

Taking the Prophetic Word to Heart

a Devotional Study on “Revelation”

by Marcus Johnson (Lake Region Bible Church, Round Lake, IL) • © 2016 (Revised 2020) • Along with Scripture, the primary resources used are: The Book of Revelation, by G.K. Beale (NIGTC); Revelation by Craig S. Keener (NIVAC); Revelation by Leon Morris (TNTC), and The Book of Revelation, by Robert H. Mounce (NICNT). Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

I. What do we learn about Jesus Christ and His Prophetic-Word?

1. The Revelation of Jesus Christ

- He is the Exalted-Reigning Christ:
 - who loves us, freed us, & has made us a kingdom & priests (Rev 1)
 - who knows His churches & whose purifying presence is w/ us (Rev 1 – 3)
- He is the Lion & the Lamb: who reigns victorious over all (Rev 5)
- He is the male child caught up to God: who will rule the nations with an iron rod (Rev 12)
- He is the Triumphant Warrior-King: coming for His bride & for judgment (Rev 19 – 20)
- He is the Lord Jesus: who is surely coming soon & whose grace is with us all (Rev 21 – 22)
 - the Lamb (28x); the Alpha & the Omega; the Temple & the Lamp; the root of David & the bright morning star; the Lord Jesus
 - who will reign w/ God almighty; dwell with His people; is making all things new; gives eternal life to the thirsty; warns & judges; is surely coming soon & whose grace is with us all

2. The Prophetic-Word of Jesus Christ

- Biblical prophecy is focused on Christ: so fix your eyes on Jesus amidst tribulation, temptation & deception
 - Biblical prophecy demands obedience & promises a glorious-eternal reward:
 - The 7 Beatitudes (blessings) in Revelation: Rev 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7; 22:14
 - Take to heart the 7 beatitudes thru a persevering-faith, obedience & keeping watch unto eternal life
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II. What do we learn about the Holy Spirit, the Local Church, & the Christian Life?

1. The Letters to the 7 Churches (See Rev 2 & 3)

- Jesus’ Self-introduction: He begins each letter focused on His glory & reign
- Jesus’ Prophetic-Word: He knows, praises & rebukes His churches
- Jesus’ Exhortation & Promise:
 - His Exhortation: hear & conquer
 - His Promise: eternal life

2. Taking the Prophetic-Word to Heart

- The Holy Spirit: Jesus dwells among His churches thru the Spirit, who is speaking to the churches. Let us “see” the glorious-reign of Jesus & “hear” the Spirit speaking.
 - The Local Church: Jesus’ purifying-protection reigns over us, but our faithfulness varies greatly. Let us repent & be faithful witnesses thru love, sound doctrine, & holiness.
 - The Christian Life: we are called to faithfulness thru church fellowship & individual discipleship. Let us conquer as disciples & local churches unto the glory of eternal life.
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III. What do we learn about the Church and the Tribulation?

1. God's Power & Protection: and His Plan of Victory through Suffering & Death

- **The 7 Churches were Partners with John:** in the tribulation, kingdom, & patience endurance in Jesus.
 - John and the 7 churches are in the tribulation (1:9). This entire age is tribulation, the beginning of birth pains, which will end in great tribulation, like the pain of child birth which climaxes at the end (Mt 24).
 - The "last days" began with Christ's 1st coming and end when He returns (Ac 2:17; 1Co 14:24ff).
 - The 7 churches were to take to heart the whole book of Revelation (Rev 22:18ff).
- **Jesus is the Lion & the Lamb:** Jesus is Lord/King (Lion) yet was victorious thru His suffering/death (Lamb).
 - Likewise the Church is protected & empowered: as the 144,000 who are sealed, the Temple that is measured (belong to God/protected by God), the Two Witnesses who breath out fire (power of the gospel), the Woman who is nourished and those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.
 - The Church also suffers & dies: she is the great multitude that comes out of the great tribulation, the Holy City that's trampled upon, the saints conquered by Satan, and the Two Witnesses martyred after their testimony is complete, but then are raised to life (victory thru suffering/death unto resurrected life).
 - Numbers are highly symbolic in apocalyptic literature: The 42 months and 1260 days in Revelation (see below) are the same length of time, about 3 1/2 years. This is understood in different ways.
 - That length of time was reminiscent of the horrible suffering the Jews endured under Antiochus the IV Epiphanes, ruler of the Seleucid Empire, when he desecrated the temple (c.160's B.C.).
 - So 42 months/1260 days might be an apocalyptic (symbolic) way of referring to a limited period of time in which God both protects His people yet allows them to suffer as His witnesses and for His glory (throughout the church age and/or at the end of the age).

