

Quick Overview of Revelation

The introduction of Revelation names the author, John, and explains the immediacy of the message: the end of days is at hand. John extends a greeting to the Christian communities in seven major Near East cities in the name of the God of history.

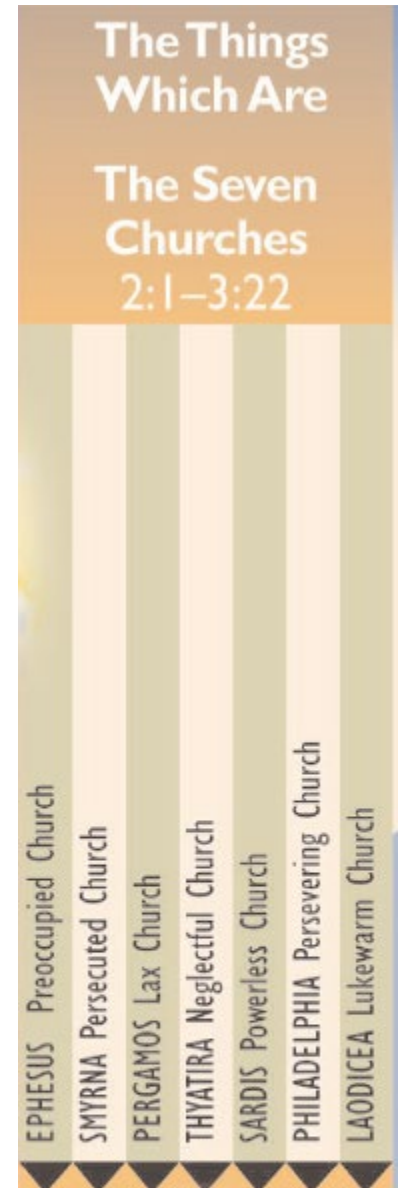
- On the Sabbath, John falls into a prophetic ecstasy. He sees a vision of a shining Jesus, surrounded by seven stars and seven lamp-stands: these represent the seven churches of Asia.
- In 2:1–3:22, John is given orders to deliver a message to each of the churches, addressing specific strengths and failings of each church, providing encouragement to some and driving others to repent before Judgment Day.
- Jesus reminds them that his coming is imminent.

The first half of John’s revelatory experience begins with the opening of the heavenly door: “Come up here,” a voice calls to him, “I will show you what is to take place in the future” (4:1).

- John sees God enthroned and surrounded by twenty-four elders.
- Lightning flashes and thunder sounds.
- Old Testament angels with six wings and many eyes sing praises to the Lord.
- God holds a scroll sealed with seven seals, and nobody is worthy of breaking the seals except Jesus, by virtue of his sacrifice.

Jesus appears here as “a Lamb standing as if it had been slaughtered,” but also as “the Lion of the tribe of Judah” (5:5–6).

- Breaking the first four seals, Jesus releases the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: victory, war, famine, and pestilence.



Seal Judgments

Cold War



Famine



Martyrdom



7 Trumpets



White Horse Black Horse Slain Souls

Open War



Death



Physical Disturbances



**Red Horse Ashen Horse
Lamb's Wrath**

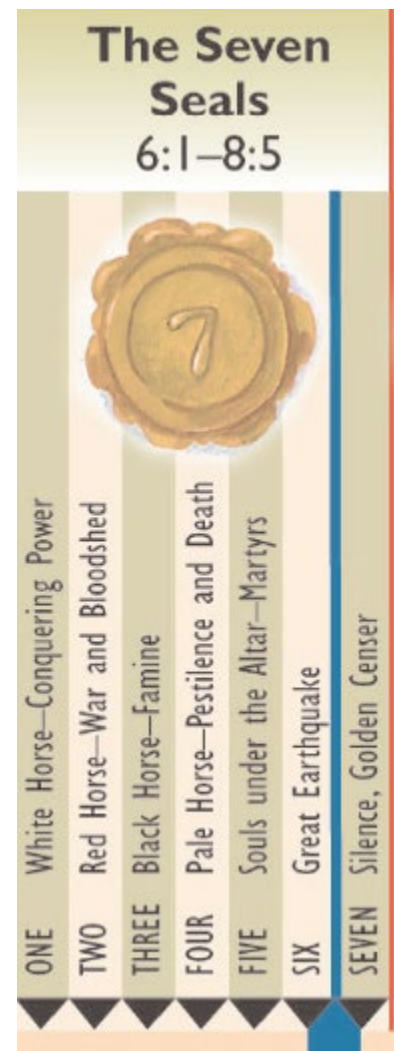


- When the fifth seal is broken, the souls of martyrs cry out for justice, but they are urged to have patience until the appointed number of people have been martyred.
- The breaking of the sixth seal unleashes a massive cosmic upheaval that devastates the world.

Before the breaking of the seventh seal, an angel marks 144,000 people—12,000 from each of the tribes of Israel—with the seal of God to protect them from the coming devastation.

