

1 Thessalonians 4:13 -5:11

Matthew 24: 15-44

Eschatology / ˌɛskəˈtɒlədʒi/ (from the Greek ἔσχατος/ἐσχάτη/ἔσχατον, *eschatos/eschatē/eschaton* meaning "last" and *-logy* meaning "the study of", first used in English around 1550)^[1] is a part of theology, philosophy, and futurology concerned with what are believed to be the final events in history, or the ultimate destiny of humanity, commonly referred to as the end of the world or the World to Come. The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as "concerned with 'the four last things: death, judgment, heaven, and hell'".

Most modern eschatology and apocalypticism, both religious and secular, involves the violent disruption or destruction of the world. The **end time**, **end times**, or **end of days** is a time period described in the eschatological writings in the three Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) and in doomsday scenarios in various other non-Abrahamic religions, whereas Christian and Jewish eschatologies view the end times as the consummation or perfection of God's creation of the world. For example, according to ancient Hebrew belief, life takes a linear (and not cyclical) path; the world began with God and is constantly headed toward God's final goal for creation.

Buddhist eschatology

Some forms of Buddhism hold belief in cycles in which life span of human beings changes according to human nature. There is relationship between life span of human being and behaviour. As per this sutta, in the past unskillful behavior was unknown among the human race. As a result, people lived for an immensely long time — 80,000 years — endowed with great beauty, wealth, pleasure, and strength. Over the course of time, though, they began behaving in various unskillful ways. This caused the human life span gradually to shorten, to the point where it now stands at 100 years, with human beauty, wealth, pleasure, and strength decreasing proportionately. In the future, as morality continues to degenerate, human life will continue to shorten to the point where the normal life span is 10 years, with people reaching sexual maturity at five^l

Hindu Eschatology

Contemporary Hindu eschatology is linked in the Vaishnavite tradition to the figure of Kalki, or the tenth and last avatar of Vishnu before the age draws to a close, and Shiva simultaneously dissolves and regenerates the universe.

Most Hindus believe that we are living in the Kali Yuga, the last of four periods (*Yuga*) that make up the current age. Each period has seen a successive degeneration in the moral order and character of human beings, to the point that in the Kali Yuga quarrel and hypocrisy are prevalent..

However, Hindu conceptions of time, like those found in other non-Western traditions, are cyclical in that one age may end but another will always begin. As such, the cycle of birth, growth, decay, death, and renewal at the individual level finds its echo in the cosmic order of all things.

Most Hindus believe that Shiva will destroy the world at the end of the kalpa. Some Shaivites hold the view that he is incessantly destroying and creating the world

Islamic Eschatology

Is concerned with the al-Qiyāmah (Last Judgement). Like the other Abrahamic religions, Islam teaches the bodily resurrection of the dead, the fulfillment of a divine plan for creation, and the judgement of the soul; the righteous are rewarded with the pleasures of Jannah (Heaven) while the unrighteous are punished in Jahannam (Hell). .

Christian Eschatology

Eschatology, from two Greek words meaning *last* (ἔσχατος, last) and *study* (λογία, lit. discourse), is the study of the end of things, whether the end of an individual life, the end of the age, or the end of the world. Broadly speaking, Christian eschatology is the study of the destiny of man as it is revealed in the Bible, which is the primary source for all Christian eschatology studies.

The major issues and events in Christian eschatology are: death and the afterlife, heaven and hell, the return of Jesus, the resurrection of the dead, the rapture, the tribulation, the millennium, the end of the world, the last judgment, and the new heaven and new earth of the World to Come.

Differing Interpretative Views

- The *Preterist* approach (from the Latin *praeteritus* meaning *gone by*) seeks parallels between *Revelation* and the events of the first century, such as Herod's attempt to kill the infant Christ, the struggle of Christianity to survive the persecutions of Judaism and the Roman Empire, the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD, the desecration of the temple in the same year, and the growth of Christianity from a sect within Judaism to an independent religion. In other words, they see the entire book of revelation as being in the past or fulfilled. It allows no real future fulfillment of any of the judgments.
- The *Historicist* method takes a broader panoramic historical approach (from apostolic times to present age) and seeks parallels between *Revelation* and the major people and events of history, especially those that directly affected Israel and the Church. In other words, it looks for the fulfillment of these prophecies throughout history. Speculation has led to theories, such as: Martin Luther as Angel of Sardis and Adolf Hitler as the Red Horse, etc.
- The *Idealist* model, also known as *Spiritualist* or *Symbolic*, approaches the images of *Revelation* as symbols that represent larger themes and concepts, rather than actual people and events. It sees in *Revelation* an allegorical representation of the ongoing struggle of the forces of light and darkness, and the ultimate triumph of good over evil. This fact limits its application to eschatology, unless used in combination with the other approaches.
- The *Futurist* method approaches *Revelation* as chiefly referring to events that have not come to pass, but that will take place at the end of this age and at the end of the world. The main focus is the return of Christ. It is the only one that grants sufficient recognition to the prophetic style of the book and a normal hermeneutical pattern of interpretation based on that style. It views the book as focusing on the last periods of world history and outlining the various events and relationships to one another. This is the approach that most applies to eschatological studies.

- **Historical Premillennialism:** This belief was held by a large percentage of Christians "*during the first three centuries of the Christian era, and is found in the works of Papias, Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Methodius, Commodianus, and Lactantius.*" Christianity became the official religion of Rome in the fourth century CE. Premillennialism was declared a heresy at the Council of Ephesus (431). Amillennialism soon became the prevailing doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church and premillennialism was suppressed.
- **Dispensational Premillennialism:** (a.k.a. **Dispensationalism**) Premillennialism, declared a heresy in ancient times, was reintroduced circa 1830. Most people credit John N. Darby with its resurrection. He was a minister of the *Church of Ireland*, a denomination in the Anglican communion, and the founder of the *Plymouth Brethren*. Premillennialism received general acceptance by most Fundamentalists and other Evangelical Christians after the publishing of the Scofield Reference Bible in 1909. As in *Historic Premillennialism*, the Tribulation is believed to precede the second coming of Christ, and the subsequent establishment of the millennial kingdom -- a thousand-year golden age on Earth. The *Final Judgment* follows the millennium. But, theologians are divided over the timing of the Rapture.

Pre-Tribulation, Mid-Tribulation and Post-Tribulation explanations. Calvary is Pre-Trib.

- **Amillennialism:** (Also sometimes referred to as **nonmillennialism, nunc-millennialism, or realized millennialism**). Amillennialists believe that the millennium is not an actual physical realm on Earth. They do not believe that it will last 1,000 years. Rather it began at the time of Pentecost (circa 30 CE) and is currently active in the world today through the presence of the heavenly reign of Christ, the Bible, the Holy Spirit and the activities of Christian faith groups. Both good and evil will continue in the world during this time. Lawlessness, a falling away from the Church, and persecution of Christians will increase in magnitude. Finally, the current *Church Age* will end suddenly at Christ's second coming. A type of Rapture will happen when Christ returns: believers will rise to meet Jesus in the sky. All will then shortly return to Earth. The Day of Judgment will then occur. Events described in *The Olivet Discourse* (Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21) and in most of the book of Revelation are seen as occurrences which have already happened, or which are symbolic in nature and not to be taken literally. The Antichrist is looked upon figuratively and not as a real person.

