

## CHAPTER 8

### REVELATION, PART III

#### III. Things that are to come, ch. 4 - 22:5

The bulk of Revelation is concerned with things that were in the future to John (1:1). This was the third main topic of the material (1:19). Now, the section is introduced in 4:1, with the same words being picked up, the things “after these things” (μετὰ ταῦτα *meta tauta*).

As noted earlier, these notes follow the futuristic interpretation, with the events in ch. 6-19 taking place near the time of Christ’s second coming to the earth.

#### A. Heavenly preparation for the tribulation, ch. 4-5

Jesus predicted that immediately before he would come again to the earth, there would be “great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again” (Matt 24:21). It is this period of time that is called in this outline the “tribulation.”

Chapters 4-5 set the stage by showing the background setting in heaven leading up to the tribulation on the earth.

##### 1. *God the Father, ch. 4*

v. 1, “Come up here”; not the rapture (cf. 2 Cor 12:1-4)

“Things after these things,” as in 1:19

v. 2, “In the Spirit”; cf. 1:10

A throne set up, and one sitting on it, symbol of judgment

v. 3, Rainbow, symbol of mercy

ἶρις *iris* (cf. the flower)

Gen 9            Rainbow, no throne

Rev 4            Rainbow, and throne

Rev 20          No rainbow, only a throne

Jasper (a form of quartz—various colors: red, yellow, brown, dark green), carnelian (flesh-colored, rose)

v. 5, Seven Spirits = Holy Spirit (cf. 3:1)

v. 4, The 24 elders

Interpretations:

- Angels (cf. 5:9-10, textual variants; v. 10 most sure)

Still indecisive, even if “they” used

- Representatives of church

12 + 12; OT + NT

Cf. Rev 21:12, 14

- Representatives of NT church

Dispensational view

Number 24 hard to explain

v. 6, Four living creatures

ζῷον *zoön* in ch. 4-5

Not θηρίον *therion*, beast, in ch. 13

Full of eyes

v. 7, Lion, ox, man, eagle

Each creature resembled one

v. 8, Six wings, say “holy, holy, holy”

Cf. Isa 6, seraphim:

Six wings

“Holy, holy, holy”

Cf. Ezek 1 (& 10:19-20), cherubim, “living creatures”

4 living creatures

(Body) like a man

4 faces each: man, lion, ox, eagle

Four wings seen

Eyes associated with wheels

vv. 10-11, All glory goes to God

Glory due for his creation, and his will

## **2. God the Son, ch. 5**

v. 1, The Father determines the tribulation

Nature of the seven seals on a scroll

v. 2, Worthy to open

Hidden by God’s authority

Cf. John 5:22; Matt 7:21-23 – the Son as the final Judge

vv. 3-4, John weep (no judgment)

v. 5, Names for Christ:

1) Lion of tribe of Judah

Lion – animal of royalty (as Nebuchadnezzar in Dan 7)

Gen 49:9-10, “he whose it is,” shows possession

Kethib (what is written): לִלְוִי *śilôh*

Qere (what is read aloud): *śîlô*

## 2) Root of David

ρίζα *rhiza*; cf. Rev 22:16

Isa 11:1, 10

v. 1, הַטֵּיף *hōṭēf*, branch, twig

v. 1, נֶשֶׁר *nēšer*, sprout, shoot

v. 10, שֹׁרֵשׁ *šōreš*, root

Both these titles bring out the royal authority of Christ.

## v. 6, Lamb

13:8, etc.; John 1:29

Slain (from foundation of world; cf. 13:8)

7 horns; authority; cf. beasts in 12:3; 13:1, 11

7 eyes; wisdom

Number 7—completeness, perfection (only demonstrable symbolic number in the Bible; see J. Davis, *Biblical Numerology*, pp. 115-24)

## vv. 9-10, first song to the Lamb

Christ’s glory due to redemption

Sung by 4 living creatures and 24 elders, or only by 24 elders

New song; cf. 14:3, sung by 144,000

## Textual variants

1) (v. 9) “You redeemed [men] to God by your blood from every tribe . . . “ (A eth)

UBS {A} rating; some MSS have “you redeemed us to God . . . “ (⌘, etc.; order not uniform)

2) (v. 10) “And have made them to our God a kingdom and priests” (virtually all MSS)

UBS doesn’t even footnote the weak variant, “have made us to our God . . . .” (part of Vulgate)

3) “And they will reign on the earth” (⌘, A [“they do reign”], etc.)

UBS {A} rating on verb tense, little doubt on they over we (cf. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, p. 666). Some Latin MSS have “and we will reign.”

The significance of these textual variants is that the reading may affect the interpretation. Who are the singers (human elders or angels?), and whom do they represent? The textual evidence shows that they refer to the redeemed in the third person, “they, them,” not in the first person, “we, us.” In that case, they do not necessarily represent the church as such, although it is still possible for angelic representatives of the church to speak in that manner.

vv. 11-12, Second song to the Lamb

Millions of angels

vv. 13-14, Third song to the Lamb

All creation

v. 14, Confirmation by living creatures and elders

## **B. The tribulation period, ch. 6-18**

As can be seen, most of the book is concerned with the events and troubles of the world during the time of tribulation. The section is organized basically around the three series of seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven bowls. There are major sections or interludes between these three series.

These three series can be charted as follows:

Seal #1	Antichrist	6:1-2
Seal #2	War	6:3-4
Seal #3	Famine	6:5-6
Seal #4	Death (1/4 people)	6:7-8
Seal #5	Martyrdom	6:9-11
Seal #6	Earthquakes, etc.	6:12-17
<Interlude, ch. 7>		
Seal #7	Silence	8:1
(introduction to trumpets)		8:2-6
Trumpet #1	1/3 earth burned	8:7
Trumpet #2	1/3 sea blood	8:8-9
Trumpet #3	1/3 rivers wormwood	8:10-11
Trumpet #4	1/3 sun, moon, stars darkened	8:12
Trumpet #5, Woe #1	Locusts	9:1-12
Trumpet #6, Woe #2	200,000,000 kill 1/3 people	9:13-21
<Interlude, ch. 10-11>		
Trumpet #7, Woe #3	Heavenly temple opened	11:15-19
<Interlude, ch. 12-14>		
(introduction to bowls)		15:1 - 16:1
Bowl #1	Sores	16:2
Bowl #2	Sea blood	16:3
Bowl #3	Rivers blood	16:4-7
Bowl #4	Sun scorch	16:8-9
Bowl #5	Darkness	16:10-11
Bowl #6	Euphrates dried, army gathered	16:12-16
Bowl #7	Earthquake, hail	16:17-21
Fall of Babylon		17-18

It seems obvious from the text that John saw these three series of visions in the order in which they are here recorded. However, there is considerable dispute among futurists as to the order in which they will be fulfilled. Basically, there are two main approaches: consecutive, and concurrent. These two methods of interpretation have been roughly charted by Gundry as follows:



Concurrent (Robert Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, pp. 74-77):

								Second Coming			
Seals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7				
			Trumpets	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
				Bowls	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

According to the concurrent theory, the plagues are not parallel throughout the tribulation period, but rather are bunched up more at the end. The strongest exegetical arguments seem to support that view, since each series of judgments ends with the coming of Christ and the culmination of God's wrath against the rebellious world (seals—Rev 6:12-16, cf. Matt 24:29-30; trumpets—10:5-7 & 11:15-19; bowls—16:17-21).

