

the book of
REVELATION



Detail of Landscape with Saint John on Patmos, Nicolas Poussin - 1640

CLASS MATERIAL BY
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THE LORD: *"...Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last.¹⁸ I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.¹⁹ Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this."* (1:17-19)

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THE HERMENEUTIC OF THE APOCALYPSE

“Because of its apocalyptic nature, its imagery and symbolism, and its many allusions to the Old Covenant writings, Revelation has through the centuries had a legion of widely differing interpretations. In the light of these vastly differing views, it ill-becomes any of us to be dogmatic in the positions we take” (Homer Hailey, Revelation Commentary, 18).

INTRODUCTION:

- We begin our study with an important warning against dogmatism. While there are many obvious erroneous interpretations of the book of Revelation, (which we will expose), the symbols of the Apocalypse can be difficult to understand. The date of writing itself is under dispute. An adaptation of a particular date of writing will influence the resulting interpretation of the book.
- **The theme of the book is beyond dispute.**
 - “The grand theme of Revelation is that of war and conflict between good and evil resulting in victory for the righteous and defeat for the wicked” (Hailey, 51).
 - “Always keep I mind that the theme of Revelation is the victory of Christ and His church over Satan and his allies” (Robert Harkrider, The Book of Revelation, Truth Commentaries, xii).
 - “The theme of this book is: **the victory of Christ and of His church over the Dragon (satan) and his helpers...**” “Throughout the prophecies of this wonderful book the Christ is ever pictured as the Victor, the Conqueror, 1:18; 2:8; 5:9ff; 6:2; 11:15; 12:9ff; 14:1,14; 15:2ff; 19:16; 20:4; 22:3. He conquers death, Hades, the dragon, the beast, the false prophet, the men who worship the beast, etc. **He** is victorious; hence so are **we**! Even when we seem to be hopelessly defeated. Do you see that band of believers?” (More than Conquerors, W. Hendriksen, 12-13).
- Keeping the theme always at the front of our mind will help us to be both consistent in our interpretations of the signs of the book, and will also serve as a great encouragement to us as we struggle against our “*adversary the devil*” (cf. 1 Peter 5:8).

THE AUTHOR OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John,² who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw” (1:1-2).

- The writer calls himself by the name John on four occasions (1:1,4,9; 22:8)
- It is widely recognized that John the apostle is the author of the book. No legitimate evidence exists in denial of this view.
 - While it is acknowledged that the language of the book differs in some ways from the gospel of John, as well as his epistles, the subject matter of the book explains that difference. (Arguments to the contrary are extremely subjective).
 - Justin Martyr, Eusebius, Irenaeus, Tertullian and Victorinus all assign the book of Revelation to Paul’s pen.

THE DATE OF WRITING

- In AD 64, the emperor Nero was the first of the Caesar’s to persecute God’s people simply because they wore the name Christian
 - Most scholars believe that Nero’s persecution was not ideologically driven, but rather to shift blame from himself for setting Rome on fire. Christians were not popular.

- At this point in history, there is no evidence that the Romans were particularly intolerant of religious beliefs. However, any perceived criminal activity or sedition against the state was punished by Rome (cf. Acts 16:21-22; 1 Peter 2:12; 4:14-16)
- Nero, however, did set a precedent for Roman emperors who would follow.
- **Those who believe the book of Revelation was written in response to Nero's persecution of Christians ascribe an early date of writing to the book. (AD 54-69), prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. (Commonly referred to as the "early date").**
- The visions of Revelation indicate a more systemic persecution of God's people, visited upon them not because of any perceived wrongdoing, but simply because of their faith.
 - By the time of the emperor Domitian, the worship of Caesar as divine was uniformly enforced in the empire.
 - Those who refused to address Domitian as "Master" or "God" were charged as atheists. Since Christians would not do so, they (like Daniel and his companions), were persecuted for their faith.
 - Persecution was less because Christians worshiped God, and more because they refused to worship the emperor. Most historians accept that persecution under Domitian was widespread.
- **Those who believe the book of Revelation was written during the time of Domitian's persecution of Christians (or shortly after) ascribe a date of (AD 95-96) for the writing of the book. (Commonly referred to as the "late date").**
 - Other Roman emperors who persecuted Christians included Trajan (98-117), Marcus Aurelius (161-180), Commodus (180-192), Septimus Severus (193-211), Caracalla (211-217), Maximus I (235-238), Decius (240-251), Valerian (253-260), Diocletian & Maximian (284-305), Galerius (305-311), Maximus II (305-313)
 - During the reign of Constantine (306-337, who co-reigned with Maximus II for the first 7 years of his reign), the emperor ordered religious toleration in the empire.
- **Reasons for accepting the late date for the writing of the book of Revelation**
 - If the reference to the great harlot Babylon can be ascribed as symbolic of Rome, the prophecy of Revelation can be correlated to the prophet Daniel (2:31-45; 7:13-28).
 - The late date better explains the breadth of persecution that is predicted and was occurring for God's people (2:10; 2:13; 3:10).
 - John was exiled to Patmos (1:9). Domitian throughout this reign exiled political and religious enemies. (There is no evidence that Nero ever did). The accepted tradition, corroborated by early writers, is that Domitian exiled John to Patmos, and that John remained on the island until Domitian's death. While the early date necessitates the major persecution to be because of the Jews, the language of Revelation indicates a more systemic, state persecution (13:7; 13:15).
 - The deterioration of the church in Ephesus from AD 62 (the date of Paul's writing of his epistle, Ephesians 1:15-16) to a congregation that had lost its first love (2:4) is improbable in less than a decade.
 - The sect of the Nicolaitans did not seem to be active until very late in the first century.
 - Laodicea was destroyed by an earthquake in AD 61. But, by the time of John's writing Revelation 3:17, the city had become rich. Unlikely in only 7 or 8 years.
 - Most external evidence (early church fathers) attribute the writing to the later date.
 - **Note:** Harkrider, in his commentary, argues convincingly that an analysis of Daniel's prophecies in Daniel (2, 7, 9) better fit with a later date view of Revelation (xxxix – xliii)
- **Note:** Some commentaries (notably, brethren such as Foy E. Wallace, Jr. and Authur Ogden, argue for an early date).

HOW TO INTERPRET THE BOOK OF REVELATION

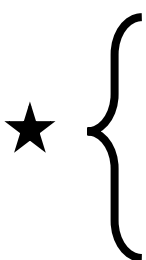
- Apocalypse “*the Revelation (apokalupsis) of Jesus Christ*” (1:1). **Thayer** – laying bare... a disclosure of truth (concerning things before unknown).
 - Literature broadly termed as apocalyptic (for its use of signs and symbols to vividly unveil truth) include the Old Testament books of Ezekiel, Daniel and Zechariah.
 - The major characteristic that apocalyptic writings share is the use of symbols.

Harkrider on Apocalyptic writing: “Adversity usually furnished the background out of which this type of writing grew. Persecution and days of difficulty often tempt one to doubt and compromise his faith. The purpose of these writings was to look beyond the present time to a dramatic intervention by God. They gave answers to such questions as, ‘Is our faith worth enduring this suffering?’ ‘What does the future hold?’ In glorious contrast to the near despair of its setting, the apocalyptic writers always set forth a future of deliverance and triumph. Thus this type of literature was intended to reveal a message that would bring hope and encouragement as God promised the overthrow of evil and a final victory for his righteous cause.” (*lvii*)

- **A principle rule of interpretation is that a literal meaning should be ascribed to any text, unless the context requires a symbolic interpretation. In Revelation, the danger is to ascribe a literal meaning to what is obviously symbolic language and intent.**

- When Premillennialists use the book of Revelation to give credence to the theory, they often arbitrarily ascribe literal meanings to the numbers and visions in the book. In this, they are both inconsistent, and guilty of *eisegesis* (reading into the text a meaning that corroborates their theory).

