

Revelation

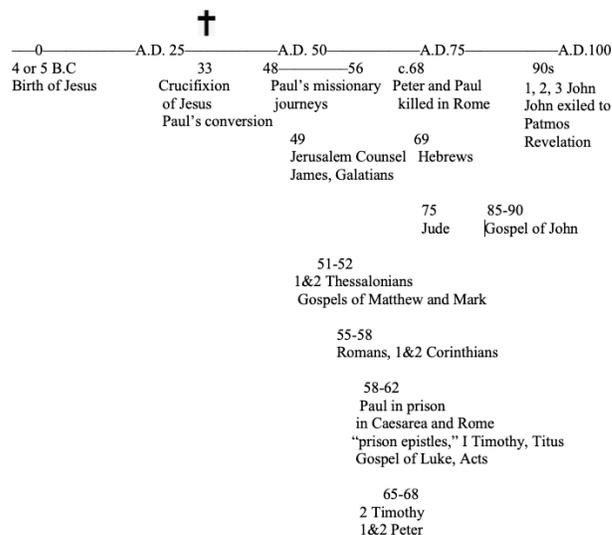
Author: The Apostle John

Date: A.D. 90s

Commentary by David A. DeWitt

[Timeline from Ryrie Study Bible]

New Testament Chronology Overview



Introduction

1. The title of the book is *Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ* [*Apocalypses Iesou Christou*], "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." The word for "revelation" here is not the same as the word for "prophetic revelation," which adds something (as in 1:3 and 22:18-19). This "revelation" discloses something that was formerly hidden but now has become visible. The word can be translated "an uncovering," "an unveiling," or "a disclosure" (see also Romans 16:25; Galatians 1:12; Ephesians 1:17; 3:3). The purpose of the book of Revelation is to unveil features of prophetic truth only hinted at in the Old Testament and other New Testament books.
2. The book of Revelation affirms the full deity of Jesus Christ. He possesses all the attributes of God, including sovereignty (1:5), eternity (1:17-18), the right to judge men (19:11), and the right to decide who lives and who dies (1:18; 2:23). He receives worship (5:13) and rules from God's throne (22:1, 3). Revelation applies Old Testament passages, that describe God, to Jesus (for example, Deuteronomy 10:17 with 19:16; Proverbs 3:12 with 3:19; Daniel 7:9 with 1:14; Isaiah 44:6 with 1:17).
3. The book of Revelation takes a high view of God's Word, claiming divine inspiration (1:2).
4. The book of Revelation reveals God the Father in all His glory and majesty, describing Him as holy (4:8), true (6:10), omnipotent (4:11), wise (7:12), sovereign (4:11), and eternal (4:10).
5. The book of Revelation describes the details and depths of the depravity of mankind. In spite of experiencing the final outpouring of God's wrath and judgment on sinful mankind, people will still harden their hearts and refuse to repent (9:20-21; 16:9, 11).
6. There is no clearer statement of the doctrine of redemption than 1:5, Jesus Christ, *who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood*.
7. Angels are prominent in Revelation. The book contains one out of every four references to angels in Scripture.
8. Revelation warns believers of the dangers of compromise with the world (chapters 2-3).
9. The book of Revelation contains more details about the end times than any other book of the Bible. It portrays Christ's ultimate triumph over Satan, shows the final political setup of the world system, and describes the career of the most powerful dictator in human history—the final anti-christ. It tells us how this world ends.
10. The book of Revelation describes the seven-year Tribulation, the Second Coming of Christ, the thousand-year Millennial Kingdom of Christ on earth, the Great White Throne Judgment, and the final eternal state of the lake of fire for the wicked and the new heaven and new earth for the redeemed.

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Study Notes by David A. DeWitt (B.S. Michigan State University, Th.M., D.Min. Dallas Theological Seminary). David is a Bible Teacher in the Relational Concepts School of Discipleship.

Four Interpretations

1. The **preterist view** sees the book as a historical record of the early history of the church. **But** Jesus did not appear, and there is no persecution in the early church that fits these events.
2. The **historicist view** interprets the events of Revelation as having taken place in church history. **But** this has all the problems of the preterist view.
3. The **idealist view** sees the events of Revelation as a timeless struggle between good and evil. **But** that ignores any realistic authors' intended meaning of the text. This view ignores Revelation's claim to be prophecy (1:3).
4. The **futurist view** sees chapters 6–22 as predictions of actual people and events yet to come in the future. Only this view allows Revelation to be interpreted in the same grammatical, historical, literal method by which non-prophetic portions of Scripture, and all portions of literature everywhere, are interpreted. This view is faithful to Revelation's claim to be prophetic. John Walvoord says,

Much of the prophecy of the Bible deals with the distant future, including the Old Testament promises of the coming Messiah, the prophecies of Daniel concerning future world empires, the body of truth relating to the coming kingdom on earth, as well as countless other prophecies. If the events of chapters 4 through 19 are future, even from our viewpoint today, they teach the blessed truth of the ultimate supremacy of God and the triumph of righteousness. ["The Revelation of Jesus Christ," p. 22]

The Author

Four times in Revelation the author identifies himself as *John* (1:1, 4, 9; 22:8). The writings of many early church fathers affirm that the author was John, the son of Zebedee, one of the twelve apostles, the author of the fourth gospel and the epistles of John. There are parallels between Revelation and John's other writings. For example, only the gospel of John and Revelation refer to Christ as "the Word" (John 1:1; Revelation 19:13). Revelation frequently describes Christ as the Lamb—a title elsewhere given to Him only in John's gospel.

John is the last living apostle. He is about 90-years-old at the time of this writing. He has been exiled on the small island of Patmos, 62 miles [100 km] southwest of Ephesus. The Roman authorities have banished him there. The apostle reported:

Revelation 1:9, *I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.*

Date

The two main dates proposed have been during the reign of Nero (A.D. 68) or that of Domitian (A.D. 96). Of course, the earlier date is held by those of the preterist interpretation. However, the writings of the early church fathers claim that Revelation was written during Domitian's reign. Nero's persecution was mostly confined to Rome, whereas Domitian's persecution was throughout the Roman Empire, affecting the believers everywhere.

- The believers of Asia Minor were spiritually healthy in the 60s when Paul wrote Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and 1 and 2 Timothy. But when Revelation was written, those believers were in serious spiritual decline (chapters 2–3), indicating time had passed.
- Also, Paul nowhere mentions the heretical sect known as the Nicolaitans, who were influential both in Ephesus and Pergamum (2:6, 15). John did not have to describe the Nicolaitans, just mention them, and apparently the believers knew whom he meant.

The weight of the evidence clearly favors a date for the writing of Revelation in the mid-nineties, near the end of Domitian's reign. This eliminates the possibility that the prophecies in Revelation were fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

Outline

The outline is given in 1:19—

- I. Chapter 1—*the things which you have seen*
- II. Chapters 2–3—*the things which are*
- III. Chapters 4–22—*the things which shall take place after these things*

A. Chapters 4–5, the scene before the throne in heaven

B. Chapters 6–18, The future seven-year Tribulation

Chapter 6, Six of the Seven Seal Judgments

1st Seal—A white horse of peace (6:2)

2nd Seal—A red horse of war (6:3-4)

3rd Seal—A black horse of famine (6:5-6)

4th Seal—A pale horse of death (6:7-8)

5th Seal—Martyred believers under the altar (6:9-11)

6th Seal—Physical disturbances (6:12-17)

Chapter 7, The First Parenthesis, the 144,000

Chapters 8–9, The Seventh Seal, which is the first six trumpet judgments

1st Trumpet—Hail, fire, blood, 1/3 of earth is burned (8:7)

2nd Trumpet—1/3 of sea becomes blood, 1/3 of sea creatures and ships destroyed (8:8-9)

3rd Trumpet—1/3 of rivers become bitter (8:10-11)

4th Trumpet—1/3 of the day is taken away, now 16 hours (8:12-13, see also Matthew 24:22)

5th Trumpet—Demons from the bottomless pit torment men for five months (9:1-12)

6th Trumpet—An army of 200 million kills 1/3 of mankind (9:13-19)

Chapters 10:1–11:13, The Second Parenthesis, the little book and the two witnesses

Chapter 11:14-19, The Seventh Trumpet Sounds

Chapters 12–14, The Third Parenthesis

Chapter 12, The war in heaven and on earth

Chapter 13, The Beast and the False Prophet

Chapter 14, The 144,000, the eternal gospel and those who worship the Beast

Chapters 15–16, The Bowl Judgments

1st Bowl—Boils appear on those who have the 666 mark of the beast (16:2)

2nd Bowl—Everything in the sea is killed (16:3)

3rd Bowl—All the rivers become blood (16:4-7)

4th Bowl—There is great heat (16:8-9)

- 5th Bowl—There is darkness and pain (16:10-11)
- 6th Bowl—The Euphrates River dries up (16:12)
- 7th Bowl—There is a great earthquake with 100-pound hail (16:17-21)

Chapters 17–18, Religious and Commercial Babylon Destroyed

- C. Chapter 19, the Second Coming of Christ
- D. Chapter 20:1-10, the Millennial Kingdom
- E. Chapter 20:11-15, the Great White Throne Judgment
- F. Chapters 21–22 the New Heaven, New Earth, and New Jerusalem

I. Chapter 1, *The Things You Have Seen*

Revelation Chapter 1

1:1, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*

The Greek word *Ἀποκάλυψις* (*Apocalypses*) appears 18 times in the New Testament. Nowhere does Revelation directly quote from the Old Testament, but 278 of its 404 verses refer or allude to Old Testament prophecies. Revelation fleshes out what was only initially suggested in both the Old and New Testaments. It is revealing real events that will take place in the real future time.

Philippians 2:10-11,...*at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Every vision and description of Jesus in Revelation is one of majesty, power, and glory.

...which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John—The book was not written for unbelievers. It is a message communicated from God the Father, to God the Son, to an angel, who gave it to John.

1:2, ...to all that he saw—John primarily makes observations, very few interpretations and applications. For example, when John says he saw a beast, he saw a beast. An angel is an angel. An earthquake is an earthquake. Rarely, he does give interpretations (the dragon is Satan in chapter 12), but after chapter 3, applications are rare.

1:3, Blessed is he who reads...for the time is near—Verse 3 is the first of seven beatitudes in the book (1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14). Notice it is the words of prophecy, not coincidental circumstances or mystical experiences, that communicate God's blessing. In the time comment, *near* means the next intervention of God in directing the course of human history.

1:4, John to the seven churches that are in Asia...and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne—These seven cities are mentioned in verse 11. The churches are all the believers in those cities. They will be discussed in detail in chapters 2 and 3. But who are the *seven Spirits*? Most think this is a reference to the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit is never called *seven Spirits*. Jesus said the seven Spirits belonged to Him (3:1), an unlikely description of the Holy Spirit. Also, the Holy Spirit is undoubtedly the one mentioned, as one *Spirit*, in Revelation 14:13 and 21:17, and the seven occurrences of the phrase *what the Spirit says to the churches*. The phrase **seven Spirits** occurs four times in the book (1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6). This could refer to seven works of the Holy Spirit, but that is all speculation. As usual, John makes observations without interpretations. How John could see spirits, is also unknown, but it argues against this being the Holy Spirit.

1:5 and 6, and from Jesus Christ

Who is described in six ways:

1. **the faithful witness**—In the Bible, faith is trusting the truth, faithfulness is acting in a manner consistent with the truth.
2. **the firstborn of the dead**—This Greek word *prototokos* does not mean firstborn in time sequence but first in preeminence. In a family, it is the one who inherits everything. Paul uses it in Romans 8:29; Colossians 1:15, 18. It is also in Hebrews 1:6. From these verses we see that Christ was first in importance and has supreme authority over the dead.
3. **and the ruler of the kings of the earth**—He is sovereign over everything of this world. He removes kings and establishes kings (Daniel 2:21). *There is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God* (Romans 13:1).
4. **To Him who loves us**—“love” here is *αγαπαω* (*agapao*), giving without reciprocity, as in John 3:16.
5. **and released us from our sins by His blood**—*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus* (Romans 8:1).
6. **and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father**—priests have access to the presence of God and represent God to the people (Hebrews 4:12; 1 Peter 2:9-10).

John closes his introduction with **to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.**

1:7—Verse 7 predicts the Second Coming of Christ as a visual, public, globally observable event (as described in Zechariah 14 and Matthew 24). With modern technology, all people could on their devices see the Second Coming of Christ to the Mount of Olives. Today, there is a live video cam that focuses on the western “wailing” wall 24/7 with the Mount of Olives just above it.

1:8, “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God—This sounds like a description of God the Father, but from the context of verse 7, this is probably a statement from Jesus, identifying Himself with the beginning and ending letters of the Greek alphabet and as being *the Lord God*.

