

The Book of Revelation:
**“For the Testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of
Prophecy”**

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INTRODUCTION

The Lord Jesus Christ gave His last revelation (*apocalupsis*) through the Apostle John, exiled on the isle of Patmos, to seven New Testament (NT) churches in Asia Minor, around AD 95. The book follows the divinely inspired outline of 1:19—*The things which thou hast seen* (1:9-20), *The things which are* (2-3), and *The things which shall be hereafter* (4-22). The Futuristic interpretation follows the *Johannine* outline literally, holding that chapters 4-22 are yet future, following the Rapture (I Thes. 4:13-17), while the Allegorical (figurative), Historical (history of the “church”), and Preterist (fulfilled in first century) views of interpretation are scripturally feckless. The number seven is predominate in the Book (i.e., seven stars, angels, seven-fold Spirit, seals, trumpets, vials, thunders, heads, crowns, mountains, kings, etc.), referring to the sense of completion, although in many contexts it must be understood literally. Although the revelation about the Tribulation (Rev. 4-19) is essentially chronological (Seven Seals, then Seven Trumpets, then Seven Vials), there are several chapters which are parenthetical, giving the reader explanations about simultaneous activity in heaven or summarizations. There are many parallels between the last book of the Bible and the first (Genesis). Understanding of Revelation requires a thorough knowledge of key prophetic passages such as Daniel 9:24-27, 11:36-45; Mt. 24-25; I Thes. 4-5; and II Thes. 3.

“The things which thou hast seen”

(Rev. 1:1-20)

CHAPTER ONE

Background

The flow of the chapter takes the reader from the Introduction (vv. 1-8), including Prologue (1:1-3) and Salutation (1:4-8), to the first main division of *“The things which thou hast seen”* (vv. 9-20).

Exposition

Rev.1:1-8

Prologue (Rev. 1:1-3)

The Father gave revelation to the Son to reveal unto His servants through John concerning the future events which the writer saw. The apostle records the first of seven beatitudes (“*blessed*”—1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7; and 22:14). This blessing is for those who read, hear, and keep the book of Revelation because on the imminent return of Christ.

Salutations (Rev. 1:4-8)

John wrote to seven churches in Asia Minor from the eternal God, the One “*which is and which was, and which is to come.*” He included all three Members of the Godhead as the source of grace and peace (“*from him...from the seven Spirits...from Jesus Christ*”). He described the resurrected Jesus Christ and his redemptive work including salvation and sanctification. His return is imminent as He is the eternal God Who breaks into the realm of time.

Rev. 1:9-20

John’s Christological Vision (Rev.1:9-18)

John identified who he was, where he was, and when he received divine revelation. The One Who spoke to him, commanding him to write (cf. 1:11, 19; 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14; (10:4); 14:13; 19:9; and 21:5) to seven churches, was the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ. He described the Lord’s glory, His relationship to the churches, and John’s reaction.

John’s Command to Write (Rev. 1:19-20)

The Lord Jesus Christ gave John the inspired outline and content of prophecy for the seven churches, identifying the mystery of the seven stars and candlesticks.

Theological Concerns

The recipients of prophecy are the Lord’s candlesticks. Those who are not in one of the Lord’s assemblies will have limited illumination in understanding prophecy in general and the Apocalypse in specific (cf. I Tim. 3:15). For instance, Roman Catholic and Protestant commentators continually misunderstand the interpretation of Revelation (vv. 1-8). The presence of the resurrected Christ in the midst of His assemblies reminds the reader of Christ’s Great Commission (vv. 9-18; cf. Mt. 28:19-20; 18:20). Protestant theology posits the false interpretation that the seven churches represent seven ages of the “Church” (i.e., universal church) dispensation.

It is significant that John was in the Spirit on the Lord's day (Sunday), as he received revelation for the Lord's churches (v. 10). The expression "Son of man" harks back to Dan. 7:13 as prophecy of the Messiah. The seven stars in the Lord's right hand are the seven pastors of the seven respective churches, which pastors are under the control of Christ as long as they remain in submission to His words.

Textual Issues

Verse 1:5—Critical Text (CT) reads "*loosed (luo) us*" whereas the Received Text (TR) reads "*washed (louo) us.*"

Verse 1:8—CT omits "*the beginning and the ending.*"

Verse 1:18—CT reverses the TR order "*of hell and of death.*"

Summary of Chapter One

After giving his prologue and salutation, John revealed the resurrected Christ's desire for him to write, following the aforementioned outline, by unfolding revelation about prophecy, for the Lord's only ecclesiological institution of this age, the visible assembly of baptized believers.

“The things which are”

(Rev. 2-3)

CHAPTER TWO

Background

This chapter presents the cities (Ephesus [vv. 1-7], Smyrna [vv. 8-11], Pergamos [vv. 12-17], and Thyatira [vv. 18-29]) in which four of the seven churches to which Revelation was written, focusing on the message to each angel/pastor.

Exposition

Rev. 2:1-29

The Church at Ephesus (Rev. 2:1-7)

The Lord revealed to the pastor of the Ephesian assembly His commendations for the church’s service and for her (i.e., the *ekklesia*) hatred of the Nicolaitanes, but also His condemnation for her leaving her first love (cf. Eph. 1:4, 15). He gave soteriological promises to those who would repent and overcome.

The Church at Smyrna (Rev. 2:8-11)

Christ commended the church at Smyrna because of her works in spite of poverty and tribulation, and warned of ten days of more tribulation, encouraging her to be “*faithful unto death.*” Overcomers would not be hurt by the second death, He promised.