- **Harkrider’s Three Rules for Studying Apocalyptic Literature (*lix*)**

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- **Picture:** Read the context; close your eyes and visualize the scenery described. If you do not see the picture, you will never understand the point.
 - **Principle:** After feeling the emotions depicted by the symbolic language, then analyze what point is intended.
 - **Practice:** Upon determining the principle lesson intended, then make the application first of all to those who originally received it and then determine its abiding lesson throughout all ages.
- Recognize the danger of getting caught up in the trees (details), and missing the point (forest). While we can’t be dogmatic in our understanding of every detail, we can discern the basic points being made in the book.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION (Taken from Hendriksen’s, *More than Conquerors*)

- **Note:** Our outline and worksheet divide the book up into the various scenes that constitutes the visions given to John on the Lord’s day (cf. 1:10). Consider the following, adapted from W. Hendriksen’s introductory material (22-30)
 - “The book consists of 7 sections.” (W.H.) (1-3; 4-7; 8-11; 12-14; 15-16; 17-19; 20-22)
 - “These seven sections run parallel. Each of them spans the entire dispensation from the first to the second coming of Christ. This period is viewed now from one aspect; then from another.” (W.H.)
 - Consider the references to judgment given either explicitly or implicitly in each section (1:7; 6:12-17; 11:15,18; 14:14; 16:20; 20:10-15)
 - Different sections ascribe an identical duration to this period. “*forty-two months*” (11:2); “*one thousand two hundred and sixty days*” (11:3; 12:6); “*a time and times and half a time*” [3½ years] (12:14)
 - So, the section on the trumpets (8-11) runs parallel with the battle between the Christ and the Dragon (12-14).

- “the seven sections fall into two groups” (W.H.) (1-11; 12-22)
 - “In the first group, chapters 1-11, we see the struggle among men, that is, between believers and unbelievers. The world attacks the church. The church is avenged, protected, and victorious.” (W.H.)
 - “In the second group of visions, chapters 12-22, we are shown that this struggle on earth has a deeper background. It is the outward manifestation of the devil’s attack upon the Man-Child. The dragon attacks the Christ. Repulsed, he directs all his fury against the church. As his helpers he employs the two beasts and the great harlot. All these enemies of the church are defeated in the end.” (W.H.)
- “Each section gives us a description of the entire Gospel Age, from the first to the second coming of Christ, and is rooted in Israel’s history under the old dispensation to which there are frequent references.” (W.H.)
- In effect, the book of Revelation recaps in symbolic language and vivid pictures the exact prose of the rest of scripture that predicts the kingdom, establishes its presence, and prophesies its deliverance to God in the end (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:25-28).
- “One more remark and this chapter is closed. We have concentrated our attention on the division of the book. Yet, it is not the division but the unity of the book, the very close relationship between all the parts, that should be emphasized. This is often forgotten.” (W.H.)

HOW MEN INTERPRET THE BOOK OF REVELATION (Taken from Hailey’s Commentary, 48-51)

- **The Futurist Position** – “holds that the book reveals the conditions and events which will immediately precede the second coming of Jesus.” (H.H.)
 - This is the view held by millennialists. That chapters 4-19 refer to events that have yet to happen.
 - This view does not take into consideration the fact that the book was intended to give comfort the Christians in the first century
 - *“things which must shortly take place” (1:1).*
 - “This position is exceedingly speculative and gives rise to numerous false interpretations of Scripture.” (H.H.)
- **The Continuous Historical Position** – “holds that the book is a forecast of the church’s history and fortunes from John’s day to the end of time, and thus some parts of the book have been fulfilled and some parts have not.” (H.H.)
 - Those who hold this view will interpret the symbols to include the rise of the Catholic church, Islam, the Protestant Reformation, etc.
 - It holds the same disadvantages as the futurist position. No comfort for the first century saints, and extremely speculative interpretations of the symbols.
- **The Philosophy of History Position** – “advocates see in the book symbols representing forces at work rather than specific historical events and persons which these symbols signify.” (H.H.)
 - “This view has more to recommend it than do the first two; however, it seems to overlook certain historical settings which gave birth to the book, and which it was intended to deal with. The view falls short in too many areas.” (H.H.)
- **The Preterist Position** – “holds that the book was written or the people of John’s day and was fulfilled in that general period.” (H.H.)
 - Most view the fulfillment in the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70
 - Other hold that the entire fulfillment is seen in the conflict with the Roman Empire
- **The Historical Background Position** – “advocates see in Revelation a book written for the people of that day, set in a definite historical background and fulfilled in the events of the first two or three centuries.” (H.H.)

- Very similar to the Preterists, but hold that there are certain principles found in the conflicts that bring out very important principles and truths for all time.
- **Note:** Homer Hailey feels that all five positions are a bit too structured and limited. Consider his concluding words in that section:

“The book has a concrete setting in a definite period of history and deals with very real problems faced by Christians of the period. Diverse figures symbolize powerful moral and spiritual forces involved in a violent clash in which the forces of God are ultimately triumphant. By their faith and steadfastness to Christ and to truth, the saints of that day found encouragement and gained the crown of victory. The particular instruments through which the satanic forces and powers of John’s day warred against the saints have long since fallen. But the message of that defeat continues to instruct and encourage God’s people today and will always sustain them when the face similar conflicts...”

“...Some of the prophecies are yet to be fulfilled; examples of these are the passing of the present order, the resurrection, the judgment, and the final reward and punishment of the righteous and the wicked. Consequently, some futurist aspects of the book are to be recognized.” (H.H.)

CONCLUSION:

- The extensive nature of this first lesson is designed to give us a basis upon which we can correctly determine the truths to be found in the book
- While details may differ, and some details found in the symbols may be beyond our grasp, the intent will be to be consistent and careful in our teaching and learning about the book, and refrain from subjective speculations and hobbies.
- Please study this material carefully, and keep both the structure and the theme in mind throughout our study.

A CONSISTENT INTERPRETATION

(From Robert Harkrider’s commentary, *lxxii-lxxiii*)

1. Remember that Revelation was written by John primarily for the encouragement and edification of the Christians of his own time.
2. Remember that Revelation is written largely in symbolic language, thus it cannot be taken literally throughout. One can ill afford to be dogmatic in interpreting symbols, but he must strive to be certain his interpretation agrees with the context of the book as well as with the rest of the Bible.
3. Remember that Revelation uses Old Testament terminology with New Testament meaning. John has used much of the terminology of Ezekiel and Daniel, but has adapted them to his own message. An understanding of the Old Testament prophets and their use of symbols would be helpful because over 400 allusions to the Old Testament are made in Revelation.
4. For the true meaning of Revelation, one must seek to grasp the visions or series of visions as a whole without pressing the details of each symbol.
5. Understand difficult passages in light of clearer passages. Make all interpretations consistent with the teaching of the whole Bible.

A COMPREHENSIVE OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

(PART 1) CHAPTERS 1-11

INTRODUCTION (1:1-3)

- Revelation of Jesus Christ – **Things which must shortly take place** (1:1)
- Revealed to John, and a blessing to those who read and keep it (1:2-3)

JOHN'S GREETING TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA (1:4-8)

- From the eternal God, seven Spirits before His throne and Jesus Christ (1:4-5)
- Description of Jesus Christ/His second coming (1:5-7)
- God's self-declaration (Alpha and Omega/Almighty) (1:8)

(SCENE 1) JOHN'S VISION ON THE LORD'S DAY (1:9-20)

- John on isle of Patmos, received a vision while in the Spirit on the Lord's day (1:9-10)
- Declaration of the Lord. See it, write it in a book, send it to the churches of Asia (1:10-11)
- Description of the Christ in the midst of the seven lampstands (1:12-16)
- The Christ talks to John (1:17-20)

(SCENE 1 CONTINUES) THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA (2:1 – 3:22)

