

Revelation

AUTHOR: John

TIME WRITTEN: A.D. 95 or 96

POSITION IN THE BIBLE:

- 66th Book in the Bible
- 27th book in the New Testament
- 1st, last, and only book of prophecy in the New Testament
- 65 have preceded it. None follow it.

CHAPTERS: 22

VERSES: 404

WORDS: 11,995

KEY WORD: The Revelation of the Coming Christ

TWO KEY PASSAGES:

1. **Revelation 1:19** - "Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this."
2. **Revelation 19:11-15** - "Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.

12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.

13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.

14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.

15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

KEY CHAPTERS: Revelation 19-21

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT REVELATION

1. One of the most controversial books in the Bible.
 - a. The book of Revelation (not Revelations) is:
 1. Neglected.
 2. Misunderstood.
 3. Perverted by multitudes.
 - b. Revelation is from the Greek word "apokalupis" meaning:
 1. "An uncovering, a laying bare."
 2. "It means to uncover, to unveil."
2. The author is the apostle John.
 - a. Four times in the book John tells us he wrote the Revelation.

1. Revelation 1:1	3. Revelation 1:9
2. Revelation 1:4	4. Revelation 22:8
 - b. Known to us as the apostle "whom Jesus loved."
 - c. One of the first men to be called an apostle.
 - d. Last apostle mentioned in the New Testament.
 - e. A native of Bethsaida in Galilee and a fisherman by occupation.

- f. He was the son of Zebedee and a brother of James that was killed with a sword in Jerusalem by Herod in Acts 12:1-2 in about 44 A.D.
 - g. He spent a large part of his life in Galilee before moving to Ephesus.
 - h. Some believe his mother was named Salome, the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus (Matthew 27:56; Mark 15:40; Luke 23:49; John 19:25). If this is true, then John and Jesus were cousins.
 - i. i. He was a successful business man as evidenced by:
 - 1. He had hired servants. Mark 1:20
 - 2. He owned his own home. John 19:26-27
 - 3. He was known to the high priest. John 18:25
 - j. In earlier years he had been a follower of John the Baptist. John 1:35; mark 1:16-20
 - k. This "Son of Thunder" was a constant companion of Jesus and a part of the inner circle of Peter, James, and John.
 - l. John received special mention on a number of occasions.
 - 1. He went with Jesus into the death chamber of Jarius' daughter.
 - 2. He witnessed the glory of the transfiguration.
 - 3. He was one of the inner three in the garden of Gethsemane.
 - 4. He followed Jesus through the illegal trials and on to the crucifixion.
 - 5. From the cross, Jesus committed the care of His mother to John. A special responsibility.
 - 6. He was one of the first to hear of the resurrection.
 - 7. He was present when the Great Commission was given.
 - 8. He was present when Jesus ascended back to Heaven.
 - 9. About sixty years later, was specially blessed again when he was exiled to the island of Patmos where he recorded the things God caused to be revealed in the Revelation.
 - 10. The Bible does not tell of his death.
 - 11. Tradition records that as an aged man in Ephesus, John had to be carried to the services of the church. His weak voice would say, "Love one another, love one another."
3. The time of writing.
- a. Strong external evidence points to Revelation having been written during Domitian's reign.
 - b. Domitian reigned from A. D. 81 to 96
 - 1. He has gone down in history as **one who bathed his empire in the blood of Christians.**
 - 2. Worship of deceased emperors had been practiced for years, but Domitian was the first emperor to demand worship while he was alive.
 - c. John had been exiled to the island of Patmos.
 - 1. It is also declared that John was 90 years old at the time of his exile to Patmos.
 - 2. The island of Patmos is located in the Aegean Sea.
 - 3. The island is:
 - a. Twenty miles south of Samos.
 - b. Twenty-four miles west of Asia Minor.
 - c. Ten miles long.
 - d. Six miles wide.
 - e. Divided into two equal parts by a narrow isthmus.
 - f. It is very rocky and rugged.
 - g. This island of volcanic rock was one of several places to which the Romans banished