The Church at Pergamos (Rev. 2:12-17)

The pastor of the church at Pergamos received Christ’s strong redress for her toleration of the doctrine of Balaam and the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, since the church was situated in Satan’s stronghold. The remnant within was to repent and overcome for eternal soteriological blessings

The Church at Thyatira (Rev. 2:18-29)

The Lord Jesus, omniscient about the assembly at Thyatira and the member’s faithful service, nevertheless condemned severely the woman teacher Jezebel (cf. I Ki. 16:31 ff.; 21:25; II Ki. 9:7) who espoused her doctrinal and practical errors throughout the assembly. The remnant was to hold fast the truth until the Lord comes back.

Theological Concerns

The meaning of “overcoming” involves both the position and practice of the believer. John revealed that the Christian has the position as overcomer, since he identifies with Christ Who overcame the world (cf. Jn. 16:33), and the power to overcome since he is born of God (I Jn. 5:1-5). Those who overcome are true Christians which will receive the soteriological blessings in heaven. Those who do not repent, even though professed Christians in Baptist churches, will perish since their profession is not genuine.

The assemblies were still the Lord’s candlesticks until He determined they no longer had the status. Even though some churches had severe doctrinal and practical errors, the remnant was to repent and overcome, and hopefully purify their respective assemblies with biblical doctrine and practice. The words of Christ’s message were to the respective pastors, who were held in His right hand of power and control, but the whole congregation was entreated to hear and respond appropriately to maintain candlestick status.

Textual Issues

Verse 13—CT (and modern versions such as NASV, NIV, etc.) omits “*thy works.*”

Summary of Chapter of Two

Three of the four churches (Ephesus, Pergamos, and Thyatira) received Christ’s condemnation and warning of loss of candlestick status. Only the church at Smyrna received commendation alone, and it was impoverished and persecuted. In all cases, both the pastor and assembly members had the responsibility to respond to the Lord’s instruction.

CHAPTER THREE

Background

The Lord Jesus Christ concluded His addresses to the angels of the last three (Sardis [vv. 1-6], Philadelphia [vv. 7-13], and Laodicea [vv. 14-22]) of the seven churches in Asia Minor, condemning two of the three.

Exposition

Rev. 3:1-22

The Church at Sardis (Rev. 3:1-6)

The church had a testimony of life and yet was spiritually dead—a good reputation but a bad reality. Only a few within, presumably including the pastor, were not defiled with the error, and they were to hold fast and repent. Their names would not be blotted out of the book of life.

The Church at Philadelphia (Rev. 3:7-13)

The Lord recognized the obedience of this assembly, albeit little in strength, and promised that he would deliver them from the hour of world-wide Tribulation. The promise of the imminent return of Christ is coupled with the church's continued obedience to be in existence when the Lord returns.

The Church at Laodicea (Rev. 3.14-22)

The Lord Jesus Christ reproved the pastor of this lukewarm assembly because of her wealth. It seems that the Lord was on the outside attempting to get in the assembly, standing at the door knocking.

Theological Concerns

The Lord warned the assemblies that He would come as a thief and remove their candlestick status, unbeknownst to them. As churches become large they risk the danger of doctrinal impurity, and the consequent loss of divine approval and status.

The book of life contains all who were ever conceived and reduces down to all who receive the Savior by meeting the conditions of repentance and faith (cf. Rev. 20:12-15). Apparently when an unrepentant sinner dies, he is blotted out of the book of life (cf. Rev. 13:8).

Textual Issues

Rev. 3:10—Although the texts of the CT and TR are the same with regard to the preposition *ek*, the meaning of *ek* is “from” and not “out of” because Paul already instructed the Thessalonian church that she would be gathered unto Christ before the Day of the Lord, which is, the Tribulation and Millennium, in I Thes. 4:17, 5:2.

Summary of Chapter Three

The last three churches received similar commendations/condemnations from the Lord as did the first four. All were to remain faithful, repent, and continue until the Lord comes back. None did! For the true Christians in Baptist churches who show their status of overcoming by the practice of overcoming, there are many blessings yet to come in heaven.

*“The Things Which
Shall Be Hereafter”*

(Rev. 4-22)

CHAPTER FOUR

Background

The Apostle John was invited, in his vision, to the throne room of God, and saw the twenty-four elders, four beasts, and their worship of God involving singing and the casting of crowns before the throne.

Exposition

Rev. 4:1-11

The Invitation to Heaven (Rev. 4:1-3)

The voice associated with the trumpet and the imperative “*come up hither*” suggests that this pictures the Rapture as predicted by Paul (I Thes. 4:16-17). This heavenly invitation precedes the final section of the inspired outline (Rev. 1:19), as the promise indicates John will be shown the “*things which must be hereafter*” (*ha dei genesthai meta tauta*). The “*hereafter*” (*meta tauta*) of 4:1 fulfills the “*hereafter*” (*meta tauta*) of 1:19. The “raptured” Apostle John saw the heavenly throne and one Who sat upon it, apparently the triune God. He used precious gems to describe the brilliance of the setting.

Those in the Throne Room (Rev. 4:4-7)

After seeing the heavenly throne with God upon it, John saw twenty-four elders sitting around the throne, apparently as representatives of church age saints (since they had white raiment and golden crowns), and four beasts (*zoon*) likened unto a lion, calf, face of man, and a flying eagle.