- **Ephesus** – A church that had left its first love (2:1-7)
 - Words of commendation (2:1-3,6)
 - Words of admonition (2:4-5)
 - Declaration of victory (2:7)
- **Smyrna** – A church suffering persecution (2:8-11)
 - Acknowledgment of persecution (2:8-10)
 - Declaration of victory (2:11)
- **Pergamos** – A church compromised doctrinally (2:12-17)
 - Words of commendation (2:12-13)
 - Words of admonition (2:14-16)
 - Declaration of victory (2:17)
- **Thyatira** – A church compromised morally (2:18-29)
 - Words of commendation (2:18-19)
 - Words of admonition (2:20-23)
 - Declaration of victory (2:24-29)
- **Sardis** – A church that had died spiritually (3:1-6)
 - Words of admonition (3:1-3)
 - Declaration of victory (3:4-6)
- **Philadelphia** – A church faithful to God in all things (3:7-13)
 - Words of commendation (3:7-11)
 - Declaration of victory (3:12-13)
- **Laodicea** – A church lacking in zeal (3:14-22)
 - Words of admonition (3:14-19)
 - Declaration of victory (3:20-22)

(SCENE 2) THE THRONE ROOM OF GOD (4:1 – 5:14)

- A voice calls to John to witness the throne room of God (4:1)
- A non-anthropomorphic and non-zoomorphic description of God the Father (4:2-3)
- An introduction of 24 elders with description given (4:4)
- A description of the throne of God, including the four living creatures with their description (4:5-8)
- The worship of the four living creatures and 24 elders (4:8-11)

- The scroll in God's right hand, and John's sadness that no one was worthy to open it (5:1-4)
- Description of the worthy Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, the slain Lamb (5:5-7)
- Worship of the 24 elders offered to the Lamb (5:8-10)
- Worship of the heavenly inhabitants, offered to the Lamb (5:11-12)
- Worship of every creature on earth and in heaven, offered to the Lamb and the Father (5:13-14)

(SCENE 3) THE FIRST SIX OF SEVEN SEALS OF THE BOOK OPENED BY THE LAMB (6:1-17). NOTE: FOUR HORSES OF THE APOCALYPSE (CONQUEST, WAR, FAMINE, DEATH)

- **Seal 1** – A white horse with a conqueror upon it (6:1-2)
- **Seal 2** – A red horse with a one who would take peace from the earth upon it (6:3-4)
- **Seal 3** – A black horse with one who had a pair of scales in his hand (6:5-6)
- **Seal 4** – A pale horse with one named Death upon it, with Hades following with him (6:7-8)
- **Seal 5** – Martyrs of God, seen under the altar, crying out to God for justice (6:9-11)
- **Seal 6** – Natural disasters upon the earth bringing terror to men (6:12-17)

(SCENE 4) THE 144,000 SEALED SERVANTS OF GOD (7:1-8)

- Four angels seen, standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the winds (7:1)
- Another angel appears, with the seal of the Living God, instructs the four angels (7:2-8)
 - The 144,000 are identified by the angel – sealed on their foreheads with the seal of God. 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel (7:4-8)

(SCENE 5) A GREAT MULTITUDE STANDING BEFORE THE THRONE OF GOD (7:9-17)

- All nations, tribes, peoples and tongues represented identifying the Father and Lamb as the origin of Salvation (7:9-10)
- Angels, the four living creatures, the 24 elders all worshipping God (7:11-12)
- One of the twenty-four elders reveals to John the origin of the great multitude. They are the ones who come out of the great tribulation. They are granted eternal comfort and sustenance by God and the Lamb. (7:13-17)

(SCENE 6) OPENING OF THE SEVENTH SEAL, AND THE SOUNDING OF THE FIRST SIX OF SEVEN TRUMPETS (8:1-9:21)

- **Seal 7** – Silence in heaven for ½ hour. Seven angels standing before God, given seven trumpets.
- The prayers of the saints offered before the throne of God (8:3-5)
- The seven angels prepare to sound the seven trumpets (8:6)
- **Trumpet 1** – Hail and fire destroy 1/3 of trees, and all grass (8:7)
- **Trumpet 2** – A third of the sea became blood, killing 1/3 of sea creatures and destroying 1/3 of ships (8:8-9)
- **Trumpet 3** – A third of the rivers and spring (fresh water) become undrinkable, causing many men to die (8:10-11)
- **Trumpet 4** – 1/3 of sun, moon and stars darkened. A warning about the calamities of the final three trumpets. (8:12-13)
- **Trumpet 5** – The first woe is unleashed (9:1-12)
 - A star falls from heaven, to whom is given the key to the bottomless pit. He opened it, bringing forth smoke from which comes powerful locusts who torment those who do not have the seal of God for 5 months. (9:1-6)
 - The locusts are described as fierce, armored, and with the ability to torment like scorpions, so that men desire to die. Their king is the angel of the bottomless pit, Abbadon/Apollyon. (9:6-11)
- **Trumpet 6** – The second woe is unleashed (9:13-21)
 - Four angels from God are released to kill 1/3 of mankind. These angels commanded an army of horsemen, 200 million strong. (9:13-17)

- 1/3 of mankind were destroyed with the plague visited upon them (9:18-19)
- This judgment of God did not result in the repentance of the men who remained. They continued in idolatry and immorality. (9:20-21)

(SCENE 7) THE MIGHTY ANGEL AND THE LITTLE BOOK (10:1-11)

- A mighty angel is described coming down from heaven with a little book in his hand (10:1-2)
- When the angel speaks, seven thunders utter their voices (10:3-4)
- The angel declares the delay in fully revealing God's mystery was over. In the sounding of the seventh angel, the mystery would be finished. (10:5-7)
- The voice from heaven instructs John to take the book from the angel. The angel instructs him to eat it, calling upon John to prophesy. (10:8-11)

(SCENE 8) THE TWO WITNESSES AND THE SEVENTH TRUMPET (11:1-19)

- The mighty angel instructs John to measure the temple of God (11:1)
- The holy city would be tread underfoot for 42 months by the Gentiles (11:2)
- Power would be given to the two witnesses of God, who would prophesy for 1,260 days (11:3-6)
- After their testimony, the witnesses would be killed by the beast from the bottomless pit, to the rejoicing of the worldly (11:7-10)
- However, after 3.5 days, the witnesses would be resurrected and ascended to heaven. This constitutes the ending of the second woe, (cf. Trumpets 5 and 6). (11:11-14)
- **Trumpet 7** – The third woe is pronounced (11:15-19)
 - Christ defeats the kingdoms of the world (11:15)
 - The 24 elders praise and worship God for His victory (11:16-19)

(PART 2) CHAPTERS 12-22

(SCENE 9) THE WOMAN, THE CHILD AND THE DRAGON (12:1-17)

- In heaven a pregnant woman gives birth (12:1-2)
- A great and terrible dragon appears before the woman, to devour the Child at birth (12:2-4)
- The Child is described as a ruler, and was caught up to God, the woman fled to a safe haven prepared by God for 1,260 days (12:5-6)
- A war broke out in heaven between Michael and the dragon, and the dragon (Satan) was cast out (12:7-9)
- A loud voice in heaven proclaims ultimate victory of Christ over Satan (12:10-11)
- Satan is described as wrathful on earth, because "*he knows that he has a short time*" (12:12)
- The woman is persecuted by the dragon, but he was unsuccessful and turned his wrath upon the rest of her offspring (the righteous) (12:13-17)

(SCENE 10) THE BEAST FROM THE SEA (13:1-10)

- A description is given of a beast rising from the sea (13:1-2)
- The beast had authority from the dragon & was adored by the world, who worshiped him (13:3-4)
- His authority was for 42 months, and he spoke great blasphemy against God (13:5-6)
- He would successfully persecute the righteous, and reign on earth (13:7-8)
- A call is made to the saints to be patient and endure (13:9-10)

(SCENE 11) THE BEAST FROM THE EARTH (13:11-18)

- Another beast is described, rising from the earth (13:11)
- This beast has the same authority, given by the dragon. Bringing signs and deceiving the world. (13:12-14)
- This beast calls upon the world to erect an idol to the beast from the sea and worship him (13:15)

