


A Key to Understanding *Revelation*



By Rich Jacobs, M.D.

Overview:





This handout outlines my understanding of Revelation and is intended to be used with your Bible as a study guide. I summarize what I regard to be the main points for each chapter. Key scripture verses are marked with a key graphic (). I recommend that you first read the overview of each chapter before you read the actual chapter in Revelation. This outline of Revelation is based on several concepts.

1. Revelation prophetically speaks to the future time (REV 1:1) of Christ's return, rather than a historical, or "preterist", viewpoint. After Christ gives advice to the Church, Revelation begins its narrative near, or at the beginning of, the "'70th Week of Daniel'" (DAN 9:24-27).
2. Revelation is mainly a chronological timeline of the events that will lead up to the time of Christ's return.
3. Saints experience persecution for their faith; it will be no different for the end-times Christians. Believers will not be raptured before the "'Great Tribulation'", although the rapture, immediately preceded by the resurrection, prevents Antichrist's total annihilation of the elect (MAT 24:21, 22; 2 THES 2:1-4).
4. The deliverance of the Church opens the door for God's judgment of the wicked (ROM 5:9; 1THES 1:10; 5:9). It also leaves a faithful, but as yet, non-Christian, remnant of Israel in the world yet to be saved, which takes place at the close of the "70th Week of Daniel".
5. Antichrist will be defeated by the physical return of Christ to the earth with all His holy ones (i.e. angels and departed saints) immediately after the remnant of Israel repents and accepts Christ as her Messiah.
6. There will be a literal earthly Millennial reign of Christ when the saints will rule and reign with Him.
7. At the end of the Millennium, there will be a resurrection of the wicked dead, the Great White Judgment Throne, and defeat of the final enemy -- death.
8. Finally, the Eternal Kingdom of God is established in the New Creation, which has been God's purpose of all time and creation from the very beginning.

Revelation, Chapter 1: Introduction and Purpose - The Second Coming of Jesus Christ ("revelation"), the Establishment of His Earthly Kingdom, & the Judgment of the World

-  **REV 1:1** The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. , ,
-  **REV 1:6, 7** and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen. Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen.

Revelation, Chapter 2: Christ's Instruction & Preparation of His Church

- To the church that left its first love (like Ephesus - REV 2:1-6)
-  **REV 2:7** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.
- To the poor but faithful church (like Smyrna - REV 2:8-10)
-  **REV 2:11** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death.
- To the persecuted church that tolerates some compromise (like Pergamum - REV 2:12-16)
-  **REV 2:17** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it.
- To the church that tolerates immorality (like Thyatira - REV 2:18-24)
-  **REV 2:25-29** Only hold on to what you have until I come. To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations— 'He will rule them with an iron scepter;
he will dash them to pieces like pottery'—

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just as I have received authority from my Father.

I will also give him the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Revelation, Chapter 3: Christ's Instruction & Preparation of the Church

- To the dead church (like Sardis – **REV 3:1-4**)
☞ **REV 3:5** He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels.
- To the patient, obedient church (like Philadelphia – **REV 3:6-11**)
☞ **REV 3:12** Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name.
- To the lukewarm church (like Laodicea – **REV 3:13-20**)
☞ **REV 3:21** To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.

Revelation, Chapter 4: John's Invitation into God's Presence to Receive the Prophecy

- ☞ **Rev 4:1** After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this."

Revelation, Chapter 5: The Scroll of God's Judgment & Wrath

- ☞ **REV 5:1** Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals.

Note: A sealed scroll was often a legal document, like a will or judicial verdict. The instructions on the scroll could not be executed until an authorized person breaks the seal(s). The scroll seen by John contains God's "Trumpet Judgments" against Antichrist and the wicked and only Christ has the authority to break the seals. Each broken seal sets into motion events that brings the world closer to these judgments.