1. Criminals
2. Political offenders
- h. At the time of Domitian, offenders were banished to work in zinc and marble quarries, while others were exiled in loneliness on an island. For John it was the latter.
- d. Revelation was written at a time when Roman hostility toward Christianity was erupting into overt persecution.
- e. Thus, it is likely that John wrote this book in A.D. 95 or 96.
4. The recipients of Revelation.
 - a. The condition of the Christians who first received the Revelation letter was very critical.
 - b. For several decades Christianity had remained unnoticed by the Roman government.
 - c. It had been regarded as a part of the Jewish religion, which was a legalized religion of Rome.
 - d. When it became known that Christianity was not just a new patch on the old garment of Judaism, Christians found themselves in great difficulty with the government of Rome as well as with their fellow man.
 - f. Nero's having burned a major part of Rome in July A.D. 64 and then blaming the Christians for it had not helped the status of Christianity in the Roman Empire for a number of years.
 - g. Christians were suffering. It was going to get worse. God shows them the ultimate outcome.
 - a. Christians are assured that Satan and the world cannot win, and that Christ and His church cannot lose.
 - b. Victory in Jesus.
 - h. Ten reasons for antagonism directed against Christians.
 1. **Christianity was an illegal religion.** Rome tolerated the religion of those whom they conquered, so long as they did not proselyte. Christians, of course, existed to save others.
 2. **Christianity aspired to universality.** With the Romans, the State was the main thing. With Christians, the kingdom of God throughout the world was the principle concern.
 3. **Christianity was an exclusive religion.** Christians refused to mingle freely with heathen social life and customs. It was necessary to them to refuse involvement with the pagan world because of the idolatrous practices in which the Romans engaged.
 4. **Christians were accused of all manner of evil.**
 - a. Because they held meetings at night and were fond of each other, the Romans figured the meetings were for the glorification of the flesh.
 - b. Because they hear Christians speak of "eating flesh and drinking blood" they accused them of cannibalism.
 5. **Christians refused to go to war.** A part of the oath and initiation of the soldiers included service to idols of the state and the bearing of idolatrous insignias on their uniforms.
 6. **Christians were recruited from among the poor and outcast.** This caused the "respectable people" to look down on Christianity.
 7. **Christians shared with the Jews the contempt which Romans held for this people.** Because of their refusal to compromise, they were regarded worse than the Jews.

8. **Christians were looked upon as wild fanatics because of their enthusiasm.**
 9. **Christianity came in conflict with the temporal interest of many of the Romans.**
Priests, makers and venders of idols, sellers of sacrificial animals, etc.
 10. **Christians refused to worship the emperor of Rome.** Explain: (a) Pinch of incense to be placed on the altar. (b) Certificate each year.
5. Methods of interpretation.
1. **The Futurist Method.**
 - a. This view is held by the millennial and dispensational groups who consider that it is unfulfilled prophecies about the future history of the world.
 - b. This method says that revelation 4-19 takes place in the seventieth week of Daniel 9:24-27.
 - c. This method sees:
 1. Revelation 4-19 as just before the coming of Christ,
 2. Then the thousand year reign. Revelation 21:1-10
 3. Followed by the judgment. Revelation 20:11-15
 4. Then the final state.
 2. **The Continuous Historical Method.**
 - a. This view presents the book as a forecast in symbols of the history of the church.
 - b. This system makes the book of prophecy in detail the apostasy of the Roman Catholic Church, then the Reformation.
 3. **The Philosophy of History Method.**
 - a. This interpretation considers the events as not necessarily occurring, but as symbolic of forces at work.
 - b. This view sees revelation as a book setting forth the principles on the basis of which God deals with men.
 4. **The Preterist Method.**
 - a. This method is the opposite of the Futurist Method.
 - b. This method says that the things pictured in Revelation are completed and past.
 - c. This view maintains that the book was written for the people of John's day, fulfilled then, and now has little or no value for people today.
 - d. Some preterists apply the visions mainly to the Jewish nation and pagan Rome, with most of them placed before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.
 - e. Two groups of Preterists:
 1. "Right wing" group.
 - a. Believe the book of Revelation to be inspired.
 - b. Most of the book was fulfilled in the time of Domitian.
 - c. Final judgment is in the future.
 - d. Only of literary interest.
 2. "Left Wing" group.
 - a. Do not consider Revelation to be inspired.
 - b. Its only value is literary.
 5. **The Historical-Background Method.**
 - a. In some ways this view is part of the Preterist method.
 - b. This method seeks to find the meaning that the book had in the day of its origin.
 - c. As a book it is written to the people of that day, it is fulfilled in the events of the first two centuries (some extend it longer), but it is in this background is seen a message for all time.
 - d. The principles for this method come from the Right Wing Preterist and the philosophy of history interpretation.

