the Church, there have always been sources of temptation that try to draw people away from God. The world attacks the Church through both persecution and seduction. But again, the sources of evil, both vicious and attractive, will not survive the wrath of God, and they will be destroyed. Instead, the pure will finally come together with Jesus, at the wedding of the Bride and Bridegroom. The Bridegroom, Jesus, is also the One who will destroy those who persecuted His Bride. The Bridegroom is a mighty Warrior who will exact justice on the persecutors and those of false religions, on everyone who is apart from God.

7. Chapters 20-22

When Jesus came to earth, the prince of this world, Satan, was dethroned. Through Jesus' life, His death, and His resurrection, the power of the devil was seriously cut back, though not yet permanently. At the end of the world, for a short time, the devil's power will be regained, and the Church will suffer. But just when it seems like the Church can't survive, God will end it all. Finally, the devil will receive the same punishment that he has led so many to. Everyone will stand before the throne of God and be judged, based on what they did with their lives. For those outside of Christ, nothing that they did on there own will be enough to enter heaven. For those who have given their lives to Jesus, His righteousness will be credited to them, and God's people will go home. That

home is beautiful, to make an understatement. It's beyond the ability of words to describe its perfection, because God now lives with His people. The curse from Eden has been removed, and humans live as they were meant to live, in plenty and in community with each other and especially with God. This is what we look forward to, and so we naturally agree with John's statement, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus."

CHAPTER 1 - (THE BOOK STARTS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CHURCH.)

- 1:1 - "must soon take" - This book is not just about the end of the world. It's about the entire New Testament, from the victory of the cross to the victory of the coming of Jesus on the last day. Everything written here is applicable to all Christians of all times, not just those living at the end of the world.
- 1:4 - "The seven churches" - as 7 means completeness in this book, the seven churches in chapters 1-3 all are parts of the Church, throughout it's history. The seven churches mentioned here form a sort of circle. They encompass most of the Christian church of it's time. They symbolize the entire Church. Every congregation at some time deals with each of the failings of each of the seven churches. Every church can relate in some way to each of the seven churches.
- "him who is, and who was, and who is to come" - God The Father
 "the seven spirits" - God The Holy Spirit
 "Jesus Christ", - God The Son
- 1:5 - "To him who loves us" - Revelation is about comfort for the church as it suffers in the world. What greater comfort is there to know that the King of Kings is the one who loves us.
- 1:7 - "all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be!" - Unbelievers will mourn in despair. We will see several calls for and promises of revenge throughout Revelation. Revenge on those who cause the children of God to suffer. John writes that unbelievers will suffer for their rejection of Jesus, and John affirms that they should suffer.
- 1:8 - "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." - Jehovah's Witnesses will say this is Jehovah speaking. Compare this verse with verses 17-18, and we'll see that Jesus and the Lord God, Jehovah, are the same Person.
- 1:9 - "companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance"- Again, Revelation is about comfort for a suffering church.
- 1:10- On the Lord's Day - the first day of the week, the week on which the Resurrection is celebrated.
 "I was in the Spirit" - removed from contact with the physical world and enters a vision-state.
- 1:13 - "like a son of man," - Jesus, the human God.
- 1:14-16 - "His head and hair were white like wool...eyes blazing like fire, feet like bronze, voice like rushing waters...holding seven stars(the churches)...double-edged sword...face like the sun" - all of these are symbols of power and purity. Jesus is coming to clean the churches to their very essence.
- 1:18 - "And I hold the keys of death and Hades." - For a church facing suffering and death, it's a great comfort to know that the One who loves them holds the power over death.
- 1:20- "angels of the seven churches" In Greek, the word for angel and the word for messenger is the same. The angels of the seven churches are not spirit angels, they are the pastors of the churches.

CHAPTER 2

- 2: 4- " You have forsaken your first love" - This is love for both God and for each other. The church of Ephesus had been so diligent against heresy that they had started treating each other with suspicion, instead of love. This is a call to not only love God with their original passion, but to show that passionate love to each other.
- 2: 5 -"remove your lampstand" - Love each other, or the church will collapse on itself. Without love, the church is ruined.
- 2: 6 - the Nicolaitans - This was a group that had worked out a compromise with the world around them. They rationalized their sinful actions by convincing themselves that this was what God wanted.
- 2: 11 - the second death. - This is hell, and it has no power over the faithful
- 2: 13 - "I know where you live—where Satan has his throne" - Pergumum was known for its cultic worship. In the middle of pagan worship and rejection of the One True God, the church stands firm
- 2: 14 - teaching of Balaam - another example of immorality corrupting the pure worship and obedience of God.
- 2: 17 - the hidden manna - The Israelites hid manna in the ark for a memorial for future generations. It was to be a source of strength. Jesus now promises to give the Church this strength.
- "a white stone with a new name" - symbolizes the triumph of faith. The new name is the name of the Christian who overcomes the trials. His person, his quality is made new.

- 2: 20 - "Jezebel" - the Nicolaitans, those who follow the teaching of Balaam, and Jezebel, all represent the perversion of righteousness.
- 2:24 - "Satan's so-called deep secrets" - Some think that in order to really know the wonder of God's grace, one must fully experience sin and wickedness. That idea is wrong, and Jesus warns the churches not to buy into that idea but to remain as far from evil as possible.
- 2:26 - "authority over the nations"— The person who remains pure will join with Christ in condemning those who reject Christ.
- 2:28 - "the morning star." - This is Christ, and again points to the sharing in authority that believers have with King Jesus, if they remain pure.

CHAPTER 3

- 3: 1- "reputation of being alive, but you are dead" - The church looked active, it seemed to be doing all the right things. But activities were not enough. Their relationship with Jesus was dead.
- 3: 7 - "What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open." - Jesus determines who enters and who doesn't.
- 3: 9 "those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not" - Jews who had rejected Jesus believed that, through their nationality, they were still the people of God. Jesus here says that because they rejected Him, they forfeited the right to be called the people of God. It was the believers in Jesus who were the true "Jews", the true people of God.
- 3: 11 - "I am coming soon." - There is both threat and comfort in this promise. Comfort, in that the suffering won't go on much longer. Threat, in that the church might be found unfaithful when Jesus returns.
- 3: 15 - "neither cold nor hot" - This is not about spiritual fervor, but about effective obedience. Cold water is refreshing. Hot water, like in hot tubs, is medicinal. The Laodiceans were neither, and so their actions were good for nothing.
- 3: 16 - "spit you out of my mouth" - It's the same result as the removal of the lampstand. The church folds in on itself when it's actions are not effective.
- 3: 19 - Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. - The last four verses are addressed to all the churches. They reaffirm that Jesus loves them, and in that love, He rebukes and disciplines them.

