

## CHRIST THE JUDGE AND HIS JUDGMENT

Write . . .

1:1 What you have seen	2:1 What is now	4:1 What will take place later
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22:21

### Theocratic Program

1:1 Jesus Christ	2:1	4:1
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The Judge Judges the Churches		Judges the Nations
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10:11 "You must prophesy again . . ."  
Cause of Judgment

19:1 Response  
in heaven

### "Satanocratic" Program

12:1 Satan's Program		14:1 God's Response:
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The Second Coming  
and its judgments

Preparation  
of Millennium  
19:11-20:3

Millennium

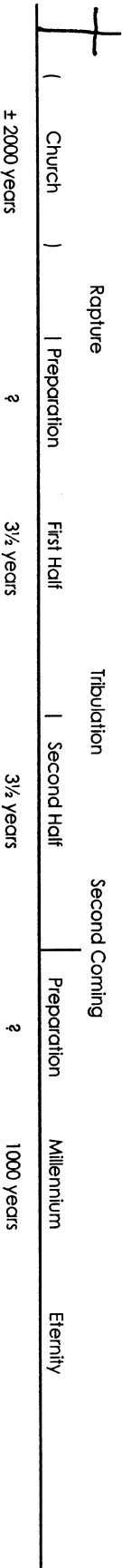
20:4-6

Final rebellion 20:7-10

Great White Throne 20:11-15

Eternity 21:1-22:5

Conclusion 22:6-21



# A LOOK AT THE BOOK REVELATION CHRIST THE JUDGE AND HIS JUDGMENT

Ralph Porter

## Some basic misunderstandings about the Book of Revelation:

*What is the title of the book?*

*How many revelations are there?*      1:1

*What is revealed in this book?*

*Why is He revealed?*

[That will become apparent as we consider the background to the book.]

## BACKGROUND

### What has happened that leads up to this Revelation?

Captivity  
Restoration of remnant  
Messianic expectancy--Restoration--Messiah--Blessing  
Messiah's coming  
Messiah's rejection  
Destruction of Jerusalem--A.D. 70

### What would happen next?

Formation of new people (Luke)  
Future restoration of Israel promised (Rom. 11:26)

Jerusalem had been destroyed.

All of God's people, both Israel and the church were suffering persecution under Roman oppression.

The church suffered under Israel also.

The book was written to God's people in the midst of suffering to encourage us by helping us understand God's perspective on what is happening to us.

## PURPOSE AND THEME

Although John's immediate audience was the church in the midst of persecution, the book is directed toward God's people in general, whenever we suffer for His sake.

It is especially appropriate to His people in the tribulation.

John has written for three reasons:

First, to encourage God's people when we are suffering on account of our faith in Him.

Second, to inform us of the outcome of the conflict we're participating in.

Finally, to motivate us to remain faithful in spite of our affliction.

To accomplish his purposes, John presents God's perspective on the events affecting us.

Christ, as Judge over the universe, is seated on His throne and judging His creation.

God is in control of all human history.

Although His people may suffer because of Him, God is even in control of people who are in rebellion.

In the end, He will be victorious.

Those who are faithful will participate in His great victory.

John expects his message to produce results in the lives of his readers.

The revelation of the Judge should produce confidence in Him.

Awareness of God's program ought to cause us to recognize our place in His plan.

This knowledge should produce obedience, faithfulness and joy in the midst of suffering.

## **ORGANIZATION**

**Key: Vision of the Judge 1:9-20**

Having completed the introduction of the revelation, John describes the initial vision he saw.

The vision presents Christ the Judge.

This vision of the Judge serves as the basis of the rest of the revelation.

The major structural divisions of the book are revealed in 1:19.

John is commanded to write what he has seen, what is now and what will take place later.

He has already seen Jesus Christ the Judge (1).

He then records what now exists: Christ's function as Judge over the church (2-3).

Finally, he describes what will take place in the future: Christ's function as Judge over the nations (4-22).

Christ is seated on the throne over the universe in general.

He is in the midst of His church and is in control of all that is happening to His church.

He is the Judge of the universe and in control of all that happens in it.

## INTERPRETATION

### Four approaches to the interpretation of the book:

- (1) Preterite--The entire book was fulfilled in the history of the early church and was over by time of Constantine (312).

The persecutions would be those of Nero and Domitian.

- (2) Historical--continuous through the entire church age—from John to the end of the church age.

Depicts seven time periods then describes general characteristics of the period.

- (3) Idealist--allegorical--no relationship to specific events--good vs. evil.

Conflict continues until God eventually triumphs over Satan.

- (4) Futurist--literal or normal--the prophecies will be fulfilled exactly as predicted, in the future.

Chapters 4-22 contain future prophecies.

Modern combination views

The message is especially valuable for the church during any time of suffering, past or future.

Our perspective concerning the future does affect our present life (1 John 3:3).

However, if the book is to accomplish its purpose in the midst of real affliction, the prophecies must be accomplished in real life.

If prophecies are literally fulfilled as promised, then any reference to historic events or universal conditions must be secondary.

The message of the book is applicable to any time of persecution; however, either its fulfillment must be literally carried out in the future, or its details become so allegorical and generalized as to become meaningless.

## THINGS YOU HAVE SEEN: CHRIST THE JUDGE 1

### INTRODUCTION 1:1-8

The unusual nature of the book of Revelation causes John to introduce it with various explanations.

#### Title 1:1a

He begins with a presentation of the subject, which is stated as a title.

The book is a revelation of Jesus Christ.

Careful study of the book will reveal Him to the reader.

#### Source 1:1b

The source of the book is God Himself.

**Purpose 1:1c**

God has given the book to Christ for a purpose.

The purpose is to reveal to Jesus' servants the things which are going to take place soon.

God doesn't want them to be ignorant concerning His program, nor concerning their role in that program.

**Messenger 1:1d-2**

John describes the means God chose to communicate His message.

God sent an angel to communicate the revelation to John.

John just reported what he saw.

He deserves no credit for the content of the revelation.

He was only a witness, describing things God Himself had shown him, through His angel.

**Blessing 1:3**

A special blessing is promised to reader and listeners alike.

It's assumed most people would receive the message through public reading. Those who listen to the message and practice its teachings will be satisfied.

The blessing is not salvation, nor a special spiritual status based on merit.

God is about to fulfill the prophecy given in the book.

Those who listen and respond appropriately will understand God's program and be content, even in the midst of persecution.

They will discern how their experience fits in His plan.

Those who don't understand what God is doing will be confused by their suffering.

This book explains what is taking place and how the conflict will end.

Therefore, the listener who responds properly will be satisfied.

**Greeting 1:4-5a**

Since the book is a long *letter* to the seven churches of Asia Minor, John sends a normal greeting to the churches.

He names himself as author and the seven churches as the recipients.

The greeting is from God the Father, the seven spirits and Jesus Christ.