- This belief was held by many leaders of the early Christian church during the first and second centuries. Simultaneously, other leaders -- perhaps the majority -- taught a version of premillennialism that is very different from today's dispensational premillennialism. St. Augustine (354 - 430 CE), often called the "Father of Amillennialism" was largely responsible for the establishment of amillennialism as the formal church belief. It remained the generally accepted system throughout Christianity until after the Reformation in the 16th century. Many Christian denominations -- including the Anglican Communion, Disciples of Christ, Lutheran, Orthodox, Reformed, Roman Catholic, and some Baptists continue to teach Amillennialism.

- **Postmillennialism:** (Also known as "**Christian Reconstruction**", "**Kingdom Now Theology**" and "**Dominion Theology.**") This belief arose during the early 19th century CE. According to author Loraine Boettner, Postmillennialism involves "*that view of last things which holds that the kingdom of God is now being extended in the world through the preaching of the gospel and the saving work of the Holy Spirit, that the world eventually is to be Christianized, and that the return of Christ will occur at the close of a long period of righteousness and peace, commonly called the millennium.*" The theory is based on the perception of a gradual movement towards social perfection. They predicted that a massive religious revival, spiritual awakening and purification would occur. The entire human race is converted to Christianity, including the Jews. A millennium of peace and righteousness follows. After the millennium, Jesus returns to earth, resurrects the dead believers, and conducts the last judgment. The Rapture and Tribulation are largely ignored.

Conclusion: I will approach the remaining time as a Christian Eschatologist, supporting a literal interpretation to Biblical Prophecy.

Christian Eschatological Timeline

I. Signs of the End

A. Signs indicating God's judgment (Matthew 24:6-8; Mark 13:7-8; Luke 21:9-11, 25-26; Joel 2:30-31).

1. Wars, Earthquakes and Famines

B. Signs indicating opposition to God

1. Persecution (Matthew 24:9; Mark 13:9-13; Luke 21:12-19; see also Matt. 5:10-12; John 15:18-20; 16:33; 2 Timothy 3:1-9)

2. Apostasy (Falling away) (Matthew 24:10-12, 24; Mark 13:22; 1 Timothy 4:1; Luke 21:34-36; 2 Thessalonians 2:3)

3. Antichrist

- a. Many antichrists (Matthew 24:5,23-24; Mark 13:6, 21-22; Luke 21:8; 1 John 2:18,22; 4:3; 2 John 7)

- b. The One Antichrist (Daniel 7:8,11,20-21,24-25; 11:36-45; 2 Thessalonians 2; 1 John 2:18; 4:3; Revelation 17-18)

The New Testament teaches two things about antichrist. First, it teaches that Christians have faced and will face many antichrists, i.e., all those who claim to be Christ (the Greek anti means "in place of") and hence, oppose Him (See Scriptural references in the verses in the outline above). Second, the Bible teaches that there will be one, climactic Antichrist, at the end of time, though his "spirit" was already on the scene at the time of John (see 1 John 2:18; 4:3; 2 Thessalonians 2; see also the references to the "beast" in Revelation 17-18, which many exegetes regard as referring to the Antichrist). His coming will indicate that the end is near. In 2 Thessalonians 2 and 1 John 2,4 we find the marks of this Antichrist, by which he can be identified:

C. Sign Indicating God's Grace!

The proclamation of the Gospel to all nations (Matthew 24:14; Mark 13:10)

D. Signs of His Coming

The signs will not necessarily be miraculous or spectacular. The very fact that Jesus and the apostles constantly urge us to be watchful, indicates that the signs will appear somewhat normal to the uninformed observer. Furthermore, the statement that the "Son of Man" will come as thief in the night (Matthew 24:43-44; 1 Thessalonians 5:2-4; 2 Peter 3:10) and the comparison with the Flood and Sodom and Gomorrah (Luke 17:26-37) also indicate the sudden and unexpected nature of Christ's return. Bottom line: the signs will not be obvious.

No one but God the Father knows the day of Christ's Coming (Matthew 24:36; 1 Thessalonians 5; 2 Peter 3; Acts 1:7). Therefore no one should attempt to calculate the exact day - a fruitless attempt anyway. We are to be prepared for Him to come at any time - not calculate! The reason that Jesus is "taking such a long time to return" is beautifully stated in 2 Peter 3:9: "The Lord is not slow about His promise as some count slowness, but is forbearing toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance."

E. Rapture

The English word rapture is derived from the Latin translation of the verb "caught up" in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 (*rapiemur*). It refers to what Paul describes in 1 Thess. 4:13-18, that all Christians, living and dead, will be caught up (raptured up) to meet Christ in the air. This being caught up is also alluded to in Luke 17:30-35, where Christ tells His disciples, that when the Son of Man is revealed, "one will be taken and the other left."

F. The Tribulation

Following the Rapture will be a period of seven years of chaos and mayhem. War will reign supreme, and the population of the earth will be decimated. This belief is based on a number of verses, in particular a statement of Jesus from the Gospel of Matthew:

Matthew 24:21 (NIV) For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now--and never to be equaled again.

The book of Revelation predicts terrible things for this period: plagues of locusts, diseases of the skin, scorching heat, mountains falling from the sky, rivers of blood, etc. etc. All in all, a thoroughly nasty time to be alive.

G. The Beast A strange character from the book of Revelation, the beast appears to be a world leader who will orchestrate the rebellion against God. Also known as the **antichrist** (based on I John 2:18, although there is no connection between the epistle of First John, and the book of Revelation), he has a number of remarkable qualities. Among these are an apparent resurrection from the dead, following a mortal blow to the head. The beast will require that all humans receive a **mark** in the forehead, or on the right hand. The book of Revelation also includes the enigmatic statement that the "number of the Beast" is 666, thus providing an endless source of amusement for the numerically inclined.

The False Prophet Apparently some sort of religious/governing leader, who will goad the world into worship of the beast.

H. Signs Indicating the Imminence of Christ's Second Advent

1. The Great Tribulation (Daniel 12:1; Ezekiel 38-39; Zechariah 14:1-2; Matthew 24:21, 29-30; Mark 13:14-27; Luke 21:20-28; Revelation 9:13-19; 11:7-10; 16:12-16; 19:19; 20:7-9). This great tribulation is also referred to as Satan's "Little Season," or "Jacob's Trouble".

2. Cataclysmic Signs in the heavens and on the earth (Isaiah 34:4; Matthew 24:29-31; Mark 13:24-25; Luke 21:25-26)

I. The Second Advent of Christ

SURELY the MOST anticipated moment in Scripture is

Over sixty times in the New Testament alone. All 9 New Testament authors mention the Second Coming specifically ... most of them numerous times. And Jesus Himself prophesied it several times (as recorded in the 4 gospels).

Daniel 7.13-14, however, is a clear Old Testament reference to the Second Coming of Jesus. Jesus quoted it Himself as a prophecy of His return (see Matthew 24.30 and 26.64 along with the corresponding passages in Mark and Luke).

1. Christ will come visibly and all people will see Him (Matthew 24:27,30; Luke 17:22-24; 21:27; Mark 13:26; 14:62; Acts 1:11; Revelation 1:7)

2. Christ will come in glory surrounded by the host of His angels (Matthew 13:39-43,49; 16:27; 24:30-31; 25:31; 2 Thessalonians 1:7; Revelation 19:11-14; Titus 2:13; Jude 14,24; 1 Peter 4:13)

J. The Millennium

A thousand-year period, marked by the imprisonment of Satan, and the earthly rule of Christ.

Revelation 20:4-6 I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

K. Armageddon

A word that has entered popular culture, this refers to the final battle between Good and Evil. The book of Revelation states this confrontation will take place in a small valley in Israel, the valley of Megiddo:

Revelation 16:16 Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.

Revelation 19:19-21 Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.