### 1. *The seven seals, ch. 6 - 8:1*

4 seals—the 4 living creatures say “Come” (to the horsemen)

Other 3 seals—no introduction

“Come” UBS {B} — A C P (spoken to horsemen)

Some MSS, “Come and see” — ἴδε *ide* in  $\aleph$  and Byz; βλέπε *blepe* in TR  
(spoken to John)

#### **Seal #1, 6:1-2**

White horse, conqueror

Conquests of Antichrist, Dan 7:8, 24-25 (11:40-42); Rev 13:4; 17:12-13

Some say, conquests of Christ in this age through the gospel (Ladd)

But seems not to be Christ, by what follows

#### **Seal #2, 6:3-4**

Red horse, war and death

#### **Seal #3, 6:5-6**

Black horse, famine

“Measure,” χοῖνιξ *choenix*, almost a quart (*BDAG*, a man's daily ration of grain)

“Denarius,” δηνάριον *denarion*, Roman silver coin; Nero debased it in value; a worker’s daily wage

“Hurt not,” these “luxuries” not available

#### **Seal #4, 6:7-8**

Pale horse, death and Hades

Kill 1/4 population: sword, famine, death, wild beasts

#### note on colored horses

Zech 1:7-11, Walk through the earth to observe (v. 11)

Red  
Sorrel = brown  
White

Zech 6:1-8, “Four winds [spirits] of heaven,” walk through earth in judgment (cf. Rev 7:1; 9:14)

red  
black  
white  
grizzled = dappled

(Possibly) horses represent various judgments on the hostile nations, prior to the establishment of the theocratic kingdom (Zech 6)

#### **Seal #5, 6:9-11**

Souls under altar, martyrs

White robe  
Blood of the Lamb, 7:14  
Righteous deeds of the saints, 19:8  
Fine linen for the church  
Rest  
Others to be killed (cf. Dan 7:21, 25)

#### **Seal #6, 6:12-17**

Earthquake and great signs in heaven, the coming of the wrath of the Lamb

Earthquake here, 6:12, and 8:5; 11:13, 19; 16:18 (7th bowl); cf. Matt 24:29

Sun, moon, stars; Joel 2:31; (3:15); Matt 24:29

Heaven rolled up; figurative in Isa 34:4; perhaps more literal here and Rev 20:11; 21:1

All hide in fear

Wrath, great day of their wrath

Cf. Rev 11:18; 14:10; 16:19; 19:15

Christians escape, Luke 21:36; 1 Thess 1:10; 5:9

If one takes the concurrent view of the judgments in Revelation, then the “wrath” passages are grouped around the second coming of Christ, when his wrath is poured out on his enemies at the Battle of Armageddon and surrounding events. Christians will at that point be with the Lord and on his side.

## **Interlude, ch. 7**

### (1) The 144,000 sealed, vv. 1-8

v. 1, Four angels about to judge with four winds (Zech. 6:5)

“Corners” = directions

vv. 2-3, Delay to seal servants on foreheads

Used for protection, 9:4

Similar function in Ezek 9:4-5 (see *NIV Study Bible*)

Seal described in 14:1, name of Jesus & Father

vv. 4-8, 12,000 per tribe of Israel

12 tribes listed

Manasseh and Joseph (Ephraim) listed separately; Dan omitted, not omitted elsewhere (e.g., Ezek 48:1); phps. because of early idolatry (Judg 18); phps.

considered as a part of Naphtali (same area and small, but see Ladd, pp. 114-115);  
phps. to show that the list is symbolic, meaning all the church (Ladd)

12 tribes are Israelites; cf. Jas 1:1; God knows family divisions (or assigns them)

These 144,000 celibate, 14:4

Whether or not these men are martyred depends on the interpretation of Rev 14:1—is that  
during the tribulation (most), or at the beginning of the millennium (Walvoord)?

Possible interpretations:

- 1) Special part of Israel
- 2) Conversion of all Israel
- 3) Whole church (= second multitude)
- 4) Special part of the church

## (2) The tribulation martyrs, vv. 9-17

—Cf. 6:11, others to be killed

vv. 9-10, Great multitude from all nations

White robes  
Palms  
Brief song

vv. 11-12, Angels and others join chorus

vv. 13-14, Identity of the multitude

“The great tribulation”

People still coming, present participle, οἱ ἐρχόμενοι *hoi erchomenoi*, “the ones coming”

Great tribulation, Jer 30:7; Dan 12:1; Matt 24:21 = Mark 13:19 (Luke 21:23 about A.D.  
70); Rev 7:14

vv. 15-17, Blessings in heaven

Serve God always

Temple & tabernacle

No hunger, thirst, sun, heat

Cf. Seal #3, Bowls #3, #4 (Rev. 16)

No tears

### **Seal #7, 8:1**

½ hour silence

Shows completion of cycle with coming of Christ

Leads to next series of visions, 7 trumpets

## **2. *The seven trumpets, 8:2 - ch. 11***

8:2, Seven angels with trumpets

8:3-6, Heavenly preparation for the trumpets

Prayers of saints

Thunders, etc., earthquake

Cf. preparation for seals in ch. 4-5

### **Trumpet #1, 8:7**

Hail, fire, blood

Cf. hail and lightning (NIV; NASB has “fire”; cf. Exod 9:23-24)

1/3 earth burned

### **Trumpet #2, 8:8-9**

Mountain thrown into the sea

1/3 sea blood

1/3 creatures die

1/3 ships destroyed

A meteorite?

### **Trumpet #3, 8:10-11**

Star falls into rivers

1/3 rivers and streams Wormwood (ἄψινθος *apsinthos*; Jer 9:15; 23:15)

### **Trumpet #4, 8:12**

1/3 sun, moon, stars struck, turn dark

Do not shine 1/3 of time, or else not at full intensity

### Eagle introduces the woes, 8:13

KJV “angel,” cf. 14:6; but nearly all MSS have ἀετός *aetos*, “eagle, vulture”

Eagle (or vulture) cries “*Ouai, ouai, ouai*” (οὐαί)—3 “woes”

These “woes” equal the last three trumpets, and lead to the coming of the Lord at the Battle of Armageddon.

### **Trumpet #5 = Woe #1, 9:1-12**

Fiendish locusts

v. 1, Star from heaven

Cf. Wormwood in 8:10

Appears to be an angel

The pit of the abyss, τοῦ φρέατος τῆς ἀβύσσου *tou phreatos* (φρέαρ *phrear*)  
*tes abussou* (ἄβυσσος *abussos*)

“Abyss” in NT:

Luke 8:31, not command them to depart into the abyss (cf. 2 Pet 2:4)  
 Rom 10:7, Who shall descend into the abyss? (cf. Deut 30:13, “beyond the sea”)  
 Rev 9:1, key of pit of abyss  
 9:2, opened pit of abyss  
 9:11, angel of the abyss  
 11:7, beast that comes up out of abyss  
 17:8, beast . . . about to come up out of the abyss  
 20:1, the key of the abyss  
 20:3, cast him into the abyss

v. 2, Smoke, as a furnace

vv. 3-10, Description of locusts

Don't hurt Christians

Don't hurt trees

Only hurt unbelievers

5-month stings, or 5-month period of activity

Similar to scorpions

Cf. locusts used for judgment in Joel 1:4; 2:1-11, 18-22, 25

Interpretations for locusts:

1) Literal creatures

2) Humans (language of appearance); Cohen, *Revelation Visualized*, pp. 198, 201;  
 cf. Pentecost, *Things to Come*, p. 362

3) Demons inhabiting creatures

4) Demons, using prophetic language (Ladd, *Revelation*, pp. 131-133)

v. 11, The ruler

Ἑβραϊστί *hebraisti* = in Hebrew or Aramaic

גְּבוּרָה *'ăbaddôn*, destruction or destroyer

Job 26:2; 28:22; Ps 88:11; Prov 15:11

Ἑλληνικῆ *hellenike* = in Greek

Ἀπολλύων *apolluon* (hapax), destroyer

Many take to be Satan; Ladd says an angel (no indication he is evil)

v. 12, First woe is past

### **Trumpet #6 = Woe #2, 9:13-21**

1/3 people killed by great army

vv. 14-15, Four angels bound at Euphrates

Same as the four angels in 7:1, holding the four winds? Seem to be different.  
Evil angels are bound—Jude 6; Rev 20:2; cf. Satan (or angel?) over the locusts.