The description of eternity plus the distinction from Christ indicate that the first Person described must be God the Father.

The seven spirits are spiritual beings related to Christ and standing before God's throne.

They are divine instruments of observation and judgment (5:6).

Their identification with the Father and with Christ lead some to consider this a reference to the Holy Spirit in His perfection.

Others consider them to be seven angels who stand before God's throne and participate in His judgment.

Jesus Christ also participates in the divine greeting.

He is described as the faithful witness, which probably views His function of revealing the Father to men.

He is the firstborn from the dead, which views His resurrection.

Finally, He is the ruler of the kings of the earth, which depicts His present and future function as Sovereign over the universe.

### **Dedicatory 1:5b-6**

The central role of Jesus in Revelation is demonstrated by the fact that He is not only the subject of the book, but it is also dedicated to Him.

The final purpose of the entire program revealed in the book is that He might receive the glory He deserves through it.

### **Promise 1:7-8**

The introductory section concludes with a promise which is the basis for the security of God's people in the midst of persecution.

Christ, who is the beginning and the end, is going to come again.

Everyone will see Him and know who He is.

The recognition of Who He is will cause those who made Him suffer to mourn.

Those who are suffering on account of Him will rejoice.

He will correct the injustice committed in the world and reward those who have suffered for Him.

### **VISION OF THE JUDGE 1:9-20**

Having completed the introduction of the revelation, John describes the initial vision he saw.

The vision presents Christ, the Judge.

This vision serves as the basis for the rest of the revelation.

### **The circumstances 1:9**

John received this revelation while he was imprisoned on the island of Patmos because of His testimony for Christ.

### **What was heard 1:10-11**

In the vision, a voice told John to write what he was seeing and send it to the seven churches.

**What was seen 1:12-20**

He then saw the vision.

The lampstands 1:12

The vision depicted seven lampstands.

The Person among the lampstands 1:13-16

In the midst of the lampstands was a unique Person.

He was similar to a man but his glorious and unique appearance distinguished him from anyone John had ever seen before.

The reaction of John 1:17a

When John saw this person, he fell down like a dead man before Him.

The description of the Judge 1:17b-18

After John's response to Him, He revealed Himself to be Christ.

He is the eternal One, the resurrected One, and the One who possesses authority over death and the habitation of the dead.

The command 1:19

He commands John to write what he has already seen, what he was seeing taking place then, and what was about to take place.

The interpretation 1:20

He then revealed the interpretation of the vision John had seen.

Christ is standing in the midst of the seven churches and has their messengers in His hand.

He governs the events which occur in the churches.

As King and Head of the church, He is about to judge them.

**THINGS WHICH ARE NOW: THE JUDGE JUDGING THE CHURCHES 2-3**

The revelation of Christ in the midst of the churches, which John had seen, was the basis for the judgment of the churches which is occurring in the present. Seven letters are addressed to the seven churches of Asia Minor concerning their response to the affliction they are facing.

**Two common ways of interpreting these letters:**

Some people believe the letters were addressed to seven specific churches, located in these seven cities at the time John wrote the book.

Others believe the letters were not directed to these churches as such, but rather to seven historical periods in the development of the church, as follows:

<u>Passage</u>	<u>Church</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Epoch</u>	<u>Dates</u>
2:1-7	Ephesus	Apostolic	Apostolic	Pentecost -A.D. 100
2:8-11 2:12-17	Smyrna Pergamum	Suffering Mixed with world	Post-apostolic Church united with state	A.D. 100-314 314-500
2:18-29	Thyatira	Pagan	Middle Ages	500-1517
3:1-6	Sardis	Reformed	Reformation	1517-1800
3:7-13	Philadelphia	True	Last days	1800-?
3:14-22	Laodicea	Apostate	Last days	1800-?

The fact that the letters appear to be directed to specific churches and describe conditions in those churches which apply to known conditions at that time has brought some commentators to a compromise.

They accept the letters as literally to the named churches but maintain that they are applicable to the historical periods also.

Just as all of these types of churches were found in the first century, so they are all present in the twentieth century.

It is not difficult to find examples of each today.

Therefore, it seems better to apply *the principles* directed to these churches to similar churches of any historical period.

When a historical period of church development is similar to one of these churches, the same warning is applicable to the church of that period also.

This method of interpretation eliminates, on the one hand, the problem of vague limits to specific historical periods and differences between churches within a historical period; and, on the other hand, interesting historical documents without application to the church of later epochs.

### **Each letter contains seven components.**

In some cases the component is emphasized by its absence.

The obvious implication is that this is omitted because it is not applicable to the church named.

The seven components include:

Name	Cause for praise
Failure	Judgment to be expected
Promise	Description of the Judge
Warning	

### **THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS 2:1-7**

Ephesus is praised because of their hard work for the Lord and their patience in the midst of suffering.

They have exposed false teachers and removed them.

Nevertheless, they are in danger because they have lost their initial love for the Lord.

Unless they do something about this failure, they will lose their place among the churches of God.

Their hatred for the Nicolaitans is commended, but not defined.

The name is not that of a known doctrinal view.

It is formed from a compound expression meaning "to conquer the people."

It is also seen in a church where the doctrine of Balaam is present (2:14-15).

Some, therefore, have related it to the promotion of libertine views such as Balaam introduced to cause Israel's downfall.

Others relate it to the promotion of the distinction between clergy and laity.

It must be admitted that the real meaning is not known with certainty.

An additional problem found in this letter, as well as in those which follow, is the promise, **"to him who overcomes."**

The expression has been used frequently to demonstrate that it is possible not to overcome and thus to lose one's salvation.

This expression should be understood by comparing the same author's use in 1 John 5. There he tells us who will overcome.

The one who has overcome is the one who has trusted Christ.

Therefore, those promises are certainties for those who have truly believed.

To those who have not believed they should serve as a warning.

#### **THE CHURCH AT SMYRNA 2:8-11**

This church suffered greatly for their faith in Christ.

No failure is mentioned.

They will suffer persecution for "ten days."

The meaning of this expression is not clear.

It may refer to ten literal days of persecution.

It may use ten as the description of completeness to indicate the extent of their suffering.

It may refer to a short period of persecution (Gen. 24:55; Jer. 42:7; Dan. 1:12).

It may describe ten waves of persecution to come on them by distinct emperors.

Or, it may refer to ten years of persecution under Diocletian.

Though none of the suggested interpretations can claim definitive support, the main point of the message is clear.

They will suffer intense persecution for a short period of time.

They are encouraged to remain faithful.

God will repay them abundantly for whatever they may be allowed to suffer.

### **THE CHURCH AT PERGAMUM 2:12-17**

This church is commended because they have remained faithful to God in spite of their location.

Pergamum was the center of the pagan worship of Zeus.

The reference to Satan's residence there probably refers to the temple.

Their failure is allowing those holding false doctrine to remain among them.