CHAPTER 4 – THE THRONE OF GOD. (THE TIMELINE OF HISTORY BEGINS AGAIN)

- 4:1 This is a vision not of heaven, but of the universe. This is to show us, through symbolism, that all things are governed by the Lord on the throne.
- 4:2 The throne is the center of the universe, the spiritual center. God is in the middle, with all things surrounding it. It is theocentric, with the middle being the most important.
- 4:3 jasper – in Rev 21:11, we see that jasper is clear as crystal. This symbolizes the purity and holiness of God. The red carnelian symbolizes that this holiness is expressed in judgment. However, the rainbow, green like an emerald, shows that for the children of God, the storm is over, and like for Noah, the promise is that they will not be destroyed.
- 4:4 The twenty-four other thrones, and twenty-four elders represent the entire army of the redeemed. They are the twelve sons of Israel (Judah, Reuben...) and the twelve apostles. The church of the Old Testament and the church of the New Testament. They wear clothes of holiness and crowns of victory. They circle the throne, giving glory to God.
- 4:5 flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder represent the Father, living in the Holy of Holies. The seven lamps symbolize the Spirit of God, the third Person of the Trinity.
- 4:6 The sea of glass represents Christ, in which the saints have washed their robes (see 7:14). The four living creatures represent the cherubim, ready to serve in whatever direction God desires. (See Ezekiel 10:20.) Being covered with eyes, front and in back, symbolizes intellectual penetration. They see the truth.
- 4:7 The living creatures are described as different things. The lion symbolizes strength, the ox is the ability to serve, the man is intelligence, and the flying eagle the ever-readiness to serve God.
- 4:8 The wings again show their willingness to swiftly carry out the will of God. The creatures, like the elders, are there for the glory of God.

CHAPTER 5 – THE SCROLL

- 5:1 The scroll is the plan of God, unrevealed and not carried out. To open the seal is to reveal the plan AND to carry it out.
- 5:5 An elder gives the good news that there is one who can carry this out. It's not an angel. It's one who has experienced redemption, who has also experienced the need for a Savior. The Lion of Judah is able to do this.
- 5:6 But it's not a Lion that we see. It's a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain. Christ is the Lion and the Lamb, who showed strength in His death, but meekness as well. The Lamb is standing between the throne, with the four living creatures, and the twenty four elders. He is the mediator, standing between humans and God, since He Himself is human and God. He has seven horns, showing His infinite power, and seven eyes, showing that He is all-knowing.
- 5:8 The golden bowls full of incense, are the sweet smelling prayers of the saints. This sets up the next scene. The Lamb accepts the prayers of the saints, which means that the saints do not need to fear during times of trouble and persecution, which are to come.

CHAPTER 6 – THE HORSES AND THE SEALS OF THE SCROLL

- 6:1 Between the first coming and the coming second, Christ opens the seals. The seals are symbols of times of trouble and persecution. The first four are associated with the four horses. The four living creatures are the same as those in chapter four, so they are the cherubim. The cherubim take their turns introducing a horseman.
- 6:2 First, there's a white horse. The Rider is Christ. White is the color of holiness and heaven. The crown connects with Revelation 14:14, where Christ is wearing a crown. Finally, Revelation 19 pictures again a rider on a white horse, and there it most definitely is Christ. Jesus is conquering, right now, not just at the end. The other three horses are seen as subservient to the white horse. The atrocities are all used by God to conquer.
- 6:3 The second seal is opened, and a red horse comes. This is religious persecution of God's children. The verse says that the men slay each other. The Greek here is almost always used for the execution of believers, not just general warfare. This will come back when the fifth seal is opened, and the souls of those who have been slain for the Lamb cry out. This also fits with the fact that wherever Christ goes, persecution follows. But notice that the rider is given the sword, implying that God gave it to Him, and God can take it away. This rider is still under the control of God.
- 6:4 The third seal. The black horse with the scales: This also points to the suffering of believers. The red horse and the black horse go together. They represent the direct persecution of the church. The red is the literal sense of martyrdom, people dying for their faith. The black, though, points to injustice, oppression, starvation, economic hardship of Christians. Both are persecution. These two forms of persecution, then, stand for all forms of persecution.
- 6:7 The fourth seal and the pale horse. This set of affliction is the suffering everyone undergoes. Christians have to suffer this simply because they live in a world of death and famine and sickness. Death refers to general death. Hades is the place of the dead, not Hell, which is another Greek word. Sickness kills Christians and non-Christians. Wild beasts kill in the amphitheater, or in the wilderness. This is general suffering.
- 6:9 The fifth seal. These are the souls of those put to death under the second seal. They are crying for vengeance, but not for their own sake, for God's sake. The world, by slaughtering the children of God, has scorned God Himself, and disregarded His sovereignty. Their white robes symbolize righteousness, holiness and festivity. And they are assured that their prayers will be answered.
- 6:12 The sixth seal. This seal introduces the judgment day. This is the one great catastrophic event at the end of the age. There is a great earthquake. The earthquake, the sun turning black and the moon turning red should not be taken literally. We can't picture even one star falling on earth, much less all of them. But as horrible as our mental picture of stars colliding with our earth, that's how terrible this day will be for those apart from God. The same for the sky being rolled back, and every mountain being moved. Very literally, God's wrath will finally be poured out on a world that has persecuted the Church, and that it will be awful.
- 6:15 This terror falls on six classes of humans, kings, princes, officers, the rich, the strong men, and the slaves. Therefore, EVERY Godless person is condemned, from the top to the bottom. Throughout history, when the believers are persecuted, the persecutors are judged, and in that light, we must read chapter 8.

CHAPTER 7 – THE SEALED MULTITUDE

It looks like the seventh seal should be opened, and all the wicked removed. The winds are waiting to bring destruction. Everything looks ready for the final judgment. But before the judgments come, another angel brings the seal. The judgments are for the wicked, not for those with the seal. The seal protects believers from the judgments. The seal marks ownership, that we belong to God. And the seal certifies that we are sons of God, makes it official.

7:3 The seal is placed on their foreheads. In chapter 14, we read that the name of the Lamb is placed on believers' foreheads. This name is likely the seal.

7:4 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel. 3(the Trinity) times 4(the directions of the wind, meaning the whole universe) equals 12. 12 times 12(the Old Testament patriarchs & the apostles) equals 144. To show that this is not just a small part of the church, but all of the church, 144 is multiplied times 1000

7:5 From the tribes of Judah. This can't mean physical Israel. If it did, where are the tribes of Dan and Ephraim? 12,000 from each tribe shows harmony in the middle of variety, harmony from all different cultures.

7:9 The great multitude: This is the church triumphant, victorious. They are without number, the crowd is so big. The palm branches are signs of salvation.

7:13 "The flowing white robes again show the festivity and holiness.