Heavenly Worship (Rev. 4:8-11)

The apostle observed the four beasts singing the first of five recorded hymns of praise (v. 8; *vide* also 4:11; 5:9-10, 12, and 13), and the elders casting their crowns before the throne and

singing the second of the hymns of praise (v. 11). The Scripture speaks of several crowns elsewhere: I Cor. 9:25; Phil. 4:1; II Tim. 4:8; Jam. 1:12; I Pet. 5:4; and Rev. 3:11.

Theological Concerns

The identity of the twenty-four elders as church age saints follows these lines of argument: 1) the rapture is exclusively for NT saints, OT saints will be resurrected following the Tribulation; 2) the white raiment indicates they have been saved; 3) the golden crown (*stephanos*) is the victor's crown, suggesting they have been judged at the Bema of Christ; 4) they were kings and priests as the Lord promised (cf. Rev. 1:6 with 5:10).

Textual Issues

Rev.4:11—CT changes to the imperfect verb *esan* (“they were”) instead of the present *eisin* (“they are”) in the TR.

Summary of Chapter Four

John's vision has as it were, revelation about the pre-Tribulation rapture and immediate presence in the throne room with God, the elders, and the beasts, depicting the next prophetic events in heaven and on earth.

CHAPTER FIVE

Background

Chapter Five continues the throne room scene and advances the revelation, indicating that the seven-sealed book must be opened, and only the Lamb is worthy for that task.

Exposition

Rev. 5:1-14

The Sealed Scroll (Rev. 5:1-4)

The new focus in the throne room was the seven-sealed book or scroll, and the query about Who was worthy to open it, causing John to weep.

The Worthy Lamb (Rev. 5:5-7)

One of the elders instructed John to stop weeping, because the identity of the Worthy One fulfilled the OT prophecy concerning the Lion of Judah and the Root of David. Further information indicated that the slain Lamb, the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ, took the scroll from the Father Who sat upon the throne.

The Worship of the Lamb (Rev. 5:8-14)

The Lamb took central position to receive worship, as the twenty-four elders, and multitudes of others, as well as angels and beasts, and all creatures in heaven and earth sang praise to the Lord in the final three hymns of praise.

Theological Concerns

The seven-sealed scroll is apparently the book of future judgment and redemption, as revealed in the rest of the Apocalypse (Rev. 6:1-17; 8:1-5).

Textual Issues

Rev. 5:9—the CT omits the TR’s “us” (*hemas*), obfuscating who has been purchased with Christ’s blood. Only men, and not angels or beasts, have been purchased with the precious blood of Christ.

Summary of Chapter Five

The importance of this throne room scene registers for the reader when the vision presents the concern about Who may open the scroll, weeping over the concern, and rejoicing in the Lamb Who does take the scroll, worshipping Him in anticipation of unsealing the scroll.

CHAPTER SIX

Background

The vision reveals the opening of six of the Seven Seal Judgments, which begin the world-wide judgments of the Tribulation period, as Christ prophesied (Mt. 24:4-8).

Exposition

Rev. 6:1-17

The First Seal Judgment (Rev. 6:1-2)

The First Judgment was the rider on a white horse bringing false peace, which fits the Anti-Christ’s deception.

The Second Seal Judgment (Rev. 6:3-4)

The next Seal Judgment depicted the red horse taking peace from the earth in the form of wars.

The Third Seal Judgment (Rev. 6:5-6)

The Third Seal was the black horse which represented famine.

The Fourth Seal Judgment (Rev. 6:7-8)

The Fourth Seal Judgment was the pale green (*cloros*) horse which represented death and hell.

The Fifth Seal Judgment (Rev. 6:9-11)

The next Seal was the picture of Tribulation saints slain during the Tribulation period.

The Sixth Seal Judgment (Rev. 6:12-17)

The Sixth Judgment resulted in a world-wide earthquake, falling stars, and extreme terror on earth. The Lord will roll back the first and second heavens as a scroll so that man on earth will be able to see the Lamb in heaven.

Theological concerns

The Seal Judgments are indeed judgments, so the white horse does not picture Christ and righteousness, but the judgment of the false peace with which the Antichrist will deceive the world, acting in the place of Christ and against Him.

Textual Issues

Rev. 6:17—CT replaces the TR “*his*” (*autou*) wrath with “*their*” (*auton*) wrath.

Summary of Chapter Six

The six Seal Judgments are world-wide, demonstrating the beginning of God’s wrath upon sinful mankind.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Background

Leaving the chronological sequence of Seal Judgments in Chapter Six, the vision recorded two groups of saints in the Tribulation who will experience redemption—the 144,000 and the multitudes saved by receiving their message.

Exposition

Rev. 7:1-17

The Sealing of the 144,000 (Rev. 7:1-8)

The Lord will protect His witnesses by sealing them before possible hurt to them. He sealed 12,000 Jews from the twelve tribes, excluding Ephraim and Dan, but referring to the tribes of Joseph and Levi, and giving a total of 144,000.

The Salvation of the Multitudes (Rev. 7:9-17)

Multitudes will be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb during the Tribulation, and they will serve him forever.

Theological Concerns

The 144,000 will not be Christians, or any select church group, but will be virgin Jewish men from the twelve Jewish tribes (cf. Rev. 14). Some have speculated that the omission of Dan was because the Antichrist would come from this tribe.

