

About this Study

I've always avoided the study of Revelation, because it was too hard to understand. But I finally had to tackle it as I wanted to have a better grasp of the judgment of God.

At the conclusion of a year of study, there was a discussion of whether to share the results publicly, because my conclusions contrasted sharply with other established scholarly work. But in consideration of those before me and, with deep respect for their work, this study of Revelation is being released to inspire others to read this difficult book and discover the joy of having some sense of clarity that objective biblical hermeneutics can bring.

The approach I used was to understand Daniel thoroughly and Ezekiel and Zechariah partially (they're hard to understand!) before attempting Revelation. Because of the challenges of figurative speech and unnatural events, a large chart was made of each observation of the text on a 12 x 9 foot wall in my dining room. By using painters tape, the table could change how observations were classified to enable a better understanding of the text. The picture on the right shows an early version of the table.



The beauty of this methodology is that the observations can be easily checked and validated by peer review. Inferences can also be evaluated to determine if it is evidence based, or an interpretative error based on an error in biblical hermeneutics.

I am indebted to my wife as she allowed this work to stay in place while we had several dinners with a variety of believing and non-believing friends. To say the least, it stimulated an interesting range of dinner conversations.

My understanding of Revelation is presented in three different formats:

1. **Systematic Study:** You can start the systematic study by clicking the "next" button on the lower right hand corner of this page. The systematic study is a short summary of in-depth articles (For deeper study) you may encounter at the bottom of various pages of this study that may help you see what I saw and understand the conclusions that I made.

2. **Printable Table of Observations, Inferences, and Conclusions:** The table of observations has been condensed so that it can be printed out in several sheets. By joining the sheets together, you can make your own notes or expand upon it on your dining room wall...

The easiest place to start on this chart is at the first seal.

This chart is part of the systematic study and located at its end (Using a Chart to Record Your Observations). If desired, you can print it out now (Print this Table).

3. **Exegesis of Revelation:** For those who prefer learning with a traditional exegetical approach, another teaching tool was developed and included at the end of the systematic study (Revelation - An Explication: www.helpmewithbiblestudy.org/12system_end/revExposition.aspx). Within the verses are links that will show you observations elsewhere in the Bible that will help you draw interpretative conclusions. If you come across a "table" link, a new page showing the chart in your browser is produced, which allows you to study one page with the biblical text alongside the other page showing the chart.

Personally, I find the best way of understanding this book is to 1) use the printable table to track, verify, and annotate your observations starting with the seals, and then 2) match up your observations of Daniel and the gospels with your observations of Revelation. From those observations, read and compare the in depth articles with your observations and draw your own interpretations.

If this study is correct, it answers many commonly asked questions such as:

1. Were there one or two great earthquakes (sixth seal and seventh bowl)?

About this Study (continues)

2. Why was there 30 minutes of silence in heaven before the seventh seal?
3. What is rapture? How is it different from resurrection?
4. If Satan, Antichrist and False Prophet are thrown into the lake of fire, what happened to fallen angels?
5. How was the Abrahamic Covenant fulfilled?

Revelation is a very difficult book to understand and interpretations abound. As a rigorously tested objective study, I hope this will cause you to test your own hypothesis and discuss it with your friends, wrestle with some of its observations and publish your work. In sharing your work, God will use you to help all of us grow closer to Him.

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Definition

Eschatology is the study of the end of human history.

It is a compound noun from two Greek terms:

"eschatos" means "last" with a view towards final, closing or concluding.

"logos" means "word."

Eschatology is the study of "last words."



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Revelation

Another term associated with Eschatology is "apocalypse."

The English translation "apocalypse" is derived from the Greek verb "apokalyto."

The Greek preposition "apo" combined with the Greek verb "kalupto" provide the meaning of "to uncover" or "to reveal" something previously hidden or secret.

Thus, the book of Revelation is so named, because the apostle John receives a vision that "uncovered" or "revealed" the future of the last days.

The revelation (**apokalupsis**) from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who testifies to everything he saw — that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. (Rev 1:1-2)



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Apocalyptic Literature

Because the book of Revelation is:

- a) full of symbolic and figurative language, and
- b) devoted to the future,

these characteristics have defined a category of biblical literature called Apocalyptic Literature.



Examples of this genre can be seen in Daniel 7-12 and Matthew 24 among other books of the Bible.

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The Problem

The figurative language of the book of Revelation poses a real problem. When the apostle John recorded his vision, he described locations and events that he had never seen before.

What should be understood literally and what should be interpreted allegorically?

What do the literal or figures of speech represent?

Since the apostle's writing, have any of these events occurred in human history?

How do other eschatological prophecies, outside of Revelation, harmonize with the apostle John's prophetic vision?

It continues to be the source of great confusion, division, and question.



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The Consequence

Because of its rich figures of speech, scholars have used a variety of hermeneutic approaches in an attempt to understand the book of Revelation resulting in the development of several interpretive models.

Unfortunately, most Believers now read Revelation through the bias of an interpretive model regardless of whether the interpretation makes sense against the text itself.



Is it possible to employ an objective hermeneutic approach (i.e. the more you observe, the less you need to interpret, etc.) where one can read Revelation in the sequence that the apostle John wrote and take the natural meaning of his words?

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Start At The Beginning

To understand and appreciate what happens in the end, Revelation, in essence, is the conclusion to the Pentateuch. The complete history of mankind, from beginning to end, illustrates the elegance and literary beauty of God's personal testimony to Moses (Ex 17:14; 24:3-7, 12; 34:27-28; Deut 28:58-61; 31:24-26).

Start At The Beginning (continues)

God tells Moses of the goodness of Creation: the creation of the heavens and the earth, the creation of man in His own image, both male and female, and the use of angelic beings to mediate His interactions with human beings.

God tells Moses of Man's corruption of His image: the introduction of death and condemnation of all mankind, banishment from the Garden of Eden and the Tree of Life, and the curse of the earth.

God tells Moses of His plan for salvation through His covenant with Abraham.

God tells Moses His definition of faith through the covenant He makes with the nation of Israel from Mt. Sinai (Ex 19:3-9).

The rest of the Old Testament, written by the Holy Spirit, is about God's lovingkindness (covenant fidelity) and His New Covenant because of man's infidelity.



And the New Testament is about Jesus Christ the mediator of the New Covenant: Messiah, King, and Judge.

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The Prophet

In comparison to apocalyptic literature found in Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Zechariah, Daniel's apocalyptic prophecies were quoted or referred to the most in the New Testament some 600 years later.