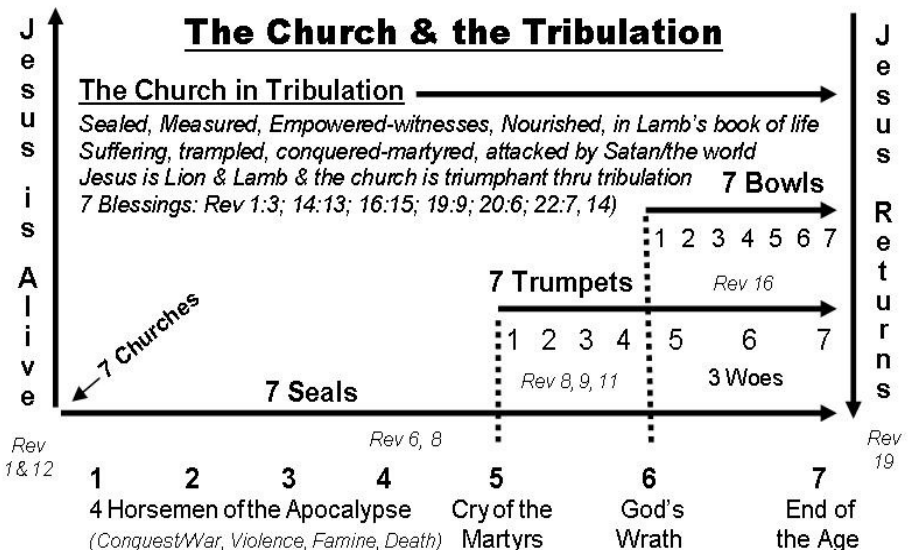
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|---|---|
| ● God's Power & Protection (See Rev 5-9, 11-14) | ● God's Plan: Victory thru Suffering & Death |
| → John <u>hears</u> about a "Lion" (Jesus is King) | John <u>sees</u> a "Lamb" (who suffered/died & lives) (Rev 5) |
| → John <u>hears</u> a number/144,000 sealed
(the 144k/12 tribes are all of God's people) | John <u>sees</u> a great multitude/come out of tribulation (Rev 7)
(they are a great multitude from all tribes & language) |
| → Temple (church) is measured (protected) | The Holy City (Christians) is trampled upon for 42 months |
| → The Two Witnesses prophesy for 1260 days
(represents the gospel witness of the church) | These Witnesses are martyred but then raised back to life
(represents the persecuted church which must suffer/die) |
| → The Woman (church) is nourished/1260 days | Her offspring (Christians) are attacked by Satan |
| → Believers' Names written in Lamb's book of life | The Saints are conquered/martyred for 42 months |

2. The 7 Seals, 7 Trumpets & 7 Bowls

- **7 Seals:** 1/4 destruction on the earth
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- **7 Trumpets:** 1/3 destruction on the earth
1 2 3 4 [5 6 7]
- **7 Bowls/God's Wrath:** global destruction
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

With the 7 Seals, Trumpets, and Bowls of Wrath, the intensity of destruction increases with each series. There is an "interruption" between the 6th & 7th Seal and 6th & 7th Trumpet, as if the reader needs reassurance of God's sovereign plan & protection, before hearing more. But there is no interruption between the 6th & 7th Bowls of wrath, as wrath & judgment are being poured out on the unrepentant with such intensity that there is no time for a pause.

There's a scroll with 7 Seals in Rev 5 that only the Lion of Judah (the Lamb) can open. It reveals God's unfolding plan for the end of the age. This scroll is like a person's will, & the opening of the scroll is like the reading of someone's will. Jesus, who died but is alive & reigns as Lord, is the executor of His own will. It is possible that the 7 Seals represent the entire church age, and with the opening of the 5th Seal (the cry or prayer of the martyrs) the 7 Trumpets begin to blow (the prayers of the saints coincide with the blowing of the Trumpets: Rev 8:3). Also, the last three Trumpets (5, 6 & 7) might coincide with the 7 Bowls of God's wrath, because those Trumpets are called "woes" and are more severe than the first four Trumpets.



See the expanded chart on the last page of this devotional

IV. What do we learn about Satan, the World, and the Kingdom of God?

1. Satan's Limited Reign: & Our Call to Persevering Faith & Wisdom

- He is defeated: yet formidable enemy (Rev 12 – 14; 20)
- His authority comes from God: & he operates as a counterfeit-trinity [dragon, beast of sea & earth] (Rev 13)
- He deceives & rules the world: and He conquers the saints (Rev 13)
- He will suffer eternal torment: in hell (Rev 20)
- Our Call: Embrace persevering-faith and prophetic-wisdom (Rev 2 – 3; 13)

2. The Idolatrous World: & Our call to Holiness & Worship

- The world is idolatrous & immoral: living in luxury & enslaving humans for profitable gain (Rev 18)
- The world is deceived & refuses to repent: she's drunk with the blood of the saints (Rev 2-3, 8-9; 17-18)
- The world will come to an end: in a single hour (Rev 18 & 19)
- Our Call: come out of her & rejoice (Rev 2-3; 18:4,20)

3. The Kingdom of God: & Our Call to Conquer as "Witnesses" for Christ

- King Jesus has defeated Satan: the kingdom of the world will become the kingdom of God (Rev 11-12, 19-20)
 - Jesus has made us a kingdom & priests: we're in tribulation but one day will reign on the earth (Rev 1, 20)
 - We Conquer as Christ's witnesses: who love Jesus more than our own lives (Rev 2, 3, 12-14, 19, 20)
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V. What do we learn about God, the Gospel, and the Coming-Eternal Glory?