The doctrine of Balaam could refer to the love of money, to tempting God's people to practice libertinism and idolatry, or to compromise with intermarriage.

Each of these characteristics is identified with Balaam (Num. 31:15-16; 2 Pet. 2:15-16; Jude 11).

In any case, the comparison is not favorable.

They should have excluded from their midst those who held such doctrines.

To those who overcome God has promised His provision for their daily needs from His own supply house.

He guarantees them the white stone, used to indicate the vote of acceptance and approval.

### **THE CHURCH AT THYATIRA 2:18-29**

This church is commended for their growing works, love, faith, service and patience.

Though there is much to commend in their church, they are corrected for putting up with a woman described in terms similar to Jezebel who led Israel into idolatry and pagan practice.

They need to purify themselves and stay away from such false teaching.

Those who remain faithful will be identified with Christ Himself, "the morning star," in His kingdom.

### **THE CHURCH AT SARDIS 3:1-6**

Here there is little to praise.

They have a reputation for being alive but in reality they are dead.

In spite of what others may think, in God's sight their words are worthless and they are dead.

The only basis for praise is the presence of a faithful remnant.

This church is in need of a radical change soon.

### **THE CHURCH AT PHILADELPHIA 3:7-13**

In contrast to the preceding and following churches, the church at Philadelphia is noteworthy for its positive description.

No failure is mentioned.

Although weakened by persecution, they remain faithful.

Because of their faithfulness, Christ, who has the authority over every opportunity of service and every privileged position, has opened doors for them.

No one can take away the opportunity He has given them.

### **THE CHURCH AT LAODICEA 3:14-22**

They receive no praise.

This church is in sad condition.

Pictured as neither hot nor cold, they consider themselves wealthy and self-sufficient.

In reality they are poor, blind and naked.

They are useless to God.

Nevertheless, God continues to invite them to turn back to Him and to enjoy fellowship with Him.

**SEVEN COMPONENTS** found in the seven churches include:

#### **1. Name**

#### **2. Description of the Judge**

- \* Holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands (1:16a)
- \* The First and the Last, who died and came to life again (1:17-18a)
- \* Has the sharp, double-edged sword (1:16b)
- \* The Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze (1:14b-15a)
- \* Holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars (1:16a+)
- \* Holy and true  
Holds the key of David (what He opens no one can shut and what He shuts no one can open)
- \* The Amen  
the faithful and true witness  
the ruler of God's creation

### 3. Cause for praise

- \* I know your deeds, your hard work and your *perseverance*

I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men  
that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found  
them false.

You have *persevered*  
and have endured hardships for my name  
and have not grown weary.

You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans ("conquer the people"), which I also hate

- \* I know your afflictions and your poverty--yet you are rich.

I know the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

- \* I know where you live--where Satan has his throne--yet you remain true to my name

You did not renounce your faith in me, even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city--where Satan lives.

- \* I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and *perseverance*  
and that you are now doing more than you did at first

- \* You have a few people (a remnant) who have not soiled their clothes

- \* I know your deeds . . . .

I know that you have little strength  
yet you have kept my word  
and have not denied my name

You have kept my command to endure patiently

### 4. Failure

- \* You have forsaken your first love.

- \* You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality.

You also have those who hold to the teachings of the Nicolaitans.

- \* You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess.

By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols.

(I gave her time to repent of her immorality but she is unwilling.  
So I will cast her on a bed of suffering. . . .)

- \* (I know your deeds:)

You have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead.

I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God.

- \* (I know your deeds)

You are neither cold nor hot, I wish you were either one or the other!

You say, "I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing."

But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked

## 5. Judgment to be expected

- \* If you do not repent, I will come to you and *remove your lampstand from its place*.

- \* Repent therefore!

Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth (observe how this relates to His description).

- \* I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely unless they repent of her ways.

I will strike her children dead.

All the churches will know that I am He who searches hearts and minds . . .

- \* If you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.

- \* I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not but are liars--

I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you.

- \* Because you are lukewarm--neither hot nor cold--I am about to spit you out of my mouth

## 6. Promise

- \* To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God (1 John 5).

- \* Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer

I tell you the devil will put some of you in prison to test you and you will suffer persecution for ten days (a little while).

Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life

He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death.

- \* To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna

I will also give him a white stone (symbol of acceptance) with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it.

- \* 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--just as I have received authority from my Father

I will also give him the morning star

- \* Those who have not soiled their clothes will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy.

He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white

I will never erase his name from the book of life but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels

- \* I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut

I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.

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

I will also write on him my new name

- \* Here I am! I stand at the door and knock.

If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.

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.

## 7. Warning

- \* Remember the height from which you have fallen!

*Repent* and do the things you did at first.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

- \* He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

- \* He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

- \* I will repay each of you according to your deeds

Now I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets

(I will not impose any other burden on you only:

Hold on to what you have until I come.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

- \* Wake up!

Strengthen what remains and is about to die . . . .

Remember what you have received and heard.

Obey it and repent.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

\* I am coming soon

Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

\* I counsel you to . . .

Buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich  
and white clothes so you can cover your shameful nakedness  
and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see

Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline . . .

So be earnest and repent.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

#### **THINGS WHICH SHALL BE LATER: THE JUDGE JUDGING THE NATIONS 4-22:5**

Following the message of encouragement and warning to the seven churches, John is summoned into heaven where he is given God's perspective on the events which will follow the church age on the earth.

Although no clear reference is given here, John's call into heaven corresponds to the time of the rapture as presented in other passages, following the church age and preceding the time of God's wrath on the earth (4:1).

The church is not mentioned again until after the time of judgment.

It seems natural to conclude that his call represents the rapture of the church.

We will witness the fulfillment of these events, as John has from the prophetic perspective.

Predominant theme of this section: **JUDGMENT**

God is in control.

Though the nations rage, their struggle is futile (cp. Ps. 2)

He will judge them.

He will win the conflict.

Those who are faithful will see the day of vengeance.

*Wave after wave of JUDGMENT!*

Preparation for the judgment 4-5  
Judgment of the seven seals 6-8:2  
Judgment of the seven trumpets 8-11  
Cause of judgment: Satan's program 12-18  
Results of judgment 19-22:5

## PREPARATION FOR THE JUDGMENT 4-5

On arrival in heaven, John first observes the preparations for God's judgment of the earth.

### Description of the throne 4:1-11

He describes God's throne, the **source of the coming judgment**.

After describing the One seated on the throne (4:2-3), John describes those he observes around God's throne (4:4-11)

First among those around God's throne, John observes 24 elders. 4:4

There are several interpretations of who these elders are:

Some suppose them to be angels, since they are identified with the Cherubim in the vision.

Several aspects of the vision seem to contradict this interpretation:

They are seated on thrones.

They are dressed in white, as are the saints presented throughout the book.

They wear gold crowns.