Few have been esteemed by God as highly as the prophet Daniel, and he was noted for his deep love for God's people. In loving devotion to God and with a regular prayer life, Daniel serves as an exemplary life of faith.

When Daniel receives his personal dreams about the fourth Gentile kingdom that precedes the Divine Kingdom, he was around age 68 - 70 years old. He was at least 80 years old, around the year 538

B.C., when he learns of what would be known as "Daniel's 70th week" (Dan 9:20-27). By this time, he served under the first two Gentile kingdoms: the Neo-Babylonian and the Medo-Persian.

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The Fourth Gentile Kingdom

As the only unrecognizable empire prophesized by Daniel, the fourth Gentile empire was portrayed as militarily strong and not uniformly united (Dan 2:40-43).

An angel would inform Daniel that this kingdom was different from all other kingdoms, devour the whole earth, and crush it (Dan 7:23).

In the book of Revelation, Daniel's fourth empire is described as "Babylon the Great, The Mother of Harlots, and Of the Abominations of the Earth" (Rev 17:5). This identification of the fourth empire is confirmed by the loud voices in heaven rejoicing when the seventh trumpet sounds, "the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ" (Rev 11:15).



The Fourth Gentile Kingdom (continues)

What the angel describes figuratively as "Babylon," the apostle John would describe in the words of Jesus as "the world."

Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever. (1 John 2:15-17)

The fourth Gentile Kingdom, Babylon the Great, represents the world, a secular culture that denies the existence of God and sin; it is a life motivated by pride and power derived by human achievement.

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Daniel's 70th Week

Daniel's prophecy of the 70th week is significant for two reasons:

1. God affirms that His Kingdom will come after 70 weeks which will include the fulfillment of His covenant promises (Dan 9:24).
2. God reveals a timeline. Daniel discovers that a "week" is not a period of seven days; it is a period of seven years.

a) When the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem is announced, Jerusalem will be rebuilt in 7 weeks (Dan 9:25). While Nehemiah completes the initial rebuilding of the walls around Jerusalem in 52 days (Neh 6:15), there is little record of when Jerusalem was finally rebuilt in the fashion mentioned by the angel Gabriel.



b) 62 weeks later, Messiah the Prince will arrive and afterwards be cut off (Dan 9:25-26), and indeed this prediction matches Jesus Christ's crucifixion in 33 A.D.

c) The 70th week appears discontinuous and does not follow the 69th week, because there is no historical evidence that the complete cessation of transgression, sin, and iniquity has occurred since Jesus Christ's resurrection and ascension. The 70th week begins with the emergence of the "one who makes desolate" (Dan 9:27).

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Tribulation

"Tribulation," according to Jesus, occurs as the result of one's faith in God and describes the persecution of that faith. It is distinct from other causes of persecution (i.e. racism, socio-economic class, etc.) and can happen at any time.

However, Jesus makes a distinction when speaking of tribulation in the context of the end of human history. Associated with Daniel's 70th week, when "the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet standing in the holy place," Jesus speaks of the "great tribulation" as an extreme and lethal persecution of Believers (Matt 24:29; Mark 13:24).

While the Great Tribulation ends just before Jesus Christ returns at the seventh trumpet, Daniel's 70th week ends with the demise of the Antichrist (Rev 19:20-21) and "to make an end to sin" (Dan 9:24).



Tribulation (continues)

Because Jesus applies the term "tribulation" exclusively to Believers, He implies that Believers will be living through this period, and the tribulation ends with the demise of the last genuine Believer who would be persecuted for their faith and martyred.

The apostle John reports that this special class of Believers would be resurrected first and reign with Him for a thousand years before a new heaven and earth is ushered in. This special class of Believers are those who died because of their testimony of Jesus Christ and the word of God during the Great Tribulation, because they refused the mark of the Beast and did not worship him.

Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?" I said to him, "My lord, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Rev 7:13-14)

Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years. (Rev 20:4-6)

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The Apostle

A fisherman by trade, John was among the first disciples to be called by Jesus (Matt 4:21-22; Mark 1:19-20) and always mentioned in the first group of four disciples in all of the lists of the Twelve (Matt 10:2; Mark 3:17; Luke 6:14; Acts 1:13)

Exiled on the island of Patmos, the apostle John was "in the Spirit on the Lord's day," a divinely inspired vision of this period of final judgment.

Given by God and revealed by His Son clothed in power and glory, Revelation is the apostle John's account of things which must come (Rev 1:1).



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The Antichrist

Introduced by Daniel (Dan 9:27), the Hebrew terms behind "abomination of desolation" are in reference to a person who initially desecrates the Temple and makes it desolate of worshippers.

Jesus refers to this person in the future sense (Matt 24:15; Mark 13:14) as well as Paul (2 Thes 2:3-12).

The apostle John presents the last ruler of the fourth Gentile empire as the Beast from the Sea with one of his seven heads with a "fatal wound" that "healed." This spectacular figure of speech portrays a supernatural being worthy of worship (Rev 13:3-4).

Satan gives this man a mouth to speak "arrogant words with blasphemies against God" (Rev 13:5-6).



The Antichrist (continues)

With Satan's power and authority, the Antichrist is given 3-1/2 years to act, to make war and conquer the saints, to rule every nation given to him, and to receive worship from around the world (Rev 13:5-8). This period appears to be the last half of Daniel's 70th week prophecy (Dan 9:27).

However the title, the Antichrist, is never used throughout Revelation. Instead, that person is called simply the Beast (Rev 13:3-4; 19:20).

The association of the abomination of desolation to "the Antichrist" comes from the apostle John's epistles. He defines "antichrist" as one who deceives and denies God the Father and / or His Son Jesus Christ, and this can apply to anyone; however, **the Antichrist is applied to one individual who comes in "the last hour"** (1 John 2:18-22; 4:1-7).

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The False Prophet

Following the emergence of the Beast of the Sea, the apostle John introduces the Beast from the Earth (Rev 13:11).

This man has the authority to make the whole earth worship the Antichrist (Rev 13:12).

With the intent to deceive, he performs miracles to encourage the worship of the Antichrist including the making of Antichrist idols (Rev 13:14-15).

Anyone who does not worship the Antichrist or his image is killed (Rev 13:15).

In order to participate in any aspect of the economy, everyone in the whole world must have the mark of the Antichrist or his number 666 on their right hand or forehead (Rev 13:16-18).



The association of the Beast from the Earth to the False Prophet occurs later in the apostle John's account of Armageddon, and his title aptly describes the role and relationship he had with the Antichrist (Rev 16:13; 19:20; 20:10).