7:14 they who have come out of the great tribulation: The great tribulation is all the sufferings that the people of God have experienced, explained in chapters 4-7.

CHAPTER 8 - THE SIX TRUMPETS (THE TIMELINE OF HISTORY BEGINS AGAIN)

The six trumpets come as a result of the persecution of the Church from chapter 6, but only for those who were not sealed in chapter 7.

8:1 The seventh seal – This results in half an hour of silence. The silence comes because the judgments that are coming are so awful, so awesome. When the Lord comes in the OT, He is preceded by silence, no one can say anything. But it's only half an hour. The judgments come quickly. The silence is the waiting that we are doing right now, waiting for the final judgment to finally come.

8:3 – There is much incense given, to mix with the prayers of the saints. The incense is the mediation of Jesus. He's the one who makes our prayers smell sweet and acceptable to God. And as a result of the prayers, the six judgments are hurled on the earth. Though the angel carries it out, the rumblings are the agreement of God from heaven.

**Notice that there are six. This is not the end, this is the beginning of the end. Ch. 10:7 says that when the seventh trumpet is blown, then everything will be made clear. The six trumpets describe life between the first coming of Christ and the second coming, at the end of the world.

8:7 – The first trumpet - Between the first and second coming, God afflicts the persecutors of the church with various disasters that take place on land.

8:8 – The second trumpet - Now, the Lord uses calamities at sea to afflict the persecutors.

8:10 – The third trumpet - Here, God is using calamities on the inland waters to afflict

8:12 – The fourth trumpet – The abnormal function of heavenly bodies i.e. asteroids, solar flares, ozone layer?, are all warnings and punishments.

CHAPTER 9

9:1 – The fifth trumpet – the abyss is hell before the final judgment. The star falling is the devil, who looses the demons to wreak havoc on the earth. The trumpet is God giving the devil the power to do this, so it's still under God's divine decree and control.

9:3 – the locust – these are the powers and influences of hell operating in the hearts and lives of wicked men. They go after men, not after vegetation. All of these descriptions of the locust symbolize the terror and destruction that Satan works in those who are apart from God.

9:13 – The sixth trumpet – This is war, not one particular war, but ALL wars, past, present and future, but particularly those at the end of the age. The sixth trumpet is connected to the fourth seal of Revelation 6:7. The angels being released are evil angels, demons, but still under the power of God.

CHAPTER 10 – THE FINAL JUDGMENT

10:1 – The angel is very closely related to Christ, when compared to Rev 1:7,17 and 4:3, and yet they are different. Standing on the sea and land means that this is a universal message. The message that John hears, that he's not allowed to write down, shows that we can't know everything about the future. We know the trumpets and the bowls, but there are other forces at work.

10:8 –The scroll – This is not happening between the sixth and seventh trumpets. We know this because the angel says there would be no delay. Rather, this is another perspective on this present time that we live in right now. The scroll is the Word of God. It tastes sweet, because the gospel is good news. But it turns sour, because with the preaching and acceptance of the gospel comes persecution. This goes back to 6:2, where the first rider, Christ, is followed by the second rider, slaughter. John was living this right now, being in exile on Patmos for preaching the gospel, and writing to a persecuted church that had accepted the gospel. John is told to prophesy about nation and kings, and that is exactly what he is doing as he writes this book.

CHAPTER 11 - THE TWO WITNESSES

11:1 – The measuring rod – This is a description of the bitter experiences that the church will endure, from the last chapter. Measuring symbolizes setting apart. To measure the temple is to set it apart from the secular. John measures the inner sanctuary, where the altar is. This inner sanctuary represents the Church. The Church is set apart, made holy, sanctified, for God. They are being protected, while the wicked world is being afflicted with all the judgments mentioned before. The Church will suffer, but they will not perish. The divine protection does not extend to the court, that is, to those who outwardly appear to be part of the Church, but inwardly are not true believers. The court symbolizes nominal Christians. This “trampling” will last 42 months, 3 and a half years, which symbolizes this present, gospel age.

11:3 – The two witnesses – The two witnesses symbolize the true Church. The Church works through ministers and missionaries, though these are not just career ministers and missionaries. Their work goes on for 1260 days, symbolizing from the time of Christ’s ascension to the judgment. 1260 equals 42 months, and is also expressed as a time, times and half a time. 1 time plus 2 times plus ½ time equals 3 ½ years. The gospel is preached, but always with affliction, the sweet and the sour together. The power that they hold is very real. It’s not imaginary. The wicked will suffer because of the prayers of the righteous. The work of the Church is done right now, while the devil is bound.

11:7 – The witnesses killed – The Church as a mighty organization around the world will be destroyed. Not every believer will be destroyed, but the Church as an organization will. The time of ministry will be done. Now, it’s time for survival. The world will look at this church that used to be and mock it, but only for a short time (3 ½ days.) But with Christ’s second coming, when He calls believers to meet Him in the air, to “come up here,” that’s when the end will come and the Church will be revived and restored. The description of the church, the two witnesses, goes to the time of judgment and beyond.

11:13 – the earthquake – Now we go back to the consequences for the world, before the judgment. The coming of Christ is great for believers, but terrible for the world. This is the end. Seven thousand people die. That’s all of them that were destined for destruction by the earthquake. Not all the people, because there are survivors. The survivors give glory to God, but this is not conversion. This is just acknowledgment that God is God, not that they love God or want to serve Him.

11:15 - The seventh trumpet – The full splendor and glory of God is revealed at the final judgment.

11:19 – the ark – this symbolizes the covenant of grace, which is beautiful for the Church, but terrible (lightning, rumblings, thunder, earthquake, hailstorm) for the wicked

CHAPTER 12 – THE WOMAN AND THE DRAGON

We begin the timeline again, going back to the beginning of the church.

12:1 a woman – She is understood to be the Church, the people of God beginning with Adam. She is the Bride. From earth’s perspective, she doesn’t look like much. But from heaven’s perspective, she is amazing. She is clothed with the sun, showing that she is glorious. She has the moon under her feet, showing that she has dominion. She is wearing a crown of victory, with the twelve pointing to the twelve tribes and the twelve apostles.

12: 2 She is pregnant, because it was the Church’s task to bring forth the Messiah. The pregnancy, the bringing forth of the Messiah involves the pain and hardships of the exile of the Old Testament and the pain of fighting against the dragon.

12: 3 The dragon is Satan. The seven crowned heads show that he rules the world. The ten horns show his destructive power.

12: 4 When Satan was cast out of heaven, before the creation of the world, he took with him a considerable portion of angels with him.

The dragon is poised to destroy the child the moment it was born. Here, we see the whole story of the Old Testament, the work of the devil to destroy the people of God through the distraction of idols or through external threats.