L. The Final Judgment

The beginning of the end: all humans, dead and alive, are presented before the throne of God to receive their final assignments. The righteous are granted a place in Heaven: the unrighteous are consigned to That Other Place.

Revelation 20:11-15 (NIV) Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

M. New Heaven and New Earth

The final result of the Second Coming will be fulfillment of all the promises of the kingdom of God. Satan will be destroyed, and there will be no more sin, suffering or death.

And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever. (NIV, Revelation 20:10)

"As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear." (NIV, Matthew 13:40-43)

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. (NIV, Revelation 21:1-4)

Revelation

A. Introduction –Exegetical Narrative

The book of Revelation deals with the most significant book of prophecy in the Bible and is only challenged by the book of Daniel. Though many have debated on how it should be interpreted, all believers cherish the book of revelation because it gives us hope for the future when God will make “all things new”.

I believe the book of Revelation is the most fascinating book ever written. The reader (with a commentary) is swept up into another time and another place as the panorama of the future unfolds before us. There is something in the human nature that is curious about the future. God speaks to that need in our lives by revealing the future before us.

The central theme is: “The Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave him to show to His bond-servants the things which must shortly take place” (1:1)

Jesus appears in Chapter 1 as the glorified, risen Savior. In chapters (2- 3), He is the Lord of the Church. In chapters (4-5), He is the Lamb of God. In chapters (6-11), he is the Judge of all mankind. In chapters (12-13) He is the miracle born male child. In chapters (14-19) he is the coming King. In chapters (20-22), He is the Lord and King of Heaven and Earth.

Critics often characterize the message as “**Doom and Gloom**”. I would say it is a prophetic message of “**Doom and Boom**”. For the unsaved, bottom line – Bad news – you lose. For the saved, good news – we win!

The general outline that makes senses is as follows:

1. Preface (Chapter 1)
2. Proclamation (Chapters 2-3)
3. Problem (Chapters 4-5)
4. Process (Chapters 6-11)

5. Players (Chapters 12-18)
6. Plagues (Chapters 19-20)
7. Postscript (Chapters 21-22)

The Problem of the entire book in the seven-sealed scroll. The process includes the seven seals and seven trumpets. The plagues are the seven bowls of judgment. (remember this for later). In the middle of the book are the seven players in the great end times.

B. The Keys to Unlocking the Future

The term Revelation means to unveil (uncover) which was previously hidden. It translates the Greek term apokalupis. The book is often known as the Apocalypse.

Other Jewish and Old Testament apocalyptic or prophetic literature can be found in Isaiah 24-27, Ezekiel 38-39, Daniel 7-12, Zechariah 9-14 and parts of Joel, Micah, Zechariah and Malachi

In order to become oriented to the book you must take seriously what the author indicated what happened. John states that he “heard” certain words and “saw” certain visions. This invites the readers to enter into the experience being recounted and to participate through mental imagery.

C. The Themes and Ages of Revelation

1. Themes: The Christ (Chapter 1), The Church (Chapters 2-3) and the Consummation (Chapters 4-22)
2. Ages: Church Age (Chapters 1-3), Tribulation Period (Chapters 4-19), Kingdom Age (Chapter 20) and Eternal State (Chapters 21-22)

D. Nature of the Symbolic Language

The events predicted in revelation are stated in symbolic language. Many come from the Old Testament. In fact, of the 404 verses that are contained in revelation 278 are drawn from the Old Testament. These include, but no exhaustive: Tree of Life, Lion of Judah, Book of Life, Lamb of God, Throne of God and so on...

Some are born of the New Testament, such as: Word of God, “first born of the dead”, Son of Man, marriage supper, the Bride, etc.....

Some terms in the book or revelation have no parallel: mark of the beast, image of the beast, seven thunders, synagogue of Satan, little book, great and white throne.

Other symbols are specifically explained and then identified: Alpha and Omega = Jesus Christ; Seven Lamp stands = Seven Churches; “great day of their wrath” = Great Tribulation; Dragon = Satan; etc.

Other symbols are self explanatory: numbers, angles, seals, trumpets, songs, horses, fire, death and hell, etc.

The key to interpreting the book of Revelation is discerning what is literal and what is symbolic. Remember that the symbols themselves depict real people, things, situations, and events. For example, the seven lamp stands in 1:20 symbolize 7 real churches that existed in Asia Minor or modern day Turkey. Or the Male child in 12:5 is Jesus Christ.

The KEY: The promise: Revelation 1:3 “Blessed is he who reads, and those who hear the words of the prophets, and heed the things which are written in it”

E. Who really Wrote the Book?

John the Apostle on the Isle of Patmos while in exile. It was written in AD 95, some scholars debate this time. Arguments in favor of his writing. Similarities in style and vocabulary with his Gospel and the Epistles.

F. Why is Revelation so Unique?

Several elements make Revelation one of the most unique books in the Bible. The basic structure of the book is woven around a series of three and sevens. For example, the overarching triplet: Past “the things which you have seen” (Chapter 1), Present “the things which are” (Chapters 2-3) and the Future “the things which shall take place after these things” (Chapters 4-22). **The seven visions:**

1. Seven Churches (1:9-3:22)
2. Seven Seals (4:1 – 8:1)
3. Seven Trumpets (8:2 – 11:19)
4. Seven Symbolic Figures (12:1 -14:20)
5. Seven Bowls (15:1 – 16:21)
6. Seven Judgments (17:1 – 19:10)
7. Seven Triumphs (19:11 – 22:5)

The most significant numbers:

Three is the symbolic number of the Trinity. It is one of John’s favorite numbers. He constantly express himself in triplets: For example; “Blessed is he who reads...those who hear...and heed” (1:3); “Jesus Christ the faithful witness...first born of the dead...ruler of the kings of earth” (1:5); I know your tribulation...the poverty...the blasphemy” (2:9) and so on – look for it as your read it again.

Also, the number three is use primarily related in the judgments. Series of judgments: seals, trumpets and bowls. Judgment consists of: fire, smoke, and brimstone. These elements will kill a third of mankind (9:17-18), a third of the trees burned up (8:7). Evil Agencies (satanic trinity): Dragon, beast and false prophet. And, a threefold defeat: Satan on earth (12:9), into the abyss (20:1-3) and finally into the lake of fire (20:10).

Seven is the most significant number in the Apocalypse. There are seven spirits, seven churches, seven lamp stands, seven stars, seven lamps of fire, seven horns, seven eyes, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven bowls, seven angles, seven crowns, seven mountains, seven Kings and seven last plagues. In addition, there is a seven fold description of Christ (1:14:16), sevenfold message to each of the seven churches (2-3), sevenfold praise of the lamb (5:12), sevenfold result of judgment (6:12-14), sevenfold blessing (7:12), sevenfold triumph (11:19) and the seven “new things” (chapters 21-22).

VERY Interesting:

The 3 7's of the 7 3's Signature of the Sevens 21. They are: Seven Churches, Seven Spirits, Seven Lamp Stands, Seven Stars, Seven Lambs of Fire, Seven Seals, Seven Horns, Seven Eyes, Seven Angles, Seven Trumpets, Seven Peals of Thunder, Seven Thousand People, Seven Heads, Seven Diadems, Seven Angles, Seven Plagues, Seven Bowls, Seven Mountains, Seven Kings, Seven Beatitudes and Seven “I am’s” of Christ..