1:9—Verse 9 was discussed in the introduction

1:10, I was in the spirit on the Lord’s day—John was taken out of his physical body, which remained on Patmos, to another dimension. (Like Ezekiel was taken spiritually to Jerusalem while he was physically in Babylon—Ezekiel 8:1-4.) *The Lord’s day* is an unknown reference, since the Greek phrase John uses does not occur anywhere else in the New Testament.

It could be the Sabbath, but most Christians were probably not keeping the Sabbath at this time, especially in Asia Minor where the church was now mostly Gentile.

It could be the prophetic day of the Lord. The problem is the common expression for the eschatological “day of the Lord” (*hemera kyriou*, as in 2 Peter 3:10) is not (*kyriake hemera*) the phrase John used here.

It could be a Roman “imperial day,” (Ryrie study Bible) or the emperor’s birthday, but it is hard to get any confirmation for that.

It could be Sunday. Most people think so. But that is most likely reading our tradition back into the phrase. Paul does use the first word *kyriake* for the *Lord’s* supper (in 1 Corinthians 11:20), but Sunday, in the New Testament, is always called *the first day of the week*. John himself calls it that two times (John 20:1 and 19).

1:11, *Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches*—The voice, which sounded like a trumpet (verse 10) commanded John to write what he sees in a book and send it to the seven churches of Asia Minor. The church was identified as the believers in the whole city. Some may have been small, but Ephesus was started by Paul, Priscilla, and Aquilla in Acts 18, on Paul’s second missionary journey in the mid-60s. It is now in the 90s, so the church has been there at least 30 years. Paul was there at least 3 years. So it was probably a fairly large church with different house groups meeting in different places throughout the city, but throughout chapters 2 and 3, the church is all the believers in the whole city, not individual groups.

1:12-16—This paragraph is a magnificent description of Jesus Christ, probably as we will see Him. John fell at His feet in worship. So will we. Notice Jesus, being God, accepted the worship, compared to the angel who would not allow John to worship him (19:10 and 22:8).

1:17-19—Jesus’ initial message to John made four points:

1. He told him to not be afraid. Notice the first step of obedience to God is fear, *perfect love casts out fear* (1 John 4:18), only when there is first fear for perfect love to cast out.
2. He reminded John that He was risen from the dead.
3. He told John He had the *keys of death and Hades*, controlling who goes there.
4. He told John to write this book.

1:20, *As for the mystery*—If He means what Paul said, a “mystery” is something God had not revealed before (Ephesians 3:3-9). Jesus then told John that the seven lampstands were the seven churches, and the seven stars are the seven angels assigned to those churches. This introduces the epistles of chapters 2 and 3.

Comments and Applications from Chapter 1

1. This is an apocalypse [*Ἀποκάλυψις (Apocalypses)*], a specific kind of revelation which discloses, unveils, and explains something that already exists, in this case in the plan of God for the future.
2. One way, to keep the things written in this book, is to think of Jesus in His glorified state described in this chapter. His perfect life on this earth was instructive, His death on the cross provided our salvation—but Paul wrote, *...even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer* (2 Corinthians 5:16). Revelation starts with a description of the glorified Christ and ends with His coming to earth as King of Kings, His millennial reign, His seat of judgment at the Great White Throne, and the eternal state. All this is as true as the history of Jesus presented in the Gospels of His first coming.
3. Think of Christ as we will see Him, like white snow on a sunny day. Brighter than the sun in the summer. Christ’s eyes like a flame of fire, shining on the white hair, the golden sash, and the polished bronze feet must be almost blinding to see.
4. We should not give credit to angels for what God is doing. They are His messengers, but the glory and worship go to God, not them. The angel told John, *“I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren.”*

II. Chapters 2-3, *The Things Which Are* Introduction to the Seven Churches of Revelation 2-3

These seven letters represent the last inspired epistles (letters) to the believers of the church age. The churches average about 50 to 150 miles (about 80 to 240km) from Ephesus. The order of the churches from Ephesus to Laodicea fits a geographical outline.

A common interpretation is that each church represents a different period of church history from the first century to the current generation of believers. **Four reasons why a historical interpretation should be doubted:**

1. There is no mention of a historical comparison.
2. There is a logical geographical order.
3. Taking a historical view limits our current applications, warnings, and promises only to the last church of Laodicea.
4. It is not consistent to say that Ephesus represented the first century of Christianity, since all seven churches existed in the first century. Therefore, they **all** epitomize the condition of the church in the first century, and every century since.

None of these churches lasted. Today, this whole area is Islamic.



A Suggested Application of the Seven Churches

The focus on these seven churches leads to many unanswered questions.

- Why these seven churches? Surely the churches in Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, and Rome were bigger and more influential.
- How do we apply the fact that the local church was all the believers in the city? Only in some remote village would the local church today be all the believers in the city. So, for the most part, such local church identification does not exist today.
- How do we apply this to our local churches? We have divided up the believers in our cities into different assemblies that seem to violate Jesus' description of a church and the warning Paul gave the Corinthian church to not divide the city into different local churches (1 Corinthians 1:10-13).
- What does it mean to remove the lampstand (2:5) from disobedient or irresponsible churches?
- Are there angels today who are representing the cities where believers are present?
- Are we responsible for what is going on with the believers in the city in which we live, or work? Nearly every Christian population of nearly every city is allowing nearly all of these sins in Revelation 2&3 to go on, today, without comment.

Comments and An Application from the Seven Churches

I do not suggest I can answer these questions. But here is a general idea for application. I suggest that as believers we apply the evaluations of each of the seven churches to whatever Christian organization we are involved in. Also, to avoid theological and moral tunnel vision, we should all be involved with more than one Christian group. Whether we are in an institutional local church, a missionary organization, a para-church group, campus ministry, an inner-city or prison ministry, evaluate your group with an application of the evaluations Jesus made of these seven churches.

Revelation Chapter 2

There are three common suggestions as to the angels of chapter 2:

1. The angel is the pastor or bishop of the church—this is unlikely. “Pastor” is reading our culture back into the text. The gift of pastor in Ephesians 4:11 (the only reference to the word “pastor” in the New Testament) is the word for shepherd, not angel. Neither Jesus nor the apostles ever suggested having a pastor over a congregation, and Jesus said, “*Do not be called leaders*” (Matthew 23:10). For example, where is the pastor in Philippians in 1:1, where Paul addresses the leadership of the church and never mentions a pastor, and John condemns Diotrefes for loving to be first among them in 3 John 11.
2. The angel is a human messenger who delivers the letter to the church—possibly, the word is used this way in Luke 9:52 and James 2:25, but it is never used that way anywhere else in Revelation.
3. The angel is a supernatural being who delivered the letter to the church, possibly taking the form of a human (Hebrews 13:2). This is probably the best answer. The word “angel” occurs 66 times in the book, and all other times it refers to a supernatural being. Actually, in 3:5 an angel is a supernatural being, in the midst of the message to the church. My conclusion is that these are probably supernatural angelic beings who possibly took the form of a man and delivered the letter from John to the churches, the believers of those cities.

The letters all have the same form. The message begins identifying the city church, then with a descriptive comment about Jesus, then how the church addresses the situation among the believers in that city, collectively. The message concludes with an exhortation *to him who overcomes*. The word *overcomes* is usually translated *conquers*. So, the problem is stated corporately, that is, with the believers in the whole city, but the response called for is always individual. *He who has an ear to hear let him hear...He who overcomes*. The point is to be an overcomer, one who conquers the sinful temptations going on in your culture.

2:1-7, The Message to the Church of Ephesus

The Ephesian church began on Paul’s second missionary journey (Acts 18:18f). Paul stayed there 3 years (Acts 19:10). It was a political and commercial center. The major religion was the Temple of Artemis or Diana. It ranked with Antioch and Alexandria as a major trade center. Timothy was there for a time to appoint leadership in the church (1 Timothy 1:3). It was probably the city where John lived the last years of his life, from which he was exiled to Patmos.

Jesus’ Description—The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands. He is aware of what is going on in the churches.

Jesus’ Evaluation—He knows the details of what is going on with believers. He used three words for work: deeds, toil, and perseverance. Jesus complimented them because they are judgmental. They do not tolerate evil men, especially those who lyingly call themselves apostles.

Jesus’ Condemnation—They left their first love. Even though they are making the right judgments about the false prophets, they were not doing it for the love of Christ. They were in danger of Jesus not using them anymore to build His church (remove your lampstand out of its place) because they were doing it for some reasons other than trying to please the One they originally loved. This is typical of a church when it takes intolerance to legalism.

2:5—Remember and repent.

2:6—They hated the Nicolaitans, and Jesus also hated them. In the Bible hatred is only focused on sin (and notice there is no separation of the sin from the sinner). We do not know much about the Nicolaitans. They were some sort of worldly group that pulled the church away from their love of

Christ. The word means “to rule over,” so some suggest that this is a group trying to form a hierarchy, but we do not know that with any certainty.

2:7—The point of the letter is to the individual. *To him who overcomes*. They are to overcome the group that is teaching false things, overcome the influence of the Nicolaitans. The result is a heavenly reward.

2:8-11, The Message to the Church of Smyrna

Jesus’ Description—The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life.

Jesus’ Evaluation—Jesus said only good things about Smyrna. He knew their deeds of tribulation and poverty. They were being persecuted by Jews, referred to as a synagogue of Satan.

2:10—Jesus told them to not fear, though they are going to be thrown into prison for 10 days and then be killed. They were not to fear because they will get the crown of life.

2:11—The one who overcomes is overcoming the synagogue of Satan, being in prison and killed. They need to overcome religious persecution from non-Christian sources.

2:12-17, The Message to the Church of Pergamum

Jesus’ Description—The One who has the sharp two-edged sword, referring to His judgment.

Jesus’ Commendation—They held fast Jesus’ name and did not deny their faith in God.

Jesus’ Condemnation—Pergamum is where Satan’s throne is, a large area of polytheistic temples. Antipas was martyred there (nothing else is known about this). Some hold to the teachings of Balaam and the Nicolaitans. Jesus did not deal with the society in general.

2:16—He tells them to repent of following false teaching (like that of Balaam and the Nicolaitans).

2:17—To the individual who overcomes, there is reward. Overcomes what? Overcomes pagan idolatry in the community and overcomes false teaching in the church. It is always about overcoming the temptation of participating in what is acceptable in the society they live in.

2:18-29, Message to the Church of Thyatira

Jesus’ Description—The Son of God in His resurrected glory

Jesus’ Evaluation—He knows their deeds, their love, faith, service, perseverance, and that their deeds of late are greater than at first. But they tolerated the woman Jezebel, probably an actual woman who taught and led people into immorality (similar to promoting LGBTQ+ lifestyles). Jesus gave her time to repent, but she would not do it. Notice, repentance is always the key to restoration. Therefore, Jesus will throw her upon a bed of sickness. Her children (possibly her followers) will have pestilence. Jesus says, “*I am He who searches the minds and hearts.*” Only God can judge motives. He who overcomes what? Overcomes false teaching in the church, which imitates the world’s immorality. Let him who has an ear let him hear.

Comments and Applications from Chapter 2

1. Remember—Jesus knows, evaluates, and judges all our activities, including what groups we support and condemn (verses 9, 14, 15, 20).
2. One of Jesus’ answers to our prayers about suffering is for us to be faithful until death (verse 10).
3. When you see that you are not keeping Christ’s standard, repent, meaning change your mind (verses 5, 16). Notice: In the world, changing your behavior precedes (is the key to) changing your mind. In the Bible, changing your mind precedes (is the key to) changing your behavior (Romans 12:1-2).

Revelation Chapter 3

3:1-6, Message to the Church of Sardis

Sardis was about 50 miles southeast of Thyatira. It was a wealthy city located on a commercial trade route. Most of the city followed mystery cults or secret religious societies. The magnificent Temple of Artemis dating from the fourth century B.C. was one of its points of interest and still exists as an important ruin.

Jesus' Description—He who has the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars.

Jesus' Evaluation—He does not give details, but He said, "*I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of My God.*" And there are some who have not soiled their garments. They will receive white robes because they are worthy.

Jesus' Warning—Wake up, Remember...and repent.

3:7-13, Message to the Church of Philadelphia

Philadelphia was about 28 miles (45km) southeast of Sardis and 65 miles (105km) east of Ephesus.

Jesus' Description—*He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens.* His judgments are holy, true, and unchangeable.

Jesus' Evaluation—They have kept God's Word and have not denied His name.