- 12: 5 - The son – This is Jesus Christ. He is the seed of Eve. He rules with an iron scepter, mentioned already in Psalm 2:9. The child is snatched up to God, symbolizing Jesus' ascension to take His seat at the right hand of God.
- 12: 6 The woman goes into the desert which is a place of safety. She is taken care of for 1,260 days, the same amount of time as the time of persecution mentioned earlier.
- 12: 7 And there was war in heaven. This is the effect of Jesus' birth, death, resurrection and ascension.
- 12: 8 They lose their place in heaven. This is paralleled in Revelation 20, where the dragon is bound for a thousand years.
- 12: 11 Notice how the angels defeat the dragon. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, not by their own strength. It's Jesus' death and resurrection that brings their downfall. However, they are not totally destroyed.
- 12: 13 Now, the devil goes after the Church, the woman, another picture of the persecution of the church. He can't remove the Savior anymore, so, indirectly, he continues his attack on God by going after God's family.
- 12: 14 The Church is protected, though. The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, the same wings as Isaiah 40, giving her great strength to survive the assault. She is taken care of for a time, times and half a time, a year, two years, and 6 months, or 3 ½ years, or 1260 days, as mentioned before. The 3 ½ years refers back to 1 Kings 17, the time of drought for Israel, but the time that Elijah the prophet was cared for with ravens bringing him food, and with water from the creek. Those 3 ½ years, like this time, are a difficult time for the people of God, but they are always cared for. This is the millennium of Revelation 20. The devil can't defeat the church.
- 12: 15 The devil spews water like a river. It's symbolism of a flood of attacks, of lies and delusions and almost-right doctrine and heresies and distractions and divisions. The devil tries to sweep the church away. But he can't.
- 12: 16 The earth helped the woman – This probably refers to Ex 15:12, the song of Moses, which says "You stretched out your right hand and the earth swallowed them." God intervenes to protect from the river of assault
- 12: 17 The devil then goes away to make war against the rest of the church's offspring, meaning individual believers. His attack is against the church as a whole and against the individual members of the church.

CHAPTER 13 – THE BEASTS

- 13: 1 This chapter begins with the dragon from chapter 12 making war on the church and the individuals of the church. The sea refers to the nations and their governments. Isaiah 17:12 calls the nations "the sea." The dragon calls out a beast from the sea. The beast is a servant of the dragon. The beast represents the persecuting power of nations and governments against Christians. His appearance is similar to the dragons, with the horns also representing destructive power and the crowned heads also representing his rule of the world. We've seen examples of this through history. Babylon, Assyria, the Persian empire, the Greek Empire, the Roman empire. But the characteristic remains the same. These are all examples of the world power being against Christianity. The blasphemous names show the desire of governments and leaders to have total power of their own, rather than give God the glory and the power.
- 13: 2 The animals represented go back to Daniel 7. In that reference, there were four beasts, representing four evil empires. In this text, the beast has the characteristics of all four. The beast stands for all governments and nations that persecute the church. It can also point to the final persecution, where all the evils of all the empires are rolled up into one final, terrible power. Still, the beast serves the dragon, and operates only under the authority of the dragon.
- 13: 3 The fatal wound points to the idea that just as one evil empire seems to have been wiped out, another one rises. Babylon was conquered, but Rome rose up. Rome fell, but Communism rose. Communism fell, but Islam is rising. And the world follows the beast.
- 13: 4 People are amazed at the power of this beast. They worship (think broadly about worship, not just church service style) the power of the nation, the government. People are in awe of it and say IT is more powerful than anything. That is blasphemous.
- 13: 5 The beast uses this power for 42 months. That's 3 and a half years, or 1260 days or a time, times and half a time. The same time period mentioned before that the dragon is trying to destroy the church, that God is protecting the church.
- 13: 11 The second beast then appears. He comes out of the earth. James 3:15 says that false wisdom, false philosophies, false religion, come out of the earth. This second beast represents false religions. This is the false prophet of Revelation 19:20. This second beast is not as powerful as the first. He has two horns, and they look

like a lamb. The Lamb in Revelation is of course Christ. This second beast looks kind of like the lamb, except he speaks like the dragon. He might talk about peace and love and kindness, but it's not a Godly view of these things. He perverts them. Islam, for example, talks about wanting peace, but they deny that Jesus is the Savior and King. The same teachings, but done through lies.

- 13: 12 The second beast serves under the first beast, carrying out it's orders. The false religion supports the anti-Christian government.
- 13: 14 The inhabitants of the earth are deceived by the apparent power, seemingly miracles of the false religion and the power given by the anti-Christian government. The inhabitants of the earth, as opposed to the saints of God, buy into this all, and place their loyalty and allegiance in the forces against Christianity.
- 13: 15 This is an example of the apparent miracle that the beast is able to do. His power causes people to worship the first beast, and ultimately the dragon. He causes all who refuse to worship the image to be killed. More persecution for the church.
- 13: 16, 17 The mark of the beast, without which there is no buying or selling – There is lot's of conjecture about this mark. Some think it could have been the mark that a slave had on him identifying himself with his master. It could be the image of an emperor on a coin. It could be the tattoos received in pagan worship. The idea of the coin makes sense, as verse 17 shows that the mark had economic effect. The meaning behind this, though, goes back to chapter 7. In chapter 7, God places His seal on the forehead of all those who belong to Him. That seal protects them from the judgment that He will bring on those who are away from God and persecuting His people. Here, the dragon, through the beasts, tries to place his own mark on his people, and force the saints to suffer the consequences. He uses his name, like God does, or the number referring to his name. The thing is, as a Christian, which would you rather have? The mark that allows you to buy and sell, or the mark that allows you to escape the horror of mountains falling into the sea, of stars crashing into earth, of eternal destruction. Not buying and selling doesn't sound so bad, all of a sudden.
- 13: 18 The number 666 – The Hebrews had a system for assigning numerical values to letters. When you add up the Hebrew value to the name Neron Caesar, or Caesar Nero, you get 666. John probably was referring to this awful, violent king who put so many Christians to death. However, the number goes further. 3 refers to completeness, wholeness, perfection. 6 is incompleteness, imperfection. 666, three sixes, is complete imperfection, total incompleteness. If God is perfection, than this refers to the opposite of God, the opposite of Christ, the anti-Christ. It refers to the quality of the person, their characteristics of ungodliness. That's how we recognize this leader. We compare them to the perfection of Christ, and we see them exactly opposite of our King.