G. So What Lies Ahead? 3 3's

1. Christ appears to John - on Patmos (Chapter 1)
2. He dictates the letters to the seven churches – on earth (Chapters 2-3)
3. John is transported into God's throne room – in heaven (Chapters 4-5)
4. He sees future judgments – from heaven (Chapters 6 – 11)
5. John then sees 7 symbolic players – from heaven and earth (Chapters 12-13)
6. He sees the seven last plagues – from heaven (Chapters 14- 18)
7. John witnesses the marriage of the Lamb in heaven and His triumphal return to earth (Chapter 19)
8. He views the Millennial Kingdom – on earth (Chapter 20)
9. John sees the new heaven and the new earth in eternity (21-22)

I. The Preface - Chapter 1

a. What in the World is Happening?

The divine intruder had come to his despondent, lonely and remaining disciple. He had come with a vision of the future and message of hope and warning for His Church and Israel.

Unlike the Old Testament prophecies that often remained sealed up (Daniel 12:9); the Savior had come to reveal the future (Revelation 22:10)!

John emphasis is Jesus Christ is Chapter 1:

A triple, triplet:

1. (1:5) Faithful Witness, First-born of the dead, Ruler of the Kings of the Earth
2. Faithful Martyr, Risen Savior and King of Kings
3. Also, that he loved us, released us, and made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father

He also emphasizes his officer status in much different in the second advent versus the first advent.

(1: 7-8) “Behold He is coming with the clouds” and then adds a triplet:

1. And every eye will see Him
2. Even those who pierced Him
3. And all the tribes of earth will mourn over Him

The promise is one of future triumph. The slain lamb or lowly servant, humble shepherd or rejected prophet will return as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Philippians 2:10-11 “that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father” WOW – What completeness!

Additionally, he stresses his eternity! 1:8 “I am the Alpha and the Omega” “who is and was and who is to come, the Almighty” Is = present tense Was=past tense and Is To Come = future tense

His Foreshadowing of the Kingdom of Final Victory

1:18 “I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.”

With this GREAT news he commanded John to write those things which are:

1. You have seen - past
2. Things which are - present
3. Things which shall take place after these things - future

II. The Proclamation - Chapter's 2 and 3

Judgment begins at the House of God!

Before the book of Revelation presents any message of judgment on the unbelieving world, it first calls the churches to repentance. If the local churches are not a proper representation and expression of God's truth and righteousness, how can they influence the world for Christ? Sobering thought!

In these letters, we find the Lord of the Church lovingly but firmly speaking to His church. Some have called these; “love letters from the Lord of heaven”

The message of the churches Represent a sevenfold pattern

1. Commission
2. Character
3. Commendation
4. Condemnation
5. Correction
6. Call
7. Challenge

Even though these were literal churches in Asia Minor (Modern Day Turkey) and were meant for teaching and rebuking, there is significant parallelism for today's church in relevance and eternal application. REPEAT!

The Seven Churches

1. Ephesus – the Orthodox, but lost love Church

City: Ephesus was a large and prosperous city. Even today, its ruins are the most extensive in the region. Temple of Diana – one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

Church: Paul visited in his second mission journey. Aquila and Priscilla assisted Paul there. Paul on his third missionary trip ministered for three years and eventually left Timothy in charge. 1 Timothy 1:3. One of the greatest apostolic churches. The Lord commends them for their patience, fidelity, and endurance.

Challenge: the church's first love could refer to several things: its first love for Christ, the fervency of new believers, or basic priorities. Christ calls upon them to repent and reinstate their original commitments. Otherwise, he threatens to come and remove their lamp stand. Significant and indicates any church can cease being a true church. What an application for today.

2. Smyrna – the Suffering Church

City: The city was named after a perfume. The city was ruled by three people groups including the Lydian's and Persians. It was destroyed and rebuilt by Alexander the Great. Again damaged badly by earthquakes, it was rebuilt by Marcus Aurelius. In AD 325, during the council of Nicea, Bishop Eytychius represented Smyrna. In AD 1402 it fell to Tamerlane, who massacred the Christian population in the name of Islam.

Church: Persecution was the image of this church. They suffered in the hands of the Romans and would suffer even more because the Jewish population was very antichristian. It came to be one of the most revered and influential churches of its time because its leaders were willing to lay down their lives for Christ and the Gospel. Four things characterizing the church mentioned by Christ: Poverty, Slander, Prison and Death.

Challenge: No words of condemnation and no call to repentance. Only one of two churches this is true. They were told they are rich with Christ. Would the modern day church demonstrate this suffering attitude?

3. Pergamum – the Political and Compromising Church

City: Was an incredible city. Pillared temples, public buildings sat atop of the acropolis. Above all there was the great Temple of Zeus, king of the gods (little g). Also, one of the greatest libraries in the ancient world, boasting over 200,000 volumes of books. Lastly, known for its famous healing and medical center.

Church: Christ began His letter to the church by reminding them “I know where you dwell”, Rev. (2:13). He was fully aware these Christians were surrounded by a non-Christian society and exposed to its values, standards and pressures. Power of the state vs. the young Christian church was inevitable. Despite the wonderful heritage, Christ had great concerns for this church, Revelation 2:15 he hated the false doctrine of Balaam and the Nicolaitans (Christian freedom and liberty leading to worldliness and lawlessness).

Challenge: The Great Shepherd was concerned with the wayward condition of the flock of Pergamum. He was concerned the doctrinal compromises would lead to the destruction of the church. The Lord's letter emphasizes several things:

1. Love for the truth – we must long and love the truth and let it be the final authority.
2. Desire for holiness – we cannot win a lost world with a worldly Christianity.
3. Willingness to repent – he called the church to repent of their compromise. If they did, He promised three things: hidden manna, a white stone and a new name.

4. Thyatira – The Prosperous, Tolerant, Permissive Church

City: A defenseless city. No natural fortress and relied on Pergamum some 30 miles away for military protection. It was a commercial and manufacturing city. Religion was connected to the material prosperity and participation in the trade guilds.

Church: Our Lords commends the church for its charity, service, faith, patience and good works. However, there was a serious problem with the church. A powerful woman named Jezebel had influence so great that she encouraged the believers to participate in the guild festivals-committing fornication and eating things sacrificed to idols. Interesting, just as the Old Testament Jezebel (1 Kings 16:31), the pagan wife of King Ahab led the Israelites astray, so does this New Testament “Jezebel”. In summary, they preferred social acceptance to spiritual integrity.

Challenge: The bottom line; the Lord rebuked their ethical and doctrinal error. This false prophetess may have been encouraging and tolerating secret sin vs. public sin. However, the Lord reminds is he has “eyes like the flames of fire”. In Acts 1:24 and 15:18 He is called the heart knower. Christ threatens to cast this immoral woman into a Great Tribulation (2:22). Like careless and immoral believers today, those in Thyatira did not take seriously the coming of the Great Tribulation.

5. Sardis – The Dead Church Have you ever been to a Dead Church? The service is dull, lifeless, empty and irrelevant.

City: Was a commercial and industrial city. It was living in the past. It was one of the greatest cities in the world in 6th century B.C.

Church: Like the city, the church flourished and then decayed. The Savior warned them to wake up and repent lest He “come like a thief in the night” and catch them

unprepared. To those who wake up, He promises not to erase their names in the Book of Life.

Challenge: 1. Remember how you were converted and back to the basics of New Testament Christianity. 2. Keep the Truth. It is the only anchor of your soul in changing times. 3. Repent of your apathy. Become diligent and vigilant about your walk with God.

6. Philadelphia – The Faithful and Preserving Church

City: Relatively small compared to other cities. Sat in a lush part of Asia Minor. It was considered the gateway to the east as it was strategically located on the main road from Rome to Troy, Pergamum, Sardis, etc.

