

Living as a Christian in America Today

What we can learn from Revelation and what we should not forget from the other 65 books and 2000 years of church history

1 Peter 4:12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.

I. Here are the questions I hope to answer, directly or indirectly, through the study. You've asked for it, now brace yourselves.

1. How did the American church get into the shape we are in today?
2. How does a Christian deal with loss of Biblical morality and ethics?
3. How does a Christian respond to race and gender discussions?
4. Isn't America a Christian nation, how do we get control back?
5. What should a Christian expect from society, the government and popular thought?
6. Should Christians be more or less involved in politics to influence policy to stop the assault on us?
7. What is the "Secret Timeline" that Christians are supposed to understand that allows them to navigate the end times?
8. What does Revelation mean for us today?
9. Are we in the last days, have the 4 horsemen in Revelation been released?
10. It can't get much worse, the end has to be near, isn't that true?
11. Is the recent pandemic foretold in Revelation? Is it a sign of the end times?
12. Who is Babylon, the Anti - Christ and what are the beasts in Revelation? What does that have to do with us today?

II. Problems Understanding Revelation If you are having a hard time understanding a passage in Revelation, make sure you aren't in one of these traps.

- A. We read the text with a bias from what someone told us it "has" to mean.
- B. We automatically assume things about the language that may not be true
 1. End of the age, is not the end of time in Bible vocabulary
 2. "Soon" doesn't mean in the next few years
- C. We don't fully understand the OT imagery that John is using
- D. We miss the forest for the trees. The themes get lost in the imagery and details.
- E. We like to understand the Bible as literal, Revelation was not meant to be taken literally. Then, we arbitrarily pick and choose literal vs. imagery.
- F. We have a short term view of history and think "it's never been this bad before"

III. The current state of the world is not different than it has been throughout church history

A. Violence – We have more violence as time goes on because there are more people to fight and we have better history records. We have more death as time goes on because we are more efficient at killing each other. The trend of war is a constant climb upward in history, we like to fight each other.

1. 429 recorded wars from AD 1 to 1000
2. 370 from 100 to 1500
3. 506 from 1500 to 1800
4. 614 from 1800 to 1900

B. Pandemics

1. Smallpox 165AD (Middle East) 1492 (Caribbean), 1520 (Aztecs)
a) 90% of some Caribbean islands died. Aztecs died in totality. Possibly 56 million native Americans died in 16th and 17th centuries.
2. Typhoid 430BC (Athens).
a) 2/3rds of Athens died. Still kills 600,000 worldwide today
3. Bubonic Plague 541AD (Middle East), 1350 (Europe), 1665 (London), 1855 (China)
a) 50 million total estimated to have died in 4th-6th centuries. 1/3rd of world died in 1350, 20% of London died in 1665, 15 million died in China.
4. Leprosy Middle Ages
5. Cholera 1817 (Russia), spread to Europe and America
a) 1 million died in Russia from first outbreak. Millions more died through the next 150 years.
6. Influenza 1889 (Russia), 1918 (Spanish Flu), 1957 (Asian Flu)
a) 1889 Russia, 360,000 died. 1918, 50 million died, 1957, 1.1 million died
7. HIV 1981 – 35 million died so far

C. Persecution of Christians – From Ligonier Ministries

In the first three centuries of the church, from Nero to Diocletian, Roman imperial and provincial persecutions were fierce. Tradition tells us of gladiators in the Colosseum, lions in the Circus Maximus, and staked pyres in the Forum as threatening the earliest believers. Yet they persevered. As Tertullian quipped, “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.”

The rise of Islam out of the desolate Arabian Peninsula and its subsequent westward expansion posed new threats to Christians throughout Byzantium and across the North African shore. From the seventh to the eleventh centuries, the Christian heartland was crushed under the weight of Islamic invasions. The plunder of churches, the rape of Christian women, the torture of priests and monks, the pilfering of villages and towns, and the occupation of the territories sent shudders of horror throughout the West—eventually prompting the efforts of the Crusaders.

Throughout the medieval age, Islam remained a persistent danger to believers, both in the conquered lands of the old Christian East and along the frontiers of the West. Invading Assassin armies marched to the gates of Vienna; marauding Ottoman armies controlled the eastern Mediterranean. Their policy of enforced servitude for Christians who would not convert to Islam threatened to swallow up the last remnants of the faithful. There were other dangers to Christians as well—from the Teutonic tribes of the north, from the last of the pagan Viking warlords, and even from overzealous inquisitors.

With the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries came a new wave of persecution. Many believers were, in the words of Foxe's Book of Martyrs, "bound to relinquish not only goods and children, but life itself, for the glory of their Redeemer." A vast host were swept away in the wars that raged across Europe: the German Peasants' War (1524–25), the Battle of Kappel (1531), the Schmalkaldic War (1546–47), the Huguenot repression (1562–98), the Eighty Years' War (1568–1648), the Thirty Years' War (1618–48), and the Wars of the Three Kingdoms (1639–51).

