

I. SEVEN INTERPRETIVE PRINCIPLES TO UNDERSTANDING THE BOOK OF REVELATION

A. **PRINCIPLE #1:** *The book of Revelation is about the revelation of Jesus Christ—making the glory of His person known (Rev. 1:1).*

¹ The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God [Father] gave Him [Jesus] to show His servants... (Rev. 1:1)

1. The primary reason The Father gave this specific revelation to the Church was to show the beauty of the character and person of Jesus, knowing it would bring us into maturity as a spotless and prepared Bride for Jesus, fully able to partner with Him, His plans and heart to transition the earth as a dwelling place for God (Eph. 3:8; 4:13–16; 5:27; Rev. 19:7; 21:3; 22:17). As we gaze upon the beauty of Jesus we are transformed into His image by the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 3:18)

¹⁸ But we all... beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Cor. 3:18)

2. Secondly, the book of Revelation is about “the end time plans” of God in how He will transition the earth to the leadership under His Son. Studying the book of Revelation allows the Church to participate in releasing God’s plans through faith-filled words of agreement (1 Jn. 5:14) in prayer, song and declaration (Rev. 5:8; 8:3–6; Ps. 149:6–9; Mt. 16:19). First, we must mature by “eating the scroll,” allowing the Holy Spirit to mark our hearts with its message (Rev. 10:8–11; Jer. 20:9; 23:29).

¹⁴ Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. ¹⁵ And if He hears us... we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. (1 John 5:14-15)

3. If we read Revelation correctly, it causes us to love Jesus and trust His leadership, as we see His dramatic plans in the end times. His wise and loving plans combine God’s sovereignty (in manifesting love and righteousness), human free will, and satanic rage, resulting in the end-time harvest of souls and a victorious Church, without violating justice or man’s free will. The Lord’s plan is for an environment to exist to allow both love and wickedness to come to full expression (Mat 3:12; 13:30; Rev. 14:15).

B. **PRINCIPLE #2:** *The book of Revelation was written to be understood by everyone*

1. John would never have been commanded to write the book twelve times if only a small audience of the Church (IE, Bible scholars) would comprehend the message (Rev. 1:11, 19; 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 4, 14; 14:13; 19:9; 21:5). Revelation is the only book that God promised a special blessing to all those who read the prophecy (Rev. 1:3; 22:7). Learning the storyline is like learning a second language later in life—it takes time but you can do it.

³ Blessed is he who reads and those who hear... and keep those things which are written (Rev. 1:3)

2. A common misperception is that the Church cannot understand the message of Revelation, keeping us from knowing the person of Jesus (Rev. 1:1) and preventing us with partnering with His end-time plan (2 Cor. 4:3; 11:3). The Devil has put *fear* and *confusion* around the book in order to prevent and hinder God’s purposes of this book (Jer. 23:20; 30:24). As a result, many refrain from reading and

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studying the book, let alone understand the end time plan and encounter the person of Jesus as described in the prophecy.

24 The anger of the Lord will not turn back until He has executed and performed the thoughts of His heart [His plans]. In the latter days you will understand it perfectly [in a mature way]. (Jer 30:24)

C. **PRINCIPLE #3:** *The Holy Spirit is our Teacher in understanding the book of Revelation.* The Holy Spirit was sent to help us know all things, including the Father and the Son, their plans and heart (Jn. 14:16, 19–21, 26; 15:26; 16:12-15; 1 Jn. 2:20, 27), *even the deep things of God* (2 Cor. 2:9–12). It takes God to know God (John 15:5). We need to have faith that the Holy Spirit will reveal the things in this prophecy if we ask Him.

26 The Helper, the Holy Spirit... will teach you all things... (John 14:26)

13 He will guide you into all truth... 14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine [thoughts, emotions] and declare it to you. (John 16:13–14)

D. **PRINCIPLE #4:** *The Book of Revelation is meant to be understood literally.*

1. ***Method of interpretation:*** We use the “literal” method of interpretation, looking at the plain meaning of the text that the original audience was intended to understand (Rev. 1:11, 19; 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14; 14:13; 19:9; 21:5). The original audience of the book of Revelation and most believers throughout Church history were not educated scholars but everyday people.