- He places marks on the worldly, so that they are identified. Those without a mark are oppressed economically. (13:16-17)
- The number of the beast is 666 (13:18)

(SCENE 12) THE LAMB WITH 144,000 REDEEMED (14:1-5)

- A Lamb, standing on Mount Zion is seen by John, with 144,000 individuals with “His Father’s name written on their foreheads (14:1)
- A new song is sung before the throne of God by the 144,000 (14:2-3)
- The 144,000 are described as without fault before the throne of God (14:4-5)

(SCENE 13) THREE ANGELS AND THEIR PROCLAMATIONS (14:6-13)

- The first angel tells all the earth to fear God in the face of judgment (14:6-7)
- The second angel proclaims the fall of Babylon (14:8)
- The third angel warns of the wrath of God on those who worship the beast (14:9-11)
- The promise is given to the steadfast of rest from their labor (14:12-13)

(SCENE 14) THE EARTH’S HARVEST (PROCLAMATIONS OF THREE MORE ANGELS) (14:14-20)

- The Son of Man appears on a cloud with a sickle in His hand (14:14)
- The fourth angel (see scene 13) calls for the harvest of the earth (14:15-16)
- The fifth angel appears with a sickle as well (14:17)
- The sixth angel instructs the fifth to thrust in the sickle, and gather the vine into the “*great winepress of the wrath of God*” (14:18-20)

(SCENE 15) INTRODUCTION OF THE SEVEN FINAL PLAGUES (15:1-8)

- Seven angels appear in heaven, with the seven last plagues, completing God’s wrath (15:1)
- Those victorious over the beast are found standing on a sea of glass, singing the song of Moses (15:2-4)
- The seven angels come out of the temple in heaven with the plagues, and were given bowls full of God’s wrath (15:5-8)

(SCENE 16) THE SEVEN BOWLS OF WRATH (16:1-21)

- A loud voice from heaven instructs the seven angels to pour out the bowls of God’s wrath on the earth (16:1)
- **Bowl 1** – Brought sores upon those who wore the mark of the beast and worshiped him (16:2)
- **Bowl 2** – Turned the sea to blood, killing every sea creature (16:3)
- **Bowl 3** – Turned the fresh water rivers and springs to blood. God’s judgment is proclaimed as righteous. (16:4-7)
- **Bowl 4** – Scorches men with fire. They blaspheme and do not repent. (16:8-9)
- **Bowl 5** – Darkness and pain come upon men. They blaspheme and do not repent. (16:10-11)
- **Bowl 6** – The River Euphrates is dried up (16:12-16)
 - Three unclean spirits (like frogs) come out of the mouths of the dragon, beast and false prophet (16:13-14)
 - The kings of the earth are gathered together to Armageddon (16:15-16)
- **Bowl 7** – A great earthquake comes upon the earth (16:17-21)
 - Nations fall, and the great city Babylon is divided (16:19)
 - Hail the weight of a talent falls from heaven (16:21)
 - Men blaspheme God because of the plague of hail (16:21)

(SCENE 17) THE GREAT HARLOT ON A SCARLET BEAST (17:1-18)

- An angel tells John he will show him the judgment of the great harlot (17:1-2)
- John is carried away in the Spirit into the wilderness, and sees the harlot on a scarlet beast (17:3-4)
- The harlot is identified by a name on her forehead, Babylon the Great. She is drunk with the blood of the saints and of the martyrs of Jesus. (17:5-6)

- The angel describes the beast (who would be marveled at by the world) as the one *“who was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go to perdition”* (17:7-8)
- The beast has 7 heads and 10 horns (vs. 7). The angel notes the heads are seven kings, the beast an eighth king, and the 10 horns, 10 kings. These will make war against the Lamb and fail. (17:9-14)
- The 10 horns hate the harlot, and will eventually make her desolate. At present the woman reigns over the kings of the earth. (17:15-18)

(SCENE 18) THE FALL OF BABYLON (18:1-24)

- An angel with authority comes down from heaven to announce, *“Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen...”* (18:1-3)
- Another voice from heaven calls for the saints to *“come out of her”* lest they share in her sins and her punishment (18:4-8)
- The kings who committed fornication with the harlot will lament her fall (18:9-10)
- The merchants who made money off her will weep and mourn at their own loss (18:11-19)
- Heaven is called to rejoice over her fall (18:20)
- A mighty angel from heaven describes the violent nature, and totality of Babylon’s fall (18:21-24)

(SCENE 19) HEAVEN REJOICES OVER THE FALL OF BABYLON (19:1-10)

- A loud voice of a great multitude praise God for His judgment of the great harlot (19:1-3)
- The 24 elders and four living creatures worship God (19:4)
- A voice from the throne calls for all God’s servants to praise Him, and they respond (19:5-8)
- John is called to record these things, and worship God (19:9-10)

(SCENE 20) THE VICTORY OF THE CHRIST (19:11-21)

- Heaven opens, and the Christ is revealed on a white horse, coming to make war against the nations (19:11-16)
- An angel declares a victory is eminent against the forces of evil in the world (19:17-18)
- The beast, the kings of the earth and their armies all gather to battle the Christ (19:19)
- The beast and false prophet are cast alive into the lake of fire, and the rest were killed (19:20-21)

(SCENE 21) THE 1,000 YEAR REIGN OF CHRIST (20:1-10)

- An angel comes from heaven, and casts Satan into the bottomless pit, binding him for 1,000 years (20:1-3)
- **Note:** After 1,000 years Satan *“must be released for a little while”* (20:3)
- The souls of *“those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus”* are seen on thrones, living and reigning with Christ for the 1,000 years (20:4)
- The rest of the dead are raised when the 1,000 years are completed – the 1st resurrection (20:5-6)
- Satan is released from his prison at the end of the 1,000 years and deceives the nations (20:7-8)
- Satan’s forces surround God’s people, but God defeats them, and casts the devil into the lake of fire and brimstone (29:9-10)

(SCENE 22) THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT (20:11-15)

- God, on a great white throne, judges the dead according to their works (20:11-12)
- Death and Hades delivers up the dead, and themselves are cast into the lake of fire – the second death (20:13-14)
- Anyone whose name is not found in the book of life is cast into the lake of fire (20:15)

(SCENE 23) THE NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH (21:1-27)

- John sees a new heaven and new earth after the passing of the first heaven and earth (21:1)
- John saw the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God (21:2)
- A loud voice proclaims God’s presence with His people. *“The tabernacle of God”* with men (21:3-4)
- God proclaims the end of the conflict, *“It is done!”*, giving life to the righteous, and sending the ungodly into the lake of fire and brimstone *“which is the second death”* (21:5-8)

- One of the seven angels shows to John the new Jerusalem, “the bride, the Lamb’s wife”. John describes the city. (21:9-21)
 - The Lord God and the Lamb are the temple in the city (21:22)
 - The glory of God illuminates the city (21:23)
 - The nations of those who are saved walk in the city (21:24-26)
 - Nothing that defiles will be in that city. Only “those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life.” (21:27)

(SCENE 24) THE RIVER OF LIFE AND JESUS’ TESTIMONY (22:1-17)

- John’s vision ends with one final scene, he is shown a “*pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.*” (22:1)
- The tree of life is described (22:2)
- There will be no night in that place for God’s servants. God gives them light. (22:3-5)
- The angel verifies the faithful and true nature of the words proclaimed to John (22:6-7)
- John affirms, “*Now I, John, saw and heard these things.*” (22:8)
- The angel rejects John’s worship (as a fellow servant), instructing him to worship God (22:8-9)
- The angel instructs John not to seal the words in the book, “*for the time is at hand*” (22:10-11)
- Jesus proclaims He is coming quickly, to “*give to everyone according to his work*” (22:12-15)
- Jesus (“*the Bright and Morning Star*”) sent the angel to proclaim these truths (22:16)
- An invitation is given to him who desires the water of life to “*Come!*” (22:17)

A WARNING ABOUT THE BOOK OF REVELATION (22:18-19)