Church: The local congregation had stood firm in their faith even though they were being persecuted from the local Jewish Synagogue. (3:9). The symbolic descriptions of the church are vivid; a key, door and pillar. Jesus is pictured as the one holding the “key of David”. Door: Matthew 7:13-14 “For the gate is small, and the way is narrow, that leads to life, and few are those who find it”

Challenge: The church had only little power, but our Lord promised to do great things through them. He promised to us their testimony to convert the Jews who opposed him (3:9). He also promised to keep them from the hour of testing which shall come upon the whole world (3:10). This is no local persecution, but the Great Tribulation itself. This indeed is the overall promise to the church they will be removed in the rapture prior to the tribulation. This is a universal application and instructions and promises applicable to all churches of all time.

- a. Pillar in the temple of God. Heavenly temple
- b. Name of God. His name is subscribed to us in its promise.
- c. Name of the City of God. The promise of the New Jerusalem reminds us that we are destined for the heavenly city. Our right of citizenship has already been guaranteed.
- d. Christ’s new name. His new name reflects the full revelation of his character.

7. Laodicea – the Lukewarm, Useless or Putrid Church: Interesting he follows up with this. It was one of the most well known churches and everything is wrong in the church. Puritans thought is the lukewarm church of England, Scofield saw it as a liberal, apostate church. Be careful, this was a literal church that had not lost its candlestick, so light was still flickering.

City: Laodicea was the key city in southern Phrygia. It was a popular place for people to retire...making the city a famous banking center. The wealth of the city caused it to be proud and self-sufficient. Pride, self-sufficiency and dependence on material wealth were big factors on the Lord's anger with the church.

Church: The basic designation of the church as "lukewarm" is taken from the contrasting hot springs in nearby Hierapolis and the pure, cold waters of Colosse. By contrast, Laodicea was lukewarm. The phrase "I would that you were hot or cold" 3:15, speaks to their uselessness or effectiveness vs. lukewarm spiritual condition of Laodicea which was virtually useless.

Challenge: No words of commending, in fact words of stern rebuke! He writes of neither heretics, evildoers or persecutors. John Stott writes quote "perhaps none of the seven letters is more appropriate to the church in the twentieth century. It describes the respectable, nominal, rather sentimental, skin deep religiosity which is so widespread among us today" end quote In reality, the Laodiceans were "poor, blind and naked" (3:17)

However, Christ still loved this church and was concerned by its future. It was not apostate, it still had its candlestick. The Lord @ the end is pictured @ the end in verse 20 "if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come to him, and dine with him and him with me".

III. The Problem - Revelation 4-5

Revelation 4

“God is on the Throne”

We shift from an exalted Christ (chap 1) and seven letters in (chaps 2-3) to a vision in heaven (chaps 4-5). The vision in heaven serves as the fulcrum to what will transpire on earth.

Chapters 4 and 5 contain a Double Vision: 1. God the Creator and 2. Christ the Redeemer. In chapter 4, all of heaven worships the Father for creating the World. In chapter 5, all of heaven worships Christ the Lamb of God, for redeeming the world.

The Great Transitions occurs in 4:1 shifting our focus into the future. The church is absent from Revelation 4:1 to 19:7 and is not appear again until 22:6. From the opening of the seals, until the marriage of the Bride, the chapters between focus on the nation and people of Israel.

(4:1) John is “raptured” to Heaven in the Sprit and sees a door opened in Heaven. His experience is identical to the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:1-4 where he is described as being caught up into the third heaven. The call to come up here is similar to what believers will experience in the rapture.

John is transfixed with the one seated on the throne, not the throne. He sees his glorious appearance, but not actually God himself supporting John 1:18 “no man has seen God @ any time”. He is holding a scroll and his appearance was “like a jasper stone and Sarius appearance” 4:3. These two together resembled or pictured “fire and ice! Also, these stones were the first and last precious stones in the breastplate of the high priest (Ex28:17-20). An emerald rainbow surrounds the throne. The rainbow reminiscent of God’s covenant with nature. Lightings and thunderings emanate from the throne. It is the life source of the universe – the power plant of divine energy

There are 24 elders surrounding the throne and depict the courtroom of heaven. Their number is significant since there were twenty four courses (shifts) to the Old testament Levitical priesthood (1 Chronicles 24: 7-19). The church is also described as royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:5-9)

The Holy, holy, holy recognizes the supremacy and triune nature of God. PS Buy the way, just as Isaiah the prophet heard this declaration in the throne room of God. Isa 6:3 God is praised and exalted as the Father and Creator of the universe.

Revelation 5

“Worthy is the Lamb”

As God the Father was the central figure of Chapter 4, Jesus the Christ is the central figure for Chapter 5. He appears suddenly and dramatically @ center stage and comes to take his rightful inheritance from his Father’s hand.

He explodes in the courtroom as the Lamb of God who has been slain 5:6. Similar to the terminology the John the Baptist used in John 1:29 “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

John then notices a book (scroll) in his right hand of God Almighty with seals affixed! This book (scroll) has had different interpretations over the years, from: the gospel, new covenant, book of life, etc. Since opening the seals enacts the judgments of God, it seems the best to view the scroll as the title deed or divine contract to the world. As such, the scroll certainly contains the eternal decrees of God and expresses His divine will and counsel.

John weeps because no one is worthy to open the seals of the scroll and fulfill God’s plan for human history (5:3-4). The falling short are in heaven, earth and under the earth. At this point, one of the “elders” interrupts John to announce the “Lion that is from the tribe of Judah” and the “Root of David” has prevailed to open the book (5.5).

With this comes Songs of heaven with the angelic host of angles and creatures (seraphim) will join the elders in singing praise to the Lamb in 5:12.

The expression Worthy is the Lamb places worship of Christ equal with the God the Father. Again, the Father is worshipped as Creator in Chapter 4 and Christ is worshipped as redeemer in Chapter 5. He is to be worshipped as equal in essence to the Father, while the Holy Spirit draws our attention to both because he will not speak on His own initiative. John 16:13

Process: Seven Seals and Seven Trumpets

Revelation 6 – 11

Chapter 6 “The Wrath of the Lamb”

The process of God’s judgment upon the world is unleashed by opening the seven seals. Norman Geisler believes chapters 6-11 (seal and trumpeters) are the external message to the unbelieving world and Chapters 14-19 are the internal message to the believers.

For those who have read Revelation, you know there are **Seals, Trumpets and Bowls**. Some view these prophecies in strict succession. Others view them happening simultaneously. Neither are true.

The most logical situation is as follows and comes from John Walvoord. There are seven seals that begin the process. The seven trumpets are contained in the seventh seal and the seven bowls contained in the seventh trumpet. The seven bowls are a closely knit series that happen in rapid succession and parallel the trumpets but are more intense. In fact, the plagues are similar, but in the trumpet series the plagues only affect 1/3, while the bowls affect a more completeness. Additionally, all of these judgments (seals, trumpets and bowls) include divine, demonic, human and natural forces.

Let me stop here and address those who believe these are symbolic events which cannot literally occur. Well, I want to take you back to Exodus 7-12 where God directs Ten Plagues, the last one the death of the firstborn – where to this Day the Jewish community (secular and religious) celebrates a major religious holiday, called the Passover, given the Angel of Death passed over the Jewish firstborns and only destroyed the Egyptian firstborns.

The Seven Seals

The opening of the seven seals initiates the messianic judgments that comprise the whole of Revelation 6-11 and 14-19. These judgments also parallel the pattern predicted by Christ in Matthew 24-25 and Mark 13.