Textual Issues

Rev. 7:12—some MSS omit “*amen.*”

Summary of Chapter Seven

The Lord will insure that the 144,000 Jewish evangelists will be sealed and protected in order to evangelize the multitudes that will be saved during the Tribulation.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Background

This chapter focuses on the opening of the Seventh Seal Judgment, which Seal contains the Seven Trumpet and Seven Vial Judgments. Chapter eight follows chapter six in sequence, emphasizing subsequent developments concluding with Christ’s Second Coming.

Exposition

Rev. 8:1-13

The Opening of the Seventh Seal (Rev. 8:1)

The opening of the Seventh Seal Judgment will be a solemn and momentous occasion in world history, giving respite for an additional 30 minutes, as the Lamb will activate the culminating events of His wrath.

The Seven Angels (Rev. 8:2-6)

The seven angels with the seven trumpets will be God’s agents to carry out His judgment on the world when they sound out their respective Trumpet Judgments, as the Lord will respond in vengeance to the saints’ prayers.

The First Trumpet Judgment (Rev. 8:7)

This Judgment will affect nature, sending fire with hail to destroy earth vegetation, similar to the fourth plague against Egypt (Ex. 9:23 ff.)

The Second Trumpet Judgment (Rev. 8:8-9)

The Second Trumpet will affect the sea waters as a large fiery mountain is thrown into the Mediterranean Sea turning one third of it to blood, and destroying life and ships (cf. Ex. 7:20).

The Third Trumpet Judgment (Rev. 8:10-11)

A star named Wormwood will fall into the water sources on Earth, making the water bitter (cf. Ex. 15:23-24).

The Fourth Trumpet Judgment (Rev. 8:12-13)

The Fourth Trumpet Judgment will smite the heavenly bodies and cause darkness on the earth, similar to the ninth plague (Ex. 10:21 ff.). As if these four Trumpet Judgments were not enough, an angel warned of three more woes of the last three Trumpet Judgments which will devastate earth inhabitants.

Theological Concerns

The Lord will avenge His Tribulation elect as they pray for divine judgment on the enemies of the righteous God, as He promised (Lk. 18:7). The “*inhabiters*” (*katoikousin* = *kata oikousin* = *ecumenical*) of the earth will probably be the ecumenical movement (cf. Rev. 3:10).

Textual Issues

Rev. 8:13—the CT substitutes “*eagle*” (*aetou*) for the TR’s word “*angel*” (*angelou*).

Summary of Chapter Eight

The Seventh Seal Judgment will commence in this chapter, beginning the terrible wrath of the Lamb, continuing all the way to the coming of Christ in Rev. 19.

CHAPTER NINE

Background

The fifth angel announced the first woe (8:13) which was a personage, apparently named Abaddon and Apollyon, fall to the earth at the midpoint of the Tribulation. His presence will unleash demons from the abyss to torment men. The next woe (the Sixth Trumpet Judgment) will unloose four angels and activate a 200,000,000 army which will kill one third of mankind, but also will harden the remainder in their unrepentant state.

Exposition

Rev. 9:1-21

The Fifth Trumpet (Rev. 9:1-12)

This woe will involve Satan's fall from heaven (cf. Rev. 12:7-12) and the unleashing of his demon army from the *abyss* (cf. also Lk. 8:31; Rom. 10:7). Their sting will inflict pain for five months, presumably beginning the Great Tribulation. Satan is the angel-king named Abaddon and Apollyon, Hebrew and Greek titles for destruction. This woe is the beginning of the intense pain and destruction of the last three and half years of the seven year Tribulation.

The Sixth Trumpet (Rev. (9:13-21)

The second woe will unloose four bound angels (demons) in the Euphrates. Following them will be a 200,000,000 army of fierce horses out of whose mouths will issue destruction, killing one third of mankind. The remaining two thirds will not repent of their murders, drugs (*pharmakeion*), fornication or thievery.

Theological Concerns

The Tribulation is Daniel's seventieth week (cf. Dan. 9:24-27), or *heptad* of seven years, divided into two units of three and half years (1260 days or 42 months).

Textual Issues

Rev. 9:13—the CT omits "*four*" (found in the TR) with reference to the horns of the altar.

Summary of Chapter Nine

This frightening chapter depicted two of the last three woe judgments, including the fall of Satan to the earth, the unloosing of his demonic army, and the unloosing for four more angels with their army which will destroy one third of mankind.

CHAPTER TEN

Background

This chapter presents a parenthetical hiatus of the activity in heaven and earth. The mighty angel holds a little book which apparently contains further judgment. John is told not to write, but to seal up the seven trumpet judgments. The angel declared that there would be no more delay as the mystery of God would be finished. John took the little book and ate it as instructed, sensing that it was bittersweet and being informed that he would prophesy again.

Exposition

Rev. 10:1-11

The Mighty Angel (Rev. 10:1-4)

Another mighty angel, distinct from the one in 5:2, and therefore not Christ, appeared with a little book in his hand. This parenthetical interlude was somber, suggesting the ominous foreboding of the culmination of God's wrath. Upon hearing the seven thunders, the Apostle John started to write but was prohibited. Apparently the Lord did not want certain judgmental revelation inscripturated at this time.

The Consummation of Judgment (Rev. 10:5-7)

The mighty angel straddling the sea and earth swore by Christ, the Creator, and announced that there would be no more delay in bringing final judgment to earth (cf. 6:10). With the Seventh Trumpet Judgment would commence the events leading to the culmination of the mystery of God in establishing the Millennial kingdom.