1. The God who is on the Throne

- Our God reigns: as the Sovereign, Eternal, Creator, Redeemer & Judge (Rev 1, 2-3, 4-5, 12, 14, 19-22)
- Our God seals His servants: & reveals to us (His servants) what must soon take place (Rev 1, 7)
- Worship the Lord God Almighty: who was, who is, and who is to come (Rev 4-5, 19, 21-22)

2. The Apocalyptic Gospel

- Jesus Christ is Lord: and He is coming back (Rev 1, 19)
- The Lamb who was slain is worthy: and He has ransomed people for God (Rev 5, 7, 19)
- The War has been Won: but the battle still rages (Rev 12-13)
- God's Command & Invitation:
 - Fear God & give Him glory (14:7)
 - If you are thirsty, come... (21:6; 22:17)

3. The Coming-Eternal Glory

- God is making all things new: & He will dwell with us (His people) as our God (Rev 21:1ff)
- Judgment Day is coming: & God will avenge the blood of His saints (Rev 17 – 20)
- The Lord's Command: worship God & keep the words of this book (Rev 19 – 22)
- Surely Jesus is coming soon: and His grace is with us all (Rev 1 & 22)

Rev 1, 5, 12

The male child is born and caught up to Heaven. Christ defeats Satan & casts him out of heaven. Satan is filled with fury as he knows his time is short.

Jesus, the Lamb who was slain, is the exalted - reigning Christ, and the only one worthy to open the scroll (of destiny). He appears to John and tells John to write down what he sees.

Rev 7, 11, 13

Believers (whose names were written in the Lamb's book of life) are sealed by God, so they will hold to the testimony of Jesus throughout the Tribulation.

A Theological & Chronological Chart of the Tribulation in Revelation

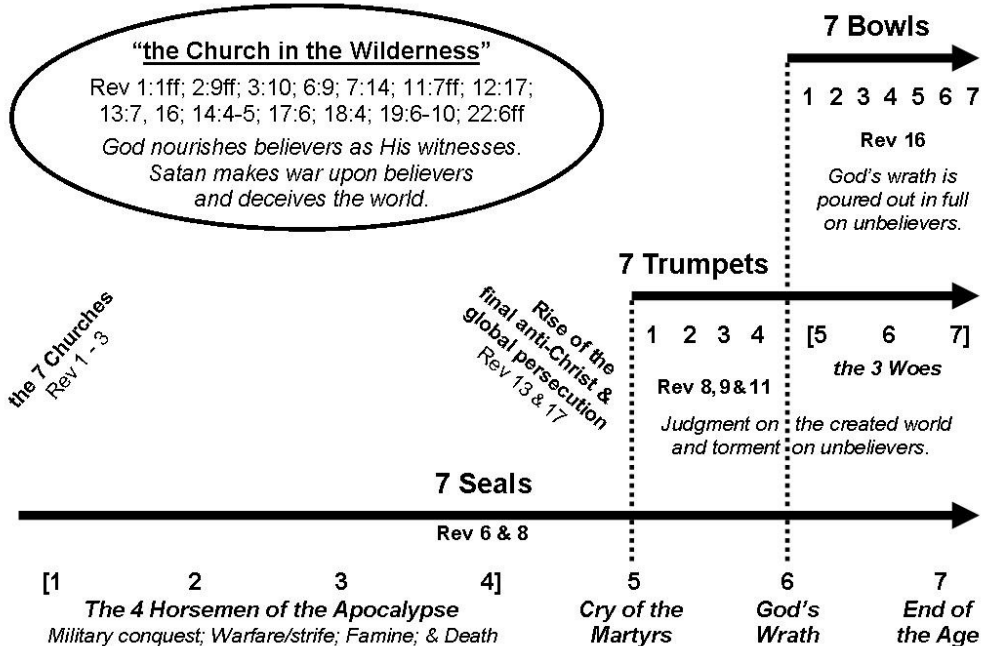
The Tribulation

Revelation 1:9

I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. (ESV)

"the Church in the Wilderness"

Rev 1:1ff; 2:9ff; 3:10; 6:9; 7:14; 11:7ff; 12:17; 13:7, 16; 14:4-5; 17:6; 18:4; 19:6-10; 22:6ff
God nourishes believers as His witnesses. Satan makes war upon believers and deceives the world.



Rev 7, 11, 14, 19, 20, 21 & 22

Jesus returns as King of kings & Lord of lords.

Believers are resurrected and reign with Christ during His Millennial reign.

Resurrected believers worship God & celebrate victoriously after the Tribulation.

The unbelieving dead are resurrected and judged by God at the great white throne.

God dwells with His people, granting them eternal life in the New Heaven and Earth. Unbelievers suffer eternal torment in the lake of fire.

by Marcus Johnson • Lake Region Bible Church • July 2011 • This chart includes ideas adapted from various Bible scholars, including: Greg Beale, Craig Blomberg, D. A. Carson, R.H. Gundry, Craig Keener, Robert Mounce, & Onesimus Ngundu