3:10, *I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth*—This seems to refer to the testing John is about to describe in chapters 4–19. Jesus also referred to this as a tribulation that will come upon the whole earth before His Second Coming (Matthew 24). To those who believe in Jesus, He promises, "*I also will keep you from the hour of testing.*" This cannot mean just the believers in Philadelphia because He said the testing is to come upon *the whole world*. So, it seems to mean that those believers in Christ in the Church Age, who are alive when it is the time for this worldwide testing, will be **kept from** it. John Walvoord wrote,

"He could not have stated it more explicitly. If Christ had meant to say that they would be preserved **through** a time of trouble, or would be **taken out** from within the Tribulation, a different verb and a different preposition would have been required." [Walvoord, "Commentary on Revelation"]

Believers are taken to heaven at the Rapture, thus **kept from** the tribulation to come (see John 14:1-6; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 5:9). Also, significant is the Greek phrase *tereo ek* (keep from). Some think the church will go through the tribulation judgments and that God will preserve them in the midst of it. However, the meaning of *ek* is "from," "out from," or "away from." If Jesus meant the church would be preserved through the tribulation, He would have used the words *en* ("in") or *dia* ("through").

3:14-22, Message to the Church of Laodicea

There are some who say these people are unbelievers. But Jesus here calls them the "church" [*ekklesia*, "called out ones"]. By definition, the church (whatever else it is) is the "body of Christ," "those who believe" (Ephesians 1:19, 22-23). The only way you can claim these are unbelievers is to have an institutional definition of the church, or a definition which says the church is an assembly. That would mean the church could include unbelievers, and that would contradict the definition of the church used throughout the New Testament.

Jesus' Description—*The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning [or source] of the creation of God.*

Jesus' Evaluation—This is the only church with only bad things. Their problem is that they are lukewarm. The reason is because they are wealthy, living in luxury. They say they are rich and have need of nothing. Instead, they should be pursuing eternal treasures.

3:20, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me”—This verse is often taken out of context, usually used in an evangelistic sense. However, it is written to believers, who need to repent and turn back to Christ. He is waiting at the door of their hearts, but they have to open the door to Him, and He will come in and fellowship with that person.

He who overcomes. Overcomes what? The community of believers who are living in wealth and luxury and because of that have become lukewarm.

Comments and Applications from Chapter 3

1. Remember and repent. Remember God’s standard and repent of the difference between God’s standards and your deeds.
2. Those who persevere through the tribulations of this age will be kept from the future tribulation.
3. Living in luxury is deceptive. It makes us think we are spiritually okay, which makes us lukewarm Christians. Invest your wealth in eternity.

III. Chapters 4–22—*The Things Which Shall Take Place After These Things*

A. Chapters 4–5, The Scene before the Throne in Heaven Revelation Chapter 4

John saw a door open in heaven. And the voice, like a sound of a trumpet, told John to come up to heaven. Chapters 4–18 all come from around the throne of God described in chapters 4–5. The throne is a whole area, not just a chair. In the area of this throne is a temple. Around the throne is a rainbow, with a sea of glass, clear like crystal, in front of it.

There are also 24 thrones belonging to 24 elders (possibly also more than just a chair). The elders are most likely key men of God from throughout history. Both Old and New Testament leaders are called elders. There are also four magnificent living creatures around the throne. They have faces like a lion, an eagle, a man, and a bull or calf. Ezekiel seems to be describing the same living beings with the same faces, except he records *each of them had four faces* (Ezekiel 1:6). So John probably just saw the one face that was facing him because they did not turn, because each went straight forward (Ezekiel 1:12). And they *ran to and fro like bolts of lightning* (Ezekiel 1:14). *They did not cease to say, “Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come.”*

In front of the throne, John saw a golden altar for incense. There is a larger brazen altar, like the altar of burnt offering in the Old Testament. Later, the believers who had been killed appear by this altar. Some things change around the throne, but the 24 elders and the four living creatures are always there. The elders fell down before the throne. They cast their actual crowns of gold before the throne. This is not believers giving their rewards back to Christ. Only the 24 elders are involved in this, and it is an act of worship, not giving back eternal rewards. The elders say God is worthy to receive glory, honor, and power because He is the Creator. Sometimes John could discern that there were angels as far as he could see.

John is brought into this area. Sometimes an angel or one of the elders would explain things to John. All the rest of the tribulation judgments come from this area.

Comments and Applications from Chapter 4

1. Give glory and honor to God because He is holy and eternal.
2. Proclaim that God is worthy of worship because He is the Creator of everything. Evolution is a blatant religious attempt to take glory away from God. Evolution teaches survival of the fittest, which says you are fittest, that is, you deserve glory. It is a Satanic idea.

Revelation Chapter 5

[Seven seals picture from reformationtoreformation.com/post/poole-on-revelation-5-1-the-scroll-of-history]

5:1—There was a scroll sealed up with seven seals. Usually, you would unroll some of the scroll, break a seal, then unroll some more scroll, then break another seal, etc.

5:2—A strong angel asked who is worthy to open the book and break its seal.

5:3—Even though heaven was full of sinless individuals, no one was found worthy to open the book, i.e., to judge the earth, either on earth or in heaven.

5:4—John began to weep greatly because no one worthy was found to open the book. That meant God's program could not go forward. The satanic world system could not be judged. John and the other believers wanted judgment to take place because of their persecutions.

5:5—John must have been standing near one of the thrones because one of the elders told John that Jesus is an overcomer who could open the book.

5:6—John saw a figure of *a Lamb standing as if slain*.

5:7—The Lamb, representing Jesus, came and took the book out of the hand of God the Father who sat on the throne (fulfilling John 5:22—*the Father...has given all judgment to the Son*).

5:8—The elders and the four living creatures now bow down before the Lamb. The elders now have a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which represents the prayers of the saints living in the tribulation who want the judgment of God to come upon the earth.

5:9-10—They sing a new song—a song not to God the Father, but to God the Son. He is worthy to take the book and break the seal because He purchased with His blood people whom He made to be a kingdom of priests (chapter 20).

5:11-14—Then, as far as John could see, there were angels. The angels and the four living creatures and the elders all sang, "*Worthy is the Lamb to receive glory...*," glory to the One who sits on the throne and to the Lamb. The four living creatures said, "*Amen*," and the elders fell down and worshipped.



Comments and Applications from Chapter 5

1. Do not judge people in the sense of vengeance or payback or giving them what they deserve. No one in heaven or on earth is worthy to do that except Jesus (verses 1-5).
2. Teach and preach Jesus as the Judge (John 5:22) because He alone is worthy of it. He is worthy of it because He purchased believers with His blood.
3. Christ's death on the cross made believers a kingdom of priests (verse 10).
4. Focus your worship on the Father and the Son (verse 13). There is no focus on worship of the Holy Spirit in Revelation.

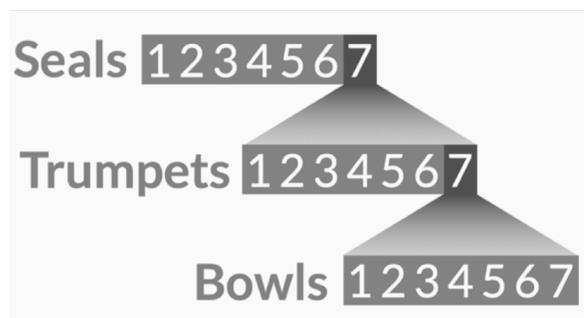
B. Chapters 6–18, the Future Seven-Year Tribulation

Revelation Chapter 6

The scene now shifts from heaven to the earth. Before we begin unpacking the details of the seven-year tribulation period, we should remember this was predicted by Daniel in the 500s B.C.

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

Daniel predicted that there would be one (John called the antichrist) who would make a seven-year peace covenant with Israel, but break it with *abominations* in the middle of the seven years (after 3 ½ years). Revelation 6–18 gives the details of Daniel 9:27.



The 7 seals of Revelation 6 cover the whole tribulation because the 7th seal contains the 7 trumpet judgments (8:1–11:19), and the 7th trumpet (11:15) contains the 7 bowl judgments (16:1-21). Some suggest that chapter 6 is an outline of the whole tribulation but that seems unlikely because the trumpets come out of the last seventh seal. After the 7th seal is opened (and the trumpet and bowl judgments occur), Jesus returns. Each of these judgments intensify.

6:1-2—The First Seal—Antichrist—The Lamb broke the first seal. The first four seals are known as the “four horsemen of the apocalypse.” A crown is given to the horseman on the white horse for him to offer a peace that is short-lived. Some suggest this is Christ (because of the white horse), but the sequence is wrong. Christ returns after the tribulation. The horseman is the antichrist (1 John 2:18; Revelation 13:1-10). The horse is white, indicating he is pretending to offer peace. He has a bow, but he does not shoot it at anyone. It seems like he conquers, but without war. This is similar to Daniel 9:27, where the antichrist makes a firm covenant with the many for one period of seven (the seven-year time of the tribulation).

6:3-4—The Second Seal—War—It was granted to the horseman on the red horse *to take peace from the earth*. The crown is given to the one on the white horse, and “*it was granted,*” and the sword “*was given,*” meaning all are under the authority of God.

6:5-6—The Third Seal—Famine—The black horse brings famine to the earth.

6:7-8—The Fourth Seal—Death—The ashen horse brings death to one-fourth of the earth, killed with sword, famine, pestilence, and by wild beasts of the earth.

6:9-11—The Fifth Seal—Martyrdom—The souls of the martyrs of the tribulation cry out to God for revenge on those who had killed them. But they are told to wait until the number of those believers who were to be killed should be completed. The plan of God included the persecution and martyrdom of His saints, so they could be overcomers and receive eternal rewards.

6:12-17—The Sixth Seal—Natural Disasters—The stars disappear from view, and there is a great wind and a great earthquake. Everyone from kings to slaves are trying to hide themselves from this great disaster. The conclusion of the six seals is that they are *the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come*. It is interesting that this is the conclusion of the unbelievers of the earth who believe their situation is the wrath of God, but have no thought of repentance (see also 16:11).

Paul tells us that the church is not going to go through God's wrath (1 Thessalonians 1:10). In 1 Thessalonians 5:9, we are told that believers are not appointed to wrath (the same word for *wrath* as here in verses 16-17). This is quite different from what is said to the believers in the fifth seal, who are going to go through the wrath. Therefore, the believers on the earth at the fifth seal are not part of the church. It would seem that the church has already been removed from the earth.

The wrath "has come." The verb is a timeless, accomplished act (Greek aorist tense). The tribulation is called the wrath of God right from the beginning. If you put the Rapture in the middle of the tribulation, you still have the problem of the church going through some of the wrath, which Paul says we will not do.

Comments and Applications from Chapter 6

1. The future of the earth is judgment, not prosperity. The judgment will come quickly by God, not as a process of human failure to preserve it. But until then, the prosperity of the ungodly may continue, and so will their immorality. From about the year 1800 until today, the prosperity of the world has increased. At the same time, the morality of society has decreased.
2. Even at the beginning of the tribulation, we see the wrath of God, and Paul said we are not appointed for wrath (compare 1 Thessalonians 5:9 with Revelation 6:17).

Chapter 7, The First Parenthesis

Revelation Chapter 7

The 144,000

7:1-3—Here we have the first parenthesis of the book. John saw four angels at the four corners of the earth holding back the four winds. The "Expositor's Bible Commentary" for 7:1 has this note: "The expression 'the four corners of the earth' was used in antiquity among the Near-Eastern nations much as we use 'the four points of the compass.'" Clearly, the expression is a metaphor for the whole earth. The point is, they are holding back the judgment on the whole earth. Then another angel

came from the eastern or rising sun, crying out to the four angels (who were granted to harm the earth) to not harm the earth until they have sealed the bondservants of God on their forehead.

7:4-8—144,000 are sealed (12,000 from each of the 12 tribes of Israel). All 12 tribes are mentioned, except for the tribe of Dan. Levi is mentioned, even though as a tribe of priests, it had not received territory in the Land. The two tribes from the two sons of Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh) are mentioned. It does not tell us why Dan is not mentioned, so we can only guess. Most likely it is because Dan was the tribe that left their assigned area and moved north, killed the people at Laish, took over their city and named it Dan. Chapter 7 means these 12 tribes exist today and will be identified as such in the tribulation.

7:9-17—John saw a multitude that no one could count standing before the throne. These are believers martyred in the tribulation. They were singing a song of praise to the Lamb. The angels, the elders, and the four living creatures joined in the song. One of the elders asked John where the people came from. John said, “*You know.*” The elder said these are the ones from out of the tribulation. They have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. Their positional sanctification on earth has become ultimate sanctification as they stand before the throne. Their task is now to serve God in the temple before the throne. God will spread His presence over them. Then their condition is described as:

- No more hunger
- No more thirst
- No more sun beating down on them
- The Lamb will guide them to the water of life
- God will wipe away every tear from their eyes

This sounds similar to the New Jerusalem, but here John is observing the conditions surrounding the throne of God in heaven.