3. Incredible victory in Jesus.
- C. There are three major sections in the book:
 1. The Outer Struggle - The Church and the Roman Empire. (1-11)
 2. The Inner Struggle - Christ and Satan. (12-22)

THE OUTER STRUGGLE - THE CHURCH AND THE ROMAN EMPIRE. (1-11)

- A. Revelation contains a prologue (1:1-3) before the usual salutation (1:4-8).
 1. The Revelation was transmitted:
 - a. Father to Christ
 - b. Christ to an angel.
 - c. An angel to John.
 2. This is the only Biblical book that specifically promises a blessing to those who read it. 1:3
 3. But it also promises a curse to those who add to or detract from it. 22:18-19
 4. The vision appears to John on a Sunday while he is exiled on the island of Patmos.
 5. John is commissioned to write what is revealed to Him.
- B. In 1:1-3 John tells us several key things in these first three verses:
 1. It is a **Revelation of Jesus Christ**.
 2. It is a book involving symbology (signs and symbols, not to be taken literally, Revelation 12:1-3)
 3. It is concerning things which would **SHORTLY COME TO PASS!** 1:1
 4. The time, during John's day, was "at hand." 1:3
- C. The Seven Churches of Asia. (2-3)
 1. Chapter 2
 - a. Ephesus. 2:1-7
 1. They had left their first love.
 2. They were told to repent and return to their first love.
 - b. Smyrna. 2:8-11
 1. The rich — poor church. Rich materially but poor spiritually.
 2. Told to remain faithful unto death. 2:8
 - c. Pergamum. 2:12-17
 1. Compromising and persecuted.
 2. Rebuked for tolerating and compromise and false teaching.
 - d. Thyatira. 2:18-29 (The longest of the seven letters.)
 1. The church was commended for its love, faith, ministry, and patience.
 2. However, they were compromising with false teachers.
 2. Chapter 3
 - a. Sardis. 3:1-6 (The shortest of the seven letters.)
 1. The church had a reputation for being alive, but the Lord declared them dead.
 2. They were to hold fast and strengthen the things which remain.
 - b. Philadelphia. 3:7-13
 1. The city of "brotherly love" with the open door of opportunity.
 2. Commendation but no condemnation.
 - c. Laodicea. 3:14-22
 1. The church that made God sick. It was lukewarm.
 2. Condemnation but no commendation.
- D. Chapters 4-5 - A transition in the book from things on the earth to things seen in Heaven.
 1. **Chapter 4**: Herein we see:

- a. The throne of God
 - b. A rainbow
 - b. 24 elders
 - c. White robes
 - d. Four living creatures
 - e. God being worshipped.
2. **Chapter 5**
- a. The seven-sealed book (scroll) written on two sides.
 - b. At first, no one worthy to open it.
 - c. Jesus is worthy to open the book.
 - 1. He has overcome.
 - 2. He was dead and is alive again.
- E. Chapter 6 - Breaking of the first six seals.
- 1. 1st Seal - White horse: Christ conquering in the gospel.
 - 2. 2nd Seal - Red horse: Persecution and war.
 - 3. 3rd Seal - Black horse: Economic discrimination
 - 4. 4th Seal - Pale horse: Death and hades.
 - a. Some Christians were killed by the sword.
 - b. Some Christians were died because of famine.
 - c. Some were killed by wild beasts in the coliseum.
 - 5. 5th Seal - Souls slain for the world.
 - a. Souls slain because of their testimony for the truth.
 - b. Each is given a white robe.
 - c. They cry out for God's vengeance to be upon the oppressors of truth and God's people.
 - d. They are told to be patient and wait. In His chosen time, God would take the appropriate action.
 - 6. 6th Seal - Judgment is announced.
 - a. Devastating destruction is decreed (announced).
 - b. This does not refer to the end of the world judgment.
 - c. There is yet another seal to go.
 - d. This seal is but the announcing of the judgment to come when God decrees it to be time.
- F. **Chapter 7** - Interlude between the opening of the 6th and seven seals.
- 1. Review of the first six seals. Six basic things happened to the Christians.
 - a. 1st - They were first conquered by Christ in the Gospel.
 - b. 2nd - They were persecuted for being Christians.
 - c. 3rd - They were economically discriminated against.
 - d. 4th - They would die.
 - e. 5th - We find them alive in Heaven with all those gone before.
 - f. 6th - The judgment is about to fall—it is announced.
 - 2. Chapter 7 shows the saints on earth are sealed—protected.
 - a. The 144,000 symbolically represents all of God's people on earth at any one time.
 - b. An innumerable multitude before the throne, clothed in white robes (overcomes, who died faithful) now in the presence of God, are worshipping.
 - c. They came out of a great tribulation meaning they had had to endure many difficulties (persecutions) while alive.
- G. **Chapters 8:1 - 11:19** - The breaking of the seventh seal.
- 1. The seventh seal has seven trumpets.

2. There is silence in Heaven for about half an hour in which all look toward the throne.
3. An important judgment of God is about to fall, having been announced in the sixth seal.
6:12-17
4. An angel brings “much incense” to the altar representing the many prayers of the saints.
5. **8:6-12:** The first four trumpets sound.
 - a. 1st angel sounds his trumpet: (8:7) Pictures the Old testament plagues in Moses’ day - judgments that strike the land.
 - b. 2nd angel sounds his trumpet: (**8:8-9**) Sea (maritime) disaster judgment.
 - c. 3rd angel sounds his trumpet: (**8:10-11**) Land waters judgment.
 - d. 4th angel sounds his trumpet: (**8:12**) Darkness smites the sun, moon, and stars.
6. In **8:13** a flying angel announces the final three trumpets: WOE, WOE, WOE.
 - a. 5th angel sounds his trumpet: (**9:1-12**) 1st WOE: The hellish locusts indicating internal decay with the locusts afflicting those who are not Christians.
 - b. 6th angel sounds his trumpet: (**9:13-21**) 2nd WOE: The hellish army indicating external enemies.
 1. A third part of men are killed, but certainly not a majority.
 2. They repented not of their sins. Lesson: some people will never repent.
7. Chapter 10 contains an interlude between the 6th and 7th trumpets.
 - a. This section is a part of the blowing of the seven trumpets (**8:1 - 11:19**) which completes the breaking of the seventh seal (**8:1-2**).
 - c. This 10th chapter is part of an interlude (similar to chapter 7 in-between the 6th and 7th seal) which gives encouragement to the Christians.
 - d. A strong and awesome angel has a small book in his hand, and when he cries out with a loud voice, seven thunders sound.
 - e. John is ready to write down these warnings, but is instructed not to write them.
 - f. John is instructed to eat the little book that would be sweet in the mouth but bitter in the belly. This simply means that he was to continue to prophesy (inspired preaching) to all people, and keep on prophesying and never never quit.
8. Chapter 11
 - a. The measuring of the temple (**11:1-2**) is another symbolical way of drawing a distinction between God’s people and the sinners, the profane. There is a difference.
 - b. The two witnesses: (**11:3-14**) indicate a victory for God’s cause.
 - d. 7th angel sounds his trumpet: (**11:15-19**) Third WOE: Therein the 7th seal, 7th trumpet and 3rd WOE are realized.
 1. The kingdom of the Lord displaces the kingdom of the world and Christ reigns forever and forever.
 2. The 24 elders around the throne worship God.
 3. God destroys those who hurt His people. Judgment falls from the Throne upon those who have not served Him.
9. The first half of the book is finished and we are blessed that the evil will be judged and the righteous will be saved.
 - a. Christ truly is reigning now.
 - b. He has ALL authority.
 - c. The Christians who remain faithful into death will be sealed and protected by the Lord.