CHAPTER 14

- 14: 1 - "144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads" - This is the sealed multitude of chapter 7. But in chapter 7 they are living on earth, surrounded by enemies. Here, they are living in heaven, enjoying the victory after the final judgement. 144,000 is not taken literally. It's 12 times 12, the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve disciples, the Church of the Old and New Testaments, times 1,000. It's the complete Church, all of them. Not one is missing.
- 14:2 - sound from heaven - the sound, like rushing waters and thunder, is overwhelming, and shows a huge, powerful crowd. It is both majestic and powerful, as well as beautiful.
- 14: 3 - a new song - This is a new experience. This has never happened before, and nothing else can come close to equating the experience of salvation purchased by the blood of the lamb.
- "No one could learn the song except the 144,000" - only those who have endured by faith through the experience can know this experience. For everyone else, they just don't understand.
- 14: 4 - "did not defile themselves with women" - this is not about sexual purity. It's about spiritual purity. As in Hosea, unfaithfulness is described as spiritual adultery away from God. The 144,000 are the faithful bride, the faithful Church, keeping herself pure for the Bridegroom through obedience and faithfulness.
- 14: 6-8 - "The three angels" - This verse takes us back to the events just before the second coming. All three angels go together. This is three ways of saying the same thing, that God sends His warning to everyone, that they must repent and turn to Him before the final judgment, and disaster.
- 14: 13 - "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." - these are the martyrs
- 14: 14 - "one "like a son of man" - Jesus
- 14: 16 - the earth was harvested. - See Matthew 13:36-43. The unbelievers AND the elect are gathered from the earth, the unbelievers to be burned in the fire, the elect to be stored away safe in the storehouses of the Lord.
- 14: 19 - "great winepress of God's wrath" - hell

14: 20 - "They were trampled" - a gory description of the suffering of hell.

CHAPTER 15

Throughout history, the same order of events happens again and again. Again and again, churches are established because the Holy Spirit using the preaching of the Word to change people's hearts (chapters 1-3). But again and again, the Church is persecuted by the world (chapters 4-7). And again and again, God punishes those who do evil, who persecute His church (chapters 8-11). And again and again, this conflict between the Church and the world points to a deeper, spiritual battle between the dragon and the seed of the woman (chapters 12-14). But what happens when God's punishment on the persecutors does not end the persecution? Does God just allow them to continue? No. The wicked at some point, either at death, or even before death, cross the line between God's patience and God's wrath. Even as the blessings of eternal life begin already now for believers, the curses of eternal damnation start already now for the wicked. These are the last plagues of chapters 15-17

- 15: 1 - seven angels with the seven last plagues - The seven last plagues, the bowls, are parallel to the trumpets of chapters 8-11, with one difference: the trumpets limited in their effect, while the bowls are universal and final. The judgments of the trumpets are all throughout life, before the final days. The bowls are all throughout life, but especially during the final days. The trumpets involve some of the wicked, the bowls involve all of the wicked. Furthermore, the trumpets serve more as warnings, while the bowls serve as punishment, with no more warning. Also, those who are receiving these plagues are those in chapter 13 who have not repented of their sins.
- 15: 2 - a sea of glass - a splendid picture of God's righteousness and purity clearly seen (transparent) through the judgment of the wicked.
- those who had been victorious - Those who remained faithful, in spite of the beast, who did not defile themselves. They are the overcomers. They made it!
- 15: 3 - the song of Moses - As God brought His people through the dangerous Red Sea and delivered them from their deadly enemy, the Egyptian army, so God has brought His people through the dangerous attacks of the beast
- 15: 5 - the temple, that is, the tabernacle of the Testimony - a sign that the plagues are directly from God, not just some natural, coincidental catastrophes, but the punishment of divine wrath.
- 15: 7 - four living creatures - the angels, the cherubim, who are ready to serve God at all times and wherever they are sent (see Rev 4:6; 5:6; 6:1; 7:11; 14:3; 15:7; 19:4)
- 15: 8 - no one could enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed. - The time to repent is past. It's too late. There is no more turning to God in prayer. Now is the time of punishment. And yet, even now, because God is describing this, this serves not as a description of what must happen, but is still a warning to those who hear it.

CHAPTER 16

- 16: 2 "first angel...sores" - Physical afflictions. For believers, physical afflictions are never punishments. They are tools to refine faith. For unbelievers, though, these physical illnesses in the last days are punishments.
- 16: 3 - "second angel ... turns the sea into blood" - disasters and catastrophes on the oceans are in punishment for wickedness
- 16: 4 - "third angel - rivers and springs...became blood" - the sources of sustenance, of life itself, are turned to poison.
- 16: 6 - "...for they have shed the blood of your saints" - the persecution of the Church has actually worked against the accusers. If the Church is the salt of the world, helping to preserve it, then when the Church is eradicated, the world actually suffers.
- 16: 8 - fourth angel... the sun given power to scorch - It is possible that concerns about the ozone layer, and higher incidents of skin cancer, are due to this judgment. Remember, believers are not punished. Believers who suffer these things will be avenged, as explained in chapter 6.
- 16: 10 - "fifth angel... darkness" - Perhaps this is physical darkness, actual blindness. Perhaps this is the darkness of despair and the chaos of governments falling.
- 16: 11 - "cursed the God of heaven" - instead of turning in repentance to the God against whom they've rebelled, they curse God, and evoke even more wrath from God.
- 16:12 - "sixth angel... water dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the East". - The kings of the East are probably a demonic host that God, in His sovereignty, uses to attack the wicked of the world. God can even use demons to carry out His punishment.

- 16: 13 - "three evil spirits that looked like frogs" - these are repulsive, Satanic, loathsome plans and ideas and projects and methods
- 16: 14 - spirits of demons - They will do miraculous signs that influence world rulers over for Satan, and through them, the rest of the world
- 16: 15 - "Behold, I come like a thief! - In the middle of the rejection of God, and of the miraculous signs drawing people towards evil, that's when Jesus comes, suddenly, without warning.
- 16: 16 - Armageddon - Refer back to the battle that Deborah fought in Judges 4. In Judges 5:19, Deborah refers to the battle being fought near Megiddo, which is the same word as Armageddon. Armageddon is the symbol of every battle in which, when the need is greatest and believers are oppressed, the lord suddenly reveals His power in the interest of His distressed people and defeats the enemy. The final battle of Armageddon is the final push of Satan against the people of God. There have been many battles of Armageddon, but there will be one, final, great battle.
- 16: 17-18 - "seventh angel ... 'It is done!'... a severe earthquake. - The final judgment is here, accompanied by catastrophic natural phenomena. God's judgment has happened. Humanity is at the edge of eternity. The Final Judgment is finally here.
- 16: 19 - great city split into three parts, - In John's mind, this is the city of Rome, which will also be referred to as Babylon the Great. It's the center of Satanic power and oppression against the church. Being divided into three parts shows it's complete, utter destruction. God's anger has been held back for a long time, and now it explodes in its fury.
- 16: 20 - "island fled away"- the places of oppression are chased away before God's wrath.
- 16:21- huge hailstones - the entire evil empire, everything that is evil, is demolished. Everyone apart from God is finally destroyed.
- they cursed God - and still, even in hell, those apart from God curse Him. They will never understand the glory of God.