Comments and Applications from Chapter 7

1. God has a future for all the tribes of Israel (even the exception of Dan). He is still honoring His promise to Abraham. God keeps His promises specifically. He is faithful to His own Word.
2. There is only one way to stand before the throne, and that is to have your robe washed by the blood of the Lamb (verse 14).
3. Notice that heaven (the throne of God) is not the New Jerusalem, which is on a new earth, which is the eternal state for believers. But they have in common the elements of no physical suffering and no emotional sorrow (verses 16-17).

Chapters 8–9, The Seventh Seal, Which Is the First Six Trumpet Judgments

Revelation Chapter 8

8:1-6—When the Lamb broke the **seventh seal** on the book handed to Him by God the Father, it released seven trumpets. At that moment, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. This tells us that time in heaven is measured the same as on earth, or perhaps John was able to measure it by his reference of time. Nonetheless, it eliminates the common belief that in heaven “time will be no more.”

Then John saw a ceremony where seven angels stand before the throne and seven trumpets were given to them to announce the next judgment. In other words, this seventh seal is going to be broken down into seven trumpets.

Another angel was standing before the altar with a golden censor in his hand. It seems to be a long stick with a cup on the end. He is given more incense, which represents more prayers, and adds them to the prayers that are already there. They are put on the golden altar before the throne.

It is like the altar of incense in the Old Testament. In Exodus 30:1, Jesus told Moses to make an altar as a place to burn incense. Apparently, it was to represent both the golden altar and the altar of incense in heaven. The smoke of the incense went up before God (here John tells us clearly that the smoke is the prayers of the saints). The prayers are most likely asking God to judge the evil on the earth and to bring in His kingdom quickly.

Then the angel with the censor filled the cup with fire which he took from the larger brazen altar. Then he threw the whole thing (rod, cup, and all) to the earth. There are many sounds of lightning as the seven angels stand ready to blow the seven trumpets.

8:7—First Trumpet—One third of the earth was burned up, i.e., a third of the trees and green grass.

8:8-9—Second Trumpet—Something like a great mountain was thrown into the sea. One third of the sea became blood. One third of the sea creatures died and one third of the ships were destroyed.

8:10-11—Third Trumpet—One third of the rivers and the freshwater springs became bitter.

8:12—Fourth Trumpet—A third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars were darkened, day and night.

8:13—An angel announced three woes to the earth and to those who dwell on the earth because the last three woes (trumpets five, six and seven) are going to be extremely bad.

Comments and Applications from Chapter 8

1. The prayers of the saints reach the throne of God. It does not mean that God answers all prayers, but all those prayers are precious to God. God answers prayers according to His plan, His timing, and His glory.
2. The saints on earth are not exempt from the judgment of God on earth. Only the 144,000 are sealed, not the saints in general. Believers are protected from hunger, crying, and pain in heaven, not on earth.

Revelation Chapter 9

9:1-12—Fifth Trumpet, Woe #1—A star fell from heaven. This is probably a demon, notice the star is referred to as *he* (third person singular) in verse 2. The bottomless pit is full of demons who were not allowed to be on the earth before. But now the key opens the pit and lets the demons loose. Before the earth was created, Satan and some (one third, 13:1) of the angels fell and became demons. Some were allowed to be on the earth, and some were so bad they were confined to this pit (see also Luke 8:31).

When the pit was opened, smoke came out along with creatures he describes as *locusts*. Power is given to them by God. But they are told they cannot hurt the grass and trees but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their forehead. They are not permitted to kill anyone but only to torment them for five months. So we know the first woe, the fifth trumpet judgment, lasts five months. The torment of these demon locusts is like a scorpion when it stings a man. For the first time in history, men will seek death but will not be able to die. Their appearance is given in verses 7-10. John is not giving us a scientific description. He is just trying to describe them in comparison to things he knows. We do not know the size of the creatures. They have a leader called Abaddon or in the Greek called Apollyon—translated *destroyed* (1 Corinthians 10:10).

9:13-21—Sixth Trumpet—Woe #2—The sixth angel blew a trumpet, and there was an unidentified voice from the horns of the golden altar, which said to the angel, “*Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.*” Most believe the one angel is good and the four are demons because good angels are not bound. If that is the case, then demons have been prepared by God to kill a third of mankind.

The headwaters of the Euphrates River are near Mt. Ararat (where Noah’s ark settled) in Turkey. The river flows 1700 miles to the Persian Gulf. Both Turkey and Syria have 7 dams on the Euphrates, using the fresh water themselves. Consequently, today, the river in Iraq is almost dried up. Crops are down 90%. They are bringing bottled water in from Saudi Arabia for the people to drink. The Euphrates is mentioned a lot in the Old Testament, as the cities of Babel and Babylon were built on its shores.

9:16—The number of the armies is 200 million. This seems to be a human army, coming from the East, and attacking west over the Euphrates River. In 2022, the People’s Republic of China claimed an active military of 2,185,000. [wikipedia.org] Not that this is necessarily a Chinese army. There were probably not that many people on earth in John’s day. Next, we have a description which seems to picture modern warfare or even warfare future to us. Ryrie says, “The 200,000,000 creatures who compose this supernatural cavalry may be human beings or demons or demon-possessed humans.” [Ryrie Study Bible note on Revelation 9:16]

9:18, a third of mankind was killed—After the 4th seal, ¼ of mankind was killed. Already so many have been gone from other things in the meantime (believers who have been Raptured and believers who have been martyred, as well as the other seals and trumpet devastations). But this additional 1/3 would be at least another 1.5 billion, meaning the population of the world is about cut in half at this point. Down to 3 or 4 billion, most likely. Think of the problem of disposing of the dead bodies.

9:20, The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent. So at this point, all evangelism comes to an end. The surviving unbelievers continued to: (1) worship demons, (2) worship idols of gold and silver, (3) commit murder, (4) practice sorcery, (5) participate in immorality, and (6) steal.

Comments and Applications from Chapter 9

1. God is in control of demons. He dictates what they can and cannot do. So even demon possession today is under the sovereign control of God. Even though it may be caused by demons and brought about by the sin of the individual, it is still within the sovereign plan of God. The world is not a struggle between God and Satan. What we see in the world is God demonstrating His own glory. And He uses Satan and demons to demonstrate His own glory. Satan and demons are unwitting servants of God. Everything ultimately brings glory to God.
2. Clear evidence of the work of God (such as the judgments of Revelation 9) will not bring about repentance among those who have chosen to not believe.

Chapters 10:1–11:13, The Second Parenthesis

Revelation Chapter 10

The Little Book

10:1-11—Here we begin another parenthesis. It is a pause in the horrors of the judgments on the earth, to remind us of heaven’s perspective, that God is still in control. This parenthesis is between the sixth trumpet (which is the 2nd woe) and seventh trumpet (which is the 3rd woe) and before the seven bowls.

10:4—Why tell us about a book with a message hidden from us? Perhaps to give assurance to us that the events which follow are all planned by God, in His defeat of evil. John saw a strong good angel coming down out of heaven. He is a magnificent angel with a rainbow upon his head. In his hand he has a little book. This is not Christ, and this is not the book of chapter 5. But this is a powerful angel with a new little book. He stands with one foot on the sea and one on the land, which probably means that the last plagues will affect both the land and the sea. His voice was like the roar of a lion. Something like seven peals of thunder gave John a revelation from God. But a voice from heaven told John to not write what the thunder said. It was something John heard and understood and wanted to write down, but the voice did not want the church to know about it. Deuteronomy 29:29 tells us

The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.

Our goal is to know what the Bible knows but to not know more than the Bible knows.

10:5-6—Then the magnificent angel raised his right hand and swore by God’s eternity and God as Creator that there will no longer be any delay. When the seventh angel sounds his trumpet in 11:15, the bowl judgments will be poured out on the earth, which occurs in 16:1-21, and the tribulation will come to an end. Then Christ will return, and the prayers of the martyrs who wanted vengeance for their martyrdom will be fulfilled.

10:7—In the days of the bowls, the mystery (previously unknown prophetic revelation—Ephesians 3:3-9) of God is finished, the prophecy God gave to the prophets all through history about God’s judgments will be finished with the seventh trumpet (which is the seven bowls).

10:8-10—Then the voice from heaven told John to take the book which is in the hand of the magnificent angel and eat the book. John is told it will be sweet to his taste but bitter to his stomach. So John does that, and so it was. I suspect the little book represents the Bible. It could be that it represents this particular book of Revelation. At any rate, it is revelation from God. It is generally viewed as sweet until you understand it, then you realize it contains bitter judgments. The bitterness has to do with verse 11 and prophesying about bitter judgments.

10:11, *And they said to me, “You must prophesy again concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings”*—John is once again assigned to write the prophecies, which will be much more devastating than anything he has written so far.

Comments and Applications from Chapter 10

1. There are, and will always be, certain things we are not supposed to know (Deuteronomy 29:29). God reveals via His written Word what we are to know. What has not been written is what we are not supposed to know (like, say, what God is doing in our lives—the theme of the book of Job). So beware of modern false prophets with a mystical word from God, saying, “God told me,” “God led me,” or “God called me.”
2. Today we are experiencing a delay (verse 6) in God’s fulfillment of His promises given throughout His Old and New Testament prophets, but this tribulation period is the end of the delay, the fulfillment of that prophecy.
3. The Word of God is both sweet and bitter. It is sweet, in that it tells us of the character of God, His holiness and justice. It is bitter in that it shows how His holiness demands judgment on a sinful world.

Revelation Chapter 11

The Third Temple

11:1-2—The tribulation temple is the third earthly temple. Why measure it? It seems to indicate the reality of it. Ezekiel was told to measure the fourth temple, known as the millennial temple, as well, probably for the same reason, to show it will really exist in the real world.

- The first temple was Solomon’s temple built in the 900s B.C. and destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.
- The second temple was built by Zerubbabel in the 400s B.C. The second temple was often called Herod’s temple because Herod reinforced it and made it bigger and more beautiful. The wailing wall today is part of the wall of the reinforcement that Herod made around the temple area. The second temple was destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70.
- The third temple will be built by the Jews, either before or during the tribulation. It will be taken over by the antichrist during the tribulation. “...*the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God*” (2 Thessalonians 2:4). The third temple will be destroyed by an earthquake at the Second Coming of Christ.
- The fourth temple, described by Ezekiel, will be the millennial temple (Ezekiel 40–48).

The angel told John to not measure the courtyard because *the nations...will tread underfoot the holy city for forty-two months*—3 ½ years. This is probably the last half of the seven-year tribulation (Daniel 9:27) because in the first half the Jews establish worship in the Jerusalem temple. Jesus said when they see the antichrist take his seat in the temple (already built in the first half of the tribulation), then the Jews are to flee to the wilderness (Matthew 24:15-20).

The Two Witnesses

11:3-13—Two witnesses will prophesy for God for 1260 days. This is also 3½ years, probably the first half of the seven-year tribulation. Ryrie says,

Whether the two witnesses will prophesy during the first half or the last half of the Tribulation is not stated, though the first half seems more likely, since their termination by Anti-christ (v. 7) fits better at the midpoint of the Tribulation than at the end. [Ryrie Study Bible]

11:3-8—The two witnesses are unidentified so guessing about their identity is useless. They will be clothed in sackcloth, indicating a life of poverty. Their judgments seem to be in addition to all the other judgments. Everyone hates these two men because of their power to cause drought, to turn the water to blood, to cause plagues, etc. If anyone tries to destroy these men, fire comes out of their mouths which will destroy their attackers.

The beast (the antichrist) finally kills the two witnesses. Their bodies will lie in the street of Jerusalem. It is mystically *called Sodom and Egypt* because they were the enemy of God's people and in these days Jerusalem will be the enemy of God's people. It is mystical because John says it is. We only depart from the plain ordinary meaning when the author does. The correct meaning is always and only the author's intended meaning, and here John says it means the city *where their Lord was crucified*.

11:9-10—The whole world views the bodies for 3½ days as they lie in Jerusalem. They will not permit the bodies to be put in a tomb. The people on the earth are rejoicing because of the dead bodies of the witnesses in Jerusalem. They see the two witnesses as terrorists, destroying the world, and finally killed by the government. Notice God is causing sickness, disease, destruction, and death. Later on, we will also see Satan causing healing and seemingly resurrection from the dead (Revelation 13:3, 12).

11:11-12—After 3½ days, breath came from God into the witnesses. All the rejoicing of the people is changed to great fear. Then there was a voice from heaven (we do not know if the whole world hears or just the 2 witnesses), which said, "*Come up here.*" The witnesses then went up into heaven in the cloud and their enemies watched them.

11:13—Then there is a great earthquake and one-tenth of Jerusalem is destroyed and 7,000 people are killed in the earthquake. The rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven. But soon they are cursing God again. When worldly unbelievers see a catastrophic event which does not destroy them, they tend to turn to God (as many people did on the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York City). But when they personally suffer the curse of God, then they blame God for it (16:11).