The Consumption of the Little Book (Rev. 10:8-11)

In similar manner with Ezekiel (2:9-3:3), John received instruction to eat the little book, producing the bittersweet effect upon him. As the prophet of God writing the Apocalypse, the righteous judgments would be sweet to him as a believer, but bitter as he realized multitudes would receive the wrath of the Lamb. As he continued to inscripturate the Book of Revelation, his prophesy would go before the multitudes including kings.

Theological Concerns

Ezekiel received instruction to eat a scroll of woe about the Lord's judgment on Jerusalem. As he consumed the roll of a book, it became as honey of sweetness in his mouth. The judgmental messages which the Lord's prophets preached weighed heavy upon them since they recognized many would incur the wrath of God, including their family and friends.

Textual Issues

Rev. 10:2—some MSS have *biblion* instead of TR's *biblaridion*.

Summary of Chapter Ten

This second parenthetical chapter depicted the heavenly pause before the final consummation of the wrath of the Lamb.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Background

Before the Book of Revelation gives additional sequential activity, the Lord reveals more parenthetical information. Since Chapter Nine revealed events up through the mid-point of the Tribulation, Chapter Eleven summarizes events relating to the close of the first three and half years before proceeding to the Seventh Trumpet Judgment or third woe (11:15 ff.). The two

witnesses who had been protecting the Tribulation Temple will be killed by the Antichrist, and subsequently resurrected.

Exposition

Rev. 11:1-19

The Tribulation Temple (Rev. 11:1-2)

The temple predicted by the Apostle Paul that the Son of Perdition will defile (II Thes. 2:4) receives this first notice in the Book of Revelation. John was instructed to measure the temple, but not the court, which will be under gentile dominion for the final forty two months of the Tribulation.

The Two Witnesses (Rev. 11:3-12)

Concerning the two unnamed witnesses, John recorded their length of ministry as 1260 days, their supernatural power, their death, and their ultimate resurrection. These witnesses protected the Tribulation temple from the Antichrist during the first three and a half years, as well as smote the earth with the Seal and Trumpet plagues (9:20), evincing hatred from both Satan and mankind. Their death will bring world-wide rejoicing at the mid-point of the Tribulation, and after three and a half days, the Lord will resurrect them, invoking a similar “resurrection” effort from the Antichrist (13:1-3).

The Third Woe (Rev. 11:13-14)

A great earthquake will occur in Jerusalem, commencing the third woe or Seventh Trumpet Judgment.

The Seventh Trumpet (Rev. 11:15-19)

This pericope will give the heavenly perspective of the seventh angel sounding. In heaven, joy and worship will evince from those in heaven as God will pour out His wrath on those on earth.

Theological Concerns

The Scriptures refer to four temples in Israel’s history: the Solomon, the Zerubbabel-Herod, the Tribulation, and the Millennium temples.

The persistent and contrived efforts by Bible commentators to identify the two witnesses are unnecessary since the Scriptures do not reveal who they are. Although Moses, Elijah, and Enoch have received candidate status, there is no reason not to understand the witnesses as future individuals empowered by God for this task. Commentators seem to put more energy into identifying the witnesses than in exegeting the passage.

Textual Issues

Summary of Chapter Eleven

As the two witnesses protect the temple and smite the earth with judgments, they will receive fierce hatred for their short three and half year ministry. At the mid-point of the Tribulation they will be slain but then resurrected, commencing the last three and half years of judgment, about which heaven will rejoice.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Background

Chapter Twelve continues the parenthetical material, summarizing Israel's history and revealing Satan's fall from heaven and pursuit after the Lord's remnant in the last three and a half years. Predominate personages in this chapter and the next are the woman, the child, the dragon, Michael, the remnant, the first beast and the second beast.

Exposition

Rev. 12:1-17

The History of the Remnant Nation (Rev. 12:1-6)

Harking back to Gen. 37:9, the vision summarizes the history of the Jewish remnant from Joseph to the birth and resurrection of Christ, to the current Great Tribulation persecution.

The Heavenly Expulsion of Satan (Rev. 12:7-11)

Although Satan lost his position in heaven with his initial sin (Isa. 14:12-15; Ezk.28:12-18; cf. Job 1:6), he will not lose his place until the mid-point of the Tribulation, when he does not prevail against Michael. Those in heaven will rejoice that salvation will be completed since the accuser is expelled.

The Satanic Persecution of the Remnant (Rev. 12:8-17)

As there will be joy in heaven with his expulsion, there will be woe on earth. Satan's Antichrist will intensify his persecution on the believing Jewish remnant.

Theological Concerns

During the Tribulation, believers will have and keep the commandments of God, presumably the Scriptures. This truth recognizes that the Lord has made available His inscripturated revelation in every dispensation.

Textual Issues

Rev. 12:14—the words “half a time” are omitted in Codex C, but this omission does not affect the *KJV* or many modern versions.

Summary of Chapter Twelve

Satan’s long-time hatred for Israel will culminate in his pursuit to persecute and destroy the believing Jewish remnant, whom the Lord will protect.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Background

This chapter focuses on two great evil personages, the first and second beast, or the Antichrist and the False Prophet, respectively. Their nature and deception are revealed, along with the number of the Antichrist.

Exposition

Rev. 13:1-18

The First Beast (Rev. 13:1-10)

The first beast is both a system and a person, who will orchestrate a pseudo-resurrection (reincarnation [?]) and demand to be worshipped. His nature will be warlike as he has dominion over the people of the earth through the last three and a half years.