19 Write the things you have seen, the things which are, and the things which will take place after this... (Rev. 1:19)

2. ***The prophecy uses multiple symbols in the book are only meant to be taken that way because the text indicates as such*** (Rev. 1:20; 5:6; 11:8; 12:1, 3, 9; 17:7, 9, 15-18, etc.). For example: the “mystery” of the seven stars and the “mystery” of the seven lampstands (Rev. 1:20) are interpreted directly by the passage itself. Simply interpreting all personalities, numbers and events of the book in their plain, common sense meaning makes learning the main storyline of Revelation much easier to understand.

20 The mystery of the seven stars which you saw...and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels [messengers] of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches. (Rev. 1:20)

E. **PRINCIPLE #5:** *All the main symbols in the book are interpreted by the book itself* (Rev. 1:20; 5:6; 11:8; 12:1, 3, 9; 16:13–14; 17:7, 9, 12, 15–18).

1. The seven primary symbols in the Book of Revelation:

- ***Dragon:*** symbolic of Satan (Rev. 12:3, 4, 7, 9, 13, 16, 17; 13:2, 4; 16:13; 20:2).
- ***Beast:*** symbolic of the Antichrist, who is called the “Beast” 36 times in the book of Revelation (Rev. 13; 14:9-11; 17:3-17; 19:19-21; 20:4, 10).
- ***Another Beast:*** symbolic of the False Prophet, who is called “another Beast” just once (Rev. 13:11). Every other time he is called the False Prophet (Rev. 13:11-17; 16:13; 19:20; 20:10).
- ***Seven Heads:*** 7 historical empires that persecuted Israel and controlled Jerusalem – *Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome and Islamic Caliphate* (Dan. 2:41–42; 7:7; Rev. 12:3; 13:1; 17:3–16).

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- *Ten Horns*: a future 10-nation alliance that receives authority to serve the purposes of the Antichrist at the same time (Dan. 2:41-42; 7:7, 20, 24; 11:36-45; Rev. 12:3; 13:1; 17:3, 7, 12, 16).
- *Harlot Babylon*: a global religious and economic system that is satanically inspired and empowered to seduce the nations from the city of Mecca¹ (Isa. 13–14; Jer. 50–51; Rev. 17–18).
- *Woman with Male-Child*: symbolic of the faithful remnant of ethnic Israel throughout history that gave birth to Jesus, the Male-Child who will “rule all nations with a rod of iron” (Mt. 1:1-17; Rev. 12:1-5). Satan wars with the “rest of her offspring” who are Gentile believers (Rev. 12:17).

2. *Some of the minor symbols are interpreted outside of Revelation*. The Bible itself always interprets the Bible. For example, the “sword” proceeding from Jesus’ mouth (Rev. 1:16; 2:12, 16; 19:15, 21) is symbolic of the “Word of God,” which is interpreted in the books of Ephesians and Hebrews (Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12). God “hides” things in His word *for us to seek out* (Mat. 7:7–8), *grow in love* (SS 3:3) and *mature our ability to discern* as we study His word and dialogue with Him (Heb. 5:12–14).

F. **PRINCIPLE #6**: *The book of Revelation is about how the Church will stand victorious through the Great Tribulation, partnering with God’s end times plan, overcoming temptation and persecution (Rev. 12:11; 15:2)*

1. This view differs from the view that the Church will be raptured *before* the Great Tribulation. We believe that teaching this view is an error and will leave the Church unprepared for *the endurance, understanding, love and power*, necessary to partner with the Lord. This is not an issue of salvation but of preparedness or readiness. We can partner with others who love Jesus in doing the Great Commission even through they hold another end time view.
2. Jesus’ judgments in the Great Tribulation do not happen *to* God’s people as helpless victims of Satan, but they are released *through* them as they partner with His sovereign leadership. Out of 404 verses, only 12 (less than 3%) speak directly about the persecution of Israel and the Church (Rev. 6:9–11; 11:7; 12:17; 13:7, 15; 16:6; 17:6; 18:24; 19:2; 20:4). The other 392 (97%) describe our victory over Satan (Rev. 20:1–15)
3. As Moses participated in prayer under the Lord’s leadership in releasing ten of His judgments on Pharaoh (Ex. 7–12), so the end-time Church will participate in prayer under Jesus’ leadership as He releases twenty-one judgments on the Antichrist, his government and armies (Rev. 6–19).
4. The message of Revelation is how the Lord will transition the earth from under the grip of Satan and sin to the leadership of Jesus, as He establishes His Father’s rule affecting all spheres of society and removing the curse of sin from the earth forever (Dan. 7:13–14, 18, 22, 27; Jude 14–15; Rev. 1:7; 11:15–19; 19; Isa. 25:8; 1 Cor. 15:24–29).