The Seventh Trumpet

Chapter 11:14-19

11:14-19—The seventh trumpet includes a description of the beginning of the reign of Christ (verse 17). We are living in the church age. God is not yet ruling over the earth. But His sovereign plan is in place. There are no accidents. The seventh trumpet (containing the seven bowls) is the end of the tribulation, which is followed immediately by the Second Coming, the judgments, and the Millennial Kingdom.

11:19—The temple of heaven is opened and the ark of His covenant appears in His temple, and there are flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder coming from the ark, and on earth there is a great earthquake and a great hailstorm.

Comments and Applications from Chapter 11

1. Witnesses for God should communicate humility and an urgency for repentance.
2. To be a witness for God means to represent the Lord to the earth.
3. To be a witness for the Lord is to be hated by those of the earth. So our warning is a “narrow gate,” not a popular message.
4. We must keep in mind that we live in a world over which God **will rule**, not one He **does rule** over now. God’s sovereign plan is in place, but not His will. Today, things are not outside of God’s control, but they are outside of the direct rule of God. For example, we should not expect justice from governments or the courts. We should not think if things are going well, we are being blessed by God, or if they are going bad, we are being cursed by God. Circumstantially, politically, socially, and religiously, Satan will appear to be winning because he is currently ruling.

Chapters 12–14, The Third Parenthesis

Revelation Chapter 12

12:1-3, *A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun and the moon*—This is the first of 7 signs in the last half of Revelation (vv. 3; 13:13, 14; 15:1; 16:14; 19:20). The word *great* (*mega*) appears in verses 1, 3, 9, 12, 14 in this chapter. *Great* is either in size or significance. John tells us it is a *sign*, indicating it was not a literal woman but the symbol of a woman.

A woman is clothed with the sun (Israel), with the moon under her feet (probably referring to the dream Joseph had in Genesis 37:9-11), and on her head a crown of twelve stars (the 12 tribes of Israel). The woman is pregnant, in great pain, and about to give birth to a child (Jesus). [The Roman Catholics say the woman is Mary. But they also say Mary was immaculately conceived, so she had no pain in childbirth because pain in childbirth is part of the curse for sin. This woman has a lot of pain in childbirth, so it could not be the Roman Catholic Mary.]

12:3—There is another sign in heaven, a great red dragon appears, who has seven heads and ten horns. The seven heads are seven world governments that precede the antichrist's world government (17:9-14). The ten horns are ten nations that the antichrist rules over when he establishes his empire. The woman flees into the wilderness where God protects her for 3½ years. [There is no example of that happening with Mary.]

12:4-6—The tail of the dragon [Satan] sweeps away a third of the stars of heaven [angels], which probably means that one third of the angels followed Satan in his rebellion with God. Demons who follow Satan are fallen angels (verse 7). The dragon tried to devour the Child (perhaps referring to Herod killing the babies in Bethlehem, which would mean Herod was led by Satan). The male Child is to rule the nations with a rod of iron. But the Child is caught up to God and His throne (the resurrection and ascension of Christ). The woman flees into the wilderness (which begins with the dispersion of the Jews in A.D. 70), but the author, like all prophecies about Israel, completely skips all teaching about Christ's first coming and life and ministry and the church age and goes directly to the tribulation, where Israel is nourished for 1260 days, the last 3½ years of the seven-year tribulation.

One of the most popular myths about Satan pictures him as being in charge of hell. In reality, Satan is not in hell. He has never even been there. He will not be sentenced to the lake of fire until after the final rebellion is crushed at the end of the Millennium (Revelation 20:7-10). And when he does enter hell, he will not be in charge. He will be the one undergoing the most horrible punishment.

Far from hell, Satan currently divides his time between roaming the earth, *seeking someone to devour* (1 Peter 5:8, see 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2; 6:12) and being in heaven, where he attempts to overthrow God's purposes and people. One way he does that is to constantly accuse believers before God's throne (12:10; Job 1:10-11). But his attempts to turn God against His own children does not work. Nothing can separate us from the love of God (Romans 8:38-39).

12:7-10, *And there was a war in heaven.* This war is going on during the tribulation. It is a war between Satan and his angels and Michael and the angels of heaven. Michael and his angels overpower Satan and his angels. So Satan and his angels are thrown down out of heaven to the earth. During our age, Satan and his demons (except for the ones cast into the bottomless pit) have access to heaven. For example, Satan came before God in heaven in the first chapter of Job. Jesus said to Peter that Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat (Luke 22:31). Until the tribulation, Satan is called the accuser of the brethren. But during the tribulation, he is thrown down to the earth. Satan deceives the world and accuses the brethren. But after this battle, he can no longer accuse the brethren before God in heaven.

12:11—The brethren are overcomers because: (1) of the blood of the Lamb, (2) of the word of their testimony, and (3) they did not love their life even when faced with death.

12:12-14—At this point, Satan knows *that he has only a short time* to rule over the earth. When the dragon saw he was thrown down from heaven, he persecuted Israel. The woman (Israel) was given ability to flee from the dragon for 3½ years.

12:15-16—Satan, in some unexplained way, tried to destroy Israel with water, but the earth was opened up by God to soak up the water.

12:17—So the dragon was enraged with Israel, which would be at least the 144,000, and Satan went to make war with the rest of the converts to Jesus Christ. These converts are described as (1) those who keep the commandments of God and (2) hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Comments and Applications from Chapter 12

1. Do not confuse God's program for Israel, with His program for the Gentiles, even in the upcoming tribulation. Gentile believers, from all the nations, are being killed and appear in heaven in white robes. But the Jews are sealed for their future role on the millennial earth. God deals with each group differently.
2. Satan does two things: he deceives the earth and accuses the believers.
3. The overcomers are those of verse 11—*because of the blood of the Lamb, the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.*

Revelation Chapter 13

The Third Parenthesis continues with a focus on the antichrist and the false prophet.

The Antichrist

13:1-2—The dragon here is Satan and the beast is the antichrist. He is described in great detail in Daniel 7; 8:23-25; 9:26-27; 11:31-45; Matthew 24:15-16; and 2 Thessalonians 2:3-10. Different than past dictators, this man will rule the entire world. He was described in Revelation 11:7 as the beast who will kill God's two witnesses.

The ten horns are the ten kings that help the antichrist come to power. The seven heads are the seven world empires that have preceded the antichrist. The beast looked like a leopard, bear, and a lion. And the dragon (Satan) gave the antichrist his power.

These Beasts Parallel Daniel 2 and 7

Daniel 2:31-49—Nebuchadnezzar had a vision of an image of a great statue. The head is gold (Babylonian Empire), the breast and arms are silver (Medo-Persian Empire), the belly and thighs are bronze (the Greek Empire), the legs are made of iron (the Roman Empire), and the feet are a mixture of iron and clay (the antichrist's empire). The stone is the Second Coming of Jesus, which destroys the antichrist's empire. The stone became a mountain on the earth, which is Christ's Millennial Kingdom.

Daniel 7:4-8, 9-14—Very much like Revelation chapters 4, 5 and 17, Daniel had a vision of four beasts. The lion is the Babylonian Empire, the bear is the Medo-Persian Empire, the leopard is the Greek Empire, and the fourth great and terrible beast which destroyed the others was the Roman Empire. Then this beast becomes the antichrist's Roman Empire. The ten horns are the nations the antichrist takes over, after he takes over three horns, or nations. The antichrist is the little horn.

13:3—The antichrist had a fatal wound that is healed. Imagine living at this time and not being deceived. Your experience or your emotions will not keep you from being deceived. Only the Word of God can keep you from being deceived. The antichrist is very convincing, even if he fakes his fatal wound. If you determine truth by experience, you will likely think this is a miracle from God.

13:4—The unbelievers of the earth worship the dragon (Satan) because the beast is healed.

13:5—The antichrist has authority for 42 months, that is, the last half of the tribulation, which is after what Daniel calls the abomination of desolation (Daniel 9:24-27).

13:6—He blasphemes against God and those who dwell in heaven.

13:7—He makes war with the saints.

13:8—Everyone on the earth whose name is **not written** in the book of life of the Lamb from the foundation of the world (predestination) will worship the antichrist. Seven times in the New Testament believers are identified as those whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life (Revelation 3:5; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27; Philippians 4:3). This is a registry in which God wrote the names of those chosen for salvation before the foundation of the world (Matthew 13:35; 25:34; Luke 11:50; Ephesians 1:4; Hebrews 9:26; 1 Peter 1:20). The elect are saved through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:16; 5:24; Acts 13:39; etc.). The non-elect will be judged because they *did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness* (2 Thessalonians 2:12). Unbelief and rejection always indicate those persons whose names were not written in the Book of Life.

13:9—Here is free will. *If anyone has an ear, let him hear.* A call for spiritual understanding. This phrase is used 16 times in the New Testament (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22; 13:9; Matthew 11:15; 13:9, 43; Mark 4:9, 23; 7:16; Luke 8:8; 14:35). Notice the invitation goes out to the individual person. There is no “group” salvation.

The False Prophet

13:11-17—Another beast comes up, this one from the earth. The antichrist came from the sea and the false prophet comes from the earth. The false prophet has horns like a lamb (probably indicating a gentle “loving” personality), and he speaks as a dragon (as a representative of Satan). Notice:

1. Verse 12—He makes the earth worship the first beast, global religion joins global politics.
2. Verse 13—He performs great signs and miracles. Makes fire come down out of heaven.
3. Verse 14—With these signs he deceives people into building an image of the first beast.
4. Verse 15—He gives breath to the image of the beast, seems to bring it to life. He tries to kill everyone who will not bow down to the beast.
5. Verse 16—He causes everyone to have the mark of the beast either on his right hand or on their forehead.
6. Verse 17—No one can buy or sell unless they have this mark. Global economics joins global politics and global religion.

13:18—The mark of the beast is 666. No one knows what that means. We know how it is displayed (verse 16) but not what it means or how it will be written. 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 says:

the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

Comments and Applications from Chapter 13

1. The most foundational question of life is, “What is the basis of your authority? Your experience? Your politics? Your religion?” If your authority is in extra-biblical revelation, miraculous signs and wonders, healings, mystical power and authority on earth, how could you possibly know the difference between Christ and the antichrist? Everyone who does not take the Bible literally, **will** follow the antichrist.
2. The world will morally move towards verse 6, that is, the blasphemies of God and Christ, which today is the most common form of expletives on television and films. Actually, many programs will “bleep” out other words but leave in the blasphemy. By the way, people do not blaspheme in the name of Buddha, Allah, Mohamed, or Krishna.
3. The world will progressively move toward hatred of the Bible-believing Christians. In America today, all world religions are okay, except Christianity.
4. World religion will move in the direction of supporting a world government. The attempt is to come up with a concept of God that all religions can agree with and then tolerate each other.

Revelation Chapter 14

This chapter is a contrast to chapters 12–13, which were from Satan’s perspective. They gave the details of Satan’s men—the antichrist and false prophet. Now chapter 14 returns to what God is doing. In contrast to the darkness of Satan and his men, chapter 14 describes the Lamb, angels, redeemed saints, worship, and those sealed by God.

14:1—John begins by reminding us he is making observations. He says, *Και εἶδον (Kai eidov)* “and I saw.” John uses this phrase frequently in the book (14:6, 14; 15:1, 2, 5). Here in 14:1, John saw the Lamb (Jesus) standing on Mt. Zion. He is with the 144,000 named in chapter 7. There are 12,000 of each of the 12 tribes of Israel, except Dan. The number is still 12 because the tribe of Levi is included, in the place of Dan. Most likely this Mt. Zion is on earth. Zion is the name of David’s city located south of the Old City in modern-day Jerusalem.

14:2—Then John heard a loud *voice from heaven* which he finds hard to describe. He said it was like the sound of many waters, like thunder, and like the sound of harps playing.

14:3—The 144,000 sang *a new song*, but no one could learn the song except the 144,000. Why? We do not know. But it shows how God has different plans and jobs for different believers. For example, there are saints who are martyred, who have a different blessing than those who are not martyred, and they are different from the 144,000, which are different than the blessing for the church, which is different than for believers in the Old Testament.

14:4—The 144,000 have not been defiled with women—that is, they are celibate bachelors. The use of the word *defiled* probably indicates that single celibacy is the ideal condition. This is certainly different from Old Testament, where being fruitful and multiplying was the ideal condition. The 144,000 followed the Lamb wherever He goes. They do not lie. They are blameless (unblemished), not that they are perfect. They are sinners who need to confess their sins like other believers, but they do not have sinful baggage.