River Euphrates, a boundary between the Holy Land and the armies of Asia

“The hour, day, and month, and year” (one article) = “the appointed time,” not  
amount of time for preparation

Purpose, kill 1/3 people

Cf. 1/4 people in fourth seal, 6:8

Total: 1/2 people killed

Angels gather the army, not dry up river as in sixth bowl, 16:12

v. 16, Army of “fiendish horses” (Beckwith)

Number = 200,000,000

Walvoord, p. 166, quotes *Time* magazine, May 21, 1965, p. 35, as  
reporting that Red China at that time claimed a man-and-woman militia of  
200 million—same figure as in Rev 9:16.

vv. 17-19, Description of horses

Similarities to locusts (9:7-10):

<u>Locusts</u>	<u>Horses</u>
Bodies like horses	Horses
Teeth of lions	Heads like lions
Tails as scorpions	Tails as snakes
Bite with head & tail	“Bite” with head & tail
Ruled by angel	Ruled by four angels

But differences between locusts and horses:

<u>Locusts</u>	<u>Horses</u>
Face of men	Face of lion
Hair as women	—
Sting	Kill
—	Fire out of mouth
Breastplate of iron	Breastplate of fire, etc.

Interpretations of army:

- 1) Literal army of horses and men
- 2) Language of appearance for modern warfare
- 3) Demonic powers

vv. 20-21, Continued wickedness of the survivors

Cf. Isa 22:12-13

Demon-worship

Idol-worship

Murders

Sorceries (φαρμακεία *pharmakeia*)

Fornication

Thefts

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### **Interlude: Continuation of Trumpet #6 = Woe #2, ch. 10 - 11:14**

This interlude before the conclusion of the sixth trumpet contains three parts: the mighty angel and the little scroll, the measuring of the temple and court, and the two witnesses. These visions point to the sovereignty of God, who rules all events during the tribulation and the following judgment.

#### (1) The mighty angel and the little scroll, ch. 10

vv. 1-2, Identity of the angel

Arguments for angel = Christ (cf. description in ch. 1):

Mighty

Robed in cloud

Rainbow above his head

Face like the sun

Feet like fiery pillars

Arguments for an angel:

“Another mighty angel,” ἄλλον *allon*, another of same kind

Cf. 5:2, another mighty angel; 8:3, another angel

“Little scroll,” βιβλαρίδιον *biblaridion*; not same as scroll of ch. 5, βιβλίον *biblion*

J. B. Smith (p. 153) argues for angel in 10:1 being Michael, and angel in 5:2 being Gabriel (Dan 8:16; 9:21):

Cf.	Rev 10:1	Dan 10:5-6
	Rev 10:5-6a	Dan 12:7a
	Rev 10:6b-7	Dan 12:7b

It seems that the description is that of an angel, not Christ, but we cannot be certain of the identity of the angel.

#### v. 3, Seven thunders

Perhaps related to seven lamps (seven spirits) in 4:5

Some compare to Ps 29:3-9 (“voice of Yahweh”; Scott, ASV marg.), God’s powerful providence

Or just seven voices from heaven (safest interpretation!)

#### v. 4, Things sealed until later

Cf. Dan 8:26; 12:4, 9

#### vv. 5-7, Oath of the angel

“Time,” χρόνος *chronos* = delay

The angel is not saying that time as we know it, as a part of the space-time creation, will cease to be. Rather, he is saying that there will be no more delay until the final judgment and the return of Christ; God’s patience with the rebellious world will have reached its end.

Seventh trumpet will bring the end

#### v. 7, “Mystery of God”

Associated with Christ and his work in making the church, the body of Jew and Gentile

But not a total mystery, since it was “announced to the prophets”; must include events prophesied in OT, coming of Messiah, judgment on nations, establishing of kingdom

J. Oliver Buswell (*Systematic Theology* 2/450) associates the seventh trumpet with the “last trumpet,” and the resurrection and rapture. He holds the mid-tribulation view, and that the bowls follow the trumpets. Thus he places the resurrection-rapture after the trumpets, before the bowls, with the bowls occupying the final 3½-year period called the “great” tribulation. Of course, with the concurrent view, the seventh trumpet would come at the end of the tribulation, and could indeed be identified with the “last trumpet.”

vv. 8-11, John eats the scroll

Sweet in mouth, vengeance wanted  
Sour in stomach, vengeance terrible

Similar to Ezek 2:9 - 3:4; 3:14; and to Jer 15:16-18

## (2) The temple and court, 11:1-2

John to measure the temple and altar and to count the people; sign of God’s sovereignty over them and protection of their spiritual welfare during time of “Gentile” persecution

Cf. Ezek 40:5ff; Zech 2:1ff

Court not to be measured, since Gentiles will control external features of temple

Gentiles to trample holy city for 42 months

Similar passages speak of the long period after A.D. 70:

Temple destroyed and trodden; cf. Matt 23:37-39; Luke 19:41-44; 21:20-24

Jerusalem “trodden” in Luke 21:24

This “trampling” refers particularly to the time immediately prior to Jesus’ second coming. The 42 months agrees with other time references to the final persecution:

<u>3-1/2 years</u>		
Dan	7:25	3½ times (years)
	9:27	½ of 7 times
	12:7	3½ times
Rev	11:2 (here)	42 months
	11:3	1,260 days
	12:6	1,260 days
	12:14	3½ years
	13:5	42 months

We see here the preservation of the Jewish remnant and the salvation of the Jewish people (Zahn, Beckwith, Ladd)

### (3) The two witnesses, 11:3-14

vv. 3-4, 6, Identity of two witnesses

Two olive trees, two lampstands — cf. Zech. 4 (one lampstand and two trees)

The lampstand in Zech. 4 is fed by oil from two olive trees. Probably Zerubbabel is the lampstand, and the trees are “the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord,” perhaps Haggai and Zechariah (cf. Ezra 6:14; Hag 1:1; Zech 4:6).

Cf. Elijah

Able to stop rain 3½ years (1 Kgs 17:1; cf. 18:1, in the third year; Luke 4:25; Jas 5:17)

Able to call down fire on enemies (2 Kgs 1:10, 12-13)

Elijah to come (Mal 3:1; 4:5; Matt 11:14; Mark 9:12)

Cf. Moses

Water to blood, and other plagues

Moses and Elijah both with Jesus at transfiguration

But Elijah’s ministry was also performed by John the Baptist, and these witnesses are to be killed (v. 7). So probably, while they fulfill the ministries of Moses and Elijah, they are other individuals, whose identities are as yet unknown.

v. 3, The 1260 days

Some believe they will testify during the first half of the tribulation (cf. Dan 9:27), with the great tribulation following their death.