The Age of Discovery in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries afforded new opportunities for missionary deployment around the world. Plunging into the darkest jungles, trekking across the harshest deserts, and sailing along the deepest seas brought new dangers—for both the missionaries and their first disciples. The story of the great missions movement cannot be told apart from the terrible sacrifices made by faithful followers of Jesus.

Until you are impaled on a stake and set on fire to light the roads to Washington DC, you haven't matched the persecution of the first century Christians.

D. The most radical changes in the 20th century (continuing now) that differed from the previous 19 centuries

- I. Communist ideas. Communism has been the cause of near 100 million deaths, with a large percentage Christians, in the past 110 years.
 - a) Vladimir Lenin, Joseph Stalin, Adolf Hitler, Mao Zedong, Idi Amin, Mengistu Haile Mariam, Robert Mugabe, Fidel Castro, Kim Il-sung, and Pol Pot just to name a few major players
 - b) Communism is a religion, it is the worship of the state. Coupled with secular humanism it is an extremely dangerous false religion.
2. Technology. We can kill each other more efficiently than ever
3. Information. People are aware of things that we never knew were happening before the communication revolution. Unfortunately where the printing press allowed the church to spread the truth of the gospel, now the internet allows us to spread every false idea opposed to God at light speed.

IV. The Bible has an overall theme that we must understand if we want to understand Revelation

Peter J. Leithart Commentary on Revelation:

Revelation does not predict the end of the physical universe; it uses the imagery of cosmic collapse to unveil the end of the old creation. –

The Bible is a book of books, with the emphasis here being on the singular *book*. For all its complexity and diversity, it is a unified text with a single over- all plot, an internally coherent pattern of imagery, a worldview of symbols and beliefs and teachings and demands. Revelation is a book of the Bible, and that means it operates within the world and history described in the OT and NT. Creation, fall, flood, Babel, Abraham, Sodom, Egypt, plagues, exodus, conquest, temple, tabernacle, kingdom, exile, Elijah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, return, rebuilding: These books, people, and events provided the coordinates of John's imagination, long before he was swept up by the Spirit to see visions of God. He *did* have an ecstatic visionary experience, but what he saw reflected the events and institutions of the Bible, and when he recorded them he naturally recorded them in the vernacular he knew, the vernacular of the Scriptures. –

A. Kingdom of God is the theme of the Bible. Redemption is a part of the kingdom theme. A one-sentence description of the Bible is the kingdom of God manifesting and spreading through all of creation (leaven parable).

- I. Throne Scriptures. It is clear that God rules in the spiritual realm visibly and in the physical realm invisibly
 - a) *Psalms 89:4, 14; 93:2, 97:2, 103:19*
 - b) *Isaiah 6:1; 9:7; 16:5; 66:1*
 - c) *Ezekiel 1:26; 10:1; 26:16; 43:7*
 - d) *Daniel 7:9*
 - e) *Luke, Jesus birth announcement 1:32*
 - f) *Sermon on the Mount. Your will be done, your kingdom come on earth as in heaven.*

A. Started in Genesis

1. Adam was told to have dominion (be a king) over the world and populate it (take God's image to all the world)
2. The Fall derailed Adam's role as king, and the promise was made in Gen. 3:15 that someone else would come through Adam's line to finish the job
3. The Fall created the need for redemption, but the main story is still God's kingdom being brought into the earth
4. Revelation tells of the completion of the plan of God to finally make the Earth his Kingdom where all enemies are vanquished

B. Daniel's vision

1. Interpreted for us, the final kingdom is the kingdom of God.
 2. This was achieved on the Cross by David's son David
- C. Everything points to the day when God sets his anointed one "Messiah" on the throne
1. David's covenant - God promised David in 2 Sam 7 that there would always be a ruler on the throne of Israel
- D. God put Jesus on the throne at the cross and resurrection (Pss 2:6; 45:6–7, with Heb 1:8–9; 132:11; Isa 9:6–7; Jer 23:5–6; Mic 5:2; Zec 6:13; Lk 1:33; 19:27, 38; 22:29; Jn 18:36–37; Ac 2:30–36).
- E. Kingdom preaching from Jesus
1. First words in ministry were "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." Mark 1:15
 2. My kingdom is not of this world John 18:36
- F. Redemption at the cross inaugurates the Kingdom on earth
1. Crushing of Satan's head at the cross defeated the ruler of this world and fulfilled the promise in Gen 3:15
 2. World is judged, Satan is cast out, when Jesus is "lifted up" on the cross. John 12:31
 3. It appears weak and foolish but is larger and more powerful than any earthly kingdom 1 Cor. 1:21–31
 4. It is not measured by pomp and circumstance but by grace and truth John 18:37
- G. Revelation is correctly understood from the throne room of God looking out on Christ's kingdom, not from the earth looking forward to Christ's kingdom
- V. Themes in Revelation are consistent with all the other books of the Bible
- A. Suffering
1. The world is arrayed against God in government, commerce and false religion, don't expect anything different.
 2. Believers should stand strong against suffering, even to the point of death, just as Christ did for us. – Peter
 3. The presence of Christ in the midst of suffering. The "coming of Christ" themes can mean that he is present to relieve the believers during times of persecution more so than the end of time. – Paul to Corinthians in 2 Cor. 1
- B. Affliction
- C. Persecution
1. In the face of a struggle between good and evil, know that Jesus is triumphant and is completely in control of the situation. God is sovereign. – Daniel

