

THE BOOK OF
REVELATION
PART 2

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A decorative graphic of a stained glass window. It features a large central circle with a pointed top, set within a larger pointed arch. The design is composed of black outlines and filled with various colors: red, blue, and green. At the top of the arch is a small red triangle. The bottom of the arch is decorated with two circular medallions containing green and red patterns, and two larger pointed sections with red and blue patterns. The background is black.

**RECAP FROM
LAST WEEK**

RECAP FROM LESSON 1

1. It is clear (it reveals) and for our benefit

Revelation 1:1-3 - “The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, ² who bore to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. witness³ 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.’



RECAP FROM LESSON 1

1. It is clear (it reveals) and for our benefit
2. Remember the Genre - Symbolic vs. Literal interpretation
 - “Genre triggers reading strategy.”
 - Apocalyptic – uses symbolic and figurative language.



RECAP FROM LESSON 1

1. It is clear (it reveals) and for our benefit
2. Remember the Genre - Symbolic vs. Literal interpretation
3. Don't Overcomplicate it - adopt a Child-like reading strategy



A PICTURE BOOK NOT A PUZZLE



RECAP FROM LESSON 1

1. It is clear (it reveals) and for our benefit
2. Remember the Genre - Symbolic vs. Literal interpretation
3. Don't Overcomplicate it - adopt a Child-like reading strategy
4. Keep the Big Picture in mind



KEEP THE BIG PICTURE IN MIND

“God rules history and is bringing history to consummation in Christ.”

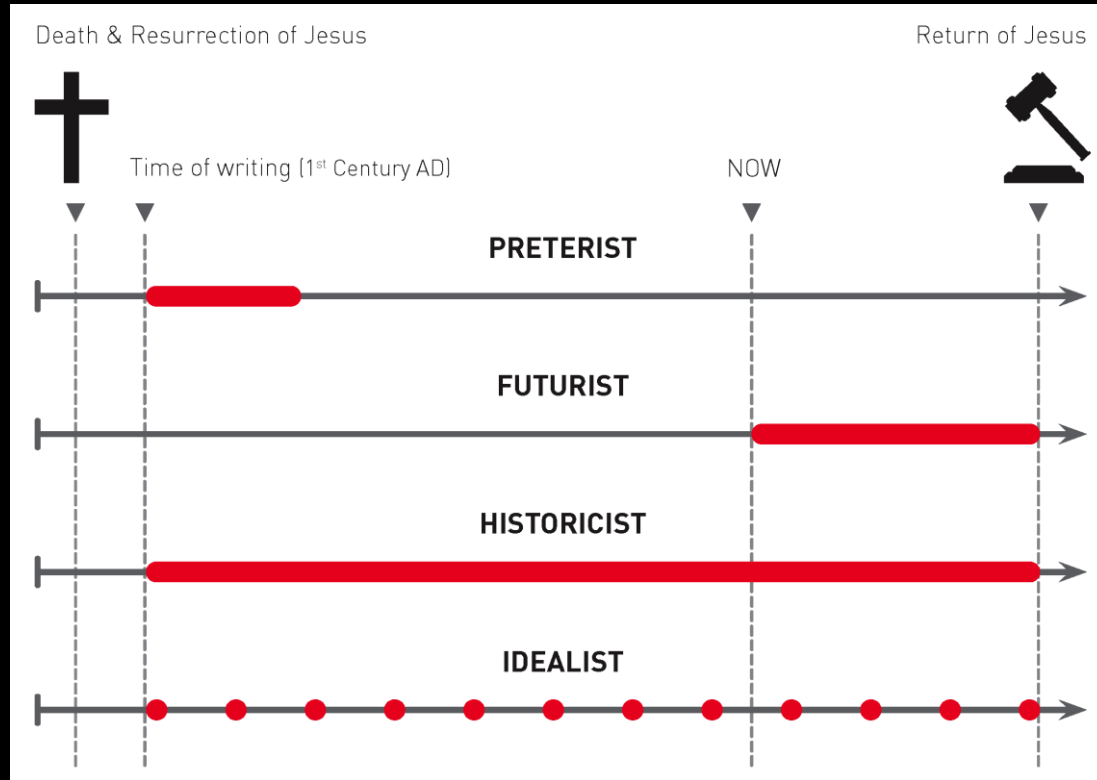
Vern Poythress, *The Returning King*

*“And he who was seated on the throne said,
“Behold, I am making all things new.”*

Revelation 21:5



When does this take place?



When does this take place?

The Beast in Revelation 13:1-8

- **Preterist** → The Roman Empire
 - Already fulfilled
- **Futurist** → The Man of Lawlessness
 - All future
- **Historicist** → The Pope
 - Strict chronological occurrence
- **Idealist** → Whenever the church is persecuted
 - The state



When does this take place?