However, it appears more natural to take this 3½ year period to be the same as elsewhere, with the martyrdom of the witnesses immediately prior to Christ's second coming, and their resurrection accompanied with earthquakes, etc. This would also fit more naturally in the context at the end of the series of trumpet judgments. It might be that some of the plagues of Revelation will be brought about at least partially by their prophetic ministry.

vv. 5-6, Witness and power of the witnesses

vv. 7-10, Their martyrdom

“Beast,” θηρίον *therion*; wild beast, not ζῷον *zo-on*, “living creature”

First mention of the beast in Revelation; cf. Dan 7:8, 20-25; Matt 24:15; 2 Thess 2:3-4, 9-10

Accomplished by the Antichrist (cf. Dan 7:7, 19-25); more description in ch. 13, 17

v. 8, Jerusalem = Egypt, Sodom (cf. Isa 1:10, Judah = Sodom and Gomorrah)

If Revelation written after A.D. 70, implies Jerusalem to be rebuilt after Romans destroyed it

vv. 11-12, Witnesses resurrected, taken to heaven

If they minister during the 3½ years of the “great tribulation,” their resurrection would immediately precede, or be a part of, the resurrection of the just at Jesus' coming. If their ministry is earlier, their resurrection would be a special case, preceding that of the other saints.

v. 13, Jerusalem earthquake

1/10 city falls; 7000 killed

Perhaps to be linked to final earthquake(s):

6th seal, 6:12

7th seal, 8:5

End of 6th trumpet, this occurrence, 11:13

7th trumpet, 11:19

7th bowl, 16:18

—Cf. Matt 24:29 (cf. v. 7—pl., earlier)

Survivors glorify God; related to final salvation of Jews (Ladd)

v. 14, Thus end of Woe #2 (= Trumpet #6)

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### **Trumpet #7 = Woe #3, 11:15-19**

Temple opened in heaven, and ark of covenant seen; earthquake, thunder, hail, etc.

v. 15, Angels announce Christ now to claim the kingdom

vv. 16-18, Song of 24 elders

Thanksgiving:

Christ has taken power to reign

Nations to be judged

Dead to be judged

Reward for:

Prophets

Saints

Those who fear name, small and great

Destroyers of earth to be destroyed

v. 19, Temple opened

Heavenly temple seen in vision

Probably similar to tabernacle; cf. Heb 8:5

References to this temple in other places in Rev — 3:12; 6:9; 7:15; 8:3-5; 11:19 (here); 15:5-8; 16:7; cf. 21:22

Ark of the covenant, symbol of God's faithfulness to his covenants, his promise to deliver Israel and to destroy her enemies

No ark in the future – Jer 3:16

Earthquake, hail, *etc.*

Hail:

1<sup>st</sup> trumpet, 8:7

7<sup>th</sup> trumpet (here), 11:19

7<sup>th</sup> bowl, 16:21

After the interlude in ch. 12-14, the vision of the heavenly temple is recalled in 15:5, leading to the vision of the seven bowls.

### **3. Interlude before the bowls: the personalities of the Revelation, ch. 12-14**

Already, before the seventh trumpet, the two witnesses and the beast have been introduced, and the two witnesses described. Likewise, the 144,000 have been described in chapter 7. In this section the beast and the 144,000 are described further, and other personalities are introduced, who have a major role in the events.

#### **a. The woman, the dragon, the male child, and Michael, ch. 12 - 13:1a**

This section has some parallels with Genesis 3, with the woman, the serpent, the seed of the woman, angels, and the wilderness.

vv. 1-2, 5a, 6, 14, the woman

Possibilities:

- Israel, cf. Gen. 37:9, produces Messiah (Mic 4:9 – 5:9, Bethlehem as a mother, giving birth)
- Mary (R. C. view), produces Messiah (but not pursued by Satan)

- Visible church, or “ideal Israel” (Buswell, Ladd), produces Messiah and Christians (v. 17; Gal 4:26)

vv. 6, 14, Flees to wilderness

1260 days; cf. v. 14, 3½ years

vv. 3-4, the dragon

= Satan (v. 9)

7 heads, 10 horns (on one head), 7 crowns (crowns on heads; not like 13:1)

Cf. Rev 17:9-10; = 7 hills and 7 kings (kingdoms)

Heads—rule through history, empires

Horns—present rule during last days

Crowns—devil rules all empires

Cf. Dan 2:44, will break all these kingdoms, even those already past

1/3 stars; possibilities:

Saints (Dan 8:10, 24)

Angels (v. 9; angels = stars in Job 38:7)

Power (cf. Rev. 8:12, 4<sup>th</sup> trumpet)

Desire to devour child (true for child being Christ, or Christians)

vv. 4-5, The male child

To rule with an iron scepter

Christ—Ps 2:9; Rev 19:15; fits with male gender

Christians, believing church—Rev 2:27 (but cf. 27b)

Caught up to God

Probably resurrection and ascension of Christ

(For mid-trib. rapture) believing church (but different from offspring in 12:17)

vv. 7-12, war of Michael and the dragon

Michael—Dan 10:13, 21; 12:1; Jude 9; Rev 12:7 (here)

vv. 7-9, Devil cast from heaven

Stated by Christ, Luke 10:18 (aorist: “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.”)

Predicted by Christ, John 12:31 (future: “Now the prince of this world will be driven out.”)

No longer will have access to accuse Christians before God’s throne (cf. 12:10)

vv. 10-12, Song of rejoicing

Heaven glad; earth sad

vv. 13-17, persecution of the woman

Devil persecutes

God protects, using the earth to help

Some apply to Christians escaping to Pella in A.D. 66, at beginning of Jewish revolt (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3:5:3, *NPF* 2nd Series 1:138)

3½ years of protection

War with the woman’s seed, who obey God; cf. 13:7 (42 months in v. 5)

13:1a, Dragon stands on shore

UBS text has phrase in 12:18; note different verse divisions in Matt 16:38 – 17:1; Mark 9:1-2

Textual evidence favors 13:1a going with end of ch. 12:

I stood, P, most Byz & others

He stood, p<sup>47</sup> & A C & others (UBS {B})

“He stood” probably changed to “I stood” in order to agree with “and I saw,” which occurs shortly after

Seeking to persecute woman’s seed, the devil calls forth the Antichrist, the beast from the sea.