2. Persecution will not last forever, light and momentary affliction. – Paul to Corinthians 2 Cor 4:17
3. Persecution is to be expected from all aspects of the world – Jesus Sermon on the Mount
4. Jesus Sends Out the Twelve Apostles Matt 10: 5

These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, “Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, 6 but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 And proclaim as you go, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ 8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay. 9 Acquire no gold or silver or copper for your belts, 10 no bag for your journey, or two tunics or sandals or a staff, for the laborer deserves his food. 11 And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart. 12 As you enter the house, greet it. 13 And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. 14 And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town. 15 Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town. 16 “Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. 17 Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, 18 and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. 19 When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. 20 For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. 21 Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, 22 and you will be hated by all for my name’s sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. 23 When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes. 24 “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. 25 It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household.

D. Judgment of evil

1. Judgment will come to the evil in the world. – Paul to Thessalonians
2. The messiah will judge in truth – Isaiah
 - a) *Is 11:3 He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, 4 but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.*

E. Sovereignty of God – Similar to Daniel 4, God controls human activity

F. Kingship of the Messiah – We see Jesus as he is seen from heaven

VI. The genre of Revelation is important to understand before you can interpret the words

A. Each book of the Bible has a genre. Revelation is apocalyptic. This does not mean a disastrous judgment, but an unveiling.

1. There are history, poetry, law, wisdom literature, letters and apocalyptic writing.
2. Parts of Daniel, Ezekiel and the minor prophets have apocalyptic imagery that John uses in Revelation

B. The genre and structure are critical to understanding any type of writing.

1. *Animal Farm* by George Orwell
2. *Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan
3. *Calculus and Analytic Geometry* by Thomas and Finney
4. *Diary of Anne Frank*

C. Structure will drive the interpretative model that is used to understand the apocalyptic language. God unveils truth through images

Revelation takes the form of a letter, but it contains mostly symbolic language identical to images in the OT. Without understanding the OT images, Revelation is not clear. John pulls from the images that he knows best, the OT.

Here's an example of imagery in our speech, imagine reading this 2000 years ago.

We had a major pitch to the big wheels from corporate. We brought in the A players and had it all teed up. Bill got the green light and rode in with is head high. But fumbled it and fell flat on his face. You could feel the air sucked out of the room. The team called a time out and huddled. Joe was up to bat next but he struck out just like Bill. We were sinking fast, people were looking at their watches and spacing out. To save face, we asked for a breather so we could powwow and rally the troops. Finally at the 11th hour Sue pulled together a dog and pony show that was one for the books. She saved the day and we all strolled out like heroes. Our phones were blowing up all evening with news of the big win. To someone unfamiliar with our imagery, this would make no sense whatsoever.

D. Revelation takes into account that the Cross has happened, the OT prophets looked forward to the messiah and he came. John sees the spiritual implication of what Jesus did and continues to do on earth from heaven.

VII. Symbols in Apocalyptic Languages

- A. Beasts – things from the earth usually representing the creation
- B. Babylon – Representation of Rome and all earthly kingdoms typified by Babylon as assuming the power of God
- C. Some are more clear to us: Lamb, Serpent, Dragon
- D. Numbers in apocalyptic language are not meant to be taken literally.
- E. The Bible is full of repetitive use of numbers to represent things, and Revelation is no different

1. 3 – Represents God
2. 4 – Creation. 4 corners of earth (north south east west), 4 horns of altar, 4 rivers in Eden, 4 winds, 4 living creatures (all of the created animals)
3. 6 – Number of man, 1 short of God,
4. 7 – Represents God. His fullness or completeness. God made earth in 6 days, his day is the 7th.
5. 12 – God's people. 12 tribes, 12 apostles
6. 1000 – A number representing “everyone” or “everything” that is too large to count. Like our term Bazillions.
7. Combinations of these numbers or multiples of these numbers represent a more full description
 - a) *24 is 2 x 12, or Old and New covenant people*
 - b) *144,000 12 x 12 x 1000, all of the people of God from both Old and New covenants*

VIII. Old Testament Prophecies are integral to understanding Revelation

1. God judged Israel for disobedience by sending them into exile in Babylon and Assyria. Only the exiles from Babylon returned, the rest lived in Samaria and were permanently dispersed.
2. OT prophets provided hope for the exiles while their entire world was falling apart
 - a) *Could not worship*
 - b) *Were enslaved*
 - c) *Culture was destroyed*
 - d) *God promised this would be temporary through the words of the prophets*
3. OT prophecies pointed to the messiah. NT interpretations of OT prophecies are all interpreted as being fulfilled by Jesus.
 - a) *A deliverer would come (like Moses did in Egypt) and be a king (like David was to Israel) and rescue God's people from Exile*
 - b) *This king would be different than the previous wicked kings of Israel that failed to protect them from destruction*
 - c) *God would change the hearts of the people so they would love his law*
 - d) *The king would be a servant, and would suffer for Israel before triumphing over the enemies of God's people*