John Sees Three Angels

14:6-7, **The first angel** is flying in the atmosphere, having an eternal Gospel which he preaches to the whole earth. Every nation, tribe, tongue, and people hear the Gospel, fulfilling Matthew 24:14. The Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached to the whole world. Many believers today think it is our responsibility to preach the Gospel before Christ returns. But in Matthew 24, it is in the context of the tribulation, not the church age. Here in Revelation, we see that it is not only in the tribulation but is also carried out by an angel. This is the only mention of the “Gospel” in Revelation. The Gospel message is:

Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters.

14:8, **The second angel** says, “*Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great...who made the nations drink of immorality.*” This is a dominant theme from here on—the fall of Babylon. (See chapter 18.) Babylon is the headquarters of the antichrist and false prophet. Babylon is most likely the Babylon located in modern day Iraq. Why would this Babylon be literal and the mention of Sodom and Egypt in 11:8 be mystical? Because the author said so.

14:9-10, **The third angel** said that if anyone worships the beast or has the beast’s mark on his forehead or hand, he will receive the wrath of God. Two things are emphasized: (1) worshipping the beast and (2) receiving the mark. It is this beast who sets up a marketing system where no one can buy without the mark (13:15-18). Those who accept this mark will be tormented forever and ever.

14:11—There is a theory today called annihilationism, that unbelievers do not suffer. They are simply burned up. But verse 11 says, *And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night.* It seems from verse 10 that Christ and some of the angels witness this torment.

14:12, *Here is the perseverance of the saints*—The saints are those who keep the commandments of God and keep their faith in Jesus (in contrast to the unbelievers of verse 11). There is a difference between assurance of salvation and security of salvation. Those who are ordained by God to be saints from eternity past are secure in their salvation. But if you are not keeping His commandments or faith in Jesus, then you have no assurance of that salvation (1 John 2:4). Not taking the mark of the beast is an example of obedience to God’s commands and keeping faith in Jesus.

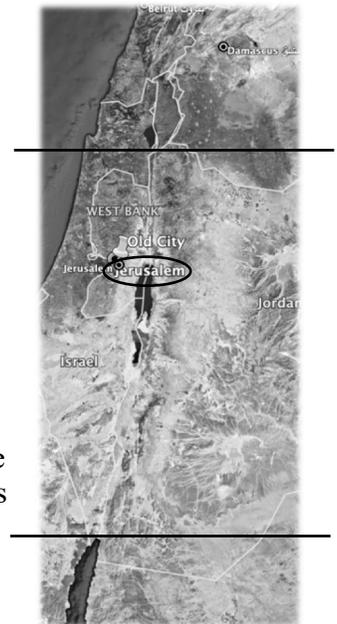
14:13—John now hears, *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!* They have *rest from their labors and their deeds follow them.* This is the opposite of the Old Testament concept of blessings, which are always on earth and usually in the land of Israel. New Testament blessings are always in heaven and are not connected with this world. This is the bema judgment of tribulation believers who are rewarded for their deeds. Judgment is always based on works and salvation is always based on faith.

14:14-16—John saw a white cloud, and Jesus is sitting on the cloud with a crown on His head and a sickle in His hand. Another angel comes out of the temple and says the hour of reaping has come. It is not a good harvest. It is a harvest of sinners—like in the days of Noah, where everyone who was evil was taken away (see Matthew 24:37-41).



14:17-19—Another angel comes with a sickle and he harvests the grapes (unbelievers), and they are put in the winepress of the judgment of the wrath of God.

14:20—Blood came up to the horses’ bridles, for a distance of 200 miles (320 km). This is the description of the final battle of the antichrist before Christ’s Second Coming. The fault line that runs down the Jordan River Valley from the Sea of Galilee down through the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Aqaba is about 200 miles (320 km). This is where most of the “Battle of Armageddon” is fought. Armageddon is the valley of the mountain of Megiddo in the Jezreel Valley, where the armies gather before the battle (16:13-16.) Then they will march against Jerusalem.



Comments and Applications from Chapter 14

1. Two things to avoid if you want to be a people of God who are following Christ: sexual impurity and lying (verse 4).
2. The Gospel message (and our teaching about the Kingdom of God) should include the 3 elements the angel gave: fear God, give glory to Him because He will judge the earth, and worship Him because He is the Creator (verses 6-7).
3. Perseverance of the saints is not just God’s choice of who will be saved. It is not just security but assurance of salvation. It is those who keep God’s commandments and their faith in Jesus (verse 12).

Chapters 15–16, The Bowl Judgments

Revelation Chapter 15

15:1—John saw 7 angels who have 7 plagues, and we are told that in them the wrath of God would be finished. In other words, this will satisfy the justice of God. It is the reason for judgment. God's character requires judgment for sin, and the judgment must match the sin. The reason the judgment on the earth has been so severe is because the sin has been so severe.

15:2—John saw a sea of glass with what John describes as fire, apparently some kind of light coming up out of the glass. Then he saw those who had been victorious, described as those who have not worshipped the beast nor took the number 666. They were standing on the sea of glass.

15:3-4—They sang a song of Moses (probably referring to Exodus 15:1-18). Eight things about God are mentioned:

1. God's righteous acts
2. God is Almighty
3. God is righteous
4. God is true
5. God is the King of the nations (His sovereignty)
6. God is exclusive (no other gods—He alone is holy)
7. God is holy
8. He is a God of revelation

15:5—Then John saw the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven.

15:6—Then 7 angels come out, clothed bright and clean, with golden sashes (the word means a rope or a belt).

15:7—One of the 4 living creatures gave the angels the 7 golden bowls full of the wrath of God, in a sort of ceremony.

15:8—The temple is filled with the smoke from the glory of God and from His power. Then the temple was closed (apparently it was usually open) until the plagues of the 7 angels were completed.

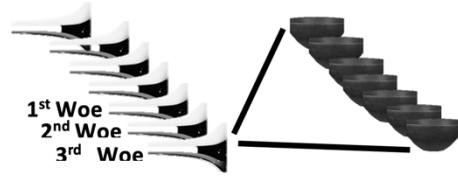
Comments and Applications from Chapter 15

1. Do not obey evil commands of an evil government. Peter and Paul tell us to obey our government (Romans 13:1; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13), but the martyred saints of the tribulation are rewarded for not obeying their government. While in the church age, we should follow our national governments, realizing there is also a satanic force inspiring a global anti-Christ government we should not follow (Acts 5:29).
2. Part of our prayer life should be to praise God for His attributes and His works.
3. Do not teach or proclaim a God without judgment. God is not tolerant of sin. Sin must be judged. The reason Christ died on the cross was to satisfy the justice of God. But that does not mean God overlooks sin today. Sin is never overlooked. It is always judged.

Revelation Chapter 16

The Bowl Judgments

16:1—A loud voice from the temple in heaven told the seven angels to *go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God.*



The Seventh Trumpet, the Announcement of the Seven Bowls

16:2, **First Bowl—Malignant Sores**—Loathsome and malignant sores came upon all the people *who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image.*

16:3, **Second Bowl—The Sea Is Turned to Blood**—All the oceans will be turned to blood. It will kill all the sea life.

16:4-7, Third Bowl—The Fresh Water Is Turned to Blood

16:4—Next, the drinking water is gone.

16:5-6—An angel declares that God is righteous and Holy for pouring out these judgments and the people of the earth *deserve it* because they poured out the blood of saints and prophets.

16:7—From the altar a voice says, “*Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments.*”

16:8-9, Fourth Bowl—Scorching Fire

16:8—The fourth angel pours out his bowl on the sun and it scorched men with fire and fierce heat.

16:9—But the men of the earth do not repent. Instead, *they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues.* The people of the earth are now believers in God, who hate God and do not repent. They believe God is responsible for what is happening, and then they blaspheme Him for doing it. There are two different perspectives of the work of God—those in heaven who say it is righteous and those on earth who blaspheme because of it.

16:10-11, Fifth Bowl—Darkness and Pain

Darkness covered the earth, and people *gnawed their tongues because of pain.* Once again, people did not repent but blasphemed God because of their pains and sores.

16:12-16, Sixth Bowl—Invasion from the Armies of the East

16:12—The Euphrates River dries up, probably because of the scorching hot sun of the fourth bowl. Remember, Babylon is on the Euphrates.

16:13-15—Three demons, like frogs, come one from Satan, one from the antichrist, and one from the false prophet, all performing signs. These demons go out to the whole world to gather the armies together to go to war against God.

16:16—The armies gather in the Jezreel Valley, which in Hebrew is *Armageddon* or *Har-Magedon*. Megiddo is in the middle of the valley along the Carmel Ridge on the south side. “Har” means hill. It is the Megiddo Tel. It is not the place of the battle, but the place where the army gathers. Satan, using the three demons pictured as frogs, has gathered them there to fight against Christ at the Second Coming in Jerusalem. Through Zechariah God told Israel,

Zechariah 14:2, “For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city.”

16:17-21, Seventh Bowl—The Greatest Earthquake and Widespread Destruction

16:17&18—The seventh bowl is poured out upon the air. A loud voice came out of the Temple from the throne, saying, “*It is done.*”

16:19-21—A great earthquake affects the whole earth and (it is not clear which) either Jerusalem or Babylon is split into three parts. There was lightening, thunder, and a great earthquake. Islands disappear. Huge 100-pound hailstones come down from heaven. *Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was extremely severe.*

Comments and Applications from Chapter 16

1. Always define truth and justice the way God does, not the way people do.

Truth is the way things actually are. And God always says things, reveals things, and explains things, the way they actually are.

Justice is dealing with everyone from the same standard. God’s justice is dealing with everyone from His own righteous standard, derived from His own holiness. The New Testament word for “justice” is either from the word for “judgment” or (more frequently) from the word for “righteousness.”

2. Do not think pain or times of suffering will bring people to repentance. The natural man responds to pain with anger. Only the heart convicted by the Holy Spirit of God responds to pain with repentance (John 16:14).

3. Understand the world does not believe in the existence of sin, or moral evil, because that assumes an absolute standard. The world believes some people are sick, malevolent, or sociopaths. But these are things that can be treated with therapy and progressive education. So they will always conclude that sin should not be judged.

Chapters 17–18, Religious and Commercial Babylon Destroyed Revelation Chapter 17

17:1-2—One of the angels who had the seven bowls came to John and said he wanted to show John a great harlot who sits on many waters. The harlot is the false global religious system. The waters represent the people and the nations (verse 15). The kings of the earth commit acts of religious immorality with her.

17:3-4—The woman, who is a harlot (false religion), sits on the beast (verses 9-12). The harlot is beautifully dressed in scarlet, purple, and gold stones. In her hand she has a cup full of abominations and unclean things.

17:5—On her forehead is the name, *Babylon the Great, mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth.*

17:6—She is drunk with the blood of the saints (martyrs). John mentions that he *wondered greatly* about her.

17:7—The angel says he will explain *the mystery* to John.

17:8-10—The beast that already *was* are the five empires already gone into history. The beast *is not*, because during the church age this timetable is not running. But it is about to come up again (revival of the Roman Empire under the antichrist). The nations are the five major empires of the world, as civilization moved west: (1) Egypt, (2) Assyria, (3) Babylon, (4) Medo-Persia, and (5) Greece. [See also Daniel 2 and 7.] The 7 heads are the 7 mountains on which the woman sits. Some suggest these are the 7 hills of Rome. More likely these are 7 previous empires. Of these 7, 5 have fallen (they are the beast that was, in verse 8). One is, that is, at the time of John, which would be the Roman Empire. The other has not yet come (the antichrist's empire). The beast represents all these Gentile nations that God is working through. The one that "is not" (yet) in verse 8 is the one that "is" in verse 10 (the Roman Empire). The antichrist's empire grows out of the revival of the Roman Empire from the time of John. The 7 heads are seven mountains. These seven mountains are not a description of Babylon or Rome. They are the empires of history.

17:11—The 8th is also the 7th, that is, the antichrist himself is considered an empire.

17:12—The ten horns are ten kings (of the antichrist's empire) who have not received a kingdom but have received authority for one hour. It is the same as the ten toes of Daniel's statue (Daniel 2). There is a coalition of ten nations out of which comes the antichrist. He takes control over 3 of them before taking control of 10 of them. These 10 nations are the revived Roman Empire, which are today's Europeans. He then puts his own leaders (kings) over these nations, but it is very short—only one hour before the end.

17:13—The purpose of this antichrist empire is to give power and authority to the antichrist.

17:14—This empire will then wage war against the Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ. But *the Lamb will overcome them because He is Lord of Lords and King of Kings*.

17:15—The waters, on which the harlot sits, are the peoples, nations, and tongues of the earth.

17:16—The nations of the antichrist will hate the religious system and destroy it so that only the political empire is left. Why? The answer is in verse 17.

17:17—Because *God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God should be fulfilled*. So, Satan is doing God's will and His purpose.