“Sea” = world’s people (17:15)

## **b. The two beasts, ch. 13**

“Beast” = θηρίον *therion*, as in 11:7; implies wild, savage, destructive

### vv. 1b-10, The Antichrist

#### v. 1, Heads and horns

7 heads (7 empires behind him)

10 horns (on one head, the seventh one)

10 crowns (on the horns; holds rule over the ten kings of the seventh empire, during his own time, unlike devil, who rules all empires, 12:3)

—Cf. Dan 7:7-8, 23-25; Rev 17:12-14a

#### v. 2, “Beast-like” qualities

Leopard

Bear

Lion

—Cf. Dan 7:3-7

Power from Satan, cf. v. 4

#### v. 3, One head killed and restored

Restored Roman empire? Rev 17:8, 11

Antichrist himself? vv. 12, 14 (not as likely)

v. 4, Admiration for Antichrist

vv. 5-6, Blaspheme

42 months

v. 7, Persecutes saints

Universal rule on earth

v. 8, Saints don't worship him

Lamb slain from foundation of world (KJV, NIV, NLT; perhaps "written from foundation of world," as ASV, NASB, ESV [see 17:8])

vv. 9-10, Saints to brace themselves for coming persecution

vv. 11-18, The False Prophet

vv. 11-13, His "qualifications"

Out of the earth (phps. Palestine)

Like lamb (cf. Christ in ch. 5)

Speak as dragon

Commands to worship beast, with his authority

Great signs, Matt 24:24

Fire from heaven, Matt 16:1; cf. v. 4

vv. 14-15, The image of the beast

Deceives (as in 2 Thess 2:9-12)

Could be abomination of desolation (Dan 9:27; Matt 24:15 = Mark 13:14; 2 Thess 2:4; Rev 13:15)

vv. 16-18, The mark of the beast

Right hand or forehead

Mark = name of beast, or number of his name

666, see discussions in Beckwith, pp. 403-06; also Smith, pp. 206-07

### Greek letters

Irenaeus, either Τειτάν *teitan* (Titan) the mythical monster, or Λατεῖνος *lateinos* (Latins; with irregular *ei* instead of more frequent *i*)

Most plausible: Γαῖος καῖσαρ *gaios kaisar* (Gaius Caesar = Caligula, A.D. 37-41); requires 616, as in C and in a few Latin MSS; in Roman numerals 666 is DCLXVI, and 616 is DCXVI

### Hebrew letters

(Not discovered until 1800's)

Beckwith, et. al., suggest Hebrew letters קסר נרן *nrwn qsr*, Greek Νέρον καῖσαρ *neron kaisar*, “Nero Caesar” (A.D. 54-68). Value of Hebrew letters:

נ	n	50
ר	r	200
ו	w	6
נ	n	50
ק	q	100
ס	s	60
ר	r	<u>200</u>
Total		666

If written without Hebrew ending נ *n* (cf. Rev 9:11; 16:16), value becomes 616, explaining textual variant. Irenaeus mentions that the variant was common in the second century.

A difficulty: קסר *qsr* is usually written קיסר *qysr* (value of 676), but the shorter form is attested

Beckwith says 666 used rather than 676 because 666 in Hebrew notation looks like heads and horns (?), p. 406.

Other suggestions using Hebrew letters:

Caesar of Rome (616)  
Caesar of the Romans  
Trajan (A.D. 97-117)  
Primal chaos (377; Gunkel)

Other kinds of suggestions

Historical characters:

Mohammed  
Pope Benedict IX  
Luther  
Hitler  
Kissinger

Numerical computations:

666 = sum of all Roman numerals except M: DCLXVI,  
thus the total power of Rome

666 = a “triangular number”: sum of all numbers of 1  
through 36;  $36 = 6 \times 6$ , with 6 as the “number of  
man”; the word “beast, in an evil sense” is in  
Revelation 36 times (Smith, p. 207)

6 is the number of man; 666 is the ultimate number of  
man—false trinity (Satan, Antichrist, False Prophet)

Symbolical appearance of number:

The Greek letters  $\chi \xi \varsigma$  (*chi, xi, sigma*), are the first and  
last letters of the word Christ ( $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$  *christos*),  
with the serpentine letter in the middle (Smith, p.  
207)

General interpretation:

666 is simply the number the Antichrist will choose, for  
some unstated reason

The last interpretation seems most attractive, except that the number 666 seems to refer to a man's name, known to John's readers (vv. 17b-18). Perhaps the Antichrist was thought of as an antitype of Nero.

### c. Many of those in heaven, 14:1-13

#### vv. 1-5, The 144,000 again

Described earlier in 7:3-8

Standing with the Lamb on Mt. Zion

Could be heaven (v. 3; cf. Heb 12:22)

But sealed in 7:3; thus not killed? (cf. 9:4)

Could be Jerusalem (at end of tribulation, Walvoord)

Seems better to be heaven, since they are in sight of the throne and elders, etc., v. 3.

Lamb's and Father's names (not Father's name only, as KJV) now on foreheads too; cf. 7:3

v. 3, New song; cf. 2:17; 5:9

v. 4, These servants undefiled:

Virgins (*παρθένοι parthenoi*)

Constantly with Lamb

Offered as firstfruits to God

No lie

Blameless, without moral blemish (contra 2 Pet 2:13)

ἄμωμος *amomos* (blameless; cf. Walvoord):

Eph 1:4, without blame

Eph 5:27; 1 Pet 1:19, without blemish

Col 1:22, unblamable

Heb 9:14, without spot  
Jude 24, faultless

vv. 6-13, Angels in heaven

Declare the doom of Babylon

vv. 6-7, Another flying angel (10:1, angel; cf. 8:13, eagle)

Good tidings

Judgment hour coming

Worship God

v. 8, Second angel

Babylon is fallen

Babylon probably represents Rome; cf. 1 Pet 5:13

Joyous form of expression

Cf. Rev 17-18, which give details of the city's fall

vv. 9-12, Third angel

Wrath-wine for followers of beast

Eternal torment for them

This gives patience to the saints

v. 13, Heavenly voice

Dead in Lord are blessed

“From now on,” time of John or time of vision

Will yet die, although called “dead” already

Rest from labors (*kopos*, the process)

Works follow them (*ergon*, the result)

Cf. 1 Cor 15:58 for *ergon* and *kopos*

#### **d. The earth reaped, 14:14-20**

(Fulfillment of Joel 3, esp. vv. 2, 9-17)

##### The first reaping, vv. 14-16

v. 14, The crowned reaper, probably Christ at second coming, “like a son of man,” but perhaps an angel (cf. v. 17)

v. 15, “Another angel”; cf. 14:6

Harvest “ripe, dried up (of grain),” ξηραίνω *kseraino*, aorist inceptive, “it is high time to reap” (Beckwith)

v. 16, Earth reaped

##### The second reaping (grapes), vv. 17-20

No mercy for earth, even the gleanings taken; cf. Obad. 5; note contrast with mercy for Jews in Isa 17:6

v. 17, A third angel

v. 18, A fourth angel

Power over fire; cf. 16:8, sun

Grapes (fully) ripe

ἀκμάζω *akmazo*, be ripe (hapax)

v. 19, Grapes cast into winepress of God’s wrath

Isa 63:2-3; Rev 19:13

v. 20, To bridles

Splattered

1600 stadia

1 stade = ca. 607 ft.

1600 stadia = ca. 184 miles

Note length of Holy Land itself, ca. 150 miles

This description, coming at the end of the series of trumpets, seems to point to the second coming of Christ, and the Battle of Armageddon. It would support the concurrent interpretation, with all three series ending with the coming of Christ. John now saw the third series of judgments, the bowls.

#### **4. The seven bowls, ch. 15-16**

As with the seals and trumpets, John sees first the heavenly preparation for the judgments, and then the judgments themselves.

##### **a. Preparation in heaven, ch. 15**

v. 1, Seven angels

vv. 2-4, Tribulation saints sing songs of Moses and of the Lamb

Song of Moses, Exod 15:1-19; esp. Deut 32:1-43; cf. Ps 90:16)

Deut 32 pointed to the future (note v. 43); it promises that God will bring his people back to the land and will take vengeance on their and his enemies.