IX. All OT prophesy was intended to point to the messiah's coming, not to the second coming and final judgment.

- A. In the spiritual world, the cross and resurrection were cataclysmic events
- B. All of human history up to this point, from Eden to Gethsemane, led up to the triumph of the seed of the woman over the seed of the serpent

- C. Spiritually speaking, the three days from Good Friday to Easter Sunday were a completion of the purpose of God set out from the beginning. Satan was judged, death was judged, sin was judged.
- X. Revelation applies OT images and history to the NT existence of the church in the world (Appendix)
- A. Exodus Parallels
 - 1. Captivity
 - 2. False gods being judged (water to blood, frogs, boils, hailstone, fire, darkness, etc.)
 - 3. Wilderness suffering
 - 4. Great Battle and God's mighty hand of Deliverance
 - 5. Promised land
 - B. Daniel
 - 1. Visions of kingdoms on the earth, yet under the control of God
 - 2. Vision of Son of Man
 - 3. Sovereignty of God
 - 4. Triumph and deliverance from Exile
 - C. Ezekiel
 - 1. Visions of God's throne
 - 2. Promise of resurrection and restoration of God's people
 - 3. Promise of a return to worship in God's temple (not on the earth, but fulfilled in Jesus "destroy this temple and I raise it in 3 days")
 - 4. Great Battle and deliverance (Gog & Magog)
 - 5. Restoration from Exile
 - 6. Sovereignty of God in the spread of his kingdom
 - D. Zechariah
 - 1. God's sovereignty
 - 2. Spiritual kingdom operating alongside earthly kingdom
 - 3. Many images repeated in Revelation: Scroll, horsemen, lampstands, Satan as accuser, four winds, temple, judgment of evil nations, Christ as King, restoration after suffering, Megiddo, Day of the Lord, new Jerusalem
- XI. When do John's visions happen?

- A. There are 4 views that generally capture the views of the events in Revelation
 - 1. Preterist view (Pre, as in it already happened). Revelation is a foretelling of the destruction of Jerusalem, or the fall of the Roman empire
 - a) *This requires the book to have been written before 70AD, most believe it was written in mid 90's AD*
 - b) *It limits the applicability to Israel or just the early church*
 - 2. Historist View. Revelation is a story of church history and major events that will happen. Muslim rise, Papacy of Rome, Napoleon, etc.

3. Futurist View. Revelation is a roadmap of what is to come.
 - a) *The timeline view that everyone is familiar with*
 - b) *The problem is no one knows when to start the timeline, although authors have made lots of money trying.*
 - c) *It leaves a gap of understanding on why Revelation would have been of value from 100 AD to 1900 AD.*
4. There is a modified Futurist view that takes the events not solely as clustered at the end of time.
 - a) *This combines some of the ideas that the vision represents time periods to come in church history, but are repeated throughout history and not isolated to “the end”*
5. Idealist View. Revelation is a story of the conflict between good and evil.
 - a) *This view does not attempt to apply historical events to the symbolism.*
 - b) *The problem is this misses the reality of a physical final judgment by “idealizing” it away*

B. The key to understand Revelation timing is the “end of the age” language.

1. Jews looked for the end of the old age and the beginning of the Messianic age. This is what “End of the Age” means. We are in the New Age now.
2. Jesus came as the messiah, and in a sense this was the end of the age. It opened the New Age of the kingdom of God.
3. There is now an overlap of the kingdom of God existing beside the kingdom of Satan. The gospel has rendered him powerless but he still exists to accuse, kill, steal, destroy, discourage and the like. He has no real power because Jesus defeated him at the Cross.
4. We are awaiting the consummation of the kingdom. It was inaugurated at the cross but won’t be consummated until Christ returns. We live as sojourners in this world while we wait for the next.

XII. How is Revelation Structured? Until you know the basic structure it is difficult offer detailed interpretations of the visions

A. There is no consensus on a structure, which is the source of the various interpretations of the book

B. Two basic ways to look at the structure:

- I. Chronological scheme
 - a) *We tend to read things as sequential. What happens on page 5 must have happened before what happens on page 105*
 - b) *Our thinking will tend to impose patterns where they may not exist*
 - c) *The confusion around Revelation is somewhat driven by the imposition of patterns to force the book to be chronological*

2. Thematic scheme
 - a) *The themes that occur throughout Scripture are repeated in Revelation*
 - b) *Judgment, persecution and salvation all appear in multiple scenes that John records*
 - c) *There are multiple “final” judgments that seem to conflict with a chronological reading*
3. And of course, some combination of the two
 - a) *Are some parts of the book chronological and some thematic?*
 - b) *The big question, where do you draw the line?*