None of these descriptions are attributed to angels.

It seems more consistent with biblical teaching to consider the elders to be redeemed humans.

Some believe them to represent the saints of the Old Testament together with those of the New Testament.

While the idea of 12 tribes and 12 apostles is appealing, it is based on the view that Israel will participate in the rapture, since they are physically present before the throne.

According to Daniel 12:2, Israel will not be resurrected until the second coming of Christ.

Thus it is not likely they are present before God's throne at this point.

The other alternative presented is that all 24 elders are representatives of the church, present before the Lord.

The number is applied to the totality of the priesthood, since David organized the priests of Israel in 24 divisions.

As a body of priests, the 24 elders could represent the totality of the church.

Also present before the throne are the seven spirits of God, or the Holy Spirit.  
4:5

The four living creatures are also said to be present before the Lord, just as they were in Ezekiel 1.

They again emphasize the holiness of God which demands the judgment to follow. 4:6-8

When the four living creatures praise God, the 24 elders, or the church, respond by falling before the throne and worshipping Him. 4:9-11

They testify to God's worthiness and His right to judge the universe, because He created it.

#### **Description of the book 5:1-4**

While John was watching the throne, a scroll was brought before it.

Description 5:1

The scroll contained writing on both sides and was sealed with seven seals.

Problem 5:2-4

A problem developed when no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll.

#### **The One worthy of opening the book 5:5-14**

As John was crying about the problem, the One who was worthy was revealed.

Announcement 5:5-7

John's crying was interrupted by the announcement that the Lion of the tribe of Judah, who appeared as a Lamb, was worthy to open the scroll and its seals.

Testimony of the living creatures and elders 5:8-10

As the Lamb took hold of the scroll, the living creatures and the 24 elders sang praise to Him.

He is worthy because He was slain and His blood purchased the redemption of men from every nation to serve Him as a kingdom and as priests.

Testimony of the angels 5:11-12

To their praise was added that of the vast hosts of angels singing praise to Him who was worthy.

Testimony of all creation 5:13-14

Finally all creation joined together in praising Him.

In preparation for the announcement of judgment, the source of the judgment is revealed to be God Himself.

Jesus, the divine agent designated to administer the judgment, is worthy to do so because of His person and His redemptive work.

God's resurrected people look on and praise Him, together with all the angelic hosts.

## JUDGMENT OF THE SEVEN SEALS 6:8:2

The judgment is presented as Christ unrolls the scroll, breaking open each of the seven seals.

### **First seal: Antichrist 6:1-2**

As the first seal is opened, a white horse is revealed.

On the white horse a royal conqueror is riding.

He appears as a righteous person, seated on a white horse.

His presentation at this early stage in the judgments indicates that he is a fake.

He is really a man, dedicated to the task of conquering nations.

He is the Antichrist, the one who presents himself to take the place which Christ Himself deserves.

### **Second seal: war 6:3-4**

As Christ opens the second seal of the scroll, a red horse appears.

The red color of this horse pictures the blood which is about to be shed.

The rider is given the power to remove peace from the earth and to bring war in its place.

The result of war is the death of many.

### **Third seal: famine 6:5-6**

The third seal brings a black horse whose rider carries a set of scales.

The conditions described demonstrate that his judgment brings famine.

Scarcity of food will be accompanied by the inflation of its price.

Men will work a full day for a quart of the cheapest grains which only the poor would normally eat, and then only in desperation.

Oil and wine would become luxuries that most could not afford to buy.

### **Fourth seal: pestilence and death 6:7-8**

The fourth seal reveals a yellow horse bringing famine, plagues, and death to a fourth of the earth.

### **Fifth seal: persecution and martyrdom 6:9-11**

The fifth seal reveals the persecution and martyrdom of multitudes of God's people of that time.

### **Sixth seal: earthquake 6:12-17**

The sixth seal brings a great earthquake.

This earthquake was different from any the earth has ever experienced previously.

It produced phenomenal changes in the world, as well as in the heavens (6:12-14).

The result of this earthquake is that all mankind recognizes, if they haven't previously, the source of the judgment (6:15-17).

Rather than repent of their sin and rebellion, men seek to hide from God and His judgment.

### **Background: protection of the 144,000 7:1-17**

Following the revelation of the contents of the judgment brought by the sixth seal, a parenthesis interrupts the account.

The parenthesis provides an informative backdrop to the events of the entire period of judgment.

Delay of judgment 7:1-3

Previous to the fulfillment of the seven seals on the earth, the judgment is detained so that God's servants may be protected by His seal on their foreheads.

Number of those sealed 7:4-8

The revelation of their number indicates that these are the 144,000 designated from Israel to be God's witnesses during the period of judgment.

Fruit of their efforts 7:9-17

The work of these servants of God is introduced by the presentation of the fruit of their work.

A great multitude of saints who have been killed for Christ's sake are present in heaven.

They are described as redeemed ones who have come out of the period of tribulation.

They are present before the Lord to serve and worship Him forever.

### **Seventh seal: silence and seven trumpets 8:1-2**

## **JUDGMENT OF THE SEVEN TRUMPETS 8-11**

### **Introduction of the judgment 8:1-5**

The seventh seal 8:1-2

Having received a new perspective on the events of the period, the seventh seal is opened.

Silence 8:1

First there is a brief pause of about a half hour of silence.

This is a short pause before the storm.

### Seven trumpets 8:2

The silence is followed by seven trumpets.

The seven trumpets are introduced by showing their relationship to the seven seals.

These trumpets, the essence of the last seal, constitute a more intense period of judgment which comes out of the first, but brings an even more intense series of judgments on the earth.

Their fulfillment constitutes the events of the second half of the tribulation period (8-11:19).

### The incense altar and its incense 8:3-5

After showing the relationship of the seven trumpets to the seven seals (8:1-2), then their relationship to the prayers of God's people is shown (8:3-5).

The image of the golden censer and the incense conveys the idea that the prayers of the saints ascend into God's presence just as the incense did in the temple.

The specific prayer in view seems to be the appeal for vengeance expressed in 6:9-11.

It is mentioned here because the judgment of the seven trumpets is God's response to the prayers of the saints for vengeance.

The intensity and nature of the judgments make them difficult to interpret.

Though nuclear effects of this century make the judgments easier to comprehend from a human viewpoint, they do not explain many of the details presented.

While we may have some doubts concerning the specific fulfillment, there is no question that those who live at the time of their fulfillment will understand their significance.

John describes in the closest language possible for him and his readers the judgments as he sees them.

### **Observations on this period of judgment: a "bitter-sweet" victory 10:7-11**

*What does that mean?*

*How does John show it?*

*What does this lesson mean? What should it teach us? What should my attitude be?*

### **First trumpet: judgment of vegetation 8:6-7**

The first judgment is a judgment on the earth's vegetation.

A third of the earth and trees were burned up, along with all the green grass.

