

## Supplement to XV and XVI, Chapters 2-7 of Revelation

**Chapters 2-3 Letters to the 7 Churches.** Encouragement for the “now” of John’s time with warnings to churches of all time not to fall into temptation but to persevere and “conquer” until the end.

7 churches, representing the complete assembly of the churches. Other churches were omitted from the list (Colosse, Philippi) so the number of churches is likely symbolic, not meant to be restrictive

Central message: To the one who conquers, they will inherit the kingdom of God. This is a message out of Joshua for Israel going into the promised land, but delivered in a spiritual meaning.

Biblical references: Tree of Life, Manna, Jezebel, Morning Star (David), Thief in the night (parables), Synagogue of Satan (Jesus condemning Pharisees as sons of Satan), Discipline those I love (Hebrews)

Jesus conquered the kingdom of Satan and sat down on the throne. He encourages us to conquer as well so that we can follow him to rule in the kingdom of heaven.

**Second Cycle Chapters 4-7** Redemptive History is introduced.

**Ch 4** is centered on the Throne of God. Everything encircles it, from heaven to the created order. The description here is that God is at the center of everything and all of the heavens and earth worship him. Reminiscent of Psalm 19:

1 The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. 2 Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. 3 There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. 4 Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun,

Revelation is centered around the Throne of God. He reigns in spite of what we see on earth.

**Ch 5** introduces redemptive history. Harkens back to Dan. 12, the seals are now being opened.

4 But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.” ...8 Then I said, “O my lord, what shall be the outcome of these things?” 9 He said, “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end.

The scroll is the unfurling of the gospel into redemptive history. Jesus is described with 7 eyes, horns, spirits. This is a picture of knowledge, worldly and spiritual authority. Only Jesus has the authority to “unroll” God’s plan. Once he ascended, the OT ways were no more and the gospel came forth.

**Ch 6** begins a picture of what happens. The question is when does it start?

First 4 seals are the 4 horsemen. Using the early date model this may refer to Jerusalem’s destruction. First Christ came as king, conquering Satan with the gospel. Afterward war is coming as Rome descends on Jerusalem. Then famine comes as the siege is strengthened. Finally death comes. Some see the white horse as the Roman conquest or a generic conquest that is followed by wars, famines and death.

This pattern repeats through history, so even if the original events applied to Jerusalem, the message is not lost on the coming tribulations of the church through all time.

The 5<sup>th</sup> seal are the witnesses (martyrs) who cry out from for vindication for their suffering at the hands of the world for the name of Christ. OT prophets and early believers until now all cry for righteousness.

6<sup>th</sup> seal is a sign of cosmic judgment. This could have been partially fulfilled with the signs recorded by Josephus at the fall of Jerusalem, with a foreshadow towards the final judgment when the entire earth quakes under the fear of God. Text seems to imply a larger scale judgment but it is difficult to know.

**Ch 7** appears to branch into the future. This is a promise that in spite of what is about to happen to Jerusalem, God will spare his children and none will be lost. 7:9 is a picture of the Gentiles coming into the kingdom. The great tribulation is the age we live in now, and those who persevere and conquer will inherit the blessings of 7:15-17. 7:17 sounds like the same image as 21:4. The vision concludes with the new heavens and new earth with all of creation restored to what God intended before the Fall.