Revelation, Chapter 6: Breaking the First Six Seals

- First Seal (**REV 6:1, 2**) – A Conqueror arises who appears to be good. He is Antichrist and the "70th Week of Daniel" (**DAN 9:24-27**) is near or starting.
- Second Seal (**REV 6:3, 4**) – War begins.
- Third Seal (**REV 6:5, 6**) – Food shortages, although oil supplies continue.
- Fourth Seal (**REV 6:7, 8**) – Antichrist obtains authority over a quarter of the earth, inflicting famine, disease, and social disorder.
- Fifth Seal (**REV 6:9-11**) – Antichrist begins the "Great Tribulation". The "Abomination of Desolation" has taken place and we are now past the midpoint of the "70th Week of Daniel".
- Sixth Seal (**REV 7:12-17**) – The resurrection and rapture of the saints by Christ and His angels delivers the Church from "Great Tribulation", setting the stage for God's Judgment. The Scroll has but one more seal to break before it can be opened and read.

Revelation, Chapter 7: Preparation for God's Judgment & Wrath

- God seals the remnant of Israel, represented by the heads of households from each of the twelve tribes, to protect them from the coming wrath and judgment. (**REV 7:1-8**)
- The resurrected and raptured Church is revealed, now in Heaven. (**REV 7:9-17**)
☞ **REV 7:13, 14** Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?" I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the "Great Tribulation"; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

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Revelation, Chapter 8: First Four “Trumpet Judgments”

- The prayers of the saint seek God’s justice for a wicked world (ruled by Antichrist) --**REV 8:1-6**.
- First Trumpet Judgment – hail, mixed with fire, burning up 1/3rd of the earth – **REV 8:7**.
- Second Trumpet Judgment – blazing “mountain” smites 1/3rd of the sea – **REV 8:8, 9**.
- Third Trumpet Judgment – “Wormwood” (possibly an angel) poisons 1/3rd of the freshwater – **REV 8:9-11**.
- Fourth Trumpet Judgment – darkness on 1/3rd of the earth – **REV 8:12**

Revelation, Chapter 9: Fifth & Sixth “Trumpet Judgments”

- Fifth Trumpet Judgment: Locust-scorpion demons that torment men for five (5) months (**REV 9:1-12**).
- ☞ **Rev 9:5, 6** They were not given power to kill them, but only to torture them for five months. And the agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes a man. During those days men will seek death, but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them.

Note: Each month in the Hebrew calendar is commenced with blowing a trumpet, causing some scholars to speculate each trumpet plague in Revelation lasts one month. The fifth trumpet plague, however, seems to be the exception, as Revelation says it lasts for five months. If this is so, all seven “Trumpet Plagues” take about one year to be completed. Since the “Trumpet Plagues” occur in the last 3^{1/2} years of the 70th Week, and since the “Great Tribulation” immediately precedes these judgments, one may infer the “Great Tribulation” could last about 2^{1/2} years.

- Sixth Trumpet Judgment: Demonic army bringing more torment to wicked men (**REV 9:13-21**)

Note: After the Sixth Trumpet, the Lord prepares for events that will immediately follow the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet. These events will take place immediately after the “70th Week of Daniel”.

Revelation, Chapter 10: The Small Scroll of Judgments

- The Mighty Angel announces the coming Kingdom and presents the Small Scroll, which pertains the “Bowl Judgments” and events that are about to come, immediately after the “70th Week of Daniel”.
- ☞ **REV 10:7** But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets.

Revelation, Chapter 11: Details of the Events of the Last 3^{1/2} Years of the 70th Week.

- The rebuilt Jewish Temple, in Jerusalem, is revealed. (**REV 11:1**)
- Gentile domination of Jerusalem and the Temple for the last 42 months (3^{1/2} years) of the 70th Week is revealed. (**REV 11:2**)
- Two prophetic witnesses against Antichrist minister in Jerusalem, Antichrist’s capital city for 1260 days (3^{1/2} years). One witness is known to be Elijah (**MAL 4:5**), while the second witness is thought to be Moses (see **MAT 17**). Although they openly oppose Antichrist, he is unable to kill them because they are divinely protected. These two witnesses invoke the “Trumpet Plagues” on Antichrist and a wicked world. (**REV 11:3-6**)
- At the end of the 70th Week, Antichrist kills the two witnesses, causing the world to celebrate because they believe the plagues now will end. The bodies of the two witnesses lie in the streets, unburied, for 3^{1/2} days. (**REV 11:7-10**)
- After the 3^{1/2} days, the two witnesses are resurrected, associated with a great earthquake in Israel. (**REV 11:11-14**)