The description of the judgment resembles hail and fire mixed with blood.

The appearance of these elements resembles those of volcanic action, or perhaps nuclear effects.

It is also possible, though not without problems, that God could send the literal elements as described, if He so desires.

**Second trumpet: judgment on sea 8:8-9**

The second trumpet apparently produces a huge volcano in the sea, or perhaps a meteor or nuclear arm.

The result of this judgment is the death of a third of the living creatures of the sea and the destruction of a third of all the ships.

**Third trumpet: star called Wormwood 8:10-11**

The third trumpet causes the fall of a huge star called Wormwood.

Again a meteor or nuclear weapon may be in view.

As might be expected with wormwood, a third of the waters of the earth were made bitter by its presence and many people died.

**Fourth trumpet: darkness 8:12-13**

The fourth trumpet caused darkness on the earth.

In some way a third of the sun, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars are struck, with the result that one third of the day and one third of the night the people of the world were in total darkness.

**Fifth trumpet: locusts 9:1-11**

A special introduction is given for the last three trumpet judgments (8:13).

They are especially designated as the three woes because of their severity.

The fifth trumpet then sounds, producing an invasion of locusts.

These locusts have special characteristics that no normal locust has.

They require a special explanation.

They may be a specially created animal, or demons under Satanic direction.

These creatures come out of the abyss (9:2-3).

They harm those who do not carry the seal of God in their foreheads (9:4).

They are not able to kill men, but they torment them for five months (9:5).  
Their torment is so severe that people try to escape by death but are unable to do so (9:6).

Their description is frightening (9:7-10).

Their king is the destroyer, which probably refers to Satan (9:11).

**Sixth trumpet: invasion 9:12-21**

The sixth trumpet, referred to as the **second woe**, brings an armed invasion.  
The army is composed of 200,000,000 men.

These may be armies from the other side of the Euphrates River, probably from China.

Or, they could be armies of demons.

Their horses are unusual for an army.

Some have suggested that the passage may refer to an invasion by China, supported by the demons.

The result of this judgment is the death of a third of all mankind.

In spite of this apparent indication of God's judgment, men still refuse to repent and to turn to God.

### **Background: angel with the little scroll 10:1-11**

The series of judgments is again interrupted after the sixth judgment to provide parenthetically additional background information concerning the time of judgment.

First a powerful angel with a little book in his hand was revealed.

It is clear from the context that the little book contains additional revelation of God's judgment (10:1-2).

Seven thunders are revealed but John is not permitted to record the content of those judgments yet (10:3-4).

Following the announcement that the judgment would no longer be delayed (10:5-8), John is commanded to eat the little book (10:9-10).

At first the book was sweet while in his mouth.

When it reached his stomach, the book left his stomach sour.

It appears that at first John would be pleased with what was about to happen because Christ was coming.

Further consideration of the judgment which would accompany Christ's coming causes serious discomfort.

John is informed that he must repeat his message again (10:11).

The repetition begins in chapter 12.

### **Background: two witnesses 11:1-13**

The second part of the parenthesis between the sixth and seventh trumpets describes the ministry of the two witnesses.

The period during which Gentiles will rule over Jerusalem at this time, from the beginning of the judgments will last three and a half years (11:1-2).

During that period God will place two witnesses on the earth (11:3-5).

They are similar to the two olive trees and lampstand which serve the Lord in Zechariah's prophecy (Zech. 4:1-14).

God will protect them supernaturally from any who try to harm them.

They will do works similar to those of Elijah and Moses (11:6).

For this reason many think they will be Elijah and Moses.

This is certainly a possibility.

They did appear with Jesus at the transfiguration (cf. Mat. 17:1-13).

At the same time, John the Baptist demonstrates that others could come in the spirit and power of Elijah or Moses (Luke 1:17).

Thus their identity is not conclusively demonstrated.

At the end of the period, the beast will be given power to kill the two witnesses (11:7).

The entire world will see their bodies, perhaps by satellite television, for three and a half days.

They will all rejoice at the destruction of the witnesses (11:8-10).

### **A new kind of Christmas!**

Three "Christmases" are depicted. Describe each one. How do they differ?

11:10	[Party over death of the two witnesses.]
11:15	[Second coming of Christ – no party]
12:1-2, 5	[First coming of Christ – no party; He's pursued]

*Look at 11:10*

*What's happening? Why?*

*What's going on? What does it teach us?*

At the conclusion of the three and a half days, God will begin to move His program to its completion.

He will resurrect the two witnesses before the eyes of their enemies (11:11-12).

This will cause great fear.

He will then destroy a tenth of Jerusalem by means of a great earthquake (11:13).

Seven thousand men will be killed.

The rest will be terrified and glorify God.

Their fear and praise is probably a reference to a recognition of His power but not a profession of faith nor an act of submission to His authority.

### **God WILL be Glorified!**

- \* **His judgments seen everywhere**
- \* **Men know it but don't repent 6:15-17; 9:20-21; 11:7-13**
- \* **His glory is evident 11:15-18**

**Seventh trumpet: coming of Christ and His judgments 11:14-19**

=&gt; 19:6b-7, 11-16

These events lead to the climax of the program of God's judgment as the seventh trumpet sounds, bringing on the third woe.

Christ returns to earth, accompanied by the praise of all the heavens (11:15-17).

The nations unite to oppose Him and are judged by Him (11:18-19).

With the coming and judgment of Christ, the Great Tribulation concludes.

**NEW START:**

John was informed earlier that he must repeat the message again. 10:11

The repetition actually begins with chapter 12.

**CAUSE OF JUDGMENT: SATAN'S PROGRAM 12-18**

John has already been informed that he must prophesy again (10:11).

He repeats the description of the judgment from a different perspective.

He describes the cause of God's judgment: Satan's program (12:1-18:24).

Since men have chosen to submit to Satan's authority rather than God's, the divine program requires judgment.

**Satan's program presented 12-13:18**

Satan's program is a program of opposition to God and to His people.

**The things you have seen 12:1-5**

John again returns to some things which have happened previously.

**Description of Israel 12:1-2**

He first introduces Israel as a woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head.

The description is probably related to Joseph's dream (Gen. 37:9-10).

The sun and moon, as the starting point on which Israel's place in God's program was based, would refer to Jacob and Rachel.

The twelve stars would be the twelve sons and their descendants.

She was about to give birth.

**Opposition of Satan 12:3-4**

Satan opposed God's program and sought to destroy her child.

**First coming of Christ 12:5**

Satan was unable to destroy Him at birth.

The child was designated as ruler over all the nations but was snatched away before assuming this authority.

### **The things which shall be later 12:6-13:18**

The historical backdrop leads into the future to show the things which will happen afterwards.

#### **Israel's escape 12:6**

Satan pursues Israel into the wilderness for three and a half years.

#### **Angelic war 12:7-8**

At the same time Satan's earthly opposition to God's program leads to a heavenly conflict which results in his expulsion.