What are they:

1. 6:2-3 White Horse: He rides on a White Horse peacefully as the imposter the Antichrist, who in actuality is depicting conquest.
2. 6:4 Red Horse: World War or bloodshed. He takes peace from the earth with a great sword.
3. 6:5-6 Black Horse. Famine always follows the devastation of war. Food supplies are exhausted, and those who survive the conflict must now struggles to survive.
4. 6:7-8 Ashen Horse. The ashen horse symbolizes the gaunt, colorless look of death. Alongside John states Hades was following him. Death and Hell. The fourth seal emphasizes the power given to death and Hades over one-fourth of the earth's population to kill them with elements of seals 2, 3 and 4.

The destruction described in the first four seals is a preview of what is to come in the trumpet and bowl judgments.

We then turn to back to heaven for the 5th seal:

5. 6:9-11 Martyrs in Heaven. The ones who had been slain for the Word of God. These martyrs are the people who have historically paid the price for their faith.
6. 6:12-17 Universal Devastation. The seal is opened and the earth is shaken to its very core. Disorder reigns supreme; the powers of nature and human government collapse.

Chapter 7

“From Tribulation to Jubilation”

We move to an interlude in the progression of the seven seals. It appears between the sixth and seven seals, John the Revelator stops to describe two great hosts of people who will be saved out of the great tribulation 7:14. The chapter begins by God sealing His servants. The term seal here in Greek is the same term used in the original scroll and quite different than the mark of the beast.

144,000 servants of God – They are Jews from every tribe of the sons of Israel. The specification of the tribes is consistent with the literal interpretation of those tribes. There is one notable omission from the list of Tribes, the tribe of Dan. Dan is missing because the tribe apostatized and turned to idolatry. (Judges 18:14-31) and Joseph received a double portion of blessing from his father (Gen 49:1-22) through his two sons.

John then moves from the 144,000 to the innumerable hosts of people from every nation, tribe and people group. The text tells us who they are 7:14, they are the ones who have come out of the Great Tribulation. They are pictured standing before the throne of God, 7:15.

In summary, First God is going to judge Israel in the period of the great trial, and 12,000 from each tribe, totaling 144,000, will be protected and sealed from the judgments. Second, a great number of gentiles will be saved, but many will be martyred and are found in heaven rejoicing.

Chapter 8

“The World at War”

A very solemn chapter. There is a 30 minute silence in heaven after the seventh seal is opened. It is a silence of solemn worship and deep reflection, knowing what is about to happen!

After the seventh seal is opened the seven trumpets begin their procession! They are the seventh seal!

The seven angels before God are given seven trumpets to sound these various judgments. John leaves them unmanned, but we know from other apocryphal literature these angels are named, such as Enoch 20, and may be: (Raphael, Uriel, Raguel, Michael, Gabriel, Sariel, and Remiel). These angels sound their respective trumpets in rapid succession and the destruction becomes more pervasive!

I want to pause here for a moment and emphasize, if you believe the bible is the inerrant Word of God and you approach the book of Revelation as a Biblicist (Literalist), what is about to be unveiled should produce a cosmic admiration and astonishing fear of the power of our Loving Lord!

The devastation predicted was unknown and unfathomable in the ancient world. These destructions are certainly beyond anything known to the people of John's age.

John the revelator paints a global conflagration. He sees vegetation burned, up, a mountains of fire burned to the sea, stars falling from heaven, etc. It is now wonder that he hears an angel flying around through heaven shouting! "Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on earth" 8:13

1. First trumpet: Hail and Fire v.7

The results of this destruction are so vast that one third of all the trees, vegetation and grass are burned up. Such a destruction would result in food shortages and limited supply of oxygen. One gets the impression John watched this destruction in utter amazement.

2. Second trumpet: Fireball into the sea vs. 8-9

Next, John describes a large fireball falling into the sea, polluting one-third of the oceans. Interesting the parallel of the second bowl, which we have not gotten to yet, results in the destruction of all sea life! 16:3

3. Third trumpet: Pollution of fresh waters vv. 10-11

The devastation of the seawaters is followed by the pollution of the fresh waters, rivers and springs by falling store called Wormwood. Leon Morris states: Wormwood is a bitter substance, but not poisonous.

A pause again, it is obvious in the passages described in the trumpet and bowl judgments that John struggles, even though inspired, to find first century words to describe these future events-the likes of which have never be seen before.

4. Fourth trumpet: Air Pollution v. 12

The sun, moon and stars are darkened for one third of the day. This can either refer to an eclipse or to some cosmic destruction of the atmosphere.

The extent of these judgments affects the whole world. If the Church were still on earth during this time, she would be caught right in the middle of this great global disaster. If Leon Morris, who articulated varying views admits: If the Church were still in the world, she could not escape such a worldwide devastation. There is no mention of the Church in these chapters, because she has already gone home to GLORY!

Chapter 9

Demons Unleashed!

Satan was created by God to glorify God. However, he desired to displace God (I believe he had an unquenchable - passionate desire to dethrone/replace the second Godhead – Christ in all His Glory). A great mystery of the biblical continuum.

He opposed because of his selfish, self pursuits to rule and to rebel! This pursuit led to a three fold outcome and present office:

1. Ruler of this World – John 12:31
2. Prince of Power of the Air – Eph. 2:2
3. God of this World – 2 Cor. 4:4

These titles make it VERY clear he is the unseen ruler behind human workings in this non-glorified, ungodly world. The Bible say, “the whole world lies in the power of the evil one” 1 John 5:19.

So on this side of heaven or in this world, God has allowed power to Satan and there is REAL spiritual tension between the Godly created order and Satan’s control. The prophet Daniel gives us an inside look at this conflict in Daniel 10:11-14 = an Angel sent to Daniel is detained for 21 days because of the Prince of Persia does not allow his pass. Michael, an Archangel (Chief Angel) had to assist the travel or process!

So on to the 5th trumpet. The description of what follows is absolutely incredible! Again, the words John can muster up are not completely adequate.

5. Fifth Trumpet: Demonic Invasion (9:1-12)

The plagues of locusts. The creatures are depicted as having been imprisoned in the abyss. They are released by divine permission and torment unbelievers, those who do not have the “Seal of God”. 9:4.

The description of locusts and not be regular natural insects. One, they do not do what is normal: eat vegetation – as they did in the plagues of Pharaoh. Two, they torment the earth for five months (9:5) which indicates sustainability. Three, there sting is depicted as a scorpion which is incredibly painful but not lethal. They are altered insects/demons, etc with power to really cause pain.

6. Sixth trumpet: The deadly attack (9:13-21)

The voice instructs the angel with the sixth trumpet to release the “four angles who are bound at the great Euphrates” v. 14. Since they are bound, they must be fallen angles or demons. The four angles prepared for a great conflict that will kill a third of mankind. V.15. Ruing the math, if you add that up to the fourth part of the world population that has already perished (rev. 6:8), this adds up to half the population of the world! The 1/3 represents an intensity from the previous judgment. The number of the army is 200 million, incredible number.

Chapter 10

Can it get any Worse?

Another and needed interlude - just like between the sixth and seventh seal.

A mighty Angel, Seven Thunders and the Mystery of God are discussed as stating it is finished or fulfilled!

Chapter 11

Hell on Earth

As if things were not bad enough, all hell breaks loose in this chapter. Satan's opposition to the two witnesses reached a dramatic climax in the execution, resurrection and ascension into heaven.

The second verse indicates that the Gentiles will occupy the Holy City Jerusalem and tread it under foot for 42 months, a kind of reverse persecution vs. the first couple of centuries. This adds up to 1260 days or three and one half years or the Great Tribulation. Side note: Daniels 70th week or seven years is the Tribulation period; it is the last 3.5 years which is the Great Tribulation.