“A combination of these views is probably closest to the truth. The imagery in Revelation is multifaceted, and is in principle capable of multiple embodiments...Hence, many passages have at least three main applications, namely to the first century, to the final crisis, and to us in whatever time we live.”

– Vern Poythress, *The Returning King*

When does this take place?

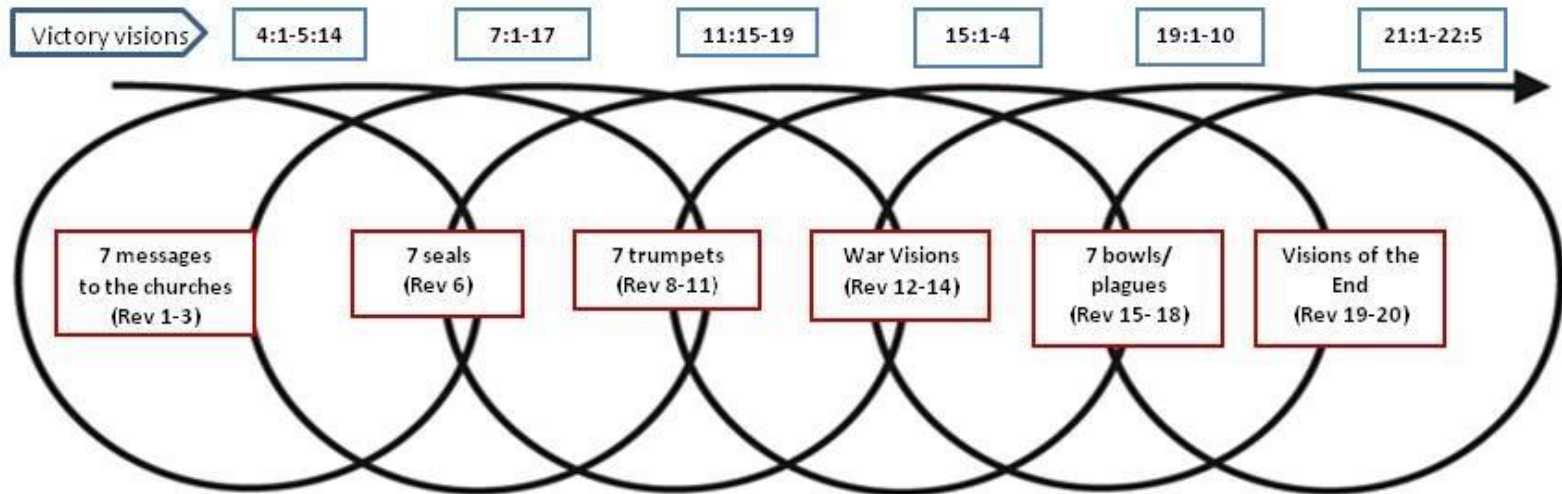
Revelation 6-18



Not Chronological

When does this take place?

General Structure of the Book of Revelation



Adapted from Koester, *Revelation and the End of All Things*, pg 42-43

Outline

1. Prologue (1:1-8)

2. Body (1:9-22:5)

1. “Things that are”: Christ’s presence with his churches (1:9-3:22)

2. “Things that shall take place after this”: Christ’s defense of his church and defeat of his enemies (4:1-22:5)

3. Epilogue (22:6-21)

Revelation 2:1-3:22

| <u>Church</u> | <u>Character of Christ</u> | <u>Strength</u> | <u>Problem</u> | <u>Duty</u> | <u>Promise</u> |
|---------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| Ephesus | authority | doctrinal zeal | lost love | repent | tree of life |
| Smyrna | giving life | spiritually rich | | suffer for Christ | Freedom from death |
| Pergamum | warrior against sin | holding fast | false teaching, immorality | repent | Spiritual significance |
| Thyatira | searching heart | love, service | false teaching, immorality (Jezebel) | repudiate Jezebel | rule over nations |
| Sardis | source of Spirit | a few faithful saints | spiritually dead | awake! | White robe (honor) |
| Philadelphia | opening door | keeping the word | little strength | continue | Secure dwelling |
| Laodicea | true witness | | worthless | admit need; receive from Christ | Fellowship |

God's Throne Room 4:1-5:14

Revelation 4-19 — The Great Tribulation

Futurist View (Dispensationalism)

- These chapters describe a future seven-year tribulation.
- The Church is often believed to be raptured before this period.
- Judgments unfold sequentially near the end of history.