#### **Satan's downfall 12:9-12**

As a result, he is cast down to the earth and furiously functions to accomplish his purposes because he knows his time is short.

#### **Satan's attack against Israel 12:13-17**

The primary target of Satan's vengeance is Israel, which he seeks to destroy.

He pursues her offspring—those who obey God's commands and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Divine protection frustrates his plan but his opposition continues.

#### **Beast's coming 13:1-10**

Having presented an overview of Satan's program and purposes, John presents the principal participants in the program (13:1-18).

First the Beast enters the picture.

The beast was given the power, throne and authority of Satan himself.

He boasts of great things and speaks blasphemy.

He is allowed to rule for three and a half years, during which time he fights against God's people and is even allowed to conquer them.

His authority extends over all nations and the entire world worships him, except for those who have trusted Christ.

The beast is seen as a system, and as an individual.

13:1 describes the system

It comes out of the sea, which demonstrates his origin among the nations.

The sea

- Dan. 7:3- the kingdoms rise up out of the sea Ezek. 28

Rev. 17:15- "waters" = peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues.

May refer to the nations in tumult (Ps. 2)

The heads and crowned horns, though described in many different ways by commentators, seem to refer to the nations which give him power.

### **The seven heads**

Could be seven rulers of Rome  
 Could be a symbolic number of perfection  
 Could be the seven hills of Rome  
 Could be seven types of government.

Rev. 17:9-10 refers to 7 heads = 7 mountains = 7 kings  
 Dan. 7 - mountains refer to kingdoms.

He seems to view 7 empires or kingdoms, rather than literal hills.

Five had already fallen (in John's day):

1. Egypt
2. Assyria
3. Babylon
4. Medo-Persia
5. Greece

One was in existence when John wrote:

6. Rome

One was still to come in the future, though it would be brief:

7. Descendant power from Rome (Dan. 2 & 7)  
 Dan. 7:7-8, 19-22, 23-27 => Rev. 17

An eighth would come out from the other seven, and receive its power from the 10 contemporary kingdoms of its day:

8. The beast (Antichrist) 17:11

The seven heads are seven world empires in succession, all of which are part of the same beast (= the Gentile world system)

### **The ten horns = 10 Future Kingdoms**

The ten horns describe ten future kingdoms that will rule at the time this prophecy is fulfilled.

They weren't yet in existence when John wrote. (17:12)

These are crowned and have authority.

They have the name of blasphemy on their heads.

They are voluntarily under the authority of the beast, the blasphemous one (17:12-13)

They are identified with him in his blasphemy (17:12)

Rev. 13:2

This beast is related to the description given in Dan. 7.

[7:7-8, 19-22, 23-27]

He has the same characteristics.

He is a synthesis—a sort of mongrel beast—of all the other kingdoms.

Speed, ferocity, majesty and power are all combined in this new kingdom.

His power is from the dragon, Satan (Cp. Rev. 12).

Satan desires to be like the Most High God.

He forms his own trinity.

So the beast is given the power, throne, and authority of Satan himself.

13:3 Head wounded to death (one of his heads)

Combines the idea of 13:3 with 17:8 & 10.

The Roman empire became dead. (# 6 "is" at the time of John)

It is one that "is not" (# 7)—A derived, resurrected form of # 6.

He brings Rome back to life.

*The danger of the supernatural! 13:3-7  
What should we learn about mighty signs from this situation?*

13:4 "Who is able to make war with him?"

If this is the one who lets everyone believe that he defeated Russia and the Arabic nations, people will be asking that question. "Who can stand up to him?" Ezek. 38-39

He is a king that is able to do whatever he pleases.

13:5-6

He speaks arrogant, blasphemous words (Dan. 11:36-39; 2 Thess. 2:3)

He rules for 42 months (3 ½ years; Dan. 9:27).

13:7

He fights against God's people and is even allowed to conquer them. Dan. 7:21-22, 25b

He is given authority over all nations.

13:8

All peoples whose names are not written in the book of life will worship him.

People whose names *are* in the book, those who have trusted Christ, will not worship him.

13:9-10 A warning to those who are living at that time.

Notice the lack of reference to the churches (Rev. 2-3)

Verse 10 looks at the end of the beast and of those who follow him.

God's people can endure the persecution in the meantime, because God will correct the wrongs.

### **Prophet's coming 13:11-18**

Following the appearance of the beast, another participant in Satan's program is introduced:

A prophet appears as promoter of the beast.

He comes out of the land – a probable reference to Israel (13:11)

He has two horns, but no criteria is given to determine what they are:

Two nations?

Two religious powers?

We have no basis presently to define these.

He appears friendly enough but is characterized by vicious talk.

He is gentle as a lamb, but speaks as a dragon.

His authority is equal to the beast but he uses it to force the whole world to worship the beast. 13:12

He convinces the masses that they should believe in them by many mighty signs. 13:13-15

He calls fire down from heaven.

2 Kings 18 - Elijah demonstrated God's power.

Most noteworthy among the mighty signs was enabling an image, which he had ordered made, to speak.

He forced everyone to receive a mark in the hand or forehead demonstrating that they were followers of the beast. 13:16-18

Without the mark it would be impossible to buy or sell anything.

The mark contains the number of the beast, or the number of his name.

The number given is 666.

Since special wisdom is related to the understanding of the significance of the number, many attempts have been made to explain its significance.

It has been traced to many individuals, especially Roman emperors, or others who have mistreated God's people:

Nero - K S R N R O N (K = 100; S = 60; R = 200; N = 50; R = 200; O = 6; N = 50).

Values are determined based on numerical equivalence of Hebrew letters.

A reincarnation of Nero; someone who comes back to take His place.

Hitler = Start at 100; a = 101; b = 102; c = 103, etc. This system is based on English letters.

A Roman leader = I, V, X, L, C, D. Adding the value of the six basic Roman numerals gives a total of 666.

"Beast" is used 36 X in Revelation. Add up 1 to 36 = 666.  
(You could apply this system to "the beast" computer also!)

It has been traced to the pope:

VICARIUS	FILII	DEI
VIC	IV	ILII
5 1 100	1 5	1 50 1 1
		500 1 = 666

(Used by Adventists and JW's)

Similar numbering systems have been applied to Mussolini, Stalin, Kissenger, Kennedy, Clinton, and many others.

6 as the number of man (created on 6th day.

3 6s would be a trinity of man.

Or, 3 being the number of perfection, 3 6s would be totally man, or the complete embodiment of humanity.

Others have traced it in numerous ways to the social security registration, or credit card system, or even the bar code system.

Most recently it has been applied to the new embedded micro chip technology.

It is wisest to recognize that the specific significance of the description is not clear today.

It will certainly be obvious to God's people at the time of its fulfillment.

They will recognize the implications and refuse to be so identified with Satan's program.