Song of Lamb, objective genitive, esp. v. 4

v. 5, Heavenly temple opened (11:19)

v. 6, Seven angels dressed in linen

ASV, “stone,” λίθον *lithon*; but UBS has λίνον *linon*, with a {B} rating; cf. 19:8, linen

vv. 7-8, Bowls distributed

Smoke implies direct divine participation; end is near

## **b. The bowls poured out, ch. 16**

v. 1, Command from God

### Bowl #1, Sores, v. 2

Only unbelievers; cf. Exod 9:10 (6<sup>th</sup> plague; NIV “festering boils”)

### Bowl #2, Sea becomes blood, v. 3

Cf. 8:8-9; 1/3 blood (2<sup>nd</sup> trumpet)

Cf. Exod 7:20-21 (Nile becomes blood, 1<sup>st</sup> plague)

### Bowl #3, Rivers and springs become blood, vv. 4-7

(not in Exodus plagues)

v. 5, “angel of the waters”; cf. winds (7:1-3) and fire (14:18)

God righteous, poetic justice

v. 7, altar speaks; cf. 6:9, souls under the altar

### Bowl #4, Sun scorches people, vv. 8-9

Cf. 7:16

### Bowl #5, Darkness, vv. 10-11

Poured out on throne of beast

Cf. 9<sup>th</sup> plague in Egypt, Exod 10:21-23

### Bowl #6, Euphrates dried, army gathered, vv. 12-16

v. 12, Euphrates dried, for eastern armies

Similar to 6th trumpet, 9:13-19

vv. 13-14, Frog-spirits

From dragon, from Antichrist, from False Prophet

Unclean spirits = demons, v. 14

Note the evil trinity

Spirits have separate existence, raise the army

“The great day of God”; cf. “the day of Yahweh,” Joel 2:31 - 3:2; Amos 5:18-20

v. 15, Parenthesis: be prepared for Christ’s coming

Cf. 1 Thess 5:2-4; warnings in Olivet Discourse

v. 16, Armageddon = Ἄρμαγεδών *harmagedon*

Hebrew מְגִדּוֹן ~ הַר *har m<sup>e</sup>giddōn* (mountain of Megiddo)

Megiddo has two spellings in Hebrew: *m<sup>e</sup>giddōn* and *m<sup>e</sup>giddō* (without the final *n*); and three spellings in Greek literature: Μαγεδδῶ *mageddo*, Μακεδῶ *makedo*, and Μαγεδῶ *magedo*.

This mountain commands the plain of Esdraelon. It may also be referred to by Joel, who mentions “the valley of decision,” and “the valley of Jehoshaphat” (Joel 3:2, 9-14).

#### Bowl #7, Earthquake and hail, vv. 17-21

v. 17, Voice from throne in temple, “It is done!”; cf. Christ in John 19:30

vv. 18-20, Greatest earthquake

v. 19, “The great city” (cf. 11:8—Jerusalem)

Context indicates it could be “Babylon” (= Rome), or perhaps Jerusalem (since followed by *καί kai* and “the cities of the Gentiles”); cf. 1/10 of Jerusalem at the sixth trumpet (11:13)

Babylon remembered, ch. 18

v. 21, Great hail

Bigger than that of Egypt (7<sup>th</sup> plague, Exod 9:22-26)

One talent = 75.6 pounds (*ZPEB*)

Cf. seventh trumpet, 11:19

## **5. Destruction of Babylon, ch. 17-18**

There is a question as to how many Babylons are in view. Many assume that Babylon in ch. 17 is an apostate religious system, while in ch. 18 it is a commercial system. It seems better to take the Babylon in Revelation as one thing, especially in ch. 17-18. These two chapters follow the OT pattern of prophecy and lament. Revelation and Ezekiel are very similar in several ways; one is the use of prophecy and associated lament. Compare these examples from Ezekiel:

Ezek. 26, prophecy against Tyre  
Ezek. 27, lament over Tyre

Ezek. 28:1-10, prophecy against king of Tyre  
Ezek. 28:11-19, lament over king of Tyre

Ezek. 29, prophecy against Egypt  
Ezek. 30, lament over Egypt

Ezek. 31, prophecy against Pharaoh  
Ezek. 32, lament over Pharaoh

In the same way:

Rev. 17, prophecy against Babylon  
Rev. 18, lament over Babylon

### **a. Prophecy against Babylon, ch. 17**

Babylon mentioned already: 14:8; 16:19

Characteristics of the woman:

- A prostitute, v. 1 (unlike woman in ch. 12)
- Rich, v. 4
- Rules over kings, v. 18
- Kills the saints, v. 6
- Destroyed by the Antichrist and ten kings, v. 16
- Identified with a city, v. 18; apparently Rome (cf. v. 9)

vv. 1-6, John's vision of the prostitute

v. 1, Judgment coming

Great prostitute, v. 2; 18:3

Waters, v. 15

v. 2, Kings' adultery, v. 4; 14:8; 18:3, 9

Cf. Tyre as a prostitute (Jer 51:7)

v. 3, Supported by beast

Beast = Antichrist (cf. vv. 16, 18)

v. 5, Babylon

“Mystery”—part of title? Yes: NKJV, NIV; No: NASB, RSV

The city, v. 18; 16:19

Figurative? cf. 1 Pet 5:13; apparently; does not fit the literal city only; includes system

v. 6, Prostitute persecutes saints; cf. kings in v. 14

vv. 7-18, Interpretation of the vision

v. 8, Beast reappears; v. 11; 13:3

v. 9, Seven heads = seven mountains

Two meanings: (1) Rome, city of seven hills

(2) seven kings or kingdoms, parallel to v. 10

Ladd takes the hills to have the same significance as the kings or empires.

vv. 10-11, Expanded interpretation of seven heads

Kings = kingdoms (cf. Dan 7:17, “kings”)

Kingdoms ruling over Israel (in Scripture):

#1-5	5 fallen:	Egypt Assyria Babylon Media-Persia Greece
#6	1 is:	Rome
#7	Other to come:	Renewed Roman empire (10 kings)
#8	Antichrist:	Of the 7 <sup>th</sup> , is the 8 <sup>th</sup>

Preterite interpreters (and others) try to link these kings to the Caesars; e.g., Beckwith, pp. 395-96, 704-05. Note his various arrangements charted:

Julius Caesar	1	1		
Augustus	2	2	1	1
Tiberius	3	3	2	2
Caligula	4	4	3	3
Claudius	5	5	4	4
Nero	6	6	5	5
Galba	7		6	
Otho	8		7	
Vitellius			8	
Vespasian		7		6
Titus		8		7
Domitian				8

Note that Beckwith shows four schemes, depending on whether one begins the series with Julius Caesar or Augustus (who was the first emperor?), and on whether one includes the three men who ruled during a period of unusual turmoil—Galba, Otho, and Vitellius. Beckwith himself prefers the fourth column, starting with Augustus, and not including the three men. He thinks John wrote during the time of Domitian, from the perspective of the time of Vespasian, looking for the revived Nero, who was Domitian.

v. 12, Short seventh kingdom

10 kings (cf. Dan 2, 7; Rev 13:1), still in future to John

v. 13, Ten kings give power to beast

Cf. Dan 7:7-8, 20-25

Ten kings maintain figurehead positions (vv. 14, 16-17)

v. 14, Final destruction of ten kings

At battle of Armageddon (16:14)

vv. 15-17, Ten kings will destroy prostitute Babylon (city)

v. 18, Babylon the great city ruling the kings

Rome—natural to John

But since the prostitute is pictured as ruling the other kings (not the 10 kings), it leads to the idea of a Satanic system of power and deception, the “spirit of Babel-Babylon” (cf. 1 Cor 10:20).