- If anyone adds to the book, the plagues written in it will be added to him (22:18)
- If anyone takes away from the book, God will take away his part from the Book of Life (22:19)

JESUS IS COMING QUICKLY! (22:20-21)

SCENE 1 – THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA (1:1-3:22)

PICTURE: THE SCENE (emotions, impressions)

PRINCIPLE: ANALYZE (the intended point)

PRACTICE: THE APPLICATION (to them and to us)

CHARACTERS & SYMBOLS

NOTES

(Turn page over if more room is needed)

SCENE 2 – THE THRONE ROOM OF GOD (4:1-5:14)

PICTURE: THE SCENE (emotions, impressions)

PRINCIPLE: ANALYZE (the intended point)

PRACTICE: THE APPLICATION (to them and to us)

CHARACTERS & SYMBOLS

NOTES

(Turn page over if more room is needed)

SCENE 3 – FIRST SIX SEALS (6:1-17)

PICTURE: THE SCENE (emotions, impressions)

PRINCIPLE: ANALYZE (the intended point)

PRACTICE: THE APPLICATION (to them and to us)

CHARACTERS & SYMBOLS

NOTES

(Turn page over if more room is needed)

SCENE 4 – THE 144,000 SEALED SERVANTS OF GOD (7:1-8)

PICTURE: THE SCENE (emotions, impressions)

PRINCIPLE: ANALYZE (the intended point)

PRACTICE: THE APPLICATION (to them and to us)

CHARACTERS & SYMBOLS

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SCENE 5 – A GREAT MULTITUDE (7:9-17)

PICTURE: THE SCENE (emotions, impressions)

PRINCIPLE: ANALYZE (the intended point)

PRACTICE: THE APPLICATION (to them and to us)

CHARACTERS & SYMBOLS

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(Turn page over if more room is needed)

SCENE 5 - ADDITIONAL NOTES

SCENE 6 – THE SEVENTH SEAL, THE FIRST SIX TRUMPETS (8:1-9:21)

PICTURE: THE SCENE (emotions, impressions)

PRINCIPLE: ANALYZE (the intended point)

PRACTICE: THE APPLICATION (to them and to us)

CHARACTERS & SYMBOLS

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(Turn page over if more room is needed)

SCENE 7 – THE MIGHTY ANGEL AND THE LITTLE BOOK (10:1-11)

PICTURE: THE SCENE (emotions, impressions)

PRINCIPLE: ANALYZE (the intended point)

PRACTICE: THE APPLICATION (to them and to us)

CHARACTERS & SYMBOLS

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(Turn page over if more room is needed)

SCENE 8 – THE TWO WITNESSES & THE 7TH TRUMPET (11:1-19)

PICTURE: THE SCENE (emotions, impressions)

PRINCIPLE: ANALYZE (the intended point)

PRACTICE: THE APPLICATION (to them and to us)

CHARACTERS & SYMBOLS

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SCENE 9 – THE WOMAN, THE CHILD & THE DRAGON (12:1-17)

PICTURE: THE SCENE (emotions, impressions)

PRINCIPLE: ANALYZE (the intended point)

PRACTICE: THE APPLICATION (to them and to us)

CHARACTERS & SYMBOLS

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(Turn page over if more room is needed)

SCENE 10 – THE BEAST FROM THE SEA (13:1-10)

PICTURE: THE SCENE (emotions, impressions)

PRINCIPLE: ANALYZE (the intended point)

PRACTICE: THE APPLICATION (to them and to us)

CHARACTERS & SYMBOLS

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SCENE 11 – THE BEAST FROM THE EARTH (13:11-18)

PICTURE: THE SCENE (emotions, impressions)

PRINCIPLE: ANALYZE (the intended point)

PRACTICE: THE APPLICATION (to them and to us)

CHARACTERS & SYMBOLS

NOTES

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SCENE 11 - ADDITIONAL NOTES

Lined writing area consisting of 26 horizontal lines.

SCENE 12 – THE LAMB AND THE 144,000 REDEEMED (14:1-5)

PICTURE: THE SCENE (emotions, impressions)

PRINCIPLE: ANALYZE (the intended point)

PRACTICE: THE APPLICATION (to them and to us)

CHARACTERS & SYMBOLS

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SCENE 13 – THREE ANGELS AND THEIR PROCLAMATIONS (14:6-13)

PICTURE: THE SCENE (emotions, impressions)

PRINCIPLE: ANALYZE (the intended point)

PRACTICE: THE APPLICATION (to them and to us)

CHARACTERS & SYMBOLS

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SCENE 14 – THE EARTH’S HARVEST (3 MORE ANGELS) (14:14-20)

PICTURE: THE SCENE (emotions, impressions)

PRINCIPLE: ANALYZE (the intended point)

PRACTICE: THE APPLICATION (to them and to us)

CHARACTERS & SYMBOLS

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SCENE 15 – INTRODUCTION OF THE SEVEN FINAL PLAGUES (15:1-8)

PICTURE: THE SCENE (emotions, impressions)

PRINCIPLE: ANALYZE (the intended point)

PRACTICE: THE APPLICATION (to them and to us)

CHARACTERS & SYMBOLS

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SCENE 16 – THE SEVEN BOWLS OF WRATH (16:1-21)

PICTURE: THE SCENE (emotions, impressions)

PRINCIPLE: ANALYZE (the intended point)

PRACTICE: THE APPLICATION (to them and to us)

CHARACTERS & SYMBOLS

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SCENE 17 – THE GREAT HARLOT ON A SCARLET BEAST (17:1-18)

PICTURE: THE SCENE (emotions, impressions)

PRINCIPLE: ANALYZE (the intended point)

PRACTICE: THE APPLICATION (to them and to us)

CHARACTERS & SYMBOLS

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SCENE 18 – THE FALL OF BABYLON (18:1-24)

PICTURE: THE SCENE (emotions, impressions)

PRINCIPLE: ANALYZE (the intended point)

PRACTICE: THE APPLICATION (to them and to us)

CHARACTERS & SYMBOLS

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SCENE 19 – HEAVEN REJOICES OVER BABYLON’S FALL (19:1-10)

PICTURE: THE SCENE (emotions, impressions)

PRINCIPLE: ANALYZE (the intended point)

PRACTICE: THE APPLICATION (to them and to us)

CHARACTERS & SYMBOLS

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SCENE 20 – THE VICTORY OF THE CHRIST (19:11-21)

PICTURE: THE SCENE (emotions, impressions)

PRINCIPLE: ANALYZE (the intended point)

PRACTICE: THE APPLICATION (to them and to us)

CHARACTERS & SYMBOLS

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(Turn page over if more room is needed)

SCENE 21 – THE 1,000 YEAR REIGN OF CHRIST (20:1-10)

PICTURE: THE SCENE (emotions, impressions)

PRINCIPLE: ANALYZE (the intended point)

PRACTICE: THE APPLICATION (to them and to us)

CHARACTERS & SYMBOLS

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SCENE 22 – THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT (20:11-15)

PICTURE: THE SCENE (emotions, impressions)

PRINCIPLE: ANALYZE (the intended point)

PRACTICE: THE APPLICATION (to them and to us)

CHARACTERS & SYMBOLS

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SCENE 23 – THE NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH (21:1-27)

PICTURE: THE SCENE (emotions, impressions)

PRINCIPLE: ANALYZE (the intended point)

PRACTICE: THE APPLICATION (to them and to us)

CHARACTERS & SYMBOLS

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SCENE 24 – THE RIVER OF LIFE & JESUS’ TESTIMONY (22:1-17)

PICTURE: THE SCENE (emotions, impressions)

PRINCIPLE: ANALYZE (the intended point)

PRACTICE: THE APPLICATION (to them and to us)

CHARACTERS & SYMBOLS

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SUMMARIZING OUR STUDY

Rather than writing the summary out for the student, there are central themes and impressions that should be apparent by the end of the study. Thus, the student is encouraged to use the material in this booklet and his or her own observations to answer the following questions in review:

- **WHAT WERE THE CONDITIONS FACING GOD’S PEOPLE AT THE TIME THE BOOK OF REVELATION WAS WRITTEN?**

- **WHAT IS APOCALYPTIC LANGUAGE, AND WHY IS IT FOUND IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION?**

- **WHAT IS THE INTERPRETIVE METHOD WE USED IN THE STUDY OF THIS BOOK? NAME AND EXPLAIN.**
 - STEP 1 –

 - STEP 2 –

 - STEP 3 –

- **WHAT IS THE THEME OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION?**

- **HOW DID THE MESSAGE OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION HELP THE CHRISTIANS AT THE END OF THE 1ST CENTURY?**

- **REVISIT YOUR WORKSHEETS AND COMPILE A LIST OF APPLICATIONS THAT WILL HELP YOU AS YOU LIVE AS A CHRISTIAN.**

INDEX 1

MAJOR CHARACTERS & OBJECTS APPEARING IN JOHN'S APOCALYPTIC VISION

Following are all of the characters (the cast) and significant objects appearing in the visions showed John on the isle of Patmos. Efforts are made to identify each and note the times they appear in the vision, though omissions may be present. Each character is listed in order according to the first time he or it appears in the narrative.

- **Jesus Christ** (1:1-2,5,7-9,11,13; 2:1-3:22; 5:5,6-8,12-13; 6:1,16; 7:9,14,17; 11:15; 12:2-5,13; 10-11,17; 13:8; 14:1,4,10,12,14; 15:3; 17:6,14; 19:7,9,10,11; 20:4,6; 21:6,9,14,22-23,27; 22:1,3,12,13,16,20-21) Identified as Jesus Christ, a loud voice, the Son of Man, by various descriptions in the letters to the seven churches of Asia, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, a Lamb as though it had been slain, Faithful and True, the Christ, the Child, the Alpha and the Omega, the Bright and Morning Star
- **Various Unidentified Angels** (1:1,20; 2:1,8,12,18; 3:1,5,7,14; 5:2,11;7:1-3,11; 8:2,3,4,5,6,7,8,10,12,13; 9:1,11,13,14,15; 10:1,5,7,8,9,10; 11:1,15; 12:7,9; 14:6,8,9,10,15,17,18,19; 15:1,6,7,8; 16:1,3,4,5,8,10,12,17; 17:1,7; 18:1,21; 19:17; 20:1; 21:9,12,17; 22:6,8,16)
 - The word angel (αγγελος, angelos) a messenger. An angel, one sent from God
 - Note: In the letters to the churches (chapters 2&3), could have reference to men, not angels
 - These angels are primarily unnamed. Some are described as mighty. Some are in groups.
 - Chapter 12:7,9 refer to the Devil and **his** angels.
- **John** (1:1,4,10, et al) - Most agree that this John is the apostle, who wrote the gospel of John, as well as the three epistles of John.
 - Note, John is present at all of the visions, shown these things by God. Each time the author identifies himself, "I was", "I saw", "spoke to me", he is acknowledging his presence at the vision.
- **God the Father** (1:1,2,6,9; 2:7,18; 3:1,2,12,14; 4:2-3,5,8; 5:1,6,7,9,10; 6:9; 7:2,3,9,10,11,12,15-17; 8:2,4; 9:4,13; 10:7; 11:1,4,11,13,16,17,19; 12:5,6,10,17;13:6; 14:4,5,7,10,12,19; 15:1,2,3,7,8; 16:1,7,9,11,14,19,21; 17:17; 18:5,8,20; 19:1,4,5,6,9,10,13,15,17; 20:4,6,9,12; 21:2,3,4,7,10,11,22,23; 22:1,3,5,6,9,18,19) The Father is mentioned many times in Revelation. The references include "word of God", "throne of God", "wrath of God", "Lamb of God", etc.
- **The Seven Spirits of God** (1:4, 3:1; 4:5; 5:6) – Seven is the number of perfection, used to denote the perfection of the Holy Spirit.
- **Seven Golden Lampstands** (1:12-13,20; 2:1-3:22) – 1:12, identifies the lampstands as representing the seven churches of Asia (Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea)
- **Sharp Sword** (1:16; 2:12; 19:15) – The power of judgment is in the word of the Lord (cf. Hebrews 4:12). While the word of God saves (cf. Romans 1:16), it also condemned the wicked. Wielded by the Lord, the execution of God's judgment is inexorable. (cf. Isaiah 11:4).
- **Death** (1:18; 6:8; 20:13-14) – Death is personified here. That is, referred to as a person.
- **Hades** (1:18; 6:8; 20:13-14) – Hades is personified. Hades is the realm of the spirits of the dead. (cf. Luke 16:19-31)
- **Deeds/Doctrine of the Nicolaitans** (2:6,15) – an argument is made that this doctrine is now known as Gnosticism. Such a doctrine would allow a man to consider himself holy even if he compromised to avoid persecution. Very little is historically known about the Nicolaitans.
- **Synagogue of Satan** (2:9,10,13,24; 3:9) – A reference to unfaithful Jews. By tolerating Caesar worship, and opposing God's people, the place of worship was not a place to serve God, but rather serve the Devil.
- **Satan** (2:9,10,13,24; 3:9; 12:3-4,7-9,12,13,16,17; 13:2,4; 16:13; 20:2,7,10) – Referred to as Satan, the devil, the dragon. The arch enemy of God and man.
- **That woman Jezebel** (2:20) – It may be this woman is actually a group/faction in the church. However, it is probable it was an actual woman with influence (Jezebel herself was a formidable woman, though evil and immoral). This woman was characterized by the Lord in the same way.
- **Rod of Iron** (2:27; 12:5; 19:15) – Referencing the Christ, the nature of His rule. A rule of absolute authority. However, consider that Jesus as Lord is not a tyrant, but a strong, loving and benevolent Master.