CHAPTER 17

- 17: 1- "the great prostitute" - anything that allures, tempts, seduces and draws people away from God. It's the center of industry, commerce, art, culture, etc. which seeks to turn away the believer from God. It is the world viewed as the embodiment of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes. There's a difference between those who lead others into evil, and those who are evil followers. The great prostitute, Babylon, is anyone who leads others into evil.
- "sits on many waters". - the waters are the nations, so the great prostitute, Babylon, is not just in one geographic location. The temptations are everywhere throughout the world. See verse 15.
- 17: 2 - "committed adultery" - going along with the prostitute, going away from God.
- 17: 3 - "scarlet beast" - this is the great persecuting power that rules by brute force and is the supreme enemy of Christ and the Church, from chapter 13.
- seven heads and ten horns - see verses 9-14
- 17: 4 - "dressed in purple" - in contrast to the fine white linen worn by the bride of the Lamb (19:8), this prostitute is gaudy and grotesque
- "golden cup" - contains all the promises of sensual satisfaction, the abominable things that are abhorrent to the people of God, but still so tempting.
- 17: 6 - "drunk with the blood of the saints" - the reckless slaughter of believers that just goads the wicked on to even more evil, like someone who is intoxicated just wants more.
- 17: 7 - "Mystery" - The woman had her name written on her forehead, along with the word Mystery. Those who have the meaning explained to them quickly recognize this woman. Those who know Jesus, who know what His will is, who know what to watch out for, will quickly recognize the source of temptation and evil when they see it.
- 17: 8 - "The beast, which you saw, once was, now is not, and will come up out of the Abyss and go to his destruction." - This is a perversion of the Lamb who lived, who died, and who came back to life. It's also a perversion of the One who is, who was, and who is to come. This is the beast of chapter 13, who appears to have been beaten, but who keeps coming back. (see note on 13:3) For example, druid worship is making a comeback today, largely due to the attraction of an ancient worship. It just never seems to die.
- "inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life" - the non-elect
- 17: 9 - "The seven heads are seven hills" - Rome is built on seven hills, so the seven heads refer to Rome, of John's time, along with every other center of wickedness throughout all of time, wherever in the world it springs up. This

refers to not just physical sources of wickedness, but any place where sin creeps up and tries to suck believers in.

- 17: 10 - "seven kings." - The seven heads of verse 3 also represent seven kings. This refers to the evil power of ungodly authorities persecuting the church. Of the seven, five have already fallen, one is right now in control, and one more has not yet come. Rather than trying to do the math, and figure out exactly who will be reigning when Jesus returns, the meaning instead is that the end is near. Many evil powers have come and gone, we are currently under ungodly persecution, and we have more to look forward to. But not much more.
- 17: 11 - "The beast who once was, and now is not, is an eighth king. He belongs to the seven and is going to his destruction." - At the same time, this beast is both an eighth king, AND one of the seven. In a word, this is the Antichrist. This is the final Antichrist, the man of lawlessness. The one human who is completely controlled by Satan.
- 17: 12 - "The ten horns you saw are ten kings" - The lesser powers and rulers of the world who buy in to the power of the Antichrist, who make life very tough for Christians, but who are themselves not the ultimate powers. They are rulers under more powerful rulers.
- 17: 16 - "The beast and the ten horns you saw will hate the prostitute" - Though the beast and the kings and rules start out loving the thing that draws Christians away from God, they will eventually turn on each other. Evil is self-destructive. Because they are wicked, they give way to jealousy and hatred against each other. The wicked destroy the wicked because they themselves are wicked.

CHAPTER 18

- 18: 1 - "another angel" - This is a different angel than the one interpreting for John from the last chapter.
- 18: 4 - "Come out of her, my people" - This is the call for separation. Holiness means to be separated apart for God, separated from anything that is not of God, that is unclean. The call to come away, to leave anything unclean has been the call of Leviticus, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and now Revelation.
- 18: 6 - "pay her back double" - The wicked in the world have caused the suffering of the children of God, and now the wicked will suffer for it. This isn't about revenge, it's about justice. As they have tortured the people of God, they will also be tortured.
- 18: 8 - "in one day" - this is not gradual, as in the warnings to turn back to God. This is sudden, as in the wrath of God falling on the sources of wickedness.
- 18: 11 - "The merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her because no one buys their cargoes any more" - The suppliers of the sources of evil mourn, not in repentance, but because of their loss of revenue.
- 18: 21 - "a boulder the size of a large millstone" - If the sea symbolized the universal nature of the sources of wickedness, then the boulder thrown into the sea shows the utter, universal nature of justice carried out against the sources of evil.
- 18: 22 - "The music of harpists and musicians, flute players and trumpeters, will never be heard in you again." - For those who enjoyed lives of evil, there will no longer be any source of enjoyment. For those who say that they want to go to hell, because all of their friends will be there, verse 22 makes clear that there will be NO sense of enjoyment for them. Friendship is a quality of God, and God will take that away.
- 18: 23 - "By your magic spell all the nations were led astray." - Not necessarily real magic, but more the sense of deception that led people into wickedness. The feeling of drugs is deceptively attractive. So is the feeling of power and possessions and self-gratification. People fall under the spell. For this, the sources of wickedness are destroyed.
- 18: 24 - "the blood of prophets and of the saints, and of all who have been killed on the earth." The sources of wickedness carrying the guilt of murder, for anyone who was ever killed, because that's evil as well, but especially for the murder of the prophets and the saints, the children of God.

CHAPTER 19

- 19: 1 - "the roar of a great multitude" - the Church, from chapter 14:1-2
- 19:2 - "the great prostitute" - see note on 17:1
- 19: 4 - "twenty-four elders and the four living creatures" - The twelve apostles and the twelve disciples, the Church of the Old and New Testaments, from chapter 14:1, and the angels, the cherubim, who are ready to serve God at all times and wherever they are sent, from chapter 15:7
- 19: 7 - "the wedding of the Lamb has come" - the time when Jesus will physically be with His Church, His believers, forever.
- "his bride has made herself ready." - through growth in knowledge and depth of insight of the Bridegroom