XIII. Chronological Outline of Revelation

- A. The Futurist view that Revelation is a map of what’s to come
 1. The timeline starts on some “trigger” that everyone tries to figure out ‘Signs of the End’.
 2. The timeline gets packed into only 7 years in most models, called the “Great Tribulation”. The church may or may not be around for this. Most call for the “rapture” of the church at some point in the 7 years.
 3. Various flavors interpret the timing of the events slightly differently, but generally there is a 7 year period where all of the seals, trumpets and bowls of judgment are sent to the earth.
 4. After this there is typically seen a return of Jesus and a 1000 year reign of Jesus on Earth in Israel. The Ezekiel temple is built and temple worship resumes.
 5. After 1000 years, the armies of the world amass to destroy Jesus and Israel in the famous “Battle of Armageddon”, named because it supposedly takes place on the plains of Megiddo.
 6. After this is the final judgement when the dead are raised, the bad go to the lake of fire and the good live in the new heavens and new earth with God.
- B. Problems with the Futurist view
 1. It keeps the focus on the earth, not on God or what’s going on in his Kingdom
 2. Jesus returning to reign on earth is hard to understand when he already reigns in heaven.
 3. It hinders believers from dealing with “now” by focusing on “later”
 4. The elements of Revelation are repetitive, and it takes too much interpretation to force it to be linear.
 5. Forcing the linear read of the text is why most people miss the bigger picture and get confused in the story.

XIV. Cyclical mode of interpretation

- A. Revelation is a succession of visions that John sees, not in chronological order of occurrence.

- B. This is supported by repetitions that make a linear timeline difficult
1. Multiple “final battles” 11:8 16:12-16, 19:19 and 20:8
 2. Multiple “final judgments” 11:18-19, 14:14-20, 19:20, 20:11, 14
 3. Multiple statements of final restoration 3:21-22, 7:15-17, 16:17-20, 21:2,10, 22:1
 4. Repetition of similar judgments on the earth in differing degrees
 5. Satan and his team appear to get destroyed, then pop up again later.
- C. The visions repeat the history of God’s kingdom coming to the earth, with a different focus in each vision.
1. It’s like watching “This is Us” or Groundhog Day. You have to determine the period in time from what the vision speaks of, and it’s not linear.
 2. Each progressive cycle spends more time on the future kingdom than on the past
- D. As with other parts of the book, Seven plays into the number of cycles of the different visions
- Cycle 1 1:1 – 3:22 Focused on the “now”, Jesus reigning in heaven while the church is on the earth.
- Cycle 2 4:1 – 7:17 Throne room of God, the perspective shifts to the spiritual throne to see redemptive history from God’s viewx
- Cycle 3 8:1 – 11:19 Spread of the gospel and the witness of the church during the persecution of the church age (resurrection to now)
- Cycle 4 12:1 – 14:20 Focus on the sovereignty of God in preserving the church against the unholy trinity of Satan, the beast and the false prophet
- Cycle 5 15:1 – 16:21 Transition to future final Judgement. Judgment on false religions
- Cycle 6 17:1 – 19:21 Judgment of Babylon and the kings of the earth
- Cycle 7 20:1 – 22:21 Almost completely focused on final judgment and new creation
- E. Each cycle has a different focus but all highlight the sovereignty of God, the kingship of Christ, the futility of the world and the ultimate victory over all adversaries.

XV. Cycle 1 1:1 – 3:22 Letter to the Seven Churches

- A. Theme: Jesus reigning in heaven while the church is on the earth.
- B. Players:
1. Jesus – Son of Man
 2. Seven churches in the early church
- C. Message:
1. Jesus is with us as King, watching us and protecting us
 2. False religion is a constant threat
 3. We are called to persevere in tribulation and conquer the false religions

4. Those who persevere will be delivered into the Kingdom

D. Symbols

1. Lamps – represent all of the churches (remember 7 means completeness)
2. Stars – Angels, the spiritual forces of God on earth
3. Vision of Son of Man (see Daniel & Ezekiel) who is Jesus

E. Judgment and Restoration

1. There is a separation at 3:20 where the declaration to Laodicea stops and another proclamation begins.
2. The conquerors from all of the churches will rule and reign forever 3:21-22

XVI. Cycle 2 4:1 – 7:17 Throne room of God, He is Sovereign and His people will overcome and be redeemed

A. Theme:

1. Jesus has been given authority by the Father to rule over all History.
2. The setting is the spiritual throne room. We are seeing history from the spiritual side of existence, not the natural world we live in.
3. Built around Daniel, particularly imagery from Daniel 7

B. Players:

1. God on his throne (see Daniel & Ezekiel),
2. Jesus – Messiah, The Lamb
3. Scroll – Redemptive history
4. 4 Horsemen – Taken from Zechariah, judgments on all nations
5. Living Creatures – All of creation praising God
6. Seals – Markers in history that represent elements of redemptive history
7. 144,000 – All of the redeemed people in history

C. Message:

1. Jesus is sovereign even in the face of persecution
2. Tribulation is meant for purification as well as punishment of the wicked
3. Martyred believers will see justice done
4. God's people will persevere to the end

D. Judgment and Restoration:

1. Believers who persevere (conquer) will be clean, not defiled by the world 7:14
2. God's people serve with him and be eternally protected in his kingdom 7:15
3. Eden is restored 7:16-17

XVII. Cycle 3 8:1 – 11:19 Trumpets indicate a judgment against the earth and the people who reject God. However the witness of the Gospel will spread even as the world “crumbles” under God’s judgments.