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Note: From other scripture, I believe the remnant of Israel has been hiding from Antichrist in Azel – an unknown location (**ZECHARIAH 14:5**) – during the last 3^{1/2} years of the “70th Week of Daniel” (**REVELATION 12:6**). From their hiding place, it makes sense that they would cheer on the two witnesses who openly oppose Antichrist, hoping that Moses and Elijah will yet deliver them from him. It also seems reasonable to conjecture that when the two witnesses are killed (**REVELATION 11:7, 8**), Israel would desperately seek God and search the scriptures for hope and help. I believe that after three (3) days of fasting and searching, Israel realizes they crucified their Messiah and repents (**ZECHARIAH 12:10**). Christ appears to them and all the remnant of Israel is saved (**HOSEA 6:1–3; ROMANS 11:25–27**). Perhaps the salvation of Israel takes place during the 3^{1/2} days when the two witnesses remain unburied in Jerusalem. If this is so, the redemption of Israel also leads to the resurrection of the two witnesses, just as it also closes the Age of the Gentiles (**LUKE 21:24**).

- The Seventh Trumpet sounds, ending the “70th Week” and announcing the Kingdom of Christ on Earth (**REV 11:15–18**)

🔍 **REV 11:15** The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.”

- God’s heavenly Temple reveals the Ark of the Covenant, announcing the redemption of Israel and heralded by a comic display of awe. (**REV 11:19**)

Revelation, Chapters 12 through 14: Parenthetical Chapters that Explain the Cosmic Conflict

Revelation 12 introduces the first of three highly symbolic chapters intended to sum up the end-times cosmic conflict between God and Satan. This chapter begins by telling us that we are dealing with a sign (Greek: “sameion”, σημεῖον), or symbol.

- The symbolism in Chapter 12 may be understood in this way.
 - The woman symbolizes Israel. Compare Joseph’s dream with the sun, moon, and stars in **GEN 37:9** to the description of this woman in **REV 12:1**.
 - The woman’s child (**REV 12:2–5**), a son who will rule the nations with an iron scepter, is Jesus Christ. (Compare these verses to **REV 19:15**.)
 - The red dragon is Satan (**REV 12:3**), which is plainly stated in **REV 12:9**.

🔍 **REV 12:9** The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

- From the key verse, shown above, we see that the third of the stars swept from sky to earth by the dragon’s tail, represent his demons, or “fallen angels”, and are different from the stars associated with the woman.
- The woman flees into the desert for 1260 days represents Israel fleeing from Satan during the last 3^{1/2} years of the “70th Week of Daniel” (**REV 12:6**). The dragon (Satan – also symbolized by “Leviathan” in the Bible) tried to destroy the remnant of Israel, but they are divinely protected during this time.

🔍 **REV 12:13, 14** When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent’s reach.

- When Satan can’t destroy the remnant of Israel, he begins his persecution of the Church, who are the ones who “hold to the testimony of Jesus”, resulting in the “Great Tribulation” and the martyrdom of many saints (**REV 12:17**).

Revelation 13 is also highly symbolic, revealing more about Antichrist and his empire.

- The sea (**REV 13:1**) represents the world of international politics. (See **REV 17:15; DAN 7:2**)

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- The beast that has 10 horns and 7 heads with 10 crowns represents the final antichrist kingdom (**REV 13:1-3**). Sometimes, it represents Antichrist, himself. Consider the following evidence.
 - The beast resembles the dragon, but is not the dragon (compare **REV 13:1** to **REV 12:3**).
 - The beast resembles an amalgam of the gentile “beast” empires revealed in **DAN 7**. Assuming the symbolism is consistent, the Antichrist’s empire, or confederation, will include elements of the Persian, Greek, and Babylonian Empires. All of these empires have sought Israel’s destruction at some time and in some way. (See comments under **Rev 17**.)
 - The persuasive power of the beast kingdom will cause it to influence and dominate the entire world (**REV 13:7**).
 - The second beast is often called a false religion or false prophet. It is like a lamb, pretending to be gentle, but with horns, having the ability to inflict harm. The dragon, Satan, speaks through this beast, compelling all men to worship Antichrist and Satan. (**REV 13:11-15**)
 - Persecution from Antichrist is enforced by restricting buying and selling to those who worship him. The number of his name is six hundred sixty-six (Greek: “hexakosioi hexakonta hex”, ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ). The subject of much speculation, 666 remains a mystery. (**REV 13:16-18**)

Revelation 14, symbolically sums up the outcome of the conflict between Christ and Satan.