Comments and Applications from Chapter 17

1. Religion and religious systems will always look like the harlot of Babylon—clean and elegant on the outside (dressed with scarlet and precious stones) but full of immorality on the inside.
2. We need to be a witness to everyone but realize that some people are predestined to not be saved.
3. The world will move into a one, global, religion. Whether gradually or quickly, we do not know, but it will be a religion which everyone, except true believers in the Word of God and the Son of God, will agree to follow. The recent call to do that is around the doctrine of tolerance. It is not to get the religions to conform to one standard but to get them to tolerate each other. For example, the pope has declared the Muslims to be "our brothers." Some sort of pantheistic practice is being carried out in many churches throughout America (such as karate, yoga, meditation, etc.). We are moving toward a one-world religion—the only people standing in the way are evangelical Christians, but a Rapture would solve that problem.
4. I suggest God's purpose in history is not to set up a war between good vs. evil or God vs. Satan, or angels vs. demons, but God revealing His glory by using Satan, demons, and evil people to bring about His purpose. Whether you are good or evil will not affect the glory of God—He will get the glory either way. You only hurt yourself, not God's purpose. Jesus said it was inevitable that evil come, but woe to him through whom it comes (Matthew 18:7). So do not be impressed that God uses you. God uses good and evil people.

Revelation Chapter 18

The Fall of Babylon, the Global Economic System

18:1-2—*After these things, ...another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority.* He cried out, “*Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!*” Babylon, with its global economic system, has become a dwelling place of demons.

18:3—The *nations* have participated in her immorality, the *kings* have committed acts of immorality (spiritual, i.e., idolatry), and the *merchants* have become rich with the wealth of her immorality.

Babylon was a ruins, but now,

...with renewed internal and foreign tourism and funding from the US embassy and other international donors, Babylon is coming back to life... grandiose Hussein-era palaces and guest-houses are filled with international artists invited for the Babylon festival, and thousands of Iraqis flock here every month for parties, weddings and musical boat rides along the Euphrates river. [theartnewspaper.com, “Babylon is coming back to life, with its famed Ishtar Gate to be restored by this summer,” March, 2022]

Now, with its vast oil production, Iraq has the possibility of being one of the richest countries in the world and Babylon could be the city mentioned in Revelation. Of course, the Babylon of chapter 18 is more than a city. It represents the whole materialistic world system. It seems to be communist-type of government-controlled capitalism, similar to what we see today in China. At any rate, the picture we get in Revelation 18 is that as materialism becomes global, biblically-defined morality decreases.

18:4-8—John *heard another voice from heaven, saying, “Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues.”* This is not about coming out of the city of Babylon but out of Satan’s global economic system. There is a command similar to this is every dispensation. The people of God are not to participate in the world’s systems (2 Corinthians 6:14-17; 1 John 2:15-17). It should also be noted that some have said this voice declares a post-tribulation Rapture. But this is a command for believers to do, the Rapture is something God does.

18:9-17—These verses describe the opulent wealth of the merchants in the antichrist’s global economic system. At least 25 specific items of wealth are traded. Examples include:

- *...the sound of harpists and musicians and flute-players and trumpeters will not be heard in you any longer—no more music, usually associated with happiness*
- *and no craftsman of any craft will be found in you any longer—no one working or being creative*
- *and the sound of a mill will not be heard in you any longer—no one preparing food*
- *and the light of a lamp will not shine in you any longer— technology is destroyed*
- *and the voice of the bridegroom and bride will not be heard in you any longer— Marriage is eliminated.*

Also notice (in verse 13) they are trading *slaves and human lives*. *Slaves* is the word for “bodies” and *human lives* are literally “human souls.” It appears they are selling slaves, possibly a reference to human trafficking of sex slaves.

18:18-24—These verses elaborate on the weeping and mourning of the merchants who have suddenly lost all their source of income. The reason is repeated in verse 24, *And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on the earth.*

Comments and Applications from Chapter 18

1. We are headed for a global economic system used by the antichrist's world system during the tribulation. That market system will favor sexual immorality and living in luxury, especially for the leadership. First is that it is also connected with the world religion. Then the political system gets rid of the religious system so there is only one religion, one government, and one morality.
2. To come out of the world means to avoid sexual immorality and living in luxury.
3. The problem with luxurious living is that it makes people insensitive to their spiritual condition and the suffering of the world.

C. Chapter 19 the Second Coming of Christ

Revelation Chapter 19

19:1-10, The Ceremony in Heaven before the Second Coming

19:1, *After these things*—The beginning of a new vision.

The bowl judgments are finished, the fall of Babylon's religious, economic, and political system, as well as the destruction of the city of Babylon, have all happened. The new vision will see the Second Coming from above, looking from the top down. From heaven toward earth (whereas the account in Matthew 24 views it from the earth looking up).

19:1-6—There is a great sound of a multitude in heaven saying, *Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God*. And the reason for the Hallelujah chorus is not because of salvation or forgiveness but, *Because His judgments are true and righteous, for He has judged the great harlot ... He has avenged the blood of His bond-servants*. This is the last of 14 sudden expressions of praise to God in Revelation. Hymns and exclamations of praise are mentioned in 4:8, 11; 5:9-10, 12-13; 7:10, 12; 11:16-18; 15:3-4; 16:5-7; 19:1-4, 6-8.

19:7-8—The marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready. Who is the bride? She is not specifically identified here but Ephesians 5:23 and 32 refer to Christ as the bridegroom of the church (the bride). This metaphor is also used of Israel (Hosea 1-3). But Israel is rewarded after the Second Coming. This also does not include the martyred saints of the tribulation. Even though they are rewarded (Revelation 7:9-17) they are resurrected to reign in the Millennial Kingdom after the Second Coming (Revelation 20:4). Most likely these are believers from the church age who have gone through the bema seat judgment (1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10), are rewarded, and are here with Christ, as His *bride*.

19:9—The angel who commanded John to write (in 14:13) now commanded him again to write *Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb*, referring to the bride. The blessings for the church age are always in heaven, not on earth. They are blessed because their righteous acts have followed them to heaven and show up as these clean white clothes.

19:10—John fell down to worship the angel who gave him the revelation, but the angel told John *do not do that*. Angels are fellow servants with believers. He told John to only worship God. This tells us that when the angel of the Lord appears in the Old Testament and receives the worship, it is a theophany of Jesus pre-incarnate, not a regular angel. The angel's statement, *The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy* means that the moral/theological foundation of Jesus' message is the same as the message of all God's prophecy.

19:11-21—The Procession of the Second Coming

(Matthew 24:26-31 describes the same event, viewed from earth.)

19:11—Then John saw heaven opened (the sky that had been darkened), and a white horse, and He who sat upon it is described with two words, faithful and true, and His activity is *in righteousness He judges and wages war*.

19:12-13—John is told that Jesus has two names. One, no one knows but Himself. The other one (although the second one could be an explanation of the first one) is *The Word of God*, which is the name John gave Him in his gospel and first epistle (John 1:1,14; 1 John 1:1).

19:14—Armies are with Him, those from heaven clothed in fine linen (*for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints*—verse 8), and they are following Him on white horses. These are most likely rewarded the church age believers and some angels.

19:15, *From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations.* This probably means he just speaks, and the nations are destroyed.

19:16—On His robe and on His thigh are written another name, or title, *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.*

19:17-18—The slaughter of human life is so great that an angel calls out to the birds to come eat the flesh of those who have been killed.

19:19—John saw the beast (the antichrist), the kings of the earth, and the armies, assembled to make war with Jesus and His army (us). They are in the Jordan Valley from the Sea of Galilee to Gulf of Aqaba and in Jerusalem. But there is no war. They are destroyed by the sword from Christ's mouth.

19:20—The beast (antichrist) is seized, along with the false prophet, and the two of them are given a resurrected eternal body and cast directly into the lake of fire with no other judgment—no good works.

19:21—And the rest of the unbelievers were killed by the sword from Jesus' mouth. And the birds come and eat their flesh.

Comments and Applications from Chapter 19

1. Do not teach or proclaim a Jesus who does not judge. Compassion and mercy are works of God, but they are not attributes of God because compassion and mercy also come to an end. Judgment and vengeance are also works of God. Attributes of God are character descriptions of God which are always true. For example, holiness, truth, and love are attributes of God because God is always holy, truthful, and loving.
2. Do not teach or proclaim a Jesus who gives comfort in this world without also proclaiming that He is coming to judge this world. Jesus saves—but Jesus also kills.

D. Chapter 20:1-10, the Millennial Kingdom

Revelation Chapter 20

20:1-3—John continues to make observations. He saw an angel coming down from heaven with a key to the abyss and a great chain. He takes hold of Satan. *And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.* Revelation 12:9 is the first time we are told in the Bible that the serpent of the Garden of Eden is Satan. This is the second time. The angel binds Satan with a chain, he opens the abyss with a key, and throws Satan into it and seals it over him, so he cannot deceive the nations until the thousand years are completed. Then he will be released for a short time (verse 7).

During the Millennial Kingdom, all those going into the Kingdom in physical bodies are believers. All the unbelievers have been put to death. They are not in the lake of fire. They are in hades, waiting for judgment (Luke 16:19-31; Revelation 21:13). Only the antichrist and the false prophet are in the lake of fire, at this time.

Besides God, there are three different kinds of beings on earth during the Millennial Kingdom: (1) angels; (2) the resurrected bride of Christ (believers from church age) joined by the resurrected and rewarded martyred saints from the tribulation (verse 4), and the resurrected and rewarded Old Testament saints (Daniel 12:1-3); and (3) those believers physically alive, having survived the tribulation (including the 144,000). Those physically alive will continue to have children during those 1000 years. Those children will need to have faith in Christ to be saved. At the end of the 1000 years, the earth is full of people, many of whom are not believers. Satan is released at the end of the 1000 years and persuades these unbelievers to rebel against God (v. 7).

Could the 1000 years be metaphorical rather than literal? These references to 1000 years does not sound like a metaphor. *Thousand years* is used 6 times here, and each time it sounds like a description. When a number appears with an article, it is usually literal. Here, *thousand years* has an article with it 3 of the 6 times. The question is what did John intend to communicate using this phrase.

20:4—John saw thrones. We do not know who sits on those thrones, but judgment is given to them. John then saw the souls of those who had been beheaded during the tribulation because:

- (1) Their testimony of Jesus
- (2) Their testimony about the Word of God
- (3) They had not worshipped the beast (antichrist) or his image, and
- (4) They had not taken the mark of the beast

These are resurrected and judged and join the bride who had returned with Christ. So they all reign with Christ on the earth.

20:5-6—The “rest of the dead” did not come to life until the 1000 years were completed. The verse should end here. The phrase, *This is the first resurrection* belongs with verse 6. The one who is part of the first resurrection (believers) is blessed because over these the second death (lake of fire) has no power.

20:7-8—When the 1000 years are finished, Satan will be released. Satan will deceive the nations from one end of the earth to the other. Gog and Magog are general terms for leaders in battle (does not refer to battle in Ezekiel 38–39). Satan uses Gog and Magog to deceive them. There are so many, they are like the sand of the sea. Even after 1000 years with the perfect government of Jesus Christ and without Satan, there are still many unbelievers. We do not need Satan to sin. Our own sin nature will get us to sin.

20:9—This is the only description of the final world war. These armies come and surround the “beloved city,” which would be the Millennial Jerusalem. Fire comes down from heaven and devours them. Like the end of the tribulation, the unbelievers are put to death.

20:10—The devil is now thrown into the lake of fire, where the false prophet and antichrist have been for the last 1000 years. They are tormented day and night forever and ever.

E. Chapter 20:11-15, Great White Throne Judgment

20:11—Then John saw a Great White Throne, and Jesus, who sat on it. The people want to flee away from Him and His judgment. There is a resurrection of all the unbelieving dead. As opposed to the first resurrection of believers in verses 5-6, this second resurrection is for unbelievers.

20:12—The great and the small (during their lives on earth) are standing before the Throne. The books are opened which show the deeds of the one who is judged. Everything they did has been recorded, and that recording is being read back to them as the reason they are being judged. Then another book, which is the Book of Life, is opened. If their name is not found written in the Book of Life, then they go through this judgment. Apparently, there are varying degrees of punishment because their judgment is based on their deeds (John 19:11). There are greater and lesser judgment based on greater and lesser sin (Mark 12:40; Luke 12:46).

20:13-15—The sea gave up the dead which is in it. This is significant because when a person is buried at sea their remains are eaten by various creatures and spread all over the oceans. For example, this would be comparable to cremation ashes scattered in the wind or at sea. That does not keep them from a bodily resurrection to the Great White Throne. Death and hades (where the souls of unbelievers have gone) are resurrected, judged for their deeds, and cast into the lake of fire.