The Second Beast (Rev. 13:11-14)

The second beast, the False Prophet, will facilitate the worship of the Antichrist through supernatural miracles.

The Number of the Beast (Rev. 13:15-18)

The Antichrist will have power to control commerce by requiring all to receive his mark with his number 666.

Theological Concerns

The Antichrist will be revealed after the Rapture (II Thes. 2:2 ff.), and will be supernaturally energized by Satan. Christians will not know who he is and it is fruitless to speculate, since even if he were alive, he would not be satanically energized yet. All kinds of efforts to understand his number of 666 is speculative and cannot be comprehended until after the Tribulation begins.

Textual Issues

Rev. 13:1—the CT reads “*he (the beast) stood*” instead of the TR “*I stood.*”

Rev. 13:18—some MSS read 616 instead of 666.

Summary of Chapter Thirteen

The two beasts will control the political/economic and religious realms in the final years of the Tribulation, dominating the world in forceful control.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Background

This chapter gives John’s vision of the 144,000 standing with the Lamb at the outset of the Millennium. Furthermore, it reveals six angels who pronounce judgment of Babylon and the final judgment harvest of the world.

Exposition

Rev. 14:1-20

The 144,000 with the Lamb (Rev. 14:1-5)

As John revealed the character of the 144,000, it is noticeable that they were with the Lamb, redeemed and secure before the throne. Since they were the “*firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb,*” they obviously were converted at the outset of the Tribulation (cf. I Cor. 16:15).

The First Angel (Rev. 14:6-7)

This angel announced the presence of the gospel in the midst of judgment.

The Second Angel (Rev. 14:8)

The Second Angel announced the fall of Babylon, and anticipated the revelation in Chapters 17 and 18.

The Third Angel (Rev. 14:9-11)

The next angel warned of the judgment on any who would worship the first beast. The unsaved Beast worshippers will be tormented in from the presence of God, presumably forever (cf. Isa. 66:24).

The Instruction to Write (Rev. 14:12-14)

After hearing of the patience of the saints, John received the commandment to write about the blessed of the dead in Christ and about His coming.

The Fourth Angel (Rev. 14:15-16)

The Fourth Angel announced it was time for divine harvest on earth.

The Fifth Angel (Rev. 14:17)

This angel had the sharp sickle.

The Sixth Angel (Rev. 14:18-20)

The Sixth Angel commanded the Fifth Angel to thrust in the sickle for bloody judgment on Jerusalem extending for 16 hundred furlongs (200 miles).

Theological Concerns

Those who worship the Antichrist will be tormented in hell forever before the Lamb of God (cf. Isa. 66:24). Hell, which ultimately will be cast into the Lake of Fire, is a reality for all without Christ. It was prepared for the devil and his angels (Mt. 25:41), and the Antichrist, False Prophet, and Satan will eventually end up in the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:10).

Textual Issues

Rev. 14:5—“*before the throne of God*” is omitted in the CT.

Summary of Chapter Fourteen

This chapter is another parenthetical pause, attempting to bring together blessings and judgments during the last days of the Tribulation.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Background

John saw the third sign (cf. 12:1 and 3), which was the seven last plagues, indicating that the consummation is at hand in chapters 15 and 16. After hearing the song of Moses, John revealed that the seven Vial Judgments were at hand.

Exposition

Rev. 15:1-8

The Third Sign (Rev. 15:1-2)

The last and third sign was the seven plagues that will destroy the Antichrist’s political/economic and religious systems.

The Song of Moses (Rev. 15:3-4)

Tribulation saints in heaven will sing the song of Moses as they anticipate vengeance on their martyrdom.

The Golden Vials (Rev. 15:5-8)

One of the four beasts hands the golden vials to the seven angels for their respective judgmental ministries in Chapter 16.

Theological Concerns

The chronological advancement of judgments in Revelation includes the chapters 6, 8, 11, 15, and 16. The parenthetical interludes include chapters 10, 12, 13, 14, and 17-18.

Textual Issues

Rev. 15:3—the TR reads *hagion* (“saints”), whereas the Westcott-Hort text (ASV) reads *aionon* (“ages”), and the Tischendorf text (NAS) reads *ethnon* (“nations”).

Summary of Chapter Fifteen

Chapter Fifteen announces the preparation for the Vial Judgments and Chapter Sixteen reveals the details of the Vial Judgments.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Background

John heard a “great” (cf. Rev. 16:9, 12, 14, 17, 18, and 19) voice instructing the angels. The seven angels will pour out the seven Vial Judgments, culminating in the Lamb’s wrath and setting up Christ’s coming.

Exposition

Rev. 16:1-21

The First Three Vial Judgments (Rev. 16:1-7)

The seven Vial Judgments will be poured out upon the worshippers of the Antichrist, including sores upon them (the First), death at sea (the Second), and bloody judgment on the water supplies (the Third). Man will be forced to drink blood as his only beverage, a divine abomination.

The Fourth Vial Judgment (Rev. 16:8-9)

The Fourth Vial affected the heat of the sun, scorching the inhabitants of earth, but not moving them to repentance.

The Fifth Vial Judgment (Rev. 16:10-11)

The Fifth Vial brought darkness on the beast's kingdom, causing them to gnaw in pain but not repenting.

The Sixth Vial Judgment (Rev. 16:12)

The Sixth dried up the Euphrates, allowing the armies of the east to advance into the holy land for the battle of Armageddon.

