

AN OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

A Final Review

Chapter One:

Jesus will communicate a symbolic message to John for the seven churches of Asia about things that were to “shortly come to pass.” The words are about a soon to come persecution that would especially affect the seven churches of Asia, but will also bring difficulty to the church as a whole (the symbolism of the number seven). The church need not fear because Jesus had conquered death.

Chapters Two-Three:

The seven churches of Asia are reviewed by Jesus to determine their spiritual readiness for the coming persecution. The churches range from the **very strong** to the **very weak**. All are told that if they “**overcome**” in the persecutions to come they will be rewarded.

Chapters Four-Five:

From the rather unimpressive earthly view of the seven churches, we are taken to the awesome **throne room of God**. Here we clearly see that God is in control and nothing can stand in opposition to Him. We also are introduced to a **seven-sealed book** very pertinent to the churches, but initially no one is found worthy to open it. **Jesus, the lion who is the lamb is the One worthy** to open the book.

Chapter Six-Chapter Eight Verse One:

The removing of the seven seals reveals a message of judgment on those persecuting the church. This is the first of **two preliminary** rounds of judgment aimed at bringing repentance. We learn that **martyrs will play a significant role** in the unfolding of Revelation’s story as those already martyred are told they must wait until their numbers are complete before their cause will be vindicated. The sealing of **the 144,000** represents the full number of martyrs, while the **multitude too great to number** stands for the entire faithful church. This round of judgment did not bring repentance so another one will come.

Chapter Eight Verse Two-Chapter Ten:

Here **seven trumpets** reveal the last of the two preliminary rounds of judgment. This also **fails to bring repentance**, so a prophecy of destruction in a “**little book**” will show the **defeat of the enemy**.

Chapter Eleven:

This chapter is a **brief review of the contents of the little book**. It shows that although the martyr's cause would seem to be defeated by the enemy, it would actually be **the forces of evil that would lose**. This **theme would then be repeated** in a number of cycles through to the remainder of the book.

Chapter Twelve:

We are introduced to **a woman** who stands for the concept of God's people (first Israel, then the church) and her son, **Jesus**. In opposition is **Satan** who sought to destroy the Christ. The victory of Jesus led to a casting down of the Devil—his power is reduced. Enraged, Satan goes after the church.

Chapter Thirteen:

Satan will use the **sea beast**, the **Roman Empire** (one emperor in particular—Dometian), and a **land beast**, those who managed **emperor worship**, to war against the saints. **Dometian**, the persecutor, will be as though **Nero** (Nero's name equaling 666 as here we are asked to take a closer than usual look at the symbolism, see chapter seventeen) had come back from the dead. Christians who resist the beast will be forbidden to buy and sell, some will even be killed.

Chapter Fourteen:

The **Lamb leads His martyr army** to victory as Babylon the Great (**Rome**) falls. This fall is **repeated many times** to bring assurance and encouragement to the saints. The **martyrs would be reaped** in being gathered to God, the **enemy would be reaped** in bloody consequence of their sins.

Chapters Fifteen-Sixteen:

Seven bowls of plagues are poured out on **Rome** to bring her destruction—"Babylon the Great was remembered before God."

Chapter Seventeen:

The Great Harlot represents the immoral spirit that characterized Rome. She makes the empire drunk on her immorality while **she is drunk on the blood of the saints**. The persecuting emperor, **Dometian**, is again revealed in a special symbolism intended to be viewed with particular scrutiny (Most of the symbols in Revelation are to be seen in their broad sweep. Here and in chapter thirteen, however, there are symbols that are to receive closer investigation). **Rome will use alliances** to fight against the church, but these alliances will ultimately turn on her and contribute to her defeat.

Chapter Eighteen:

Rome's fall brings **sadness to the people of the world** who did merchandise with her and grew wealthy. Rome had made all her conquered lands prosper as never before. **The saints, however, rejoice** at her fall! Material prosperity is not the chief aim of spiritually minded people.

Chapter Nineteen:

Victory is realized for the people of God (another repetition of this recurring theme). A **marriage supper** is prepared for the victorious church while a **grisly feast** is given the birds on the dead bodies of the defeated enemy.

Chapter Twenty:

Satan is further reduced in power as he is defeated. There would be no more worldwide persecutions after Rome was defeated. **The martyrs' cause is vindicated** (another repetition)! At the end of time, **Satan will be cast into the lake of fire** as will all those who served him through the ages. **Dometian**, the immediate threat (shortly come to pass), **Rome**, and finally **Satan** would find out the folly of opposing God.

Chapters Twenty-one-Twenty-two:

The joys of a **beautiful, secure heaven** become the final, eternal reward for the faithful.