- Other righteous people, too, are to be saved: a “great multitude . . . [of people] from all the tribes and peoples and languages” have cleansed themselves and they, too, will be protected (7:9).

Finally, it is time to open the seventh seal (8:1). But the opening of the seal is anticlimactic; when it is opened, it is revealed that there are seven trumpets that need to be blown.



Trumpet Judgments



- Four of the trumpets blow, each bringing with it disaster and destruction, with fire falling from the sky (8:6–12).
- With the fifth trumpet, the chimney leading out of the Abyss is unlocked, and bizarre locusts emerge in the smoke, stinging anyone unmarked by God’s seal.
- The sixth trumpet unleashes a vast troop of cavalry who kill “a third of humankind” (9:18).
- However, the survivors nevertheless refuse to stop worshipping idols and behaving immorally.

An angel descends from heaven, announcing the imminent fulfillment of “the mystery of God” with the blowing of the seventh trumpet (10:7).

The prophet is ordered to consume a scroll, which will taste sweet but be bitter in his stomach (8:10).

- He is told that two prophets will arise to preach the word of God in Jerusalem, but will be killed after 1,260 days by “the beast that comes up from the bottomless pit” (11:7).
- God will revive these prophets, and will strike Jerusalem with a powerful earthquake.

Finally, the seventh trumpet blows, and John hears voices shouting, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign forever and ever” (11:15).

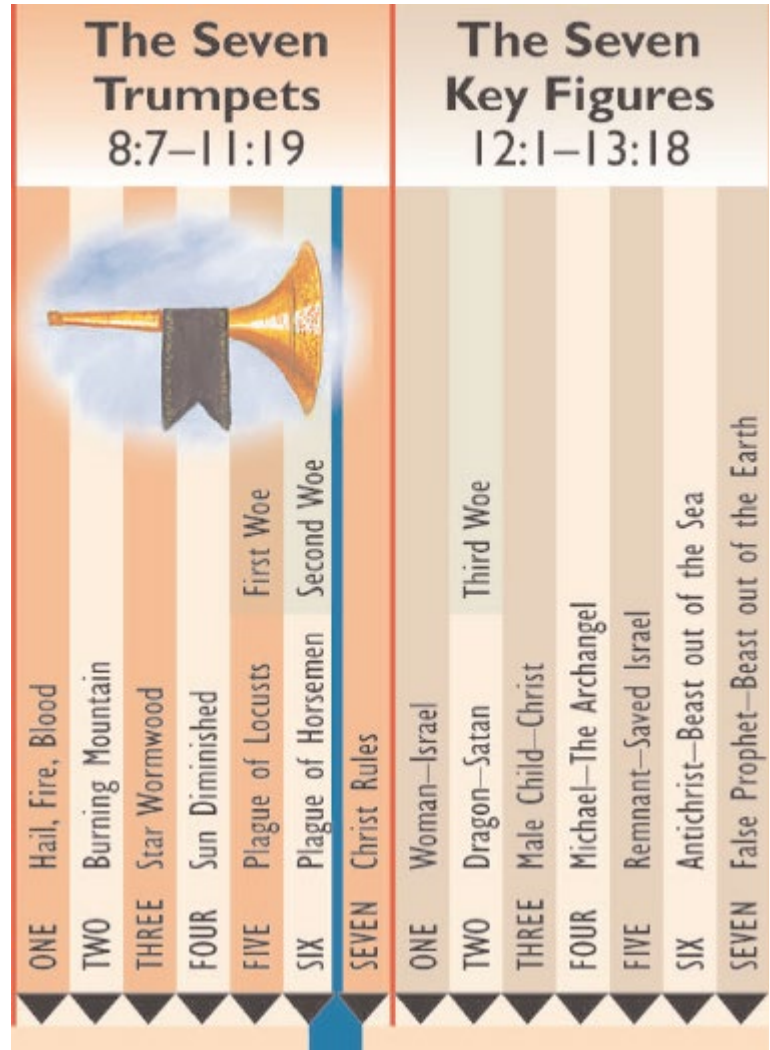
- The moment for justice, punishment, and triumph has arrived, with lightning, thunder, earthquakes, and hail.

The second half of Revelation begins with the opening of God’s sanctuary in heaven.

- A woman “clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet,” gives birth to a child who is almost eaten by a huge red dragon with seven heads and ten horns (12:1).
- The child is saved from the dragon and brought to heaven.
- The archangel Michael makes war on the dragon, who is Satan, defeats him, and drives him from heaven.
- The dragon continues to pursue the woman, who yet again escapes him. Instead, he makes war on her children.

The dragon delegates his power to a fantastical creature identified only as “the beast,” who makes war on the saints and curses God (13:4).

- A false prophet, “another beast,” arises and convinces people to worship the first beast (13:11).
- The prophet sees Jesus and his 144,000 righteous followers entrenched on Mount Zion in Jerusalem.