In the meantime, two witnesses appear on the scene. They prophesy the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Jews in Jerusalem. Their ministries sound a lot like Elijah and Moses. They have supernatural power to smite the earth with plagues (Moses) and call down fire from Heaven (Elijah) 2 Kings 1. However, early Christian tradition believed it is Enoch and Elijah given they did not die a physical death.

Or, they could just be two great witnesses called in the last times. Whoever they are, they with the Holy Spirit produce the greatest harvest of all times. Greatest Harvest coupled with the Greatest Destruction! They are then killed by the, lie dead in the street for 3.5 days with rejoice from the unbelieving world and God then resurrects them in front of the entire world!

7. Seven trumpet (11:15-19)

From this point on, everything follows in rapid succession. These five verses are the most dramatic verses in the Bible. So powerful, that Handel took the words of verse 15 “and he will reign forever and ever” and the closing chorus in his great production, The Messiah.

One cannot read these verses without realizing that we have come to some great conclusion. The 24 elders are on the faces again as they were in 7:11. Here contained in the seventh trumpet, are the 7 bowls of wrath, the dramatic conclusion to the world as we know it.

The Players

Revelation 12-13

Seven Key Figures in the End Times Drama

Revelation 12

War in Heaven.

The symbolic scorecard sits right in the middle of Revelation. Who are they?

1. Woman – Israel
2. Dragon – Satan
3. Male Child – Christ
4. Michael – Archangel
5. Rest of her offspring – Seed of the Woman
6. Beast of the Sea – Antichrist
7. Beast of the Earth – False Prophet

Chapter 13

Rise of the Antichrist

Here comes the Beast

The Bible predicts the rise of the counterfeit messiah in the last days.

For example:

1. He will appear in the latter days of the rapture of the Church (2 Thess. 2:2-7)
2. He will be the center of all Gentile world powers. (Rev. 13:1-3)
3. He will gain control and rule a confederacy of nations. (Daniel 7:7-9, 9:26 and Revelation 13:1)
4. He will centralize and control the vast global systems (Rev 13:8 and 16-18)
5. He gains power by promising peace (Dan. 8:25)
6. He will sign a peace treaty with Israel (Dan. 9:27)
7. He later breaks the treaty and demands to be worshipped (Dan11:36-37; 2 Thess. 2:4)
8. He becomes the adversary of Israel and persecutes the Jews during the Great Tribulation. (Daniel 7:21-25; 8:24)
9. He (stress he is human) receives his power and authority from Satan himself (Dan. 8:25; 2 Thess. 2:9-19)

Other Titles: Man of Lawlessness and Son of Destruction.

His number is 666 or equated to man; falling significantly short of perfection 7's.

False Prophet

1. He causes men to worship the beast vv (12-15)
2. He can do great wonders and miracles v 13
3. He deceives the whole world by his miracles v 14
4. He gives breath to the image of the beast v 15
5. He causes men to receive the image of the beast v 16

In conclusion, the world in the last days will involve three interconnected elements: 1. Global Economy 2. World Government 3. World Religion. Ironically, the entire system is driven by the global economy. The Antichrist will not necessarily have to conquer the world, by control the communication and governance that makes it run.

Plagues

Seven Bowls of Judgment

Revelation 14-20

Chapter 14

Wine Press of the wrath of God

Now the focus changes from “Bad news you lose” to now the message focuses on the people of God “good news, we win”.

As the scene opens, we see the 144,000 and is obvious by their specific number that they are the same group as in 7:3-8. What is different is a further elaboration occurs:

They are male virgins who are purchased from among men as first fruits to God. So they are: Purchased and sealed by God v 1, morally pure male virgins v 4, Followers of the Lamb v 4, Speakers of the truth v 5, Blameless v 5.

Chapter 7 calls them bondservants.

From here, we learn that three angels fly across the sky, one after another, making dramatic and climatic announcements.

1. “Fear God and give Him glory... and worship Him” (14:6-7) the idea here is salvation is still possible, even during the Great Tribulation by believing the gospel.
2. “Fallen, fallen, is Babylon the great” 14:8 the idea here is Babylon is Israel’s ancient enemy and will fight her again. The large empire (Babylon) the world vs. Israel.
3. “The wrath of God...mixed in full strength” (14:9-11) This cup represents God’s wrath. Interesting, it is probably the same cup that Jesus agonized over in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:39-42). The cup of wrath represents the final and irrevocable wrath of God. Jesus our Lord - Fully Divine and yet Fully Man was the only entity who could endure this judgment and assume the sin (His wrath) and transfer it to the grave, and then be resurrected in full Glory through his Divinity.
4. “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord” (14:12-13) Nothing more than “perseverance of the saints”

Chapter 15

The Seven Last Plagues

In eight brief verses, chapter 15 sets the stage for the final drama. The pouring out the seven bowls of God’s Wrath.

The Last Exodus: One cannot miss the obvious symbolism drawn from the Exodus story in this section 15:1-8. The final judgments on the Antichrist will be far worse than those that fell on Pharaoh of Egypt. And then the celebration. Moses sings the “Song of Moses” in Exodus 15 after the deliverance through the Red Sea. John cites the “Song of the Lamb” in 15:3-4 after our final deliverance.

Chapter 16

Battle of Armageddon

Revelation 16:14-16 tells us that the ultimate conflict of human history will take place at Armageddon in the Valley of Jezreel. In biblical times, significant battles were fought there.

The Old Testament calls it the “day of the Lord” (Joel 1:15) or “day of vengeance of our God” (Is. 61:2). They described it as a day of darkness (Amos 5:18). A time of doom for the gentile nations. (Ezek. 30:3). In fact, He even named many of the nations Egypt, Ethiopia, Put, Lud, Arabia, and Libya (Ezek. 30:5)

This dramatic and final conclusion is administered through the bowl judgments. These judgments are obvious parallels to the trumpet judgments. The differences are the extent or universality of the bowl judgments.

- 1. First bowl: a loathsome and malignant sore (Rev 16:2)** These are poured out on the earth and only affect the ones with the mark of the beast. These sores recall the sixth Egyptian plague where Pharaoh’s magicians were afflicted with sores.
- 2. Second Bowl: Oceans polluted (Rev. 16:3)** Again, following Exodus the plagues are reminiscent of those that came upon Egypt. Previously, in the trumpet judgments only 1/3 were polluted. Now all the seas are polluted. Can you imagine the stench?
- 3. Third Bowl: Rivers polluted (Rev 16:4-7)** Same situation as two.
- 4. Fourth Bowl: Sun scorches men (Rev. 16:8-9)**
- 5. Fifth Bowl: Humiliation of the beast (Rev 16:8-9)** Here the parallel with the trumpets is not there. Agonizing pain and darkness for the kingdom of the beast.
- 6. Sixth Bowl: Armageddon (Rev 16:12-16)** Up until now, the bowls have involved a direct outpouring of Divine wrath. However, here the sixth bowl, as the sixth trumpet does, returns our attention to armies of men. I most point out; man was created on the sixth day and is 6 is defined as the number of man. “The Kings of the East” descend on Israel in vast numbers for the final conflict. The entire planet has

been rocked by great devastation. All that remains is for the Antichrist to conquer and control Jerusalem. He tries, with one last GREAT man made attempt but fails, given the unbelievable Divine intervention and ultimate victory.

7. Seventh Bowl: It is Done (Rev: 16: 17-21) The first time we here God speak as he announces “It is done”. The statement “it is done” is repeated again in 21:6 after the Millennium and the Great White Throne Judgment.