The Personages of Armageddon (Rev. 16:13-16)

The evil triad is likened to frogs, who will use deception and orchestrate the strategy for the battle of Armageddon (the dragon represents the Father, the first beast [Antichrist] represents Christ, and the false prophet represents the Spirit).

The Seventh Vial Judgment (Rev. 16:17-21)

The culminating devastation of the Seventh Vial Judgment will hit Jerusalem and Babylon with a world-wide earthquake, and will commence hail to unrepentant mankind.

Theological Concerns

Terrible, painful judgment does not bring repentance to sinners; only the convicting work of the Holy Spirit through His word.

Textual Issues

Rev. 16:5—TR has ὁ ἐσόμενος (“*shalt be*”) whereas the CT has ὁ ὅσιος (“the Holy One”). The TR reading has been preserved in the two Greek fathers Alexander of Clement and Gregory of Nyssa, and in the Spanish Beatus in Latin (*futurus es*), and completes the formula (cf. Rev. 1:4, 8; 4:8; 11:17).¹

Summary of Chapter Sixteen

The Seven Vial Judgments will be poured out on the Antichrist and his followers and the conclusion of the Tribulation.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Background

The vision describes the Lord's wrath upon the ecclesiastical and political forms of the Babylonian system of Satan. This parenthetical interlude of chapters 17 and 18 summarizes the

¹There are only four pre-tenth century MSS for Rev. 16:5. The text of the Ἀποκάλυψις has received great corruption, and so this verse needs careful scrutiny by the believer (cf. Jn. 10:27).

judgment on the Antichrist's system from the mid-point of the Tribulation, and connects chapter 16 with chapter 19.

Exposition

Rev. 17:1-18

The Vision (Rev. 17:1-6)

The woman in the vision, in contrast to the woman of chapter 12, will be the harlot church of the ecumenical movement, having embraced the pagan babylonianism. The ecumenical movement of all world religions will persecute believers unto death.

The Interpretation (Rev. 17:7-18)

The angel revealed the mystery of the woman, who will be the religious system headed up by the Antichrist. Babylonianism was the religion of five fallen kings (Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Greece), the one current king (Roman), and the one coming king (revived Roman system). At the outset of the Great Tribulation, when the Antichrist will demand to be worshiped, the kings will hate the harlot religion and worship the satanic beast.

Theological Concerns

Satan's religion has not changed in over 6000 years. As the founder of pantheism, he offered deathlessness ("reincarnation") and deification ("humanism") to Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:4-6). All world religions (and hence babylonianism) may be reduced down to these two common tenets of satanic religion. He will pose as the first reincarnated god-man, represented by the "perfect" 666.

Textual Issues

Rev. 17:4—some MSS omit "*her fornication.*"

Summary of Chapter Seventeen

The Lord's judgment on religious Babylon is allowing it to run her course and culminating in satanic worship by her devotees.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Background

This chapter gives subsequent events to chapter 17 with regard to the defunct religious Babylon, indicating that the political Antichrist will dominate the world with his economic policies and self-worship.

Exposition

Rev. 18:1-24

The Condemnation of Babylon (Rev. 18:1-8)

Another angel announced the fall of Babylon with the double declaration “*Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen*” (cf. 14:8), revealing divine wrath for her fornication, wealth, pride, and sin.

The Cry for Babylon (Rev. 18:9-19)

Her fall will cause great wailing and mourning from her merchants as the system and physical properties crumble before their eyes.

The Destruction of Babylon (Rev. 18:20-24)

The Lord will allow violence to destroy commercial Babylon, which will signify a series of “no mores” (vv. 21-23).

Theological Concerns

The holy apostles are in heaven and told to rejoice. This adds credence to the interpretation that the church age saints (including apostles) do not go through the Tribulation, but are removed before it begins in the Rapture.

Textual Issues

Rev. 18:3—CT has “*have fallen*” instead of TR “*have drunk*.”

Summary of Chapter Eighteen

This chapter summarizes the fall of condemned commercial Babylon.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Background

Chapter 19 connects with chapter 16 chronologically and reveals the Second Coming of Christ at the conclusion of the Tribulation.

Exposition

Rev. 19:1-21

The Heavenly Praise (Rev. 19:1-6)

Four spontaneous expressions of “*alleluia*” come out of heaven in anticipation for the Second Coming. Saints will praise the Lord for avenging their martyrdom.

The Marriage of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7-10)

The consummation of the marriage of the Lord to His bride will occur at the respective resurrections. Following the consummation will be the marriage supper, which presumably will be the Millennium (cf. Is. 25:6).

The Second Coming of the King (Rev. 19:11-21)

Christ will conclude the battle of Armageddon, accompanied with his resurrected NT saints coming on white horses, to destroy the Antichrist and his army (cf. Zech. 14:1 ff.). At this time he will cast the Antichrist and False Prophet into the Lake of Fire.

Theological Concerns

“*Bride*” is a soteriological metaphor, which metaphor applies to all believers. The consummation of the Bridegroom to His bride will occur at the various respective resurrections (NT saints at the Rapture; OT and Tribulation saints at the Revelation; Millennial saints at the end of the 1000 year reign of Christ). Ancient biblical weddings focused on the contract, the consummation, and the celebration of the couple.

Textual Issues

Rev. 19:13—ASV follows the CT and has “sprinkled with” rather than TR’s “*dipped in*” blood.