It is clear from the surrounding passage that this mark isn't surreptitiously brought in without people knowing what they're doing.

People will deliberately accept him, with clear insight into the implications of what they are doing.

They are worshiping him as their god!!

### **Satan's program recompensed 14:1-18:24**

Following this brief presentation of Satan's purposes and the participants in his program, God's response to that program is described.

### Salvation of a remnant from Satan's power 14:1-5

In preparation for the judgment about to come, the remnant of 144,000 who have been delivered from Satan's power are gathered.

They sing a new song known only to them, in praise to God.

These were found to be blameless, having separated themselves from anything that might contaminate or distract them, in order to dedicate themselves totally to God's service.

### Judgment of the participants in Satan's program 14:6-18:24

#### Introduction of the judgment 14:6-16

*"Then . . . "* After the 144,000 have been gathered together with the Lamb, the actual judgment of God, caused by Satan's program is introduced.

An angel travels throughout the world, announcing to everyone that the hour of God's judgment has arrived at last (14:6-7).

Another angel announces the destruction of Babylon the Great (14:8).

A more detailed description of her fall will follow later.

A third angel announces that those who submit to the authority of the beast and worship him will be judged (14:9-12).

Those who are faithful to God and endure affliction for His sake should be encouraged by this announcement. They have not been forgotten.

In contrast to the judgment of God on those who serve the beast, those who follow Him will be blessed and given rest when the time of retribution comes (14:13).

The final step of preparation for judgment occurs as the Judge Himself is presented (14:14-16).

He is described as the crowned Son of Man, which undoubtedly relates Him to the title given in Daniel 7:13.

The instrument of judgment which He holds is a sickle with which He will reap the harvest of the earth.

#### Summary of the judgment 14:17-20

The judgment is first described in a summary statement (14:17-20), then in detail (15:1-16:20).

The summary description of the judgment is compared to the gathering of grapes and their trampling in the winepresses.

In this case, the result is blood flowing up to the horses' bridles for 200 miles, or the entire length of Israel.

#### Seven bowls of judgment 15:1-16:20

The details of the judgment are described as seven plagues.

### Introduction of the seven bowls 15:1-8

These seven plagues represent the final and most severe judgment of them all (15:1).

These judgments are those which accompany the seventh trumpet, or Christ's coming to the earth.

They probably occur during the 45 days Daniel predicts between the end of Israel's tribulation and the reception of the blessing God promised (cf. Dan. 12:12).

It would come between the sign of the Son of Man and His actual return, while the nations unite to oppose Him (cf. Matt. 24:30 and Rev. 19:19-21).

The demonstration of God's authority and His retribution for their affliction will cause the faithful saints to praise God for His justice (15:2-4).

The angels who will administer God's judgments receive seven bowls full of God's anger to pour out on the earth (15:5-8).

### First bowl: sores 16:1-2

As the command was given, the first angel poured out his bowl on the earth.

It produced ugly and painful sores which afflicted all those identified by the mark of the beast.

### Second bowl: sea turned to blood 16:3

The second bowl converted the sea into blood and killed all the sea creatures.

### Third bowl: water contaminated 16:4-7

The third bowl caused all of the sources of fresh water to become blood also.

The water is thus contaminated and all the people can drink is blood.

The angel praises God for this fitting reward for a blood-shedding race.

### Fourth bowl: burned by the sun 16:8-9

As the fourth angel pours out his judgment, the sun's heat is intensified and people are burned by its heat.

They recognize that God is the source of the judgment but they curse Him, rather than repent.

### Fifth bowl: darkness 16:10-11

The fifth bowl creates darkness which seems to intensify the pain they are already suffering.

They continue to curse God and refuse to repent.

#### Sixth bowl: kings from the east 16:12

The sixth bowl dries up the Euphrates which had always served as a barrier, at least psychologically, to the kings of the East.

With the removal of the barrier, they cross over to participate in the final conflict at Armageddon.

#### Background: demon activity 16:13-16

As in the other series of seven judgments, a parenthesis is again placed after the sixth judgment to describe a significant aspect of the background which affects the entire series of judgments.

This period is characterized by demonic activity which brings the kings of the earth to Armageddon for a final conflict where Christ will come to judge them.

#### Seventh bowl: geographical changes 16:17-21

As the last bowl is poured out, a violent judgment strikes the earth. Lightning and thunder, tremors and a severe earthquake combine. Radical geological changes occur which affect the topography of the land.

Cities are destroyed.

Islands disappear into the sea and mountains are flattened.

One hundred pound hailstones fall from heaven on men.

*Yet they continue to reject and curse God.*

#### Judgment of the harlot 17:1-18

After the revelation of this great generalized judgment on all mankind, the angel takes John to see two specific effects of the judgment (17-18:24).

The first judgment deals with Babylon the Great, the mother of prostitutes.

The judgment of Babylon seems to parallel other passages of Scripture that point to Babylon or Shinar as the object of God's special judgment.

This was the point of origin of human religions which oppose God's plan of salvation.

Throughout history its role has been significant (cf. Gen. 10:8-10).

Zechariah 5:5-11 appears to predict the removal of the false religious system to this area in the last days.

It will probably be accomplished by commercial interests.

Revelation 18 presents Babylon as a great commercial center of the last days.

The religious system voluntarily goes to the commercial center where it is supported until the commercial system turns on the religious system and destroys it.

Although there is some debate about the significance of "Babylon", the event itself seems to be clear.

The apparently incomplete judgment of Babylon, as predicted by Jeremiah and Isaiah, would seem to argue for a fulfillment in a revived Babylon.

The prostitute is a religious system composed of the ecumenical and syncretistic union of world religions in the last days.

It is supported by the political system of the nations which descended from Rome (17:7-8).

Once again the **seven heads** of the system are seen (17:9-11).

These seven are called hills, referring to the Gentile nations that have ruled over Israel.

Five of them have already fallen, these would include:

Egypt  
Assyria  
Babylon  
Medo-Persia  
Greece

One of the nations was in power during John's time, that would have to be Rome.

The seventh was yet to come.

This would refer to the confederation of nations which descended from Rome.

They are considered contemporaries of the time of fulfillment.

The eighth will descend from the seventh and establish his own rule.

The **ten horns** represent the independent nations of a future confederacy who will give their power to the beast (17:12-14).

In the process, three of the nations will disappear, perhaps by unification or by destruction.

In the end, the confederation will unite against the Lamb but will not be successful. 17:14

They will be destroyed.

Before that happens, God will use them as an instrument to judge and destroy the religious system (17:15-18).

Judgment of Babylon the Great 18:1-24

After the revelation of the destruction of the religious system, a totally different description is given of the destruction of the great city, likewise called Babylon.

This Babylon is described as a great commercial city.

It may be that the judgment now comes against the city in which the prostitute had functioned, because of its identification with her.