Counterarguments

- Revelation repeatedly cycles through the same church-age realities from different angles.
- Tribulation characterizes the entire age between Christ's ascension and return.
- The Church remains on earth suffering witness-bearing persecution throughout history.

The Number 7 in Revelation

| Symbol of Seven | Scripture Reference | Short Interpretation |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Seven Churches | Revelation 1–3 | Represents the fullness of the Church and spiritual conditions of God's people |
| Seven Golden Lampstands | Revelation 1:12–20 | The churches as light-bearing witnesses in the world |
| Seven Stars | Revelation 1:16, 20 | The angels/messengers of the churches held under Christ's authority |
| Seven Spirits of God | Revelation 1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6 | Symbol of the fullness and perfection of the Holy Spirit |
| Seven Lamps of Fire | Revelation 4:5 | The perfect presence and illumination of God's Spirit |
| Seven Seals | Revelation 5–8 | The complete unfolding of God's decrees and judgments |
| Seven Horns of the Lamb | Revelation 5:6 | Christ's perfect power and absolute authority |
| Seven Eyes of the Lamb | Revelation 5:6 | Christ's perfect knowledge and omniscience |
| Seven Angels Before God | Revelation 8:2 | Heavenly agents carrying out divine judgment |
| Seven Trumpets | Revelation 8–11 | Complete warnings and judgments calling the world to repentance |
| Seven Thunders | Revelation 10:3–4 | Hidden mysteries or unrevealed judgments known only to God |
| Seven Thousand Killed | Revelation 11:13 | Symbolic completeness of judgment upon the rebellious |
| Seven Heads of the Dragon | Revelation 12:3 | Complete worldly or satanic power opposing God |
| Seven Crowns on the Dragon | Revelation 12:3 | False claims to universal dominion and authority |
| Seven Bowls of Wrath | Revelation 15–16 | The fullness and completion of God's wrath against evil |
| Seven Last Plagues | Revelation 15:1 | Final and complete judgments before the end |
| Seven Angels with Seven Plagues | Revelation 15:6 | Agents administering God's final justice |
| Seven Heads of the Beast | Revelation 13:1; 17:3 | Symbolic kingdoms, rulers, or empires opposed to God |
| Seven Mountains | Revelation 17:9 | Often interpreted as Rome or the fullness of worldly power |
| Seven Kings | Revelation 17:10 | A succession of rulers or kingdoms under divine sovereignty |
| Seven Beatitudes | Throughout Revelation | Complete blessings promised to God's faithful people |

The 144,000 – 7:1–8

- The number is symbolic: $12 \times 12 \times 1,000$ represents the fullness of God's people.
- Revelation frequently uses symbolic numbers.
- The tribal listing itself is unusual and symbolic.
- The 144,000 and the "great multitude" may be two perspectives on the same redeemed people.

666 – Revelation 13:18



“Let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666.” – Revelation 13:18

666 – Revelation 13:18

- **7** = completeness/perfection/divine fullness
6 falls short of 7
- **666** may represent ultimate imperfection, humanity exalted against God, counterfeit completeness, evil reaching its fullest expression. The Beast is the embodiment of a rebellious human empire, 666 symbolizes fallen humanity attempting to become divine.
- **“Nero Caesar”** is written in Hebrew letters: **נרון קסר** (Neron Qesar)
The numerical values add up to: **666**

The End of the Story

Revelation 21:1-5

- **21** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place^[a] of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people,^[b] and God himself will be with them as their God.^[c]

The End of the Story

Revelation 21:1-5

- Old order passes away
- New Jerusalem comes down out of heaven
- Loud voice: “Now the dwelling of God is with men”
- Sin and its effects are removed
- “I am making everything new”

Events Preceding the End

- Jesus returns
- Resurrection of the body
- Final judgement
- Renewal of creation

Mistaken Notion

“Very often people have come to the New Testament with the presumption that ‘going to heaven when you die’ is the implicit point of it all... They acquire that viewpoint from somewhere, but not from the New Testament.”

– N .T. Wright

Biblical Hope: Restoration of Creation

- Restoration of creational life (continuity)
- Discontinuity?

“It is precisely ordinary earthly existence that is redeemed.”

– G. C. Berkhouwer

Biblical Hope: Cosmic Restoration

- Restoration of *whole* human life
- Restoration of *whole* creation

Colossians 1:19-20

“For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in [Jesus], and through him *to reconcile to himself all things*, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.”

As Far as Sin

“If redemption does not go as far as the consequences of sin, it is a misnomer, and fails to be redemption.... The salvation of any number of individuals...is not the redemption of what fell but the gathering up of a few splinters,...[and in such a case] Satan’s mischief [would go] further than Christ’s restoration”

– J. A. Seiss



Behold! I am coming soon.