- 19: 8 - "Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints." - The Church is beautiful because of its obedience, its actions, its works. But its obedience is really Christ's obedience. The Church is clothed with Christ's righteousness.
- 19: 9 - "Blessed are those who are invited" - There are already blessings for those of us who are invited and who come to be part of the Bride, the Church.
- 19: 10 - "a fellow servant" - Worship is only appropriate for God. Also, there is great comfort in the knowledge that God's angels are our fellow servants of God.
- 19: 11 - "a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True" - See the rider of the white horse in chapter 6. This is our Lord, our Savior, our Brother, our King, coming to exact justice and judgment on all those who are evil.
- 19: 12 - "eyes are like blazing fire" - His judgments are righteous, He sees correctly and His vision pierces to the heart of the matter.
 - "many crowns" - He is King of all kings. With the kings and the beasts, the crowns were limited. With Christ, His reign is unlimited.
 - "name written on him that no one knows but he himself" - There is always a mystery to the person of Christ. He is human, and yet He is divine, and our finite human minds will never fully grasp His person.
- 19: 13 "robe dipped in blood" - This is not Jesus' blood, it is the blood of the enemy that is shed in justice. The blood-stained robe of the Messiah symbolizes His victory in the conflict.
 - "his name is the Word of God." - John 1:1 calls Jesus the Word, who is with God and who is God. In John, it showed God revealing Himself to mankind. In Revelation, though, it is the declaration of God by which the nations of the world are destroyed.
- 19: 14 - "riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen" - these are the angels as well as the martyrs who died for the name of Jesus. The fine linen is the righteousness of divine retaliation.
- 19: 15 - "Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations" - The sword is the lethal power of God's word of judgment. Once God declares His judgment, it's as good as carried out. It is the sword of the Messiah that strikes the enemy, not the armies of the Lord.
 - "iron scepter" - another symbol of destruction. This is not an instrument to rule by, but an instrument of destruction.
- 19: 16 - "on his thigh" - literally, on His robe, near His thigh. This is a high, prominent place for one mounted on a horse. Everyone can see this name of sovereignty.
- 19:17 - "cried in a loud voice to all the birds" - The birds are called to eat on the flesh of the losers even before the battle begins. Notice who summons the birds - the angel of the Lord. The victory is decided before the battle begins.
- 19: 19 - "the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army." - The final battle of Armageddon, with all the forces of evil gathered against Christ and His army.
- 19: 20 - "the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet" - There is no shifting in the battle, where one side is winning, and then the other side. Immediately, the beast and false prophet, from Rev 13, are overthrown.
 - "The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur." - Those in secular power who have opposed the church, and those in false religions who have persuaded people to worship the antichrist, are themselves thrown into hell, and are punished with the same punishment as those whom they have led astray.
- 19: 21 - "The rest of them were killed" - All those who worked with the secular powers and false religions. But notice that the dragon, the devil, is still not overthrown. His end will be told in Rev 20:10

CHAPTER 20

The timeline of history begins again with the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Understanding that chapter 20 begins with the life of Jesus is key to an amillennial understanding of the last days, which will be explained in this chapter. To see why chapter 20 goes back to the beginning of the New Testament, it helps to compare chapter 20 with chapter 12. In chapter 12, we see Satan being hurled from heaven in connection with Jesus' birth, death, ascension and resurrection. His accusations lose their power and he is made less influential. In chapter 20, we also see the dragon, Satan, being hurled, in this account, in the abyss. This account also tells of Satan's power being cut back, and the Church begins to conquer the nations. Besides this, in chapter 19, the nations are destroyed by the sword of the Messiah. But here in chapter 20, the nations are alive again. Either they are resurrected, or chapter 20 is another perspective on the history of the Church. We can see, then, how chapter 20 begins the history of the Church again one more time.

- 20: 1- "the key to the Abyss"- this is probably the same angel as the one in chapter 9, who loosed the destruction on the earth. But in this account, the destruction is for the dragon. - a great chain - probably a type of chain that binds the hands, like handcuffs.
- 20: 2-3 -"the dragon" - Satan, (see chapter 12)
 - "bound him for a thousand years...to keep him from deceiving...until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time."- This is where the term millennial comes from. There are different perspectives on when this thousand years begins and ends, and whether it's literal. Some churches, like the Baptist church, believe that the thousand years begins when Jesus returns. According to their beliefs, Jesus will reign here on earth for a literal thousand years. There will be non-believers also on the earth during that time, but they won't have a lot of power. After that thousand years is finished, then Jesus, and the believers, will go to heaven for eternity. The amillennial, or Reformed, understanding, states that the thousand years is right now. This non-literal thousand years began with Jesus defeating Satan at the temptations, in Matthew 4. Satan's power was drastically reduced, and we see that through the number of demons that were cast out by Jesus and the disciples. We see it, for the past two thousand years, as the gospel has exploded to every corner of the earth, from a small country in the Middle East, to the every continent on the face of the earth. Satan has not been able to hold the gospel back. Granted, he still has power. He's only been handcuffed. But that power is limited. At the end of the thousand years, and we don't know when this is, Satan will be released for a time, and a terrible time of persecution will happen (see Matthew 24:9-25.) But that time will be short, as Revelation 11:11 talked about. And then Satan is defeated.
- 20: 4 - "those who had been given authority to judge...They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years" - Those who were loyal to the lamb are reigning with Jesus right now in heaven. All of their prayers are answered. All of their wishes are constantly fulfilled. They celebrate the Lamb's, and therefore their own, victory.
- 20: 5 - "This is the first resurrection". - This is the relocation of the soul from this sinful earth to God's holy heaven, in physical death for a believer
- 20: 6 - "The second death" - This is the resurrection of the body, when Jesus comes again.
- 20: 7 - "When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison" - This is the release of Satan, and the short, terrible time of persecution.
- 20: 8 - "Gog and Magog" - Symbolic figures of the nations of the world that band together for a final assault upon God and His people
- 20: 9 - "surrounded the camp of God's people" - It looks bad for the people of God. They appear to be without hope, but...
 - fire came down from heaven - in one swoop, the people of God are saved by God Himself.
- 20: 10 - the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur" - Finally, the dragon, the devil, receives the punishment that he has led so many others to. The beast, secular persecutors have gone here. The false prophet, people of false religions, have gone here. And now Satan himself is punished eternally. Satan is not king of hell. Satan is a sufferer of hell.
- 20: 11 - a great white throne - Its size symbolizes the greatest authority, and it's whiteness the presence of the holy God.
 - Earth and sky fled - Everything corruptible is gone. 1 John 2:17 says, "The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever."
- 20: 12 - "the dead, great and small, standing before the throne" - All individuals who have ever lived will stand before the judgment seat, those who are in Christ with gratitude for what Christ did, those who are apart from Christ with well-deserved fear.
 - "books were opened." - the record of every person's life
 - "the book of life." - containing the names of all the believers
 - "The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books." - People are judged based on what they did. However, no one could stand before God based on their own good works. Only those whose names are written in the book of life are able to pass through the judgment, not based on their own works, but because they share in the works of Jesus.
- 20: 13- "The sea gave up the dead...death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them" - This is not a chronological order. We don't need to understand that first there is a judgment, and then the sea and Hades give up their dead. Verse 13 simply points to the universal scope of the judgment. Hades is the ancient place of the dead, all dead. Hades is not hell. Hades is death. Believers AND non-believers go to Hades. Hades, for believers, is the place where Jesus reigns. It's a wonderful place. It's Paradise. The only thing missing is the unification of the believers soul and their body, but while they wait in Hades, they rejoice and have all their needs

satisfied. On the other hand, Hades for non-believers is bad. It's not quite as bad as hell is going to be, but it's very bad already now. Hades is the New Testament word for Sheol, from the Old Testament, and here, all those who have died come to stand before the throne.