- **Book of Life** (3:5; 13:8; 20:12,15; 21:27; 22:19) – In scripture, there are numerous references to a book or register that contains the name of those who belong to God (cf. Exodus 32:32-33; Psalm 69:28; Daniel 12:1; Luke 10:20; Philippians 4:13; Hebrews 12:22-23; and here). Those whose names are found will be saved. Those whose names are not in the book will be cast into hellfire.
- **Heaven** (3:12; 4:1,2; 5:3,13; 8:1,10,13; 9:1; 10:1,4-8; 11:12-13,15,19; 12:1,3,7-8,10; 13:6; 14:2,6,13,17; 15:1,5; 16:11,17; 18:1,4-5,20; 19:1,11,14; 20:1,9; 21:1-3,10) - The dwelling place of God and His angels.
- **Twenty-four Elders** (4:4-10; 5:5-6,8,11,14; 7:11,13; 11:16; 14:3; 19:4) – These would represent the leaders of both physical and spiritual Israel (12 X 2). They have thrones, are dressed in white and have gold crowns upon their heads, showing holiness and symbolizing their reign/victory over God’s enemies. Hailey writes, “The number twenty-four suggests a combination of the twelve patriarchs of the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles, thus representing the redeemed of both covenants now united through Christ” (168).
- **Four Living Creatures** (4:6-10; 5:6,8,11,14; 6:1,3,5,6,7; 7:11; 14:3; 15:7; 19:4) – Creatures inhabiting the throne room of God. Like a lion, calf, man, and flying eagle. Each with six wings and many eyes. Their sole purpose in creation was to praise God continually.
- **Sea of Glass** (4:6; 15:2) – In 4:6, the sea of glass is found before the throne of God. It is part of a beautiful vision of that place. In Chapter 15:2, the sea of glass is mingled with fire, perhaps referring to the trial of saints. Those saints are shown on the sea of glass in victory, singing praise in God’s presence.
- **Scroll with Seven Seals** (5:1-10) – The number 7 symbolizes the perfect. What is written in the book contains God’s absolute and total will. A seal is designed to protect the contents of the scroll. No one other than the Lamb could break the seals and unveil God’s will. **Note:** The seals of the scroll are opened in chapters 6 and 8. (The Seven Seals **REVEAL**)
- **Golden bowls full of incense** (5:8; 8:3-4) – These bowls are identified as the prayers of the saints. When Christians pray, our prayers enter into the throne room of God Himself, and are at his feet.
- **Every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, (5:13)** – This phrase is used to signify that the entirety of creation acknowledges the glory and worthiness of the Father, and the Lamb of God.
- **Martyred Souls** (6:9-11; 18:24) – John’s visions detail persecutions against the church. Christian’s lost their lives due to this persecution. Chapter 6:4 mentioned mentions death by sword. Harkider notes that though they were dead physically, here they are represented as alive and aware spiritually.
- **Seal of God on Forehead** (7:3) – A seal signifies protection, ownership and certification. Harkider: “All of these meanings are true of Christians who are under God’s protection, purchased by the blood of Christ, and certified by the Spirit to be sons of God (Ephesians 1:13; Romans 8:16).” (89). (cf. Ezekiel 9:1-11).
- **144,000 Sealed servants of our God** (7:4-8; 14:1-3) – The text identifies the 144,000 as made up of 12,000 from twelve tribes of Israel (Judah, Reuben, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, Benjamin). A combination of 12 X 12 X 10 X 10 X 10=144,000. Twelve would represent God’s covenant people. Ten indicates completeness. 144,000 would refer to the sum total or complete number of God’s people! Those with the seal of God, rather than the mark of the beast. (cf. 7:3; 14:1; 15:2; 20:4; 22:4). Notice here that the 144,000 were receiving God’s protection while on the earth.
- **Great Multitude** (7:9-10,14-17; 19:1,6) – Identified as the ones who come out of the great tribulation. They are granted eternal comfort and sustenance by the Father and the Lamb. They are now in heaven, standing before the throne. The same servants of God, faithful and triumphant in God’s presence.
- **Seven Trumpets** (8:2,6,7,8,10,12; 9:1,13; 11:15) – Like the seals before, seven is a word indicating the perfect. Here, as Harkrider notes: “The trumpets reveal the workings of God in calling men to turn from evil” (98). **Note:** The trumpets are sounded in chapters 8,9,11. (The Seven Trumpets **ANNOUNCE** and **WARN**).
- **Wormwood the great star** (8:10-11) – Fell from heaven at the sounding of the third trumpet. Wormwood was a bitter plant in the Old Testament, usually indicating God’s chastisement of His people for their idolatry (cf. Deuteronomy 29:18; Jeremiah 9:15; 23:15; in Lamentations 3:19, wormwood symbolized the bitter anguish of the prophet).
- **Bottomless Pit** (9:1,2,11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1,3) – the cavity from which evil comes, the abode of the devil and his angels. The star mentioned in 9:1 probably refers to Satan (cf. Luke 10:18). He is “*given*” the key (a symbol of loosing and unloosing) to the pit or abyss.

- **Locusts** (9:3,7) – A common pest in the Old Testament, used by God in judgment (cf. Deuteronomy 28:38; 1 Kings 8:35,37; 2 Chronicles 7:13-ff). Hailey says, these “symbolize the forces of spiritual evil in the world which the disciples would overcome and tread under foot” (227). Sin brings destruction. The locusts would bring their destruction upon the unrighteous in the world.
- **Abaddon** (Hebrew)/**Apollyon** (Greek) (9:11) – The angel of the bottomless pit. The term means destroyer. Some believe in the context of the destructive nature of evil, this would indicate the consequences of sin (immorality) in the world. In other words, the angel exists only as a figure in the vision. Others think it refers to Satan himself, the origin of all evil (cf. John 8:44).
- **Army of the Horsemen** (9:16-19) – The result of the sounding of the sixth trumpet. The 200,000,000 number indicates a substantial and powerful army, killing 1/3 of mankind. A power capable of accomplishing God’s judgment upon ungodly men. Not a literal army (cf. 9:19).
- **Little Book** (10:2,8,9,10) – While the scroll of 5:1-10 contained the entirety of God’s work regarding mankind, this book indicates only one aspect of God’s purpose. The contents are intimated in verses 9-11. John’s eating of the book is mirrored by Ezekiel (Ezekiel 2:8-3:3) and Jeremiah (Jeremiah 15:16-ff). God’s judgment is sweet when the victory is contemplated. But to prophesy God’s judgment on the wicked would certainly be a bitter thing to the Apostle.
- **The Reed like a Measuring Rod** (11:1-2) – Harkrider writes, “The reed represents the divine standard of truth by which all religious acts must be measured (Matt. 7:21-23). By God’s divine measuring reed, he could identify the true Israel of God” (119).
- **Two Witnesses** (11:3-14) – The context shows great persecution against God’s people. However, God would protect during this time. We have no knowledge of the identity of the two witnesses. What is important is they will prophesy with God’s protection, and even when ultimately killed by the beast, would be rewarded by God with resurrection and ascension. From this we can see the ultimate victory over evil (cf. Matthew 10:28).
- **The Woman** (12:1,13,14,15,16,17) – Harkrider: “...the radiant woman depicts the collective spiritual body of God’s people.” (134), (cf. Hebrews 11:39-40). This would include the faithful remnant of the Jews preceding the birth of the Christ, as well as the church (cf. Micah 4:10; Micah 5:2-4; Isaiah 66:7-13).
- **The Child** (12:2,4,5,13) – The Messiah child. A reference to the Christ. (God promised Abraham that through his seed, all the families of the earth would be blessed, cf. Genesis 12:3). The fact that the dragon sought to devour the child at birth represents the many efforts of Satan to destroy the Christ (cf. Matthew 2:16).
- **Michael** (12:7) – An archangel (cf. Jude 9); He is also referred to as “the prince of Israel” (Daniel 10:21; cf. Daniel 10:13; Daniel 12:1).
- **The Beast from the Sea** (13:1) – An agent of Satan. Most interpret the Beast of the Sea as symbolizing a world empire that would persecute the people of God. Probably the same beast referred to in 11:7 that would kill the prophets, indicating persecution from the Roman Empire. (see Daniel 7:1-14)
- **The Beast from the Earth** (13:11) – He is also referred to as “the false prophet” (16:13; 19:20; 20:10). This beast symbolizes false religion. For example, in John’s day it would be paganism/emperor worship. This two-headed attack of the world (Secular and Religious) joins to destroy the people of God.
- **Image/Mark of the Beast** (13:14-17; 14:9,11) – The **image** of the beast would be a statue or idol. The image being given life (3:15) would be the beginnings of Caesar worship in the Roman empire. The **mark** on the forehead is probably figurative of being loyal to the emperor. There is no secular proof of any literal mark found or required showing loyalty to Rome.
- **Babylon the Great** (14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2,10,16,18,19,21. **Note:** may be referred to first in 11:8 as the great city.) – The allusion to Babylon (the great city that ruled the world in the past) symbolizes the world-ruling city. In John’s time, this would be Rome. Both the political center, and the religious center of the world, because of the enforced emperor worship (cf. Isaiah 21:9)
- **Sickle** (14:14,16,17) – an instrument of harvesting, wielded in the hands of the Christ (cf. 1:7; Daniel 7:13). So, this is a representation of divine judgment on the world (cf. Joel 3:13; Jeremiah 51:33)
- **Great Winepress of the Wrath of God** (14:19,20; 19:15) – This symbolizes the response of God to the wicked. God is certainly a loving God to those who are His. However, he is also a vengeful God, who will trample underfoot the wicked. (Isaiah 63:3; Romans 11:22).