A. Theme:

1. Judgments. 4 on the earth, 3 on the people
2. Gospel witness. The scroll and 2 witness carry God’s word around the world even as it is being judged

B. Players:

1. Angels – God’s messengers
2. Judgments – Using Exodus imagery, God reminds us that He is sovereign over nations and false religions
3. Scroll – Gospel
4. 2 Witnesses – Old and New Testaments (2 olive branches)
5. Beast – Satan

C. Message:

1. The world will suffer under the judgment of sin
2. Man has nothing to protect him except God. All of the powers of the nations are futile
3. The gospel will spread and triumph in the face of persecution
4. Satan may look like he has won, but the witness of God’s people will survive
5. God protects his kingdom (Judges 4, Sisera and Deborah)
6. 7th trumpet announces Jesus is King – This is the resurrection

D. Judgment and Restoration:

1. Great battle 11:8
2. Final judgment of nations 11:18-19

XVIII. Cycle 4 12:1 – 14:20 View of the Church from God’s perspective

A. Theme:

1. Satan is at war with God’s people but it is futile, he is defeated.
2. Jesus as Messiah has defeated the authority of Satan at the cross and resurrection
3. Satan mimics God to form deceptive false religions. Counterfeit creation, counterfeit resurrection
4. False religions rise out of the earth to harm the church. Although they persecute the church they will not prevail

B. Players:

1. Woman – Israel bringing forth the Messiah

2. Dragon – Satan being cast from heaven after the Cross
 - a) *Satan was defeated at the cross and resurrection*
 - b) *Satan has no real power, only that he can deceive. The Messiah has crushed his head and the kingdom of God has been born.*
3. Beast of sea – Typically called the “Beast” False religions
4. Beast of the earth – Called the false prophet, the people who stand against Christ, the “spirit of anti-Christ” from I John
5. Babylon – The “worldly” life of works of the flesh, immorality, greed, drunkenness. Babylon was used to refer to Rome in John’s day because of the similarity in Roman excesses and debauchery.

C. Message:

1. Just as God delivered Israel from Pharaoh’s false gods through water into the wilderness, he will do the same for the church
2. Salvation has come at the cross, Satan is defeated 14:10-11
3. Jesus cast out many demons when he was on earth to show his triumph over the Satanic kingdom
4. Those who adopt world religion will be judged
5. There is a system of religion that mimics the gospel but it is false religion
6. All of the redeemed will persevere to be saved if they are faithful (144,000)

D. Judgment and Restoration:

1. Dragon makes war on church 12:17 Long process of war, not the final battle.
2. Babylon judged 14:8
3. 14:14-20 “Reaping” image of judgment is used for final judgment

XIX. Cycle 5 15:1 – 16:21 Judgment (plagues) on false religions and evildoers

A. Theme:

1. Timing moves towards the final judgment, the focus is on the destruction of the false religions
2. God will pour out his wrath on those who oppose him, in spite of the apparent success we may see by them on earth
3. Again mimics God’s judgment on the false Gods of Egypt (Song of Moses is now the Song of the Lamb (15:3-4)

B. Players:

1. Satan (Dragon), Beast, False Prophet. False trinity with false religions preaching and teaching error (croaking frogs)
2. 7 Angels and bowls. Recapitulation of judgment on Pharaoh
 - a) Sores

- b) *Sea and rivers to blood*
- c) *Fire from heaven*
- d) *Darkness*
- e) *River dried up (Red Sea crossing)*
- f) *Hailstones*

C. Message:

- 1. God is sovereign over false religions
- 2. Salvation and deliverance will come from God just as it did in Exodus

D. Judgment and Restoration:

- 1. Great battle 16:16
- 2. 16:17-20 "It is done" Calls back to mind Messiah's cry from the cross when kingdom was coronated. Now it is inaugurated.

XX. Cycle 6 17:1 – 19:21 Judgment of Babylon and the kings of the earth

A. Theme:

- 1. Focusing more on the final judgment, we see the end of all of the worldly kingdoms who oppose God's kingdom
- 2. Although the kings of the earth and Babylon kill the saints, they do not prosper
- 3. God will call all of his people from the kingdoms of the earth and punish them for the injustice
- 4. Culminates in wedding supper of the Lamb. Compare the purity of this to the wickedness of the great prostitute

B. Players:

- 1. Babylon, counterfeit bride of Christ. The prostitute. Adultery and prostitution are linked to false worship in OT.
- 2. Bride of Christ, the church
- 3. Rider on white horse, Jesus

C. Message:

- 1. Kings of earth, with Satan behind them, make war on the church. 17:14 But it is futile (Dan. 2:47 image)
- 2. All of the kingdoms of the world and all of their luxuries are only temporary
- 3. False religion will offer the pleasures of the world if you sacrifice your place in the Kingdom of God
- 4. Kings and injustices of the world will be judged
- 5. Christ rides in to meet his bride as the conquering king