## **b. Lament over Babylon, ch. 18**

Following the OT prophetic pattern, John writes a suitable lament for the fallen city, contrasting the glory of its former estate (with suitable poetic hyperbole) with its wretchedness following its destruction. Some of the language is borrowed from the prophets; cf. Isa 13; 21:9; Jer 51:8, and from the style of Ezekiel.

vv. 1-3, Declaration of authoritative angel

vv. 4-8, Second declaration (another voice)

v. 4, Warning to believers (same as Isa 48:20; 52:11; Jer 50:8; 51:6, 9, 45; 2 Cor 6:17)

v. 8, Sudden destruction, v. 10, 17, 19

vv. 9-20, The world's lament

v. 9, Kings lament

v. 11, Merchants lament

v. 17b, Shipmasters and sailors lament

v. 20, Saints rejoice

vv. 21-24, Final declaration against Babylon

v. 21, Stone sink in water; cf. Jer 51:63

v. 24, God brings vengeance, reason for destruction (19:2)

## **C. The return of Christ, ch. 19**

All three series of judgments have led up to this point—the coming of Jesus at his Parousia (παρουσία *parousia*), or his Revelation (ἀποκάλυψις *apokalupsis*). He returns as the king, to inherit and occupy his kingdom. In the process he destroys and judges his enemies, and exalts his faithful ones. As with the other great events in this book, John first speaks of a heavenly preparation.

### **1. Preparation in heaven, 19:1-10**

Section begins at end of tribulation (μετὰ ταῦτα *meta tauta*, “after these things,” 19:1)

First song, vv. 1-2

Great multitude in heaven

God is righteous

Great prostitute judged; cf. 17:17; 18:8

Servants avenged; cf. 6:10-11; 17:6

Second song, v. 3

Same multitude

Eternal destruction for prostitute; smoke; cf. 17:16; 18:9, 18

Third song, v. 4

24 elders and 4 living creatures

Worship

“Amen, Hallelujah”

Command for more praise, v. 5

Voice from throne

All to praise God

Fourth song, vv. 6-8

Multitude, waters, thunders

God Almighty reigns (on earth)

Rejoice, glorify God (v. 5)

Marriage of the lamb

Lamb = Jesus Christ

Wife = believers, as seen by New Jerusalem (21:2)

cf. Ezek 16:8; 2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:25-27, 32

Wife makes herself ready

Fine linen, righteous acts of saints (cf. v. 14)

Perhaps implies judgment past (1 Cor 3:13-15; 2 Cor 5:10)

Brides (and grooms) always elaborately dressed; brides have veil until entering chamber

Instruction to write, v. 9

The wedding supper

Normally held at house of bride's father (as in Luke 12:36; phps. John 2:1-11)

Then a procession to groom's house

Then often a feast at the groom's house (Matt 25:1, 10)

For details, see Alfred Edersheim, *Jewish Social Life*, pp. 150-55

John not to worship the angel, v. 10

Phps. same angel as in 17:1

## **2. The Battle of Armageddon, 19:11-21**

—To follow the tribulation (Matt 24:21, 27-31)

vv. 11-16, Description of Christ

v. 11, White horse (different from Antichrist's in 6:2)

“Faithful, true” — true to covenants

“Justice” — just in punishment

v. 12, Deity and power

v. 13, Blood on robe

Text variant:

βεβαμμένον *bebammenon*, pf. part. of βάπτω *bapto*, “dyed, stained” UBS {B}

forms of ραντίζω *rhantizo*, “sprinkled”

Best translation not “dipped” (as KJV, NIV), but “spattered, dyed”; speaks of result, not mode

cf. Isa 63:1-3; Rev 14:20

𐤒𐤒𐤁 *nāzāh*, Q. spatter

𐤂𐤍𐤁𐤀 *gā'al*, H. pollute, stain

The Word of God (John 1:1; cf. Heb 4:12-13)

v. 14, Armies of heaven follow

Angels (perhaps also saints)

v. 15, Sword from mouth

Isa 11:4; 2 Thess 2:8 (cf. use of these passages by Allan A. MacRae in pamphlet  
“The Millennial Kingdom of Christ”)

Rule with iron scepter (cf. 12:5; Ps 2:9)

Winepress (14:19-20; Isa 63:1-6; Joel 3:13)

v. 16, King of Kings

Cf. 17:14; reason for Antichrist’s opposition

vv. 17-18, Invitation to the birds

Angel in the sun

Cf. after Gog and Magog, Ezek 39:17-20

Cf. saying of Christ, Matt 24:28

vv. 19-21, Christ’s victory

v. 19, Armies assembled (16:16)

Apparently Antichrist has initial victories against Jerusalem, but is now  
overcome there too (Zech 14:1-4); Jews join in the fight (Zech 12:1-10)

v. 20, Beast, false prophet cast into lake of fire

First inhabitants?

v. 21, Armies of Antichrist killed, birds eat bodies

Thus Christ’s kingdom demolishes those of this world (as in Dan 2:34-35).

## **D. Millennium and judgment, ch. 20**

### **1. *Satan bound, 20:1-3***

v. 1, Key of abyss (cf. 9:1)

v. 2, Dragon identified

Angel has power over him (cf. 12:7-9)

1000 years; six occurrences in passage:

- v. 2, Satan bound 1000 years
- v. 3, Satan loosed after 1000 years
- v. 4, Reign with Christ 1000 years
- v. 5, Rest lived not until 1000 years over
- v. 6, Reign with Christ 1000 years
- v. 7, After 1000 years Satan loosed

It is best to take the 1000 years literally, as the 3½ years and the 42 months, etc. A problem for amillennialists is how to interpret the 1000 years as a long time, if Jesus had come early (cf. 22:20). For an amillennial interpretation, see P. E. Hughes, *Interpreting Prophecy*, pp. 125-26. Interesting debate in Robert G. Clouse, ed., *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views*, pp. 32-38 (Ladd, premillennial) and 156-72 (Hoekema, amillennial), with rebuttals following.

Angel binds Satan with chain

v. 3, Satan in the abyss

Deceive nations no more for the 1000 years (vv. 8, 10)

12:9, deceiver of whole world; 19:20, followers of beast deceived; cf. 2 Thess 2:9-12

Christ's death and resurrection, guaranteed Satan's destruction (esp. Heb 2:14-15; John 12:31; cf. Rev 12:11; possibly Col 2:15)

But Satan still deceiving nations (2 Cor 4:4; 1 Pet 5:8; cf. Rev 13:14; 16:13-14; 19:19; cf. 20:7-8)

Many amillennialists teach that Satan now is bound, and is not now deceiving the nations, in that the gospel is preached to all nations (Matt 12:28-29; 28:18-19a; John 12:31-32; Acts 14:16; 17:30; cf. Hughes, *Interpreting Prophecy*, pp. 110-12). However, this interpretation is countered by these arguments:

1. Christ has authority, but is not yet employing it fully and openly in the world.
2. The gospel was open to Gentiles before Christ.
3. Satan still deceives the nations (see above).
4. The gospel was given to the Gentiles *en masse* only when the Jews rejected it (Matt 21:43; passages in Acts; Rom 11:11-32).
5. The amillennial scheme often must employ excessive and subjective allegorism in both the OT and the NT.