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Setting the Stage

When carefully examining the work of the prophet Daniel and the apostle John, it appears that God reveals a specific schedule of the beginning of the end:

1. Just before the Antichrist appears, there will be a flood to harm Believers (figuratively represented as the heavenly sign of the Woman). It is not clear if this should be taken literally as a flood of water or a figure of speech as an overwhelming adverse event; Daniel uses "with a flood" figuratively to convey a sense of speed that events will unfold (Dan 9:26).

And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood (Rev 12:15).

2. The 70th week of Daniel begins with the emergence of the Antichrist who, as a world leader, makes a covenant with God's people. While there is no information about this covenant, it is believed to be some sort of peaceful agreement which will last for 3-1/2 years (Dan 9:27) – perhaps preservation of the Temple while its outer courts were trampled by the nations (Rev 11:2-3).



Setting the Stage (continues)

Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days. (Rev 12:6)

And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child. But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. (Rev 12:13-14)

3. Peace ends when the Antichrist desecrates the Temple, and this signals the beginning of extreme persecution of Believers, (Dan 7:25; 9:27), and the start of his 3-1/2 years of evil reign and latter half of Daniel's 70th week (Rev 13:5-7).

Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house. Whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath. For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. (Matt 24:15-21)

Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months. (Rev 11:2)

There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him. And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven. It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him. (Rev 13:5-7)

4. While it is not explicitly mentioned but based on the purpose of Daniel's 70th week (Dan 9:24), God's judgment, commencing with His Son breaking the seals, appears to begin at the start of Daniel's 70th week when the Antichrist appears.

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Message to the Seven Churches

Jesus' description of a future of judgment begins with the letter to the seven churches, which the apostle John prefaces, "Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near" (Rev 1:3).

The letters serve as an evaluation of the churches' spiritual state in preparation for Jesus' return and Day of the Lord. Although written in the first century, the evaluations are still relevant today.

A church that promotes sound doctrine, discerns and removes false teachers, but serves without agape love. (Ephesus, Rev 2:1-7)

A church, whose members are quite poor, experience slander for their faith yet strong enough to endure and persevere under the circumstances. (Smyrna, Rev 2:8-11)

A church that has sound doctrine, but does not enforce a doctrinal standard, has teachers who embrace society's sexual norms and advocate that all religions are good. (Pergamum, Rev 2:12-17)



Message to the Seven Churches (continues)

A church, motivated by love and faith, places an emphasis on and does good work, but allows teachers that teach a different gospel and unfounded biblical doctrine; there are other ways to salvation. (Thyatira, Rev 2:18-29)

A church, teaching little about the gospel, preaches with a focus on Christian living echoing cultural values and with little basis on the Bible. (Sardis, Rev 3:1-6)

A church, faithful and evangelistic, is unapologetic for God's word despite prevailing cultural pressures. (Philadelphia, Rev 3:7-13)

A church, whose members are wealthy and prosperous, chooses to teach Christian values that are consistent with society's values and with an emphasis on the examples found in the life of Jesus; it avoids discussion about man's sin and Jesus' death of atonement. (Laodicea, Rev 3:14-22)

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The Lamb of God

In the apostle John's first vision of heaven, one of the twenty four elders introduces Jesus as:

"The Lion from the tribe of Judah" and "the Root of David"

Yet the apostle depicts "The Lion" as "a Lamb as if slain!" (Rev 5:5-6)

Only the "Lamb" was worthy and could open the scroll with the seven seals, because He:

1. Paid the judicial penalty of sin for all
2. Appeased the wrath of His Father

In accomplishing the impossible task set by His Father, Jesus was victorious over death (Acts 2:24)

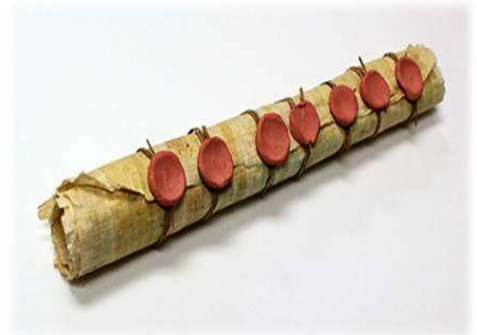
When Jesus returns to earth, the apostle observes that Jesus Christ is given titles of great honor (Rev 19:11-16):

"Faithful and True"

"A name written on Him which no one knows except Himself"

"The Word of God"

"KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS"



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The First Four Seals

When Jesus breaks the first four seals, there is a pattern of events that occurs: 1) Jesus breaks a seal, 2) a living creature says, "come," 3) a horse comes from somewhere in heaven, and 4) a rider is given the authority to do something to earth. A chart can be used to record the observations of the text:

The First Four Seals (continues)

	Seal 1 (Rev 6:1-2)	Seal 2 (Rev 6:2-3)	Seal 3 (Rev 6:5-6)	Seal 4 (Rev 6:7-8)
Third Heaven (location of the Temple of God)	First living creature commands	Second living creature commands	Third living creature commands	Fourth living creature commands
	White horse	Red horse	Black horse	Ashen horse
	Rider with a bow is given a crown	Rider is given a great sword and granted to take peace from earth so that men would slay each other	Rider with a pair of scales in hand	Rider with the name Death, with Hades in tow, is given authority over 25% of the earth to kill by the sword, famine, disease, and wild animals
Fate of the World	People and nations go out to conquer each other	Killing, murder and death	Famine and food inflation	25% of the world's population dies by murder, starvation, disease and wild animals

The prophet Zechariah saw similarly colored horses in his prophetic visions as a group in which the angelic riders worked in concert with each other as they carried out their task of patrolling the earth (Zech 1:7-11; 6:1-8).

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The Fifth Seal

Of all of the seals, trumpets and bowls, the fifth seal is the only one that does not cause any wrathful consequence upon the earth or human beings; it is solely a heavenly event concerning Believers as God's plan of judgment unfolds.

The apostle John saw the souls of Believers who were martyred because of their faith in and testimony of God during the Great Tribulation (Rev 7:13-14).

These saints were comprised of Messianic Jews, Gentile Believers, and new Believers who responded to the evangelism taking place during this time (Rev 7:9).



Upon their release from underneath the altar, the martyred souls were given a white robe (Rev 6:11), which represented the righteous acts of the saints (Rev 19:8). This clothing is reminiscent of Jesus' Parable of the Wedding Banquet (Matt 22:1-14), which was worn by the wedding guests. After the gathering of saints (rapture), the wedding banquet actually takes place in heaven; but unlike the parable, the saints represent the bride (Rev 19:7-8)!