- 20: 14 - "Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire." - Finally, death is put to death once and for all. 1 Corinthians 15:26 refers to death as the last enemy, and this enemy is finally eradicated. No more death, in any form.
- 20: 15 - "If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire." - the book of life is salvation through Jesus Christ. That's the only way to avoid the lake of fire, hell.

CHAPTER 21

- 21: 1 a new heaven and a new earth - New in the sense of totally remade, but still the same earth. Romans 8 talks about creation groaning until it is renewed, and now we see this happening. It's the same earth, but so renewed that it can be called new.
- no longer any sea. - the sea is, in the ancient mind, the source of evil, a place of danger and fear. In the new heaven and new earth, there is no place for evil, danger, or fear.
- 21:2 - the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, - Not the actual city, but a symbol of the perfected and eternal Church.
- a bride - the metaphor of marriage has been used often to describe the intimacy and love between Jesus and His people
- 21: 3 - the dwelling of God is with men, - God is with His people for eternity. God was with His people, first through the tabernacle in the Old Testament, then through Jesus, in the gospels, and here purely with Himself. Already, the benefits of "God With Us" are available for the people of God, but not fully yet.
- They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God - The eternal establishment of the covenant. God began this covenant with His people back in Genesis 12, and He confirms it here for all time.
- 21: 4 - old order of things has passed away." - Death, mourning, crying and pain are all part of the old order, and those things are no more.
- 21: 11 - It shone with the glory of God, - It shines because God is present with Her. The glory comes not from the Church, but from God.
- 21: 12 - a great, high wall - The walls are not needed for security, but the ancient idea of a perfect city HAD to include the walls. Without walls, a city is incomplete. The walls here just show the perfection of the city.
- twelve gates, - There are many ways to enter into this city. There are many opportunities for people to become believers. Not that there are many ways to God, such as through Islam, Buddhism, or Hinduism. But that God calls often and gives ample opportunity to turn to Him.
 - twelve angels at the gates. - These are watchmen, and like the walls, they simply serve to portray the ideal city. There is no threat to them.
- 21: 13 east,... north... south...west. - The gospel is open to all peoples of the earth.
- 21: 14 twelve foundations - The Church rests on the teaching and work of the apostles who first proclaimed the gospel message.
- 21: 15-16 - "measuring rod of gold to measure the city... 12,000 stadia thick" - The city is huge, enough to hold all believers from throughout history, the whole Church.
- a square...It's perfect
 - ...wall was 144 cubits - The city is very thick, very safe. No one will snatch the children from the Father's hand.
- 21: 18 - jasper - In Rev 4:3, the One upon the throne appears like jasper. In 21:11, the city glows with the glory of God, like jasper. In the very make-up of heaven, we see the glory of God.
- city of pure gold, as pure as glass - the purity of the city.
- 21: 19 - The gemstones - The stones correspond to the twelve gems in the breastplate of the high priest, which suggests that all those who live in the city receive the privileges of the high priest. We share in the riches of Christ.
- 21: 22 I did not see a temple in the city - symbol gives way to reality. There is no symbol that can capture the glory and beauty of the Lord God Himself.
- 21:24 The nations will walk by its light - A reference to the Gentiles, that the gospel is for Jew and Gentile alike
- the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. - This might refer to the precious chosen ones, the "wealth", returning to God. Or, some believe that this is referring to the material wealth of the nations that God allows His people to enjoy in the new heaven and the new earth. If this is the same earth, only drastically renewed, why would there not be material things to use to glorify God? The splendor, then, can refer to material goods for which we are thankful to God. See also verse 26.

- 21:25 On no day will its gates ever be shut - There's no more threat to guard against.
 - there will be no night there. - Not literally, but symbolically there is no more darkness, no more evil. Darkness is a symbol of being away from God, and in heaven, God is always present.
- 21:27 - "Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life." - The reason that Jesus has to cleanse us and the Spirit must make us holy in order to enter heaven is so that we don't "track" in any sin to ruin a perfect paradise for every one else. Only those who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb may enter.

CHAPTER 22

- 22:1 - the river of the water of life - the throne is the source of the river of life, and believers live right at the source of life. This is another symbol of eternal life. We will live at life's source.
- 22:2. - "On each side of the river stood the tree of life...twelve crops of fruit...the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations" - The new heaven and the new earth are the reverse of Eden. In the first Eden, it was possible to sin, as seen in the Fall. In the new Eden, in heaven, sin will be impossible. In the old Eden, eating of the fruit of a tree meant death and the curse. In the new Eden, eating of the fruit of the tree means life and blessing. 12 crops shows the abundance of the blessings.
- 22: 3 - No longer will there be any curse. The curse that was put on the human race in Genesis 3:16-17 is removed. Humanity is restored to what it was always intended to be. This is what God had created humans for, to be with Him, to enjoy the earth He created. God has fixed what humans broke.
- 22:4- "see his face" - this is the greatest of all the blessings, simply to see God face to face.
 - his name will be on their foreheads- just as those who took the mark of the beast, back in chapter 13, also took his character, so also those who have the name of God on their foreheads also take on the holy character of God.
- 22:11 Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong...let him who does right continue to do right" - This is not to encourage the wicked to keep doing wrong. Rather, there is a sense of resignation. After all this, after hearing about what is going to happen to those who are against God, those who do wrong, if they still haven't turned to God in repentance, then they probably never will. Well, then, let them. They know where they're going, having read all this. Nothing more can be done. But for those who are doing right, keep going. Because you've seen what the rewards are for those who live in and for God.
- 22: 16 "I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star." - Jesus authenticates what the angel has been explaining to John by attaching His name to the message. Jesus uses His name given in Isaiah 11:1, citing His sovereignty as the heir of King David.
- 22:18-19 - "if anyone adds...if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy," - The concern is not about details, it's about the message of Revelation. If you reject God, you will suffer. If you remain faithful to God, through Jesus Christ, you will be kept safe and brought through to live with God for all eternity. That message must never be changed. To change this message is to reject God, and we've just heard the consequences of that. Remain faithful, because Jesus is returning soon.