- **Seven Golden Bowls** (15:7) – The divine judgments of God’s full wrath against the ungodly. (Those who had received the mark of the beast). (cf. Hosea 5:10). The bowls or vials are poured out in chapter 16. (The Seven Bowls **EXECUTE**).
- **False Prophet** (16:13; 19:20; 20:10) – See the Beast from the earth above. Same figure.
- **Armageddon** (16:16) – This is obviously figurative. (No literal place). The word means, “mount of Megiddo.” There is a town of Megiddo (Joshua 17:11), waters of Megiddo (Judges 5:19); and the plain/valley of Megiddo (Zechariah 12:11). Megiddo is a plain located in the Valley of Jezreel. **Note:** an army of 200 million, and a river of blood of that size, could not fit in the valley of Jezreel. So, Armageddon is the symbolic site of a spiritual battle between God and Satan, with the Lord emerging victorious.
- **The Great Harlot** (17:1) - see **Babylon the Great**, above.
- **Scarlet Beast** (17:3) – The description of this beast, given in the 17th chapter, closely aligns with the beast from the sea that is described in chapter 13:1-8. If the harlot (Babylon the Great) is Rome, it makes sense that the scarlet beast and the beast from the sea are the same (the empire).
- **Fine Linen** (19:8) – Defined in the text, the righteous acts of the Saints. It makes up the dress of the Lamb’s bride, a reference to the church. (cf. Ephesians 5:22-33; esp. 5:27).
- **1,000 years** (20:2,3,4,6,7) – The events of chapter 20 are in a time following the establishment of the church, and the persecution at the hand of the beast and the false prophet. Interestingly, since the time of the Roman Empire, Christians have not suffered the severe oppression of a world dominion. (The Roman Empire being the last world empire). The number 1,000 (10 X 10 X 10) is the symbol of highest completeness. A complete, uninterrupted period of time when Satan is bound. The Kingdom of Christ, “cannot be shaken” (Hebrews 12:28).
- **The Souls of the Beheaded** (20:4) – These individuals were on thrones, reigning with Jesus. Every time in Revelation (47 times) except for the throne of Satan and the Beast, the thrones appear to be in heaven. This is so here as well, as Christ’s reign is in heaven, not on earth. These were souls of the martyred, in the spiritual realm, reigning in exaltation with the Lord.
- **First Resurrection** (20:5) – The reign of the martyred souls is described as the first resurrection. The term is used figuratively here. Satan’s cause was raised “resurrected” for a little while (vs. 3, 7-9). Now, in verse four is described a resurrection of Christ’s cause in the exaltation of the martyred souls and 1,000 year reign. It is the emerging of the Christ in victory from apparent defeat.
- **Second Death** (20:6; 21:8) – the eternal lake of fire (20:14; 21:8). All humans experience the first (physical) death (cf. Hebrews 9:27). However, those victorious with Christ will not experience eternal hell fire.
- **Gog and Magog** (20:8) – (cf. Ezekiel 38 & 39). Gog was the king of the land of Magog. He stood for the pagans which fought against God and His people and were defeated. The same here. The enemies of God, gathered as an army against the Lord, will be defeated, with their leader Satan cast into a lake of fire!
- **Lake of Fire and Brimstone** (19:20; 20:10,14-15; 21:8) – The place of eternal torment. This is where the beast, and the false prophet (19:20), the Devil (20:10), Death and Hades, (20:14-15), and all the ungodly (21:8) are cast in eternal judgment (the second death). (cf. Matthew 25:41, 46).
- **Great White Throne** (20:11) - This is Christ’s throne in the final judgment of mankind, and the end of the present physical system. (cf. Matthew 25:31-32; Romans 14:10-12)
- **New Heaven and New Earth** (21:1) – The present order passed away, there is the establishment of an entirely new order, different in kind. Another example of similar imagery (Isaiah 65:17; 66:22, speaking of the new age of Christ and His church. cf. Hebrews 8:6-13; 9:15). John uses it to refer to that beyond the judgment, a contrast with the church age and conflict that Revelation is centrally about. Peter wrote about this as well, a time that would follow the dissolution of the present universe (2 Peter 3:10-13).
- **New Jerusalem** (21:2; 10-21) – God’s people from all periods of time (cf. Hebrews 11:10, 13-16; 12:22-24; 13:14).
- **The Bride/The Lamb’s wife** (21:9) – A reference to the New Jerusalem above, hence God’s people. An image of purity and beauty as described in the text (21:9-17).

INDEX 2

THE USE OF NUMBERS IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Note: The following is taken from Robert Harkrider's commentary on Revelation, pages lxii-llx

"The apocalyptic writings employed numbers in a symbolic manner... The numbers three, four, seven, ten and twelve occur with regularity in Revelation and signify a message other than the literal numerical value..."

Quote from Ray Summers: "The inner significance of numbers was a kind of device which always had fascination for the Oriental mind. In that early day, when language was primitive and the vocabulary meager, one Hebrew word sometimes was compelled to do duty for a score of diverse meanings. Under such conditions, men came naturally to use numbers as we use words. They were the symbols of moral or spiritual truth. A certain number would suggest a definite concept. The conceptions arose mainly through certain primitive associations. Just as the sound of a given word by long habit calls up the corresponding idea, so a certain number, by acquired association, called up a definite concept. Such numbers become symbols and cannot be read with the literal exactness that we employ when interpreting mathematical formulae" (Worthy is the Lamb, 21).

Important Symbolical Numbers in Revelation

One (1) suggested "unity" or that which is unique and alone. This number is not actually used in Revelation, but it stands behind several others.

Two (2) is twice one, and therefore came to symbolize "strength," redoubled courage and energy. Two witnesses confirm the truth of God (11:3-12).

Three (3) became the symbol of the "divine" as it represented the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Four (4) represented the "world in which men lived, worked and died." Reference is often made to the four corners of the earth: north, south, east, and west.

Seven (7) is the "perfect divine number" indicating that which is whole. By combining numbers, other symbols resulted. When the number four ("world") is added to the number three ("divine"), the result is seven which came to be the most sacred number among the Hebrews.

Six (6) is the number representing "failure." As seven was the sacred perfect number, six fell short and came to mean doom. Man may have apparent wisdom and strength, but if he sets himself in opposition to God, he will always meet defeat just when success may seem to be in his grasp.

Three and One-Half (3.5) is seven cut in half and symbolized "broken or incomplete." Three different terms are employed which are equal: "time, times, and half a time" ($1+2+1/2$) or "forty-two months" or "1260 days." Each of these represents an indefinite period of time, certainly less than the perfect or full period signified by other numbers.

Ten (10) came to mean "completeness." A person with ten fingers and ten toes has the full or complete number of fingers and toes.

One Thousand (1,000) signified "a complete or full period of time." This number is the result of multiplying ($10 \times 10 \times 10$), which is another way of confirming the certainty of fulfillment (completeness \times completeness \times completeness). Nothing will interfere or break this period of time until God wills it.

Twelve (12) was significant in Hebrew religious thought because this number represented "God's people." In the Old Testament there were twelve patriarchs, and thus the twelve tribes of Israel constituted God's nation, and in the New Testament the twelve apostles were the ambassadors of Christ to the citizens of His kingdom.

One Hundred Forty-Four Thousand (144,000) is a multiple of the number representing fullness ($10 \times 10 \times 10$) and the number representing God's people ($12 \times 12 = 144$). Multiply these together and one hundred forty-four thousand is reached ($1000 \times 144 = 144,000$), signifying the full number of God's people on earth at any given time.

(It is important to be consistent in interpretation. Numbers should not be interpreted literally sometimes, and figuratively other times, in order to fit some theory. As Harkrider states: "A proper interpretation will follow a consistent pattern while analyzing the meaning of both the pictures and the numbers revealed in the Apocalypse").

Many commentaries and resources were consulted in the preparation of this material. However, three main commentaries with similar views were borrowed from heavily. When directly quoted, the quotes are cited, but readers of these commentaries will see many of the same thoughts and ideas that are found in this classbook.

1. **Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary** (Homer Hailey).
Baker Book House. 1979.
2. **More Than Conquerors: An Interpretation of the Book of Revelation** (W. Hendriksen)
Baker Book House, 1939.
3. **Truth Commentaries: Revelation** (Robert Harkrider) Edited by Mike Willis. -
Guardian of Truth Foundation, 1997.