

Memory Verse

Revelation 1:3

Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.

GRACELIFE  CHURCH

History and Prophecy Pt 7

A Summary of the Book of Revelation



The Revelation, not Revelations, is a **hard book** to interpret.

One genre or style of writing in it is Jewish apocalyptic literature. This is the **most difficult** to interpret, which is why there are **SO MANY** *different views on Revelation and end times.*

A. Interpreting the Book of Revelation



Revelation includes 3 genres:

It is **prophetic**: 1:3, 19:10, 22:18-19.

It is a **letter** to 7 churches: 1:4-7, 22:21.

It is **Jewish Apocalyptic literature**: 1:1. For Revelation, it refers to things in the first century, but looks forward the end.

Jewish apocalyptic literature is in both the Old and New Testament. *Daniel (2), 7-12, Isaiah 24-27, Ezekiel 38-39, Joel 2:28-3:21, Zechariah 1-6 and 9-14, part of Matthew 24-25* all include **apocalyptic literature**.

There are other Jewish books outside of the Bible that are apocalyptic, but **none** are *Scripture*.

God's judgment, often a universal judgment is common. There is the desire of the faithful people for ***God's intervention***, because they are tired of evil. Third, is ***God's call for the faithful to persevere***. Next is ***supernatural intervention*** by God Himself, angels and more. There is also a lot of ***symbolism*** in Jewish apocalyptic literature. ***Numbers*** hold significant meaning as well,

based on the Hebrew alphabet, called **gematria**. Last, events are predicted from a **cosmic perspective** for the final solution. You find **all** of these in the *Revelation*.

*Revelation was written to 7 churches about 95AD. If we **deny** that, we take the **historical** text out of context. If we **deny** future events, we take the **apocalyptic** text out of context. There can be **multiple fulfillments** of events in Jewish interpretation.*

1. Focus on the main things. Focus on the *big picture*, and **then** get into the details. The **goal** of *interpretation* is to *learn* the writers **original meaning**.

2. Remember the symbolism. Don't be *too literal* with symbols. *Symbolism* refers to *something literal*. The interpretation *John* gives of a symbol must be the foundation for

the symbols he doesn't define. The symbols are whole pictures, like parables.

3. **Compare Scripture with Scripture.** The Old Testament interprets Revelation.

4. **Remember the pastoral concern.** One purpose of *Apocalyptic literature* was to *encourage the persecuted to persevere*. We may not fully understand it, but the core theme is: **God wins!**

5. Know the Old Testament. You cannot understand *Revelation* without a knowledge of the Old Testament. There are over 250 references to the Old Testament, particularly the prophetic books. The imagery and symbolism reflect a Jewish background connected to the Old Testament.

- 6. Application comes from the main points.**
Be careful about *trying to apply every detail.*
- 7. Beware of hype!** Beware of those who say they have unlocked everything in Revelation.

8. Interpreting numbers. Numbers are important in *Jewish Apocalyptic literature*. **4, 7, 12, and 1000** and numbers related to them are **significant**. **Examples:** There are **7** churches, and **3** cycles of **7**: seals, trumpets and bowls. There are **144,000** Jews, **12,000** from **12 tribes**: 7:4-8 and 14:1. Some numbers are **literal** and some are **symbolic**. The hard part is knowing the difference... **CONTEXT!**

9. **No one will get it all right.** As good as some teachers are, everyone has blind spots and **no one** will get it all right. **Give grace!**

B. Summary of the Book of Revelation



1:1 - 8 - Prologue - *Revelation*, or "*unveiling*" is from God to Jesus, through an angel to John. Verse 3 tells us this is a prophecy, and verse 4 says this is a letter.

1:9 - 20 - Vision of Jesus Among the Churches - John is in exile on the prison island of Patmos because of his *faithfulness to Jesus*. He is to write what he saw (1:19)

and saw Jesus, walking among the 7 *lampstands*, a **menorah**. *A vivid description* of Jesus as the High Priest is given. We learn the meaning of the symbols - the 7 stars are 7 messengers (*angels or pastors*); 7 lampstands are 7 churches (1:20).

2:1 - 3:22 - Letters to the Seven Churches -
Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira,
Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. The
order in the chapters is the same order the
letter would have been *carried in Asia
Minor*. There are cultural aspects to each
church. In each letter, ***one characteristic of
Jesus*** is highlighted; there's a
commendation, accusation, then

exhortation and warning and/or encouragement to listen! The 2 areas of focus are ***warning against compromise*** and ***encouragement amidst persecution.***

4:1 - 5:14 - Heavenly Throne Room, The Lamb and Seven Sealed Scroll - From earth, the scene changes to heaven. John is told to *come up*, which is **not** a reference to the rapture. *God the Father* is worshipped on His throne. 4 living creatures surround His throne, with the 7 Spirits of God, with 24 elders. He holds a scroll in His right hand, *written on both sides*. No one was worthy

to *open the scroll*. John weeps, and saw the Lamb - **Jesus! He was worthy, took the scroll, and heaven breaks out in *worship!***

6:1 - 17 - First 6 Seals Opened - Jesus begins to *open the seals on the scroll*, paralleling *Matthew 24*. **1st seal** - conqueror on a white horse. **2nd seal** - conflict on earth - red horse. **3rd seal** - scarcity on earth - black horse. **4th seal** - death on earth - pale/green horse. $\frac{1}{4}$ of people could die. **5th seal** - martyrs under the altar. **6th seal** - silence before wrath. *6:12-17* is apocalyptic

language for *God's wrath*, quoting *Joel 2:31*,
and *Matthew 24:29*. These things are
cosmic.