Chapter 17 and 18

The Great Harlot and the Scarlet Beast and Fall of Babylon

Will pass over given these chapters take us back and we are running out time.

Chapter 19

Triumphal Return of Christ

The second coming of Christ is the most anticipated event in human history. It is the culmination of all biblical prophecy!

Just before the crucifixion, the Disciples ask Jesus “What will be the sign of your coming?” (Matt. 24:3) The Lord replied immediately after the tribulation of those days...the powers of heaven will be shaken and the Son of man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory”(Matt.24:29-30).

The Details of Christ’s Return

1. He will return personally (1 Thess. 4:16)
2. He will appear as the Son of Man (Matt 24:30)
3. He will come suddenly and dramatically (1 Thess. 5:2)
4. He will come on the clouds of heaven (Matt. 24:30; Rev 1:7 says “He is coming with the Clouds”)
5. He will come to display His Glory (Matt 16:27)

6. He will come with His Angeles
7. He will come with His Bride – The Church
8. He will return to the Mount of Olives (Zech 14:4)
9. He will return in triumph and victory Zech 14:9 and Rev. 19:6 Depicts him as: King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

The chapter ends with the beast (Antichrist) and the False Prophet cast into the Lake of Fire. The punishment dramatizes the seriousness of their offense and the finality of Christ's victory and supremacy! The rest of the army is slain and cast into the Lake of fire until the Great White Throne Judgment. (Rev. 20:11-15)

The Millennial Kingdom

Chapter 20

The idea of the Kingdom on earth is Central to all biblical teaching. The Old Testament prophets predicted it. In fact, the Old Testament prophets foretold a golden era of peace and prosperity when the Messiah would rule on earth. Jesus announced it. And the New Testament apostles foretold it again.

Such as rule is called a “theocracy” A Divine King ruling his Kingdom on earth.

The chapter opens with an Angel descending from heaven with the key to the abyss. This is likely the same angel who unlocked the pit in 9:1. He binds Satan for a thousand years. 20:2.

Interesting to note here, this is still not the final judgment and the main purpose of here is confinement. It is to prevent him from deceiving the nations.

The essential element of the idea of the Millennium is “the appearing of the kingdom of the Messiah in history, prior to the revelation of the kingdom of God in the eternal and transcendent realm of the new creation.” REPEAT

In this regard, Chapter 19 provides a transfer of the fall of Babylon (city of man) to the arrival of the New Jerusalem (city of God).

Note: in this the “Tribulation saints” are resurrected to rule with them. This is called the “first resurrection.” The “second resurrection” are when the dead are brought to judgment after the thousand years. Consequently, the unsaved dead remain dead for a thousand years.

During this time, the earth will prosper under the personal reign of Christ on the throne of David.

The Final Revolt

One of the great surprises of the apocalyptic drama, Satan is loosed from abyss after the Millennium. Satan will be released from prison, and will come out to deceive the nations (Rev. 20:7-8)

The final revolt is the ultimate proof of human depravity. Unredeemed minds will agree with Christ’s rule, but they will not bow their hearts to Him. As soon as Satan is loosed, some will rebel against the rule of God. Even though Eden-like conditions will return, man will again once more fall. We must remember two things have not changed; and unrepentant Satan and unregenerate mankind.

The final battle involves “Gog and Magog” 20:8. It comes after the millennium and involves many nations attacking the “camp of the saints” and the “beloved city” – presumably Jerusalem. This final act of rebellion is squelched by the fire that comes down from God out of heaven.

Great White Throne

Next, John sees a “great white throne”. This is the judgment throne, not the royal throne. Heaven and earth “fled away”. Many assume @ this point, that the earth and atmosphere are burned up (2 Peter 3:7-13). This will pave the path for the “new heavens” and “new earth.”

The final judgment takes place after the millennium and involves the unsaved dead of all time (“the great and the small”).

God the Father is the judge on this occasion. Christ has judged the redeemed (the believers) @ the Judgment Seat of Christ (right after the Rapture). Now, the Father judges the unbeliever. Written records of the deeds of all men are kept in books.

These accounts testify against all men that they have sinned. The Bible is very clear on human accountability. These books are only for the purpose of condemnation, they are not basis for salvation by works. Indeed, good works cannot save anyone (Eph, 2:8-10).

There is no hiding place from God and His final judgment. All the Dead of all time are resurrected to stand trial.. Even Hell is turned upside down and emptied out for this great and terrible judgment. When done, death and Hell themselves are cast into the lake of fire with the unbelieving souls. This is called the “second death” v 14.

Armageddon almost destroyed the planet, Gog and Magog results in the earth’s final devastation and God judges all. The Bible warns us “It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God” Hebrews 10:31

Postscript - Seven New Things

Revelation 21-22

New Jerusalem

Chapter 21

The final chapters take us to the ultimate prophetic vision: eternity. John was not the first to see all the way down the canyon of eternity, Isaiah the prophet also foresaw New Heavens and a New Earth (Is. 65:17-25).

The New and Final World Order

1st before the flood

2nd after the flood

3rd after the Great White Throne

God shall wipe away the tears from our eyes, and there shall be no more sorrow or death!

The New Jerusalem

1. It is literal place. It is described as a city. He speaks of its inhabitants (v24), its gates (v12), its size (v16), its foundations (v14), its walls (v18).
2. Great activity: He describes our active worship, service and activity.
3. A bride adorned for her husband. A place of everlasting love, commitment and holy fellowship.
4. Tabernacle of God is among men 21:3. Our HOLY God, who as a tainted – sinful human could not look upon the glory of God, now is accessible to His chosen flock. Remnants of the beginning of time and creation in the Garden of Eden.

* The Ultimate Promise “it is done” appears the second time in Revelation.

The bottom line is emphasized in the last book of the chapter (21:27). Only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of Life can live in the Holy City. This includes all the redeemed of all time: Old Testament Saints, the new Testament Church, the Tribulation saints and the Millennial saints.

Lastly, we see the perfect blending of the redeemed in the Holy City in that the twelve gates are named for the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve foundations for the twelve apostles.

Chapter 22

Paradise Restored

Paradise is restored in the final city. The Chapter emphasizes the eternal state will return the new creation to the inherent qualities of the Garden of Eden-only to a grander scale. Unlimited access to this life giving water will assure residents of the new Jerusalem of an everlasting enjoyment of life.

The river of life is reminiscent of the river of Eden whose tributaries flowed in four directions. The tree of Life presented in Genesis as a single tree with a singular fruit. In 22:2 the tree bears twelve types of fruit-one for each month of the year.

There is no need of healing from sickness or disease since the consequences of sin have been removed.

The ultimate testimony is the removal of the divine curse (22:3) which affected the created order.

And the BEST thing is God's presence, v5 and because of this three things will not be found in the new order: HE IS the SOURCE of LIGHT!!!

1. No Night, No Lamp and No Sun

The parallels and the end

1. A genuine prophecy (1:3; 22:6-10)
2. Addressed to God's bondservants (1:1; 22:6)
3. Comes from God (1:1; 22:6)
4. Comes also from Jesus Christ (1:1; 22:16)
5. Promises to those who obey (1:3; 22:7)
6. Warns of Judgment to those who reject (1:7; 22:11)
7. The Alpha and Omega (1:8; 22:13)

It ends by Christ telling John not to seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, which is opposite instruction given to Daniel six hundred years earlier.

Throughout the New Testament, the gospel of God's grace is the central teaching of the Christian message. This is common in the epistle letters with a benediction of grace so prevalently articulated. John follows suit and opens with Grace (1:4) and closes the book of Revelation and the Bible with Grace (22:21) Amen!!