Summary of Chapter Nineteen

Christ’s Second Coming will evoke joy in heaven, and woe on earth to the Antichrist and his army.

CHAPTER TWENTY

Background

Chapter 20 takes the reader to the next event after the Tribulation, namely, the one thousand year (6x) Millennium. During this time culminating events will occur, including the revelation that the Devil will be bound for a thousand years, Tribulation saints will be resurrected, Satan will be loosed, and the unsaved will be judged and cast into the Lake of Fire.

Exposition

Rev. 20:1-15

The Binding of Satan (Rev. 20:1-3)

John saw an angel come from heaven and bind Satan in the abyss for one thousand years. During the Millennium Satan will not deceive the nations.

The Judgment and Resurrection of Tribulation Saints (Rev. 20:4-6)

Next, he saw the Tribulation saints on thrones, having been resurrected in the first resurrection.

The Gog/Magog Uprising (Rev. 20:7-10)

Similar to an earlier Gog/Magog uprising at the mid-point of the Tribulation (Ezk. 38:2 ff.), Satan will orchestrate his final rebellion after his release from the abyss, deceiving the nations and opposing the saints at Jerusalem until the Lord will stop him, and subsequently will cast him into the Lake of Fire.

The Final Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15)

The vision of John will include the final judgment of the unsaved, as they will stand before God at the Great White Throne Judgment, be examined by the books, and cast into the Lake of Fire.

Theological Concerns

The literal interpretation of chapter 20 requires a thousand year reign of Christ which will occur after the Rapture and the Tribulation (thus arguing for a Pre-Tribulation, Pre-Millennial Rapture). The A-millennial and Post-Millennial positions of eschatology are rooted in allegorical interpretation, and therefore biblically feckless.

Textual Issues

Summary of Chapter Twenty

Chapter 20 brings human history to a close concerning final judgment on man's arch-enemy and man himself. All rebels against the Lord Jesus Christ will be cast into the Lake of Fire.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Background

The vision of the details of the eternal state with the new heaven and new earth permeates the next two chapters. The New Jerusalem with the Bride will be predominant throughout all eternity. John saw the holy Jerusalem descending twice in his vision.

Exposition

Rev. 21:1-27

The Eternal State (Rev. 21:1-8)

The eternal state will encompass the new earth with no sea (during the Millennium there will be seas [Zech. 14:8]). The New Jerusalem will host the Bride and the Bridegroom and will exclude all of the unsaved wicked.

The Description of the City (Rev. 21:9-21)

The description of the city includes the redeemed inhabitants known as the Bride, and whose representation by the 12 tribes of Israel (including Dan) and the 12 apostles of the Lamb reveal that OT and NT saints will have Bride status. The description also includes the vast dimensions and beautiful construction of the city.

The Worship in the City (Rev. 21:22-27)

Central in the city will be the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb who are the temple, and the saved from every nation shall glorify the Lord. The unsaved shall forever be shut out of the city (cf. II Pet. 3:13).

Theological Concerns

The marriage metaphor of Bride runs throughout the whole Bible and demonstrates the most intimate relationship the Lord will have with believers. This metaphor is soteriological in nature and not exclusively ecclesiological. Certainly, NT saints in Baptist churches are part of the Bride, but not exclusively so.

Textual Issues

Rev. 21:3—the CT and NASV omit the TR “*be their God.*”

Summary of Chapter Twenty-One

The divine vision of chapter 21 unfolds the wondrous glories of the new heaven and new earth with the New Jerusalem. The Lamb with His Bride will receive pre-eminence in eternity.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

Background

This chapter concludes the book and the Bible, giving the concluding description of the New Jerusalem, the last words of the angel, the last words of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the last words of John.

Exposition

Rev. 22:1-21

The River and Tree of Life (Rev. 22:1-2)

Apparently, the River and Tree of Life are essential for eternal life, according to the vision's focus on them.

The Worship of the Lamb (Rev. 22:3-5)

The Lord shall enlighten the city as His servants serve Him.

The Final Admonishments (Rev. 22:6-8)

The Lord's final beatitude involved the requirement to keep the words of the prophecy of the Book of Revelation. This prompted John to worship.

The Last Words of the Angel (Rev. 22:9-10)

The angel rejected John's worship, and commanded him to keep the sayings and worship God.

The Last Words of Christ (Rev. 22:11-16)

The Lord assured of His coming and His approval of the Book of Revelation to His churches.

The Last Words of John (Rev. 22:17-21)

John revealed that the Spirit and the Bride invite all to salvation, and warned about tampering with the words of Scripture, including the addition or diminution of God's words, invoking severe soteriological consequences. He concluded the hope of Christ's soon return.

Theological Concerns

The Lord's revelation does not need man's changes (cf. Dt. 4:4, 12:32), because man's responsibility is to receive the Lord's preserved words (Ps. 12:6-7; Mt. 24:35), not attempt to restore what God supposedly has not preserved.

Textual Issues

Rev. 22:14—CT and modern versions have "wash their robes" instead of TR's "*do his commandments.*"

Rev. 22:19—CT has "tree of life" instead of TR's "*book of life.*" The acceptance of the TR reading has the favor of translations from Tyndale (1534) through the Geneva (1560) through the KJV (1611) to the New KJV (1982), or a total of 448 years.

Summary of Chapter Twenty-Two

The thrust of chapter 22 is the Lord's promise of His imminent return and validity of the Book of Revelation, as He brings to a conclusion revelation about the future of His creation.

Finis