D. Judgment and Restoration:

- 1. Angel demonstrates final judgment with great millstone 18:21

2. Battle, great war, 19:19
3. Beast and false prophet judged 19:20

XXI. Cycle 7 20:1 – 22:21 Final Judgment, Conclusion of Time. As the first cycle was focused almost entirely on the days after the cross, this section is focused almost entirely on the final judgment day itself

A. Theme:

1. The actual final Judgment.
2. Satan's final end. The end started at the time when Jesus was on the earth, Luke 10:1-12, Matt. 10.
3. Death's final end
4. End of all wickedness
5. God's "temple" which is Christ will dwell with men
6. Restoration of Eden. Man is restored to the state God intended from the beginning

B. Players:

1. Bride – Church
2. City of God, New Jerusalem – picture of our existence with God eternally
3. Father, Son and Spirit. Dwelling with the people of God forever

C. Message:

1. All injustice will be reconciled
2. God's people receive the reward we have been longing for, life and peace in his presence
3. God has a dwelling place for his people separate from the wickedness of the world, a city that is pure and holy, fit for his bride.
4. Closing statement, do not lose hope. All of these words are true and no injustice to the King's people will be forgotten

D. Judgment and Restoration:

1. Great battle 20:8
2. Great white throne 20:11
3. Death is judged 20:14
4. Final state of wicked 20:14-15
5. New creation is presented to the Bride 21:2, 9
6. New Dwelling – With Christ as the Temple 21:10, 22
7. New Eden – 22:1-4

XXII. Appendix

| OT Book | Theme | Revelation |
|---------|--|--|
| Genesis | Creation, 1 | Sequences of seven, 2-3; 6:1-8:4; 8:6-11:18; 16:1-21 |
| | Adam and Eve, 2 | Son of man and bride, 1:13; 21:1-8 |
| | Garden, 2:8 | Paradise of God, 2:7 |
| | Tree of life, 2:9 | Tree of life, 2:7 |
| | Serpent (and Eve), 3:1-7 | Dragon (and woman), 12:1-5; 20:2 |
| | Rainbow, 9:13-16 | Rainbow, 4:3; 10:1 |
| | Babel, 11:1-8 | Babylon, 14:8; 17-18 |
| | Abraham from beyond river, 11-12 | Army from Euphrates, 9:14; cf. 16:12 |
| | Sodom, 18-19 | Sodom, 11:8 |
| | Judah a lion, 49:9 | Lion of Judah, 5:5 |
| Exodus | I am, 3:14 | I am, 1:8, 17; 22:13, 16 |
| | Plagues, 5-11 | Plagues, 15:1 |
| | River to blood, 7:19 | Water to blood, 8:8-9; 11:6; 16:3-4 |
| | Frogs, 8:1-13 | Frogs, 16:13 |
| | Hail, 9:18-35 | Hail, 8:7; 16:21 |
| | Locusts, 10:1-20 | Locusts, 9:1-11 |
| | Passover Lamb, 12 | Lamb, 5:6 |
| | Bitter water, 15:23-25 | Poison water, 8:10-11 |
| | Sea dried up, 14:21-22 | River dried, 16:12 |
| | Song of Moses, 15:1-18 | Song of Moses, 15:1-4 |
| | Manna, 16:1-36 | Manna, 2:17 |
| | Eagle wings, 19:4 | Eagle wings, 12:14 |
| | Kingdom of priests, 19:6 | Kingdom and priests, 1:6; 5:10; 20:6 |
| | Thunder and lightning, 19:16 | Thunder and lightning, 4:5; 8:5; 16:18 |
| | God the Creator, 20:11 | God the Creator, 10:6 |
| | Tabernacle, 25-31 | Spread tabernacle, 7:15; 21:3 |
| | Ark of the covenant, 25:10-22 | Ark of the covenant, 11:19 |
| | Bronze altar, 27:1-8 | Altar, 6:9 |
| | Golden altar, 30:1-10 | Golden altar, 8:3 |
| | Lampstand, 25:31-35 | Seven lampstands, 1:12 |
| | Priestly robes, 28 | Jasper, 4:3 |
| | | Name on forehead, 7:3 |
| | | Gemstones, 21:19-20 |
| | Golden calf, 32 | Image of the Beast, 13 |
| | Tabernacle filled with glory, 40:34-35 | Temple filled with smoke, 15:8 |

| OT Book | Theme | Revelation |
|-----------|----------------------------------|--|
| | Beasts from sea, 7:1-8 | Composite beast from sea, 13:1-2 |
| | Glory, dominion, kingdom, 7:14 | Honor, glory, dominion, 5:13 |
| | Stars fall, 8:10 | Stars fall, 6:13 |
| | Michael, 10:13, 21; 12:1 | Michael, 12:7 |
| | Sealed book, 12:4 | Sealed book, 5:1; 10:4 |
| Hosea | Courting wayward bride, 1-3 | Wayward bride in wilderness, 17-18 |
| | Mountains fall, 10:8 | Mountains fall, 6:16 |
| Joel | Locusts, 1-2 | Locusts, 9:1-11 |
| | Moon to blood, 2:31 | Moon to blood, 6:12 |
| Jonah | Sea monster, 2 | Beast from the sea, 13:1-2 |
| Habakkuk | Lord rides out with bow, 3:8-15 | White horse rider with bow, 6:1-2 |
| Zephaniah | Day of Yahweh, 1:14-18 | Great day of God almighty, 16:14 |
| Haggai | Shaking heaven and earth, 2:6-7 | Earthquakes, 6:12; 8:5; 11:13, 19; 16:18 |
| Zechariah | Horses, 1:8-11; 6:1-8 | Four horsemen, 6:1-6 |
| | Woman wickedness, 5:5-11 | Harlot city, 17-18 |
| | Joshua and Satan, 3 | Satan and woman, 12:1-6 |
| | Lampstands and trees, 4:1-14 | Two witnesses as lampstands, trees, 11:4 |
| | Conversation with angel, 4:5, 13 | Conversation with angel, 7:13-14 |
| | Tribes mourn, 12:10 | Tribes mourn, 1:7 |
| | Megiddo, 12:11 | Har-Magedon, 16:16 |
| | Holy city, 14:1-21 | Holy city, 21-22 |

| OT Book | Theme | Revelation |
|---------------|---|--|
| Leviticus | Blood of sin offering, 4:18, 25 | Souls beneath altar, 6:9-11 |
| | Coals and incense, 16:12 | Coals and incense, 8:5 |
| | Burning of priest's harlot daughter, 21:9 | Burning of Babylon, 17:16 |
| | Lamb with first sheaf, 23:9-12 | Lamb ascended, 5:5 |
| | Priests trim lampstands, 24:1-9 | Jesus among lampstands, 1:13 |
| Numbers | Balaam and Balak, 22-25 | Balaam and Balak, 2:14 |
| | Numbering of tribes, 1; 26 | Numbering of 144,000, 7:1-8 |
| | Jealousy test, 5:1-31 | Eating the book, 10:8-11 |
| Deuteronomy | Curses, 28 | Trumpets and bowls, 8-11; 16 |
| | City of palms, 34:3 | Palm branches, 7:9 |
| | Avenges servants, 32:43 | Avenges saints, 19:2 |
| Joshua | Joshua with book, 1:8 | Lamb with book, 5:6-7 |
| | Fall of Jericho, 6 | Fall of Babylon, 17-18 |
| Judges | Megiddo, 5:19 | Har-Magedon, 16:16 |
| Samuel | David | Lion of Judah, 5:5 |
| Kings | Pillars in the temple, 1 Kgs 7:15-22 | Pillar in temple, 3:12 |
| | 666, 1 Kgs 10:14 | 666, 13:18 |
| | Jezebel, 1 Kgs 16-2 Kgs 9 | Jezebel, 2:20 |
| | Shut up sky, 1 Kgs 17:1 | Shut up sky, 11:6 |
| | 7000, 1 Kgs 19:18 | 7000, 11:13 |
| Chronicles | Fall of Jerusalem, 2 Kgs 25 | Fall of Babylon, 17-18 |
| | 24 chief priests, 1 Chr 24-25 | 24 Ancient Ones, 4:4 |
| | Levitical choir, 1 Chr 25:1-31 | Heavenly choir, 4-5; 15:1-4 |
| | Temple filled with glory, 2 Chr 5:14 | Temple filled with smoke, 15:8 |
| Esther | Feast with gifts, 9:22 | Feast with gift giving, 11:10 |
| Job | Satan the accuser, 1-2 | Satan, 12:9 |
| Psalms | Rule with rod, 2:9 | Rule with rod of iron, 2:27; 12:5 |
| | Nations enraged, 2:1-3 | Nations enraged, 11:17 |
| | "How long?" 13:1-2; etc. | How long? 6:10 |
| | Shepherd, 23:1 | Shepherd, 7:17; 19:15 |
| | Firstborn, ruler, 89:27 | Firstborn, ruler, 1:5 |
| | New song, 96:1; etc. | New song, 14:3 |
| | Idols, 115; 135 | Idols, 9:20 |
| | Incense and prayer, 141:2 | Incense and prayer, 8:3 |
| | Hallelujahs, Pss. 146-150 | Hallelujah, 19:1-6 |
| | | |
| Proverbs | Lady wisdom and folly, 7-9 | Harlot and Bride, 17, 21 |
| Song of Songs | Waf of the bridegroom, 5:10-16 | Unveiling of Jesus, 1:12-17 |
| | Knocking to enter, 5:2 | Invitation to Laodicea, 3:20-21 |
| | Waf of bride, 4:1-6; 7:1-9 | False bride, 9:1-11; true bride, 21:9-22:5 |

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| | Sealed book, 12:4 | Sealed book, 5:1; 10:4 |
| Hosea | Courting wayward bride, 1-3 | Wayward bride in wilderness, 17-18 |
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| | Woman wickedness, 5:5-11 | Harlot city, 17-18 |
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