It is significant to observe that when the saints of the Great Tribulation (Rev 7:13-14) were given their white robes, they were told to rest "for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also" (Rev 6:11). This suggests that all of the remaining saints, who would die for their faith, will be killed soon.

The Fifth Seal (continues)

In the first interlude just prior to the seventh seal, a "great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues" of tribulation saints are presented before the throne of God and before Jesus Christ praising both with palm branches (Rev 7:9-10).

At the end of the sixth trumpet, the apostle John reports that all of the survivors of the plagues were not repentant (Rev 9:20), which suggests that before the seventh trumpet is sounded, all Believers are likely dead.

	Seal 5 (Rev 6:9-11)
Third Heaven (location of the Temple of God)	Disembodied souls of Great Tribulation saints come from underneath the altar to receive their white robes
Fate of Believers	Messianic Jews, Gentile Believers, and new Believers evangelize and continue to be martyred; but, most will not die for their faith. Before the seventh trumpet, Believers who would have died for their faith have passed away by the end of the sixth trumpet (Rev 9:20-21).

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The Sixth Seal

Of all the seals, trumpets, and bowls, the sixth seal is unique. When Jesus breaks the seal, an event occurs on earth without any mention of an angel carrying out God's judgment.

Whenever God does something to earth, He either does it Himself (Gen 1:1-31), or uses an angelic mediator (Gen 19:12-13) or human agent (Ex 4:1-9, 17). In like manner pertaining to earth, when a seal is broken, a trumpet sounds, or a bowl is poured, angels are mentioned as carrying out God's judgment upon earth. The exception is the sixth seal when the apostle John just records what happens on earth.

Another unique feature is that the catastrophic events of the sixth seal appear to be very similar, if not identical, to the events caused by the seventh bowl (Rev 16:17-21).

When the **sixth seal** is broken, there is a "great earthquake" and "every mountain and island were moved out of their places" (Rev 6:12-14).

When the **seventh bowl** is poured, there was a "great earthquake, such as there had not been since man came to be upon the earth, so great an earthquake was it, and so mighty" and "every island fled away, and the mountains were not found" (Rev 16:18-20).

If an angel is required to carry out God's judgment, then the breaking of the sixth seal encompasses all of the subsequent events from the seventh seal to the seventh bowl.

When Jesus Christ breaks the sixth seal, the apostle John records the resulting consequence.

In the course of recording the events of the seventh seal, the seven trumpets and the seven bowls, the apostle is observing the successive angelic mediated events that culminate in the catastrophic event of the seventh bowl which appears contemporaneously as the sixth seal.

The Sixth Seal (continues)

On a chart, this appears as follows:

Seal 6		
Seal 7	Trumpets 1-7	Bowls 1-7

There are three significant implications with this view:

1. The book of Revelation can be read naturally as a continuous narrative including each interlude in its place; God's unfolding plan of judgment can be understood in a continuous sequential manner.
2. While the sixth seal and seventh bowl may appear redundant, God's work of judgment, mediated through angels, is completely done after the sixth seal and its consequence fully realized (Rev 15:1; 16:17). Just as He completes Creation in six days (Gen 2:2), God completes His work of judgment in six seals.
3. With all the seals broken, the scroll can be read. The apostle John doesn't reveal anything about the scroll's content; but, from this point forward, Jesus Christ dispenses Judgment a) at Armageddon, b) the Lake of Fire for the Beast, False Prophet, and Satan, and c) on the Great White Throne.

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Interlude: The 144,000 Bond Servants

During the pause from the breaking of seals, the four angels standing at the four corners of the earth are introduced. Responsible for harming the earth, they await the sounding of the first four trumpets; however, they are instructed not to harm the earth until the bond servants of God have been sealed on their foreheads (Rev 7:1-3).

The bond servants are sealed the names of Jesus and Yahweh written on their foreheads (Rev 14:1).

This sealing is very different from the Holy Spirit's sealing of a new genuine Believer (2 Cor 1:21-22; Eph 1:13-14).

The "seal of God" protects the bond servants from the woe of the fifth trumpet (Rev 9:4) – the plague of stinging locusts from the bottomless pit that tormented people with pain for five months.

The sealed bond servants number 144,000 from every tribe "of the sons of Israel." (Rev 7:4).

They are virgin Jewish men who "follow Jesus wherever He goes" (Rev 14:4).

The time it took to seal the 144,000 appears to be the reason for the thirty minutes of silence in heaven that follows breaking of the seventh seal (Rev 8:1-2).

Subsequent to this first interlude, after the seventh trumpet and before the first bowl, the apostle John sees Jesus Christ with the 144,000 sealed bond servants "who had been purchased from the earth" (Rev 14:3-4), which indicates that they were dead and in heaven.

They were privileged to sing a new song before God, the twenty four elders and the four living creatures that no other saint could learn (Rev 14:3).

They were blameless and incapable of telling a lie (Rev 14:5), which implies a reference to what they may have been like while on earth as mortal human beings. Thus, the trumpet judgments did not begin until the 144,000 bond servants were sealed, and by the seventh trumpet, they were no longer alive on earth.



Interlude: The 144,000 Bond Servants (continues)

Using a chart to record these observations, the existence of the sealed bond servants of God would look like this:

	Seal 7	Trumpet 1	Trumpet 6
Third Heaven (location of the Temple of God)	30 minutes of silence (Rev 8:1)		
Fate of the Believers	The bond servants of God are being sealed (Rev 7:1-8)	Presumption: the sealed bond servants have begun their ministry	By the end of Trumpet 6, the sealed bond servants no longer exist on earth (Rev 9:20-21) and after Trumpet 7, they are being honored in heaven (Rev 14:1-5)

www.helpmewithbiblestudy.org/12system_end/seal4.aspx

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The Seventh Seal and the First Four Trumpets

When Jesus Christ breaks the seventh seal, thirty minutes of silence is required to finish the sealing of 144,000 bond servants on earth (Rev 7:1-3; 8:1). During that time in the Temple of God in heaven:

1. Seven angels stood before God and received their seven trumpets (Rev 8:2).
2. An angel by the altar, with a golden censer, burns incense with the prayers of the tribulation saints and emits a smoke before God and temporarily appeases His wrath (Rev 8:3-4; Num 16:46-48).

When the incense burns out, the angel fills the golden censer with the fire of the altar and throws it down to earth causing thunder, lightning and an earthquake (Rev 8:5).