7:1 - 17 - Interlude 1: Sealing of the 144,000 Jews and Multitude out of the Great Tribulation
- While events are taking place, *other things will occur* at that time. God seals 144,000 Jews; 12,000 from 12 tribes; *the remnant*. There's a great multitude in heaven, *not on earth*. They came out of (were *killed*) during the Great Tribulation. They are with the Lord and will *no longer hunger, or thirst and will be comforted*.

8:1 - 9:21 - 7th Seal Opened and Sounding of First 6 Trumpets - The 7th seal is opened. There is silence for 30 minutes *before God's wrath begins* in the Trumpet judgments. This refers to *Zechariah 2:3* and *Zephaniah 1:7...* The *trumpet judgments* are related to the *judgments on Egypt*. Like the seals, there is a **4 + 2 + 1 structure**: the 1st 4 trumpets target the *physical earth*. The 2nd

*2 trumpets target **humanity**.*

The 5th, 6th, and 7th trumpets are also called the 3 "woes." A "woe" in *prophetic literature* is judgment. **God is judging the world!** The 5th and 6th trumpets also *involved demonic activity.*

10:1 - 11:14 - Interlude 2: A Mighty Angel, the Little Book and 2 Witnesses - A mighty angel descends from heaven with a *little scroll*, referring to *Ezekiel 2-3*. John eats the *scroll*. He is given a reed to *measure the temple*. We read about *2 witnesses*, referenced from *Zechariah 4* have power **like** Moses and Elijah. The Gentiles will tread the holy city and the 2 witnesses will

prophecy for *42 months, or 3.5 years*. The *2 witnesses are killed, come back to life* and the second woe is done.

11:15 - 19 - 7th Trumpet Sounds and Praise Given - The 7th trumpet is sounded. The *kingdoms of the world* become those *belonging to the Lord and Christ*. Praise is given.

12 - 14 - Interlude 3. 12:1 - 17 - The Woman and the Dragon - A woman, Israel, *Genesis 37* and Joseph's dream, is in labor. There is a dragon with 7 heads, 10 horns, and 7 diadems or crowns on his heads. *The woman gives birth to the child, Jesus, and runs.* War breaks out in heaven and *satan and his army is thrown to earth.* The heavens are called to rejoice, and the earth is warned. *The dragon, satan, persecutes Israel...*

13:1 - 18 - Beast from the Sea (Nations) and Beast from Earth (Israel) - John sees a *beast from the sea*, or nations, with 7 heads, 10 horns and 10 crowns, described as a leopard, bear and lion: *Daniel 7*. *One of its heads was wounded, healed and worshipped*. Authority was given to him over all the earth - **antichrist**. Another beast arises from the earth - **false prophet**. He performs miracles, and deceives people into *making an image to the beast*. He gives this image life and creates the *mark of the beast* - 666 or 616.

14:1 - 20 - The Lamb, 144,000, 3 Angels and 2 Reapings - John saw the 144,000 *standing on Mt. Zion with the Lamb*. An angel flies in heaven urging people to worship God. A second angel declares *Babylon is fallen*. The third angel warns against taking the mark of the beast. A *blessing* is pronounced on those who die from now on. There are *2 reapings*.

15:1 - 16:21 - Prelude and Seven Bowls of Wrath - While there is progression, *many other events occur*. Then John sees another angel with the *7 last plagues*, or *bowls of God's wrath*. In these, *His wrath is complete*. More worship takes place, and 7 angels prepare to pour out God's wrath in the bowl judgments, and they occur rapidly.

17:1 - 19:5 – Interlude 4: The Woman and Fall of Babylon the Great - One angel shows John a woman on a beast, having *7 heads and 10 horns*. She is *Babylon the Great*. Some *symbols are defined* in 17:9-18.

Revelation 17:9-18 - “Here is the mind which has wisdom. The **seven heads are seven mountains** on which the woman sits, 10and **they are seven kings**; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while. 11“The **beast** which was and is not, is himself also an **eighth** and is **one of the seven**, and he goes to destruction. 12“The **ten horns**

which you saw **are ten kings** who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour. 13“These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast. 14“These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him *are the* called and

chosen and faithful.” 15And he said to me, “The **waters** which you saw where the harlot sits, are **peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues**. 16“And the **ten horns** which you saw, and the **beast**, these will **hate the harlot** and will **make her desolate and naked**, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire. 17“For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by

having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God will be fulfilled. 18“The **woman** whom you saw is the **great city**, which reigns over the kings of the earth.”

***Chapter 18* is the fall of *Babylon the Great*, a lament by the unjust, and celebration by the just of its fall.**

19:6 - 21 - Return of Jesus and Defeat of His Enemies - Jesus returns on a white horse, symbolic of victory. The wedding supper of the Lamb takes place, and He takes the beast and false prophet and *throws them into the Lake of Fire* and kills His enemies.

20:1 - 15 - Thousand Year Reign, Defeat of Satan's Armies and White Throne Judgment -
Satan is bound and Christ rules for 1000 years. Afterwards, satan is released, deceives the nations, and attempts to take over again, and *fire destroys the rebellious and satan is cast into the Lake of Fire.* The White Throne Judgment takes place and *death and hades* are cast into the Lake of Fire.

21:1 - 22:5 - New Heavens, New Earth and New Jerusalem - These occur, and the new Jerusalem comes down out of heaven as a beautiful city. There is a restored Eden and the curse of sin has been removed.

22:6 - 21 - Epilogue, Offer, Blessing and Warning - Jesus will return and will bring His *reward with Him*: judgment or blessing. There is plea to come to Jesus and a warning not to add or take away what was written.