THE INNER STRUGGLE — CHRIST AND SATAN. (**12-22**)

- A. **12:1-6** depicts the radiant woman, the man child and the dragon.
1. The radiant woman - represents God's people (Old and New Testament) the Israel of God.
 - a. **Philippians 3:3** - "For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."
 - b. **Galatians 6:16** - "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God."
 - c. So the woman would be Israel as the child is conceived and brought forth, and she would be the church after the delivery as she is persecuted in the wilderness.
 2. The dragon is the devil.
 3. The man child is Jesus Christ.
 4. **12:6** - Even though Jesus is caught up into Heaven, Satan isn't finished.
 - a. He goes after the woman, but God has prepared a place for her protection.
 - b. God is so good to his people.
- B. **12:7-12** - War in Heaven: Is a picture of Christ's victory.
1. Some believe this was not a literal war or battle in Heaven. Others believe it took place.
 2. Because Satan was defeated at the cross:
 - a. Salvation has come.
 - b. Power has come.
 - c. The kingdom (church) has come.
 - d. Satan has been cast down in defeat.
 3. All heaven rejoiced at this overcoming of Satan.
- C. **12:13-17** - War upon the earth
1. Like a wounded animal with no way out, the Dragon (Satan) is really angry and goes after the woman's seed (the church) those who keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus.
 2. Indeed, Satan does all he can to persecute the church, as we shall see in the rest of the book.
- D. **Chapter 13** - The sea beast and the earth beast (Two more of Satan's terrible trio).
1. **13:1-10** - The sea beast representing Rome.
 2. **13:11-18** - The earth beast representing false religion and emperor worship
 - a. The number of the beast is 666.
 - b. The number 6 represents falling one short of 7, God's perfect and complete number.
 - c. Satan, we are told, has a number that cannot win. Oh yes, it looks like he will triumph.
 1. But no, his number 6, one away from God's complete and perfect number of 7.
 2. So, Satan tries again to defeat the Lord and now its 66 (not 77, 11 away).
 3. The old Devil tries again to defeat the Lord and now its 666 (not 777, 111 away).
 - d. Does the devil want to try again? He cannot win. 666 - his number is up.
 - e. Every effort on his part just brings a more distant defeat.
- E. **Chapter 14 14:1-5** - The Lamb
1. After the introduction of the Sea Beast and the Earth Beast and all the Satanic power and might in chapter 13, chapter 14 gives us:
 - a. Encouragement.
 - b. Hope.
 - c. Strength.
 2. The victorious Christ in chapter 14 is the Lamb in chapter 5.
 3. 14:6-13 - Four messages of good news.