- The remnant of Israel is now seen to be reconciled with their Messiah and in His physical presence. (**REV 14:1-5**)
- With the founding of the earthly Messianic kingdom comes a proclamation of grace to the survivors of “Trumpet Judgments”. Along with an offer of amnesty comes a warning to people who refuse God’s grace and support Antichrist. (**REV 14:6-12**)
- Having warned the world, God now begins a harvest of judgment during the days immediately following the 70TH Week. This harvest is often called the “grapes of wrath”, as the judgment results in terrible bloodshed in the final, cataclysmic battle. (**REV 14:13-20**)


Revelation, Chapter 15 - Preparation for the Final Wrath of God

This chapter shows all the saints – both Jew and gentile – gathered with the angelic host before God, who is enraged at wickedness. The command to bring the final plagues of wrath – the “Bowl Judgments” – is about to be given.

 **REV 15:7, 8** Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls filled with the wrath of God, who lives for ever and ever. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.

Revelation, Chapter 16 - The Seven “Bowl Judgments”

God inflicts Antichrist and his kingdom with the Seven “Bowl Judgments”, or Plagues, during the month, or so, following the “70th Week of Daniel”. These plagues cause great desolation on the earth, completing the “Abomination of Desolation”.

 **Rev 16:1** Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, “Go, pour out the seven bowls of God’s wrath on the earth.”

- First Bowl – ugly, painful sores (**REV 16:2**)
- Second Bowl – sea turns to blood and all sea creatures die (**REV 16:3**)
- Third Bowl – all fresh water turns to blood. The “blood judgments” inflict on Antichrist the blood he sought through the martyrdom of the saints. (**REV 16:4-7**)
- Fourth Bowl – scorching heat from the sun. (**REV 16:8, 9**)
- Fifth Bowl – painful darkness (**REV 16:10, 11**)
- Sixth Bowl – deceptive demons that gather the nations of Antichrist’s empire for final battle at Armageddon. (**REV 16:12-16**)

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- Seventh Bowl – Final destruction of Antichrist’s capital, “the great city”, and kingdom, 100 pound hail stones, and the final desolation of a wicked world. (**REV 16:17–21**)

Note: Revelation uses symbolic language to identify Antichrist’s capital city. This city is called the “Babylon the Great” (**REV 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21**). Many people have speculated about the identity of this city, with some popular eschatologists claiming ancient Babylon, in Iraq, will be rebuilt and others claiming the city is Rome. Scripture also calls Babylon the Great the “Harlot of Babylon” and the “great city”. With these additional clues, there should be no doubt that Babylon the Great is Jerusalem, which is why John was so astonished (**REV 17:6**) when he saw her identity. **REV 11:8** says “the great city” is “where also their Lord was crucified” – clearly a reference to Jerusalem, where Jesus went to the cross. Notice that **REV 11:8** also symbolically calls Jerusalem “Sodom and Egypt”, showing its wickedness and that it will become the subject of both judgment and plagues. Also, Jerusalem, “the faithful city”, is said to have become a “harlot” in **ISA 1:21** and **NAH 3:4**. Finally, that Jerusalem has become the capital of murdering the prophets and the saints was affirmed by Christ Himself, as recorded in **MAT 23:37** and **LUKE 13:34**.

Revelation, Chapter 17 - More Details About Antichrist’s Empire

This is another symbolic chapter, it within it, we find the keys to some understanding of the symbolism used in Revelation.