## **2. The millennial kingdom, 20:4-6**

### v. 4, Resurrection and millennial reign of the saints

Two groups: faithful people, martyrs

Special emphasis on tribulation saints, but all Christians (believers) included (Matt 19:28; Dan 7:27; also Rev 2:26; 3:21; 5:9-10)

“Jesus said to them, ‘I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.’” (Matt 19:28)

“Souls,” plural of ψυχή *psuche*

Can mean disembodied spirits (Rev 6:9), but often mean “people,” as in Acts 2:41; 1 Pet 3:20

“They lived”

Aorist ἐξήσαν *ezesan*, implies resurrection (not spiritual life only, since used of unbelievers in next verse)

Apparent order: resurrection, then reigning 1000 years

### v. 5, Unbelievers not in the first resurrection

Unbelievers “lived” not until after 1000 years (20:12-13)

“First resurrection”

Not the soul going to heaven, or only Christ’s resurrection (as in Hughes, pp. 119, 121); these items not in view in Rev 20:5

The Bible sometimes views the resurrections of all as a unit in point of time (John 5:28-29) or even in substance (Acts 24:15). Matt 25:31-46 should not be used, since it refers to Christ’s judging the nations at the beginning of his kingdom, not to the resurrection.

But the most detailed passages indicate separate resurrections for the just and the unjust (Dan 12:2; John 5:28-29 [exegeted carefully]; 1 Cor 15:23-24; 1 Thess 4:16-17 [implied]; Rev 20:5, 11-15).

Note especially the comparison of terms of Rev 20:5-6 with those in John 5:28-29:

<u>John 5</u>		<u>Rev. 20</u>
Resurrection of life	=	First resurrection
Resurrection of judgment	=	Second death

John does not call the resurrection of the unjust the second resurrection, because of its great difference in quality from the first resurrection. “Resurrection” is a more positive word (Acts 23:6; Php 3:11); and John considers here the word “death” to be more appropriate for the lost, since they will be raised to condemnation.

v. 6, Believers exempt from the second death

Second death; cf. v. 14; 2:11 (Smyrna); 21:8

Priests, and reign with Christ

Fulfillment of prophecy:

Mosaic covenant—Exod 19:5-6; Isa 32:1; 61:6

Church promise—1 Pet 2:5, 9

Cf. Rev 3:21; 5:10; 20:4; 22:5

### **3. Battle of Gog and Magog, 20:7-10**

vv. 7-8, Satan loosed to deceive nations again

Cf. v. 3; shows what deception will be in particular: fighting the Lamb

Gog and Magog

Cf. Gen 10:2 (Magog a descendant of Japheth)

Same as Ezek 38-39; they attack when Israel is peaceful and prosperous (38:8, 10-12, 14-16; Zech 2:5, a city without walls); seems to fit better at the end of the millennium than at the end of the tribulation

v. 9, God destroys Gog and Magog, using fire

Cf. Ezek 38:18-19, 22; 39:6

Birds eat remains (39:4, 17-20)

Similar to Battle of Armageddon (Rev 19:17-18, 21; note argument of Jay Adams, *The Time Is at Hand* [1976], who identifies them as the same event)

v. 10, Satan cast into hell

Beast and false prophet there, v. 10; 19:20

Many unbelievers there, Matt 25:41

Eternal torment, as other will have (Rev 14:10-11)

### **4. Great white throne judgment, 20:11-15**

v. 11, No rainbow (cf. 4:2-3)

Dreadful holiness of God, as in Isa 6:1-5

vv. 12-13, Resurrection to damnation

From sea, from death, from Hades

Judged by works only (cf. Eccl 12:14)

Not in book of life (v. 15; contra 3:5; 13:8; 17:8)

v. 14, Death and Hades destroyed

Last enemy, 1 Cor 15:23-26

Second death = hell

v. 15, All unsaved go to hell

Lake of fire: 1) Antichrist, Rev 19:20  
2) False prophet, Rev 19:20  
3) Wicked nations, Matt 25:41, 46 (possibly same as #6)  
----[millennium]----  
4) Satan, Rev 20:10  
5) Unholy angels, Jude 6; 2 Pet 2:4  
6) Remaining unbelievers, Rev 20:15  
7) Death and Hades, Rev 20:14 (1 Cor 15:26)

## **E. The new order, ch. 21 - 22:5**

### **1. New heavens and new earth, 21:1-8**

v. 1, Vision of new heavens and earth

The new heavens and earth in Revelation, compared with the OT prophecies, seems to include both the millennium and the future ages.

Isa 65:17, millennium (vv. 17-25)

Isa 66:22, permanent (cf. v. 24, dead bodies)

2 Pet 3:13, “according to promise,” follows day of the Lord and dissolution of old earth and heavens, must include millennium

“No more sea”

OT considered Rahab-Leviathan-Sea (𐤓𐤁𐤁 *yām*) combination to be evil, restraining God’s purpose and order (cf. Job 26:12-13; Ps 74:13-15; Isa 27:1 [in Isaiah’s apocalypse]; 51:9-10 [referring to the exodus]).

v. 2, New Jerusalem

The bride, v. 9

Cf. 3:12; Heb 11:16

v. 3, Tabernacle with men

God's presence restored in the theocracy (Lev 26:11-12)

v. 4, All sorrow past (for believers)

v. 5, Promises to be believed

v. 6, Water of life (cf. 22:1)

Cf. "living water" in Jer 2:13; 17:13; Zech 14:8; John 4:10-11; 7:38; Rev 7:17

vv. 7-8, Opposite destinies for righteous and wicked

## **2. New Jerusalem, 21:9-27**

v. 9, The city as a bride, 19:7-9

v.10, New Jerusalem (Heb 11:10 – 12:22)

v. 12, Twelve tribes of Israel on twelve gates

Ezek 48:31-34 (the gates here have a different arrangement from the tribes' encampment in Num 2—a different order; Joseph's tribe is divided; and Levi is not included)

v. 14, Twelve apostles on twelve wall foundations

Apostles are not listed here (old question: Matthias or Paul?)

v. 16, 12,000 stadia

Plural form στάδιοι *stadioi*, stades = *ca.* 607 ft.; 12,000 stades = 1,380 miles

New laws of physics – a body that large normally would become spherical through the force of its own gravity

[The moon is about 3,000 miles in diameter]

v. 17, Wall 144 cubits thick (12 X 12; *cf.* the 144,000)

= about 200 feet thick

Angel, using same dimension as a man

vv. 18-21, Materials used

v. 22, No temple

Sheds light on OT millennial passages which show perpetual temple and ritual; must be perpetual “until the time of reformation” (Heb 9:10)

v. 23, No sun, moon, etc.

Cf. v. 11; 22:5

Isa 24:23, while wicked imprisoned

Isa 60:19-20, millennial passage

Zech 14:7, after Christ’s return

vv. 24-26, Nations honor God, his people, his city

Isa 60:3-5; many other passages

v. 27, Only regenerate people allowed in the city

### **3. Life in the new order, 22:1-5**

vv. 1-2, River of water of life (Ezek 47:1-12; Zech 14:8)

Tree(s) of life (ξύλον *xulon*, 2:7; 22:2, 14, 19; Gen 2:9)

Leaves for healing (Ezek 47:12)

v. 3, No curse (Gen 3:17; Rom 8:20-23)

Zech 14:11, as in Hebrew, ASV, NASB, RSV (“no more curse”); not KJV, NIV, NRSV (“never again will it be destroyed”)

We will serve God; we will not be idle (δοῦλοι *douloi*, “servants”; λατρεύω *latreuo*, “serve”)

v. 4, Saints forever identified with Jesus

v. 5, God the eternal light

Eternal kingdom and rule