- a. 1st message: (14:6-7) God news to everyone. Worship God for His good news has come.
 - b. 2nd message: (14:8) Wicked Babylon (Rome) has fallen.
 - c. 3rd message: (14:9-12) The emperor worshippers are punished.
 - d. 4th message: (14:13) Faithful Christians will triumph.
4. **14:14-20** - sickles of judgment - simply a figure to show the awesome scope of God's judgment upon the wicked.
- F. **Chapter 15** - Judgment is announced: Complete, everlasting and without mercy.
1. With the seven trumpets were blown in chapters 8-11, God's mercy was mixed with His wrath. The warnings only affected one-third of the whole and even then repentance was possible. Rev. 9:20-21 Now God's wrath is to be unmixed (no mercy, Revelation 14:1-10). Truly our God is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29).
 2. **15:1-8** - The seven last plagues.
 - a. The seven angels had the final seven plagues which were filled with the complete wrath of God, unmixed!
 - b. The final day of judgment is on the way.
- G. Chapter 16 - The pouring out of the seven bowls of wrath. The seven bowls of wrath build on the seven trumpets (**8:6 - 11:19**). The trumpets only touched a third part of things. But now, the seven bowls of wrath being complete, total and final judgment of God on the Roman government.
1. 1st bowl of wrath: (**16:1-2**) Is poured out completely and the land is destroyed.
 2. 2nd bowl of wrath: (**16:3**) Maritime destruction.
 3. 3rd bowl of wrath: (**16:4-7**) Pours his wrath upon the fresh waters and they become as blood.
 4. 4th bowl of wrath: (**16:8-9**) The heavenly hosts are now recipients of God's wrath, and men are wracked with pain, and they blaspheme God and refuse to repent.
 5. 5th bowl of wrath: (**16:10-11**) The Sea Beast's (Satan's) power base (Revelation 13:2) collapses and his throne is affected.
 6. 6th bowl of wrath: (**16:12-16**) Poured out Armageddon.
 - a. Some think of it as the battle of all battles.
 1. Megiddo in the beautiful Jezreel Valley.
 2. Privately, I tell my guides in Israel - "I don't want the Battle of Armageddon lecture, just the historical one."
 - b. Just as in other battles, we are led up to the brink, but we never see the fight. It's all over!
 - c. Satan is defeated, the saints are victorious. We can see the results in chapter 19.
 7. 7th bowl of wrath: (**16:17-21**) Judgment on Rome.
- H. **Chapter 17** - Mystery of the Harlot and the sea beast.
1. **17:1-6** - The harlot is Rome.
 2. **17:7-17** - The sea beast. Represents all of the ungodly government powers that could afflict the church.
 3. 17:14 - Here is war. Ten kings against the Lamb (Jesus).
 - a. Are you ready for the battle? Too late!
 - b. The Lamb overcomes them.
 - c. When Christ wins, we win because we overcome with Him.
 - d. When we realize this, "Victory in Jesus" will never be sung the same way again.
- I. **Chapter 18** - The fall of the harlot (Babylon the great)
1. **18:1-8** - Babylon's (Rome's) doom is announced
 2. **18:9-19** - The world laments her passing.

- a. Here is a laundry list of things that were going to be taken away with the fall of Rome and also weeping and sadness of those who trafficked (did business) with her.
- b. Merchants would have no more business with Rome.
- c. Many things would disappear that the people had been accustomed to.
 1. Luxuries.
 2. Necessities
 3. Slavery
 4. Rome's merchandise
3. **18:20** - Joy comes to Heaven and all those who died because of Rome's evil. Regardless of what Rome would do to Christians, God's people will live on forever and forever.

J. **Chapter 19** -

§ Review: The harlot, Babylon, the great city (Rome) has been announced as having fallen. Now, for the fall of the Earth Beast and Sea Beast! Again, the symbols are as follows:

§ Babylon - the great city represents the worldliness of Rome.

§ The Sea Beast represents the civil persecution of Rome (Emperor worship).

§ The Earth Beast represents the False Prophet (Made people worship the Sea Beast, **23:12**)

§ The Dragon represents Satan (the Devil).

1. **19:1-10** - The Hallelujah course praise the Lord as He is reigning.
2. **19:7-8** - The marriage supper when Christ and His bride, the church, will be together.
3. **19:11-16** - The victorious Christ is seen as the "King of kings and Lord of Lords."
4. **19:17-18** - An invitation to the great victory supper.
5. **19:19-21** - Downfall of the two beasts.
 - a. Christ brings the victory.
 - b. Satan suffers the defeat.

K. **Chapter 20** -

1. **20:1-3** - The binding of Satan for 1,000 years.
 - a. Notice; Satan would be bound but not destroyed.
 - b. A prophecy of the binding of Satan for a certain term of time, in which he should have much less power and the church much more peace than before.
 1. The power of Satan was broken in part by the setting up of the gospel kingdom in the world.
 2. It was further reduced by the empire's becoming Christian; it was yet further broken by the downfall of the mystical Babylon.
 - c. Thus, doubt refers to a time in which the influence of Satan will be greatly restrained, and the true church of Christ enjoy great prosperity, which shall endure for a long time.

L. **Chapters 21-22** - Much is said about the beauties of heaven.