Then the 7th angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!” (Rev. 11:15)

5. The message of Revelation is about how Jesus will bring justice to the earth. This moment in time is called His “day” of justice (Pr. 6:34; Isa. 34; 42:1; 61:2; 63:4; Jer. 46:10) where in truth, humility and righteousness (Ps. 45:4) he makes all the wrong things right, using the least severe means to bring the

¹ The other less plausible theory is a “rebuilt city” of Babylon that is to come.

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greatest amount of good upon the earth without violating anyone's free will, removing sin, Satan, the wicked and all evil from the earth forever.

¹ Behold! My Servant whom I uphold...I have put My Spirit upon Him... ⁴ He will not fail nor be discouraged, till He has established justice in the earth... (Isa. 42:1-4)

G. PRINCIPLE #7: *The judgment events found in the book of Revelation are still future.*

1. The events in the prophecy do not refer to 70AD because John received the revelation in 90AD and they were about the things which must take place after this (Rev. 4:1).

¹ "Come up here, and I [Jesus] will show you things which must take place after this." (Rev. 4:1)

2. Jesus takes the scroll and releases the judgments only after the bowls of prayer are filled in heaven which only occurs as the Church walks in maturity and fullness at the end of this age (Rev. 5:8).

⁸ Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. (Rev. 5:8)

3. There is only one time in human history when all the saints release God's written judgment upon the nations in league with the Antichrist and that's the final generation, as seen in the book of Revelation (Ps. 149:6-9; Isa. 24:14-16; 42:10-13; Joel 2:28-32; Mt. 16:18-19; Lk. 18:7-8; Acts 2:17-21; Rev. 5:8; 6:9-11; 8:3-5; 9:13; 10:6; 14:18; 16:7; 19:2; 22:17)!

⁶ Let the high praises of God be in their mouth... ⁷ To execute vengeance on the nations [in league w/Antichrist]... ⁹ To execute on them the written judgment – this honor have all His saints. (Ps. 149:6)

II. THE BASIC STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

- A. There are 4 parts in the structure of the book of Revelation, the fourth part being the largest and consisting of 5 chronological sections in which the events occur in sequential order.

B. Part 1: John's calling to prophesy about the end times (Rev. 1)

John gave truths about Jesus' majesty that formed the way he prophesied about the end times. These truths are also to equip us.

¹ I turned to see the voice... And having turned I saw... the Son of Man... (Rev. 1:12)

C. Part 2: Jesus gave 7 letters to the churches (Rev. 2-3)

The instructions Jesus gave to these churches about overcoming sin give insight into what the end-time church must overcome.

¹¹ What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are... (Rev. 1:11)

D. Part 3: Jesus takes the scroll (Rev. 4-5)

This contains the earth's title deed and Jesus' plan to cleanse the earth. Jesus takes a 7-sealed scroll from the Father, representing the **title deed** of the earth and the **battle plan** to judge, cleanse, and

prepare the nations for Jesus' rule over the earth, while bringing the Church to maturity, a Bride to partner with Him in His plan (Rev. 6-22).

¹ *Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this. (Rev. 4:1)*

E. *Part 4: Jesus' battle plan (Rev. 6-22)*

This includes the Great Tribulation judgments against the Antichrist. Jesus reveals His main storyline of love to cleanse the earth of evil. His battle plan is seen in **5 chronological sections** describing the main storyline of the twenty-one judgment events (7 seals, 7 trumpets, and 7 bowls) that are released on the Antichrist's empire in sequential order.

F. After each chronological section, an angel explains to John why the events just described are necessary. *The angelic explanations* function as parentheses that put the storyline on "pause." They answer questions arising from the chronological sections: Why is God's wrath so severe? What will happen to the saints? Angels explain to John *what happens to God's people*, including what Jesus will do to *help them*, and what the Antichrist will do to *persecute them*.

III. FIVE CHRONOLOGICAL SECTIONS (REV. 6-22)

A. *Chronological Section #1 (Rev. 6)* - The **seal judgments** against the kingdom of darkness.

Angelic Explanation #1 (Rev. 7) - We receive **protection** from judgments and falling away.

B. *Chronological Section #2 (Rev. 8-9)* - The **trumpet judgments** against the Antichrist's empire.

Angelic Explanation #2 (Rev. 10-11) - We receive **direction** by increased prophetic ministry.

C. *Chronological Section #3 (Rev. 11:15-19)* - Jesus' **second coming royal procession** and the rapture leading to Jesus replacing all the kings and top governmental leaders on earth.