Then death and hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone’s name was not found written in the Book of Life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Comments and Applications from Revelation 20

1. Everyone has a bodily resurrection—both believers and unbelievers, good and bad, great and small.
2. Believers who die today are in the presence of God in heaven (2 Corinthians 5:8), in a bodily form, but that is different than a bodily resurrection. Bodily resurrection comes after death and is at different times for different groups.
3. All judgment is based on works, for both believers and unbelievers.
4. Eternity in the presence of God or in the lake of fire is determined by whether one’s name is in the Book of Life.

F. Chapters 21-22, the New Heaven, New Earth and New Jerusalem

Revelation Chapter 21

The New Heaven and the New Earth

21:1—Then John saw, continued to observe, *a new heaven and a new earth*. The first heaven and the first earth *passed away*. So, these new ones are not in addition to the old one, they are not a re-building or re-making of the old ones, they are a replacement. Second Peter 3:10-13 says the old earth is completely burned up. The only geographic description we have of the new earth is that it no longer has any sea (either meaning no large body of water or no salt water). Except maybe it has mountains (v. 10).

21:2—The New Jerusalem came down out of heaven, *made ready as a bride adorned for her husband*, beautiful and ready for a new life together.

21:3—Then a loud voice from the throne said that God will live with men in the New Jerusalem on the new earth.

21:4—This is the eternal state of believers:

- (1) There will *no longer be any death*
- (2) There will no longer be any sorrow
- (3) There will *no longer be any crying or mourning*
- (4) There will no longer be any *pain*

All because the first things have passed away.

21:5, —*He who sits on the throne said, “I am making all things new.”* Then He told John to *“Write, for these words are faithful and true.”*

21:6—The voice from the throne said, *“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.”* History is linear, it has a beginning and an end. It is not cyclical like pantheism and reincarnation. The first story that God made is burned up and gone, but now in chapters 21–22, He begins a new story. But He does not tell us much about it, just enough to get our interest.

21:7— *“He who overcomes (conquers) shall inherit these things”*—Those who chose God (see v. 27 and 3:5). *“I will be his God and he will be My son.”*

21:8—The characteristics of those who will not be in the New Jerusalem: *cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, immoral persons, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.*

21:9—Then *one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls* told John, *“Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb,”* that is, the New Jerusalem city.

21:10—John is then taken to a high mountain (possibly on the New Earth), and he sees *the holy city, coming down out of heaven from God.*

21:11—It has *the glory of God*, with a brilliance like *crystal-clear jasper*. Jasper comes in various opaque colors, but this was like a clear gemstone.

21:12-13—It had a great and high wall, with 12 gates. At the 12 gates are 12 angels. The gates have the names of the tribes of the sons of Israel on them. There are 3 gates on each side.

21:14—The wall of the city had 12 foundation stones with the names of the 12 apostles of the Lamb.

The Dimensions of the New Jerusalem

[Pictures from <https://www.bibleinfo.com/en/questions/new-jerusalem>]

21:15-16, *The city is laid out in as a square*, but it is given with three dimensions so it is a cube or a pyramid, possibly like a mountain, with all three dimensions being approximately 1,380 miles (2,220 km). That is further than where I work in Grand Rapids Michigan to the Mexican border on the southern tip of Texas. It is from London, England, all the way across Europe to the Black Sea. But it is also that high. Commercial airliners fly at or below 40,000 feet. There are 5,280 feet in a mile. So $1,380 \times 5,280 = 7,286,400$ feet, divided by 40,000 = 182.16. That mean the height of the New Jerusalem is 182 times higher than you will ever fly in a commercial airplane. The next time you fly with the airlines on a long flight where they are at their highest allowed altitude, look down and imagine that the New Jerusalem is 182 times higher than that. Satellites orbit the earth between 160 and 2,000 km (between 100 miles and 1243 miles). So the top of the New Jerusalem is higher than the highest satellite circling the earth. It is absurd to think this city could fit on this earth. It would take a planet the size of Saturn to accommodate such a city.



21:17—The wall is 72 yards high. That is 216 feet. A 25-story building is 65 meters or 213 feet high. So the wall around the new Jerusalem is about the height of a 25 story building. [The picture is of a 24 story apartment building being constructed in St. Petersburg Fla. <https://stpeterising.com/home/2021/3/8/24-story-high-rise-apartment-tower-breaks-ground-in-downtown-st-pete>]



21:18-20—The foundation stones of the city are adorned with every kind of precious stone.

21:21—Each gate was a single pearl. And the street of the city is pure gold, like transparent glass.

21:22—There is no temple in the city, for the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb, are its temple.

21:23—The city has no need for the sun or the moon for light because the glory of God will illumine it.

21:24—The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. Who are they? We do not know, but they are believers because their *names are written in the Lamb's book of life* (21:27).

21:25—There will be no night there. Its gates will never be closed.

21:26—The nations will bring their glory and honor into the New Jerusalem.

21:27—Nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and lying shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life (see 3:5).

Comments and Applications from Revelation 21

1. This earth should be seen as temporary. It will pass away. We should take care of it as we take care of our car because it gets us from one place to another, but it has no ultimate value.
2. Will there be faith in heaven? Answer: Of course, there will. Faith is always trusting what we understand to be true. When you are in heaven, will you believe you are there? Of course, you will. Faith in heaven is greater because our understanding will be better. If you do not think so, then you do not understand biblical faith.
3. Suffering, pain, and sorrow are not something God has planned for His saints in the eternal future. So, we have to endure it here and now, but we do not have to like it.
4. Be an overcomer (verse 7), by not being involved in the things that send people to the lake of fire (verse 8).
5. Those in the presence of a holy God must be holy, not just pretty good or better than most.

Revelation Chapter 22

The New Jerusalem

22:1—There is a river coming from the throne of God. John does not tell us the source of the river. This is the only thing we are told about water except on the new earth, there is no sea. [This reference to a river should not be confused with similar millennial situations such as those in Ezekiel 47:1, 12 and Zechariah 14:8, which refer to rivers flowing from the temple and from Jerusalem and will be part of the millennial scene.] It is crystal clear water. It is in the middle of the street, with the Tree of Life on either side of the river, bearing 12 kinds of fruit, yielding fruit every month. So, we know there is time in the eternal state and months, implying there is a specific way to measure time.

22:2, in the middle of its street. This seems to be the main street of the city.

On either side of the river was the tree of life. This is the heavenly counterpart to the tree of life in Eden (Genesis 3:22-24), which represented living forever. Adam and Eve, after the Fall, were not allowed to eat of this tree. In their case, they would then forever live in a state of sin.

and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations—Rather than “healing,” the word is better translated “therapeutic” or “health giving.” They are like super vitamins, not to treat illnesses but to promote health. It sounds like the nations of believers, living outside the city, will be eating both the leaves and the fruit of this tree inside the city. The word for nations is *ethnos*. It is usually used for Gentiles, or outsiders (Matthew 28:19). However, it can also be simply translated as “people.” The new earth may be organized into people groups, which John is simply calling “nations.”

22:3—There is no longer any curse from Genesis 3. The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it. There His bondservants shall serve Him. As Paul wrote,
Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him (1 Corinthians 2:9).

22:4, *They will see His face.* In some way, God will be visible to us. We know this was forbidden in the past. Remember, even with Moses, God said,

Exodus 3:20-23, *You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!...while My glory is passing by, that I will...cover you with My hand until I have passed by. Then I will take My hand away and you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen.*

In his gospel, John wrote

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

Paul said of God, *He dwells in unapproachable light (1 Timothy 6:16).*

So this statement in verse 4 may mean we will see the face of Jesus, we will see God's throne (face is often a metaphor for the whole person—2 John 12), or it may mean that redeemed people in their resurrected bodies will actually see God the Father.

22:5, *There will no longer be any night.. the Lord God will illumine them.* It seems that the New Earth is not rotating around a sun but is illuminated by the New Jerusalem. Possibly the outer darkness Jesus referred to (Matthew 8:12; 22:13; 25:30) is an area on the far side of the New Earth, which is always in darkness, away from the light of the city.

Summary of points of the New Jerusalem from chapters 21–22:

1. God will be there, personally.
2. There will be no sorrow or suffering.
3. There will be brilliant light.
4. There will be a wall around the city about as high as a 25-story building.
5. There will be 12 gates, which have the names of the 12 tribes of Israel.
6. There will be 12 foundation stones, with the names of the 12 apostles.
7. The shape of the city is a cube or pyramid shaped mountain with a height higher than the high satellites orbit this earth.
8. The glory of God is there.
9. There are nations of believers outside of the city that depend on the city for their life, and they bring their treasures into it.
10. Only those written in the Lamb's Book of Life will come into the city.
11. There is a special river that comes from the throne of God.
12. There is a Tree of Life.

Conclusion to the Book

22:6—Then the angel told John, *These words are faithful and true*. God sent His prophets and His angel to show His bondservants the things which must shortly take place. Four times He says in the next few verses that these things will quickly or shortly take place (verses 6, 7, 10, 12). “Near” means that it is the next thing to happen. John lives in the church age, and this revelation is of the next thing that will happen. There will be no other age between the church and this revelation. It is still the angel talking to John. In 19:9, he had said, *“These are true words of God.”* He has told us the truth about the future. Every word in the book of Revelation is a true word from God. That is why he says in verses 18-19 to not add to them or take away from them.

22:7—This is the sixth of seven Beatitudes in Revelation. Jesus said, *Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book*. The word for “prophecy” is not “apocalypse,” the unveiling of something (as in Revelation 1:1). This is the word for new prophetic information.

22:8—John is the one who saw and heard these things. He fell down to worship to the angel (again), but the angel (again) told him not to do that. Only worship God.

22:10—The angel told John to not seal up the words of the prophecy of the book. Do not keep it from people.

22:11—This is a sad verse in the Bible because there is no longer an appeal for repentance. There is no appeal for anyone to change any more, when these things are over.

22:12—Jesus is coming quickly, and His reward is with Him.

22:13—Jesus is *the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end*.

22:14—This is the last of 7 Beatitudes in Revelation (1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14).
Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city.

22:15, *Outside of the city* (in the lake of fire or the *outer darkness* are...
...*the dogs* [The Accordance Greek Translation for *dogs* says, “dog; (metaph) male prostitute.”] *and the sorcerers and the immoral persons* [the word for sexual immorality] *and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.*

22:16—Jesus gives His final testimony—He has sent His angel to testify of these things for the seven churches of Asia Minor. He also identifies Himself as the Messiah of Israel, and *the bright morning star*. This exact phrase is not used elsewhere in the Bible. Peter uses a similar phrase referring to the Second Coming (2 Peter 1:19). Jesus uses the phrase, without the word *bright*, referring to rewards (Revelation 2:28). Here it seems to mean that Jesus is a new beginning.

22:17—The universal appeal, to *take the water of life without costs* comes from *the Spirit and the bride* and it is addressed to this age of grace. The bride is the church. Although the third person of the trinity is not called “the Holy Spirit” in Revelation, the *Spirit* is probably a reference to the Holy Spirit, who is also the *Spirit* in Revelation 14:13; 21:17; and the seven occurrences of the phrase *what the Spirit says to the churches*, referring to the seven churches of Asia Minor.

22:18-19—No one should add to or take away from *the words of the prophecy of this book*. *This book* is the book of Revelation. All prophecy from God is given in *words* and any new words

supposedly from God would add the words of this book of Revelation. The word for “prophecy” is προφητεία (*propheteia, prof-ay-ti'-ah*) refers to new verbal inspired revelation from God. This phrase closed the canon of Scripture until the Second Coming (verse 20). Adding to this book would be adding prophetic words from God, such as mystical messages from God, the Book of Mormon, or the Koran. To take away would be to deny that it is true. [The similar phrase used in Deuteronomy 4:2; and 12:32 refers to not adding to the Mosaic Law. The Deuteronomy statement is not about adding revelation to the Bible.] The Old Testament ends looking for more revelation from God (Malachi 4:5-6). The New Testament ends saying there will be no more verbal revelation from God, until the Second Coming of Christ.

22:19—What about the warning, *God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city*? The idea seems to be that for those who add to or take away from the written Word of God, that God will take away what they could have had from the *tree of life and from the holy city*. This is most likely a reference to unbelievers who have forfeited the possibility of being in the city, something they could have had if they had believed in Jesus (verse 14).

22:20-21—Jesus says, “*Yes, I am coming quickly*” [again, it is the same word for “suddenly”]. Then John says, “*Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.*”

Comments and Applications from Chapter 22

1. We are living in the last age. The end-times are next. We do not know how far away they are, but we know there is no other age (like Israel or the church) until these events take place.
2. The appeal of the Gospel and the call to repentance is coming to an end.
3. Never add to or take away from the Word of God as recorded in the Old and New Testaments. Do not know more about the revelation of God than the Bible knows.