In heaven, when the first four angels with their trumpets are set to sound, their role is limited to signaling an event; they are not directly involved with carrying out God's judgment. Four different and separate angels, outside of heaven and standing at the four corners of earth, throw something to earth in the process of dispensing God's judgment. This is easily seen by tracking each angel by location on a chart:

Angel in Heaven	Angel standing at the Four Corners of Earth	Harm upon Earth and Sea
#1 blows the first trumpet (Rev 8:7)	Throws hail and fire mixed with blood to earth	A third of the earth, including a third of the trees and all of the grasses, is burned up
#2 blows the second trumpet (Rev 8:8-9)	Throws something like a great mountain burning with fire into the sea	A third of the sea turns to blood, killing a third of all sea creatures and destroying a third of all sea ships
#3 blows the third trumpet (Rev 8:10-11)	Throws a great star burning like a torch called Wormwood	A third of all fresh water becomes bitter and kills many

The Seventh Seal and the First Four Trumpets (continues)

Angel in Heaven	Angel standing at the Four Corners of Earth	Angel in Heaven
#4 blows the fourth trumpet (Rev 8:12)	Strikes a third of the sun, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars	A third of a day is without sunlight and a third of the night is without any light from the moon or stars

www.helpmewithbiblestudy.org/12system_end/trumpet1.aspx

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The Fifth Trumpet

Just prior to the introduction of the fifth trumpet, the apostle John sees an eagle flying and crying out, "woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth" (Rev 8:13).

Up until the fifth trumpet, God's wrath of judgment was not focused on directly causing physical injury upon human beings.

The first four seals caused social upheaval and death (Rev 6:1-8), and the seventh seal caused harm upon the earth (Rev 8:5).

The first four trumpets caused harm upon the earth and seas (Rev 8:6-12).

Identified as a woe, the fifth trumpet heralds the start of God's wrath being dispensed directly and physically upon human beings.

When the fifth trumpet sounds, an angel from heaven is sent to earth to open the "bottomless pit" with the key he was given. From the abyss comes "the smoke of a great furnace" which darkens the sun (Rev 9:1-2).

After opening the abyss, the angel from heaven does three things (Rev 9:3-5):

1. Gives the locusts a power like a scorpion such as a tail that stings and hurts people for five months (Rev 9:10).
2. Restricts the locusts from hurting the grass, any vegetation, or any tree.
3. Restricts the locusts from stinging any of the 144,000 sealed bond servants and causing any death of those they afflict.



The fifth trumpet is the first woe, which God intends as a means to torment human beings with pain such that they would seek death but not find it and instead, seek God.

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The Sixth Trumpet

When the sixth trumpet sounds the second woe, an angel next to the golden altar in the heavenly temple of God commands the angel of the sixth trumpet to release of four bound angels at the Euphrates River (Rev 9:13-14).

The Sixth Trumpet (continues)

When the Bible speaks of confined or bound angels, it is always in the context of fallen evil angels (Luke 8:26-31; Matt 8:28-32; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6-7), and they are not from the abyss.

The four bound angels were limited to kill 1/3 of the population at that time which is at most 50% of the original population of the world before the first seal was broken (Rev 9:15).

They command armies of horsemen numbering two hundred million; however, death is not by the riders. Instead it is by the three plagues that proceed from the horses' mouths and tails (Rev 9:16-19).

After God's wrath has taken effect, the surviving human beings do not recognize that the supernatural plagues confirm the existence of God and are unrepentant (Rev 9:20-21). This likely indicates that there are no longer any Believers on earth; thus, there is no one left to evangelize and testify of God.



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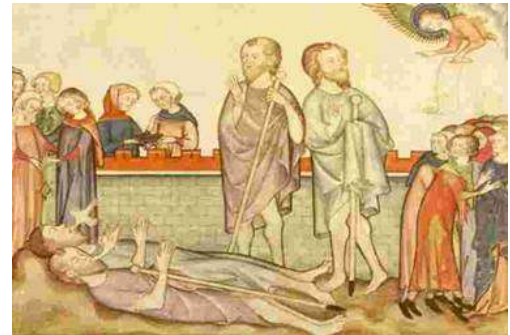
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Interlude: The Two Witnesses

In contrast to the 144,000 sealed bond servants of God, who were introduced at the beginning of the trumpets, the Two Witnesses are introduced at its end.

Because the ministry of the Two Witnesses takes place when the Temple is preserved while its outer court is being "tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months" by the nations, it appears that they ministered during the first 3-1/2 years of Daniel's 70th week (Rev 11:2-3).

Because the Two Witnesses were slain, their ministry appeared to end when the beast had the authority to make war with the saints.



This is consistent with the earlier observation that after the divine consequences of the sixth trumpet, few, if any, Believers have survived.

When the Two Witnesses were on earth, clothed in sackcloth and prophesying to the world, they had the authority to: Kill any who attempt to harm them by fire that flows from their mouths (Rev 11:5).

- Stop the rain while they were prophesying (Rev 11:6).
- Turn water into blood (Rev 11:6)
- Invoke every plague known to man (i.e. diseases, the plagues of Exodus, etc.) upon the earth as often as they desire (Rev 11:6).

The ministry of the Two Witnesses ends when they are murdered by the Beast from the Abyss (Rev 11:7). Because the abyss (Rev 9:1-2, 11-12) was associated with a place that confined fallen evil angels (Luke 8:26-31; Matt 8:28-32; Jude 1:6-7), it suggests that the Two Witnesses were killed by the fallen evil angel king Abaddon released by the fifth trumpet (Rev 9:1-2).

The bodies of the Two Witnesses will be on a street in Jerusalem where Jesus was crucified (Rev 11:8), which would be in the vicinity of the present day Church of the Holy Sepulcher.

Interlude: The Two Witnesses (continues)

Their bodies will be left out for public viewing for 3-1/2 days (Rev 11:9-10), in which people worldwide will rejoice and celebrate, because there will be no more prophetic indictments nor harmful spectacular natural events and plagues.

With an audible voice from heaven, the world will see a visible rapture of the Two Witnesses and followed by an earthquake that destroys 1/10 of Jerusalem and kills seven thousand. This produces great fear among the people, and many will praise God (Rev 11:11-13). What is uncertain is how many will come to a genuine faith in God.

It is significant to note that the end of the Two Witnesses is the cause of the second woe / sorrow, which is associated with the end of the sixth trumpet (Rev 11:14; 9:12).

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The Seventh Trumpet

Because it is distributed over three passages (Rev 10:5-7; 11:14-19 and Rev 14:6-20), the effect of the seventh trumpet is not readily apparent.

When the seventh trumpet sounds (Rev 11:15):

Heavenly beings shout out great praise and worship.

They proclaim that the kingdom of the world, previously ruled by Satan, has become the kingdom of God and His Son Jesus (Rev 11:15-17).

They announce the coming time of judgment of the dead and of rewards for the bond servants, prophets and the saints (Rev 11:18).



The heavenly temple of God opens and reveals the ark of His covenant.

The open temple allows the seven angels with the seven plagues to come out (Rev 15:5-6). Once out, one of the four living creatures gives each a golden bowl of God's wrath. These plagues are the last of God's plagues, and once dispensed with a bowl of God's wrath, the wrath of God is finished (Rev 15:1).

Three angels flying in midheaven make three pronouncements.

The first angel preaches to the whole world the gospel in a manner that all would understand and have no excuse (Rev 14:6-7; Matt 24:9-14; Mark 13:9-10).

The second angel, following the first, proclaims the fall of the secular worldview that denies the existence of God and sin; the lifestyle that is motivated by pride and power and attracts all cultures and people, intoxicating and pleasurable, will be judged for its immorality (Rev 14:8).

The third angel, following the previous two in speaking to all human beings of the world, condemns all those who have the mark of the beast (Rev 14:9-11).

The final result of the seventh trumpet is the appearance of the reapers, and the reaping that occurs is in the figurative sense and reminiscent of the Parable of the Tares.

Jesus Christ, makes His Second Coming, sitting on the cloud wearing a golden crown, wields a sharp sickle (Rev 14:1-16).

An angel, who came out of the heavenly temple, wields a sharp sickle (Rev 14:18-19).

And while the seventh trumpet heralds the third and final woe, it has yet to be revealed...

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The Reaping

When comparing what the apostle John sees after the seventh trumpet (Rev 14:14-16) with what Jesus foretells (Matt 24:29-31), it is clear that reaping is a figure of speech.

When Jesus Christ reaps, after the tribulation when there are no longer any Believers alive on earth (Matt 24:29), He is gathering all of the souls of all saints of all time who are not already in the Temple of God "from the farthest end of the earth to the farthest end of heaven" (Mark 13:27).

The apostle Paul, writing to the church of Corinth and Thessalonica, provides additional information of this reaping but with a view towards Believers and indicates that this is the start of the process of resurrection (1 Cor 15:51-54; 1 Thess 4:16-18).

When Paul states, "the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable," he is referring to the white robes of righteousness that the martyrs received earlier (Rev 6:11), in preparation of the Wedding Feast (Rev 19:7-8), which determines who is imperishable.

When the angel reaps, the "grapes" are tossed into the great wine press of the wrath of God (Rev 19:17-20), and it is Jesus Christ, when He arrives at Armageddon, who treads on the "grapes" in this wine press (Rev 19:15). Taken into consideration, this reaping includes the dispensation of the bowl judgments and the battle of Armageddon.

www.helpmewithbiblestudy.org/12system_end/bowl1.aspx

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The First Six Bowls

When the Temple of God opens, revealing the Ark of the Covenant (Rev 11:19; 15:5; Ex 40:1-3), the apostle John perceives the appearance of the seven angels with the seven plagues as a "sign in heaven" that was "great and marvelous," because "in them, the wrath of God is finished" (Rev 15:1).

When the seven angels who had the seven plagues come out from the Temple of God, they receive from one of the four living creatures a bowl of God's wrath (Rev 15:6-7).

The plagues and bowls of God's wrath are significant for the judgments they render; it is a terrible time. But instead of repenting amidst this great suffering, the people did not fear God, blasphemed His name and failed to recognize that He was Lord of all. People preferred to follow the "great men of earth" and would be unable to hear the gospel (Rev 18:23).



Then I heard a loud voice from the temple, saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God." (Rev 16:1)

Bowl	Effect on Earth
Plague 1 (Rev 16:2)	<p>Poured on the earth.</p> <p>Result: Loathsome and malignant sores on people who had the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. Implications: Because the surviving human beings are non-Believers (Rev 9:20-21; 13:8, 16-17), most, if not all, human beings are tormented with disfiguring and painful sores.</p>

The First Six Bowls (continues)

Bowl	Effect on Earth
Plague 2 (Rev 16:3)	<p>Poured into the sea.</p> <p>Result: The seas became blood and killed all living creatures in it. Implications: Any seafood that a society depends on ceases to exist. Any water derived from a desalination plant is no longer consumable.</p>
Plague 3 (Rev 16:4-7)	<p>Poured into the rivers and springs of water.</p> <p>Result: All fresh water became blood which implied that all living creatures in it died. Implications: With the poisoning of all fresh water, governments will be severely tested and societies could quickly collapse. Among numerous issues: drinking water is confined to limited supplies of packaged goods, personal hygiene is curtailed, and cooking is restricted.</p>
Plague 4 (Rev 16:8-9)	<p>Poured onto the sun.</p> <p>Result: The sun scorched with fierce heat. Implications: Increasing the heat of the sun to "scorching" may make many areas uninhabitable and unfarmable, critically exacerbates the problem of scarce safe water for any use as well as providing any relief from the painful sores.</p> <p>People blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues, and they did not repent so as to give Him glory.</p>
Plague 5 (Rev 16:10-11)	<p>Poured on the throne of the beast.</p> <p>Result: The beast's kingdom darkened and people were in pain. Implications: People blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they did not repent of their deeds.</p> <p>This is reminiscent of the Exodus, when the plagues hardened Pharaoh's heart so much so that he sought revenge:</p> <p>"Thus I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will chase after them; and I will be honored through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord." And they did so. When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his servants had a change of heart toward the people, and they said, "What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" So he made his chariot ready and took his people with him; and he took six hundred select chariots, and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them. The Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he chased after the sons of Israel as the sons of Israel were going out boldly. (Ex 14:4-8)</p>
Plague 6 (Rev 16:12)	<p>Poured onto the Euphrates River.</p> <p>Result: The Euphrates River dries up. Implications: The drying of the Euphrates River sets in motion the conflict at Armageddon by enabling the kings from the east to mobilize their troops and invade over land.</p>

The Seventh Bowl

The seventh bowl is significant for several reasons. It is the conclusion and final expression of God's wrath; when the last bowl is dispensed, a voice from the Temple of God says, "it is done" (Rev 16:7).

Note carefully that when the seventh bowl is poured (Rev 16:17-21), there are a number of harmful events that take place before the seventh plague is released at the very end.

Angel with the Seventh Plague	Effect On Earth
The seventh bowl of God's wrath is poured upon the air	Flashes of lightening and peals of thunder The greatest earthquake ever experienced in human history causing islands to significantly move from their location and mountains to fall All of the cities of the world fall and are destroyed The last plague takes effect: a severe storm of huge hailstones, weighing close to 100 pounds, fall around the world

The great earthquake that the apostle John sees when the sixth seal is broken, without any mention of an angelic agent (Rev 6:12-14), is the same earthquake that is caused by the angel pouring the seventh bowl of God's wrath moving islands and felling mountains.

By culminating in the catastrophic earthquake, the sixth seal appears contemporaneously as the seventh bowl.

With the release of the last plague of huge hailstones, which is not mentioned in the sixth seal, the seventh bowl resumes the narrative sequence of the apostle John's prophetic revelation.

It is worth noting the turn of human emotion:

After the earthquake, there is fear of God (Rev 6:15-17).

After the huge hailstones, there is anger towards God (Rev 16:21).

From this moment on, God no longer has a reason for anger, because He has pronounced judgment on the last of sin. This final judgment is celebrated in heaven with great praise and hallelujahs (Rev 19:1-3).

With judgment passed, all that remains is Jesus Christ executing that sentence upon all those human beings who are left...

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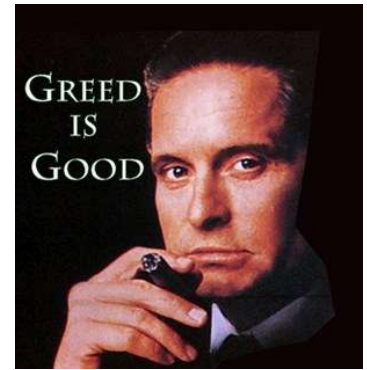
Interlude: The Doom of Babylon

One of the angels, who dispensed a bowl of God's wrath, spoke to the apostle John and explains the meaning behind Babylon (Rev 17:1-18:24).

Babylon is portrayed as "the great harlot" (Rev 17:1), and "the Mother of Harlots, and Of the Abomination of the Earth" (Rev 17:5).

Interlude: The Doom of Babylon (continues)

From a theological perspective, a "harlot" was a term God used to refer to His people that were unfaithful to the Mosaic Covenant by worshiping other gods (Ex 34:14-16; Lev 20:4-6; Deut 31:15-17). Here Babylon is portrayed as something more than an individual non-Believer. It is "the great harlot" who leads others, including kings, to be immoral (Rev 17:15-18). It is a lifestyle that attracts all cultures and people and is intoxicating and pleasurable (Rev 18:2-3).



What the angel describes figuratively as "Babylon," the apostle John described elsewhere in the words of Jesus as "the world."

Do not love **the world** nor the things in **the world**. If anyone loves **the world**, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in **the world**, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from **the world**. **The world** is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever. (1 John 2:15-17)

Babylon represents the world, a secular culture that denies the existence of God and sin. In lieu of God and His imperative to be holy (Lev 20:26), a life motivated by pride and power derived by human achievement.

Babylon has a special significance to God. After Noah's Ark and the Flood, human beings attempted to build a tower and make a name for themselves. But it wasn't simply building a tower, it was building a tower "into heaven" and seeking some recognition akin to God.

As the apostle John learns of Babylon from the angel who dispensed a bowl of God's wrath, he is learning of God's judgment, and the end of this evil influence, culture, and mindset.

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Marriage of the Lamb

With the last of God's wrath discharged, the apostle John learns that the time of the marriage of the Lamb has come (Rev 19:7-9).

"Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready. It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints." Then he said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And he said to me, "These are true words of God." (Rev 19:7-9)

Throughout the New Testament, Jesus is portrayed as the bridegroom (Matt 25:1; John 3:29; Eph 5:22-32).



Just as in a Jewish wedding ceremony, the wedding date is determined by the groom's father.

But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. (Matt 24:36-37)

Thus, when Jesus comes in the clouds to gather the saints in His Second Coming (Matt 24:29-31; 1 Thess 4:13), the metaphor of marriage between Jesus Christ and the church describes the agape relationship between the two and when all saints of all time come into the physical presence of God with their white robes of righteousness. However, note that the resurrection process has not been completed yet (Rev 20:4-6).

This event concludes the metaphor of reaping by Jesus (Rev 14:14-16).

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Armageddon

After the marriage of the Lamb, the apostle John presents the opening of heaven and the majestic appearance of Jesus Christ upon a white horse (Rev 19:11).

Jesus is described with a fearful physical appearance which emphasized His divine purpose of carrying out His Father's judgment (Rev 19:12-15).

Assisting Jesus Christ, in carrying out God's judgment, are the unfallen angels in heaven (Rev 19:14, 17-18; Matt 13:41-42).

Against the background that God's people do not possess their promised land (Dan 2:33, 40-43; 7:7-8, 11, 19-26), Satan, with the intent of denying Jesus Christ Jerusalem, the city of God (Dan 9:19), arrays a huge army at Armageddon (Rev 17:7-13; 19:19).



So decisive was the military victory that the Antichrist and False Prophet were seized without having any time to escape and were justly tossed into the lake of fire (Rev 19:20-21).

In view of God's wrath being final (Rev 15:1), the angel told to reap the earth (Rev 14:18-19), and the angel standing in the sun calling upon the birds to feed upon "the flesh of **all men**, both free men and slaves, and small and great" (Rev 19:21), it appears that all of humanity left on earth is destroyed.

Satan himself does not escape, and is sealed and imprisoned in the abyss for one thousand years (Rev 20:1-3).

This event brings to conclusion several events:

This concludes the metaphor of reaping by the angel (Rev 14:17-20).

This concludes the third cause of sympathy (third woe) expressed by the eagle (Rev 8:13) and presumably by an angel (Rev 11:14).

This concludes, completes and fulfills Daniel's prophecy of 70 weeks.

Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to **make an end of sin**, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place. (Dan 9:24)

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The Millennial Kingdom

As a consequence of the reaping of the angel, who is told to reap the earth (Rev 14:18-19), and the life threatening implications of the bowl plagues, no human beings survived Armageddon (Rev 16:1-21; 19:11-21).

Daniel prophesizes that by the end of the 70th week, sin will end (Dan 9:24). Since human beings are born with sin, the end of sin is only possible with the end of human beings.

After the Antichrist and False Prophet were thrown into the lake of fire, "**the rest were killed** with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh." (Rev 19:21)

All who remain on earth are angels who, because of their fallen state, are confined to earth (Rev 12:7-9).

The Millennial Kingdom (continues)

Reigning with Jesus Christ during the Millennial Kingdom are the Great Tribulation saints "who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand" (Rev 20:4).

These saints, the first resurrection of Believers, are the first to complete their process of resurrection which occurs at the start of the Millennial Kingdom (Rev 20:4), and they are "blessed and holy" and "over these the second death has no power" (Rev 20:6).

Special because of their stalwart perseverance during this unique period of harsh persecution of their faith, these Believers were honored with authority to reign as priests of God and of Christ with Jesus during the Divine Millennial Kingdom (Rev 20:4). An example of these martyred Believers are those seen under the alter (Rev 6:9-11).



Satan's imprisonment and removal of his evil influence from his fallen angelic followers may serve a redemptive purpose. Through the atonement of Jesus Christ, all things in heaven and earth were reconciled with God (Col 1:19-20), which seems to include fallen angels. But the writer of Hebrews indicates that Jesus' atonement does not help angels (Heb 2:16-17).

After the millennium, the apostle John reveals that Satan will be released from the Abyss to deceive again (Rev 20:7-8).

In the final war with Satan, no human military tactic is used; instead, heavenly fire consumes the enemy (Rev 20:7-9). Brimstone, which also originates from heaven (Gen 19:24; Ezek 38:22), supplies the lake of fire and is the means to eliminate Satan forever (Rev 20:10).

www.helpmewithbiblestudy.org/12system_end/lord3.aspx

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The Great White Throne

After Satan is hurled into the lake of fire, the apostle John sees a great white throne at some unknown location that is not of earth or heaven (Rev 20:11). Believers, who did not die for their faith, come to life and complete their process of resurrection. The rest of non-believing humanity, come to life; but, are not glorified in their process of resurrection. Both groups present themselves before Jesus Christ the Judge (Acts 17:30-31; Rev 20:12).

Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a **resurrection of life**, those who committed the evil deeds to a **resurrection of judgment**. (John 5:28-29)

Believers, whose souls in heaven join with their glorified bodies, come to life (Rev 20:12).

Non-Believers, whose souls in hell join with their bodies, come to life (Rev 20:13).



Each person was judged by a) looking for their name in the Book of Life and b) evaluating their life in the books that recorded their deeds (Rev 20:12-13; Matt 7:21-23).

Believers, evaluated in accordance to their deeds, were rewarded for their faithful service (Rev 20:12; Matt 19:28; Luke 22:28-30).

Non-Believers, their names not written in the Book of Life (Rev 20:13), were thrown into the lake of fire (Rev 20:15).

The Great White Throne (continues)

While its location is not specified, the lake of fire is the final place for the Antichrist, False Prophet, Satan, and non-Believers, and it is a place of torment and without any rest. In the very end, death and Hades are also thrown into the lake of fire (Rev 20:14).

With the end of death, introduced by Adam's sin, and evil, introduced by Satan, the apostle John sees a new heaven and a new earth (Rev 21:1).

And around this time, Jesus Christ hands the kingdom back to His Father God (1 Cor 15:23-28).

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New Heaven and New Earth

When earth and heaven pass away, it is with a "roar" and "intense heat" (2 Pet 3:10-12), and the apostle John sees a new heaven and a new earth.

The new heaven is the atmosphere about earth, and it no longer has the sun or moon (Rev 21:23).

The new earth no longer has any sea (Rev 21:1).

As the apostle witnesses a new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God (Rev 21:2, 10), he hears that "the tabernacle of God is among men" and that "God Himself will be among" the resurrected saints (Rev 21:3).

The city itself is a square cube; its width, length, and height measures about 1400 - 1500 miles (Rev 21:15). The city and its streets were made of pure gold like clear glass (Rev 21:18, 21).



The walls surrounding the square city are about 200 feet thick (Rev 21:17) and made of the precious stone jasper that was crystal clear (Rev 21:11, 18).

There is no temple in the new Jerusalem! God and His Son are effectively the temple (Rev 21:22).

In the Old Testament, the tabernacle was a portable tent that was divided into two rooms, the Holy Place and the Holies of Holy. Known as the "tent of meeting," the tabernacle was recognized as the meeting place between God and the His people (Ex 40:34-35). When Solomon's Temple was built, the Holy of Holies had the dimensions of a cube: 30 feet x 30 feet x 30 feet (1 Kings 6:20).

It is significant that there is no temple in the new Jerusalem; it is the heavenly Holy of Holies.

New Jerusalem is shaped as a cube.

New Jerusalem is constructed with the finest materials and craftsmanship.

New Jerusalem is the place where Believers are in God's presence, and as glorified Believers, see His face (Rev 22:4).

The heavenly Holy of Holies, new Jerusalem, descends from heaven with the glory of God (Rev 21:11) and Believers, completing the process of salvation, are raised and resurrected in glory (1 Cor 15:42-44).

It is in this context of God's glory adorning both new Jerusalem and the Believer that the apostle John introduces the "new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev 21:2).

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Epilogue

With the creation of a new heaven and new earth, God restores Creation as it was originally intended and fulfills His covenant with Abraham. Third heaven and the new earth are now united as the abode of God.

Previously corrupted, the created image of God is recovered and his relationship with God restored (Rev 21:3-7; 22:3-5; Gen 1:26-27; Rom 8:28-30).

Glorified saints have access to the Tree of Life (Rev 22:2; Gen 3:22-24) and something never mentioned before, the Water of Life (Rev 21:6; 22:1, 17).

All of the national promises to Abraham were fulfilled:

".. you shall be a blessing" (Gen 12:2)

"... And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."
(Gen 12:3)

Through Abraham and his descendants, specifically through Jesus Christ, the world will be blessed.

Through David, this promise is elaborated to include a King from his royal lineage, who will have a kingdom that will endure forever (Gen 17:15-16; 2 Sam 7:16; Ps 89:3-4; Luke 1:31-33), and from the line of David was Jesus Christ.

Despite the failure of the nation of Israel to keep their promise of the Mosaic Covenant, God unilaterally makes a New Covenant mediated through Jesus Christ (Jer 31:31-34; Ezek 36:25-28; Luke 22:20), and bestows the Holy Spirit.

"To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates: the Kenite and the Kenizzite and the Kadmonite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Rephaim and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Girgashite and the Jebusite." (Gen 15:18-20)

Abraham's descendants are promised land that extended from Egypt to include Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, western parts of Iraq and northern parts of Saudi Arabia (Gen 12:1, 7; 13:14-15, 17; 15:17-21; 17:8).

God fulfills this promise of land with new Jerusalem. Although, new Jerusalem is a square (1500 miles x 1500 miles), its area encompasses the entire land, between the Nile and Euphrates rivers, promised by God!

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