- The meaning of some of the prophetic symbols are as follows.
 - The “many waters” (Greek: “epi hidraton pollon”, ἐπι ὑδάτων πολλῶν) is reminiscent of the sea out of which the Beast emerges, thus representing international politics. (**REV 17:1**)
 - The woman is the Harlot of Babylon, as was already mentioned, representing Antichrist’s empire and capital city, Jerusalem. She is portrayed as a prostitute with whom the nations have relations. (**REV 17:1–6**)
 - The woman’s scarlet color represents sin and the spilled blood of the saints. (**REV 17:4–6**)
 - The Beast is the Antichrist empire, as explained earlier. It is not simply Rome (though Rome may be part of the Beast), because **Rev 17:8** says the Beast didn’t exist when John received the Revelation, in about 95 A.D. This Beast existed earlier, though, and it will arise again in the final days, according to this chapter. Since the Beast is a mongrel of the animals that representing the empires (see **DAN 7**), many believe Antichrist’s empire will incorporate portions of these former empires.
 - The seven heads on the Beast represent seven kingdoms (symbolized by mountains – see **DAN 2:45**), headed by seven kings, which are part of the historical effort to destroy God’s people. Five of these kingdoms had already existed by the time of John’s life. Some speculate these kingdoms have been used by Satan to try to destroy Israel. If this is so, perhaps these kingdoms would include Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persian, and Greece. At the time of John’s Revelation, one kingdom (“head”, or “mountain”) “is”, meaning it existed in 95 A.D. -- undoubtedly, Rome. (**REV 17:9–11**) The final kingdom is yet to come, and will be the short-lived empire of Antichrist.
 - The ten horns are ten rulers who will make up leaders in Antichrist’s kingdom (**REV 17:12**). These rulers correspond to the ten toes of Daniel’s vision (**DAN 2:33;41–44**).
 - The ten rulers give their power to Antichrist and they collectively begin the “Great Tribulation” of the Church and of the remnant of Israel. All this is demonically empowered. (**REV 17:13–18**)

Rev 17:6 I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus. When I saw her, I was greatly astonished.

Revelation, Chapter 18 - More On the Condemnation of the Harlot of Babylon

- Antichrist’s kingdom will emphasize fleshly pursuits, commercial trade, and money. The nations of the world will be seduced by her wealth and commerce. (**REV 18:1–19**)

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- This Great Harlot is judged and destroyed by God because of its martyrdom of the saints.
🔍 **Rev 18:24** In her was found the blood of prophets and of the saints, and of all who have been killed on the earth.

Revelation, Chapter 19 - Celebration of the Saints & Wedding Supper of the Lamb

- The celebration of the saints as a result of their deliverance and the triumph of God's righteousness over evil (**REV 19:1-6**)
- Preparation of the Bride of Christ for the wedding. (**REV 19:7-10**)
- Revelation of Christ as the Captain of the Host, now coming to claim the earth as His kingdom, as it is in Heaven (**REV 19:11-16**)
- Destruction of Antichrist and his army by Jesus and His army. (**REV 19:17-21**)
- 🔍 **Rev 19:9** Then the angel said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!'" And he added, "These are the true words of God."

Revelation, Chapter 20 - Imprisonment & Release of Satan, Gog, the Great White Judgment Throne

- Satan is bound and thrown into the Abyss for 1000 years. (**REV 20:1-3**)
- The saint rule and reign with Christ on earth for 1000 years. The Judgment of the Nations (**MAT 25:31-46**) occurs at the beginning of this Millennium. (**REV 20:4-6**)
- At the end of the Millennium, Satan will be released and returns to his wickedness.
 - Satan deceives the nations, which revolt against the Kingdom of Christ, led by a man named "Gog". (Rev 20:7, 8)
 - Gog's army lays siege to Jerusalem, but it is divinely destroyed (Rev 20:9)
 - Satan is thrown into the Lake of Fire forever (**REV 20:10**)
- The Great White Judgment Throne condemns the wicked who are thrown in the Lake of Fire. This is the Second Resurrection. (**REV 20:11-15**)
- 🔍 **Rev 20:2** He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.

Revelation, Chapter 21 & 22 - The New Creation and the Glorified Bride of Christ

- The New Jerusalem is revealed to be beautiful and glorious. It is also called the Bride of Christ, so the language is very symbolic and mysterious.
- God is the light of the New Creation; there is no sun or moon.
- There will be no more sin, death, or darkness.
- 🔍 **Rev 21:1** 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.
- 🔍 **Rev 22:5** There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

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