Angelic Explanation #3 (Rev. 12-14) - The Antichrist's violent **confrontation** with the saints deserves Jesus' judgment and the replacement of all his evil governments.

1. At the 7th and last trumpet (1 Thes. 4:16; 1 Cor. 15:52; Rev. 10:7), Jesus will rapture the Church and travel across the sky in a royal procession, so that every eye will see Him (Rev. 1:7).

⁷*Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. (Rev. 1:7)*

2. After this, Jesus will enter Jerusalem and stand on the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14:4).

D. *Chronological Section #4 (Rev. 15-16)* - **Bowl judgments** destroy evil infrastructures in society.

Angelic Explanation #4 (Rev. 17-18) - The **seduction** of Babylon's evil religion will permeate and infiltrate all the structures of society, requiring that Babylon be totally destroyed.

E. *Chronological Section #5 (Rev. 19-20)* - Jesus' **triumphal entry** into Jerusalem (Rev. 19:11-21:8).

Angelic Explanation #5 (Rev. 21-22) - The **restoration** of all things, Acts 3:21, (Rev. 21:9-22:5).

IV. HAVING THE CORRECT PERSPECTIVE – TWELVE WAYS TO VIEW THE BOOK²

The *primary purpose* of Revelation is to unveil the unsearchable riches of Christ *to transform* the Church, giving us the correct perspective to interpret, pray and prophesy its contents with the right heart and for the right reasons.

- A. *End Time Book of Acts*: Just as the book of Acts describes the power of the Holy Spirit through the early Church, so the book of Revelation describes the power of the Holy Spirit through the end time Church.
- B. *Greatest Story Ever Told*: All the epic love stories find inspiration from within the grand storyline of Revelation, including original paradise, innocent love, captivity, deliverance, restoration and ultimate victory!
- C. *Divine Navigation*: When all of the natural light of this world has failed, Revelation is our infallible “compass” giving us the divine wisdom to navigate through the coming storm of the end times (Lk. 17:26).
- D. *Bridal Preparation Handbook*: Even as Esther was prepared prior to meeting her king, so also the Holy Spirit is preparing the Bride of Christ in unprecedented unity, maturity and purity for her King (Rev. 19:7).
- E. *Catalytic Scroll*: As we “eat the scroll” that is sweet and bitter, our lives become a message that is catalytic in provoking a response of truth below the surface, exposing the heart of all (Ezek. 2:8–3:3; Rev. 10:8-11).
- F. *Canonized Prayer Manual*: As Moses stretched forth his rod to release 10 plagues upon Pharaoh through prayer (Ex. 7-12), so the end time Church will stretch forth the “rod of agreement” to release 21 of God’s judgments upon the end time Pharaoh (Antichrist) during the Great Tribulation (Ps. 149:6–9; Mic. 7:15).
- G. *Divine Warning*: Jesus likened His return to the “days of Noah” (Lk. 17:26) when a divine warning of an unprecedented, future and imminent global shaking was meant to inspire preparation (Hag. 2:6-9; Heb. 11:7). Heb. 11:7 Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark...
- H. *Second Exodus*: As God delivered the Jewish people from Pharaoh in Egypt with a mighty right hand, so He will deliver them again on a global scale (Isa. 10:24–27; 11:11-16; Jer. 16:14–15; 23:7–8; Mic. 7:15).
¹¹ The Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people who are left, from Assyria and Egypt... ¹² from the four corners of the earth... (Isa. 11:11-12)
- I. *Antitypical Fulfillment*: Jesus is unveiled as the original antitype and total fulfillment of all those who went before Him as prophetic types, merely foreshadowing His ultimate role in part (Rom. 5:14; 1 Cor. 15:45–49).
¹⁴ Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. (Rom. 5:14)
- J. *The Fifth Gospel*: Revelation is the second half of the unfolding Gospel storyline when Jesus returns to physically enforce the spiritual victory that He legally obtained at the cross. It’s the “good news” of victory!
- K. *Fulfillment of Fall Feasts*: As Jesus, the Lamb of God perfectly fulfilled the Spring Feast of Passover, so He will fulfill the Fall Feast of Tabernacles when God comes to “tabernacle” among men forever (Rev. 21:3)!
- L. *Book of Prophecy*: Tomorrow’s news today for all w/ears to hear (Rev. 1:3; 10:11; 19:10; 22:7, 10, 18, 19).

² Taken from Corey Stark’s notes on *Roadmap of Revelation*.