Once again, the city where the prostitute dwells may refer to a literal, restored Babylon, or to a figurative Babylon that assumes the role of Babylon.

Although there is a strong possibility of a literal fulfillment, either Rome or Jerusalem are attractive candidates for a figurative fulfillment in the light of contemporary history.

*=> Commercial Center?  
Why do we explain this as the U.S. or Europe?  
Nothing like it exists anywhere today!  
But remember 1948!  
Remember Brasilia!  
Wealth is mid-east style wealth!*

## **RESULTS OF JUDGMENT 19:22:5**

Having completed the description of the earthly events which occur during the Great Tribulation, especially as they relate to God's program and Satan's program to establish his own kingdom, the author depicts the climax of the conflict.

Picks up where chapter 11 let off.

The two threads come together.

The spirit of victory can be sensed in the air as the final scenes begin.

### **Response from heaven 19:1-10**

A glimpse is given of the heavenly preparations for the final scene.

Praise for God 19:1-6

God is praised by the multitude of those present in heaven.

Wedding of the Lamb 19:7-10

The time has come for the wedding of the Lamb to His bride, the church.

They prepare for the celebration of the wedding supper.

As John sees the event unfolding, he is tempted to worship before the messenger but is warned not to.

Only God is to be worshiped for this program.

### **Preparation for millennium 19:11-20:3**

At last the heavens open and Christ descends to prepare the earth for the establishment of the millennial kingdom.

Second coming of Christ 19:11-16

The second coming of Christ is pictured—another white horse appears.

He is accompanied by the heavenly armies and is ready to judge the nations of the world.

**Victory over the nations 19:17-21**

As Christ draws near, the nations of the earth turn to fight against Him.

The beast and the false prophet are cast into the lake of fire.

The remaining armies were killed by the sword coming out of Christ's mouth and the vultures gathered for a great banquet.

**Binding of Satan 20:1-3**

Satan was next taken captive.

He was taken into the Abyss.

There he was chained so as not to deceive the nations for a thousand years.

**Millennium 20:4-6**

With the preparations made and the opposition eliminated, Christ initiates the millennium.

The faithful will at that time be resurrected so that they might enjoy the blessings of the period.

Those who are resurrected at this time will not experience God's condemnation.

Those who enter it while still alive are those who have not opposed Him.

They will be forced to submit to Christ's authority.

Some will only submit by force.

Many of these will rebel against Him when given the opportunity.

**Final rebellion 20:7-10**

The rebels receive their chance at the conclusion of the millennium when Satan is released and organizes one final rebellion.

The name Gog and Magog recalls a previous judgment in which the same purpose was demonstrated.

Both were caused by an attempt to destroy Christ's kingdom.

**Judgment at the Great White Throne 20:11-15**

At the conclusion of the final rebellion John sees a great White Throne with the Judge seated on it.

All the dead who have not been resurrected previously are now resurrected.

This resurrection is for those who have not trusted Christ.

Since they have not believed in Him, they are judged on the basis of their works.

The book of life is brought out to prove that they are not in it and therefore don't deserve to live.

All these are then justly condemned by God and cast into the lake of fire.

We have dealt with the climax of human history on earth.

We have observed how the drama ends.

John finished the book with the logical question: *"Then what?"*

After the thousand years and the judgment, what comes after that?

### **Eternal State 21:1-22:5**

Since the preceding sections have been chronological, the next section should likewise follow the judgment of the great white throne.

The new conditions in eternity are described.

There will be a new heaven and new earth 21:1

A new Jerusalem will be prepared as the place of residence for the saints of God 21:2

God's people will live there in a state of blessing and He will dwell in their midst 21:3-8

A special revelation is given of the habitation prepared for the Lamb's bride (21:9-22:5)

This is given as an encouragement for those who are suffering to remain faithful.

The glory of God and His presence which shall be their inheritance in the future will make their suffering seem insignificant (Rom. 8:18).

The physical layout and grandeur of the city are first described 21:9-21

God Himself and the Lamb will form the temple of the city 21:22

The light provided by the glory of God will make the sun and moon unnecessary 21:23-27

Thus there will be no night and no impurity.

The river of the water of life will come directly from God and provide abundant fruitfulness and prosperity 22:1-2

*In summary, God will be present among His people and abundantly provide everything they need 22:3-5*

The curse will be removed and God's servants will serve Him and reign with Him.

### **CONCLUSION OF THE BOOK 22:6-21**

Having completed the vision, the book concludes with some important comments related to the message of the book.

### **REVELATION BY ANGEL 22:6**

The source of the message is again declared to be God Himself.

The angel was only a messenger, sent to show His servants the things which would take place in the future.

### **BLESSING FOR THE OBEDIENT 22:7**

A special blessing is promised to the one who obeys the message of the book.

The Lord is coming soon.

The one who pays attention to the message of this book will understand what God is doing.

The one who obeys its teachings will be especially blessed because he will be confident of his role in God's program in the midst of such difficult times.

### **REACTION OF THE WRITER 22:8-9**

John again demonstrates his own reaction to the message of the book.

He was so impressed by its message that he almost worshiped the messenger.

He had to be reminded of the messenger's real significance in God's program.

He was only a servant, just like John.

Worship was due only to God.

### **PURPOSE OF THE REVELATION 22:10-11**

The purpose of the revelation was to distinguish between the just and the wicked.

It ought to reconfirm their stand.

Those who are faithful to God will find their commitment strengthened.

Similarly, those who have rejected Him will be stronger in their rejection.

### **PROMISE OF GOD 22:12-15**

The encouraging promise for God's people who suffer for His sake is that Christ is coming soon.

He will reward each one justly, according to what he deserves (Rom. 8:18).

#### ***WHAT DOES THIS TRUTH DEMAND OF US?***

*What difference should the message of Revelation make in my life this year?*

1 John 3:3

### **SOURCE OF THE REVELATION 22:16**

Christ Himself is the One who has chosen to send this message to His churches.

He is aware of their need for its encouraging message.

He is the One who shall come and give them victory.

**INVITATION TO THE READER 22:17**

An invitation is extended to any who wish to turn to Christ and receive from Him the water which produces life.

**WARNING TO THE READER 22:18-19**

A serious warning is directed to anyone who would subtract from or add to the message because of its special significance.

The seriousness of the offense may be demonstrated by the question: *"Who would change it?"*

God is using this message to encourage His suffering people.

They need the revelation He has sent.

False encouragement is useless.

The only people who would deprive them of this encouraging revelation are those who would seek to attack and discourage God's people.

Against such ones the message of judgment contained in Revelation is directed.

**PROMISE TO THE READER 22:20a**

The book concludes with the certainty of Christ's promise that He is coming soon.

**FINAL PRAYER OF THE WRITER 22:20b-21**

That promise provokes the response from the author's heart that He would indeed come soon.

The author's concluding prayer is that God's grace might be with His people to enable them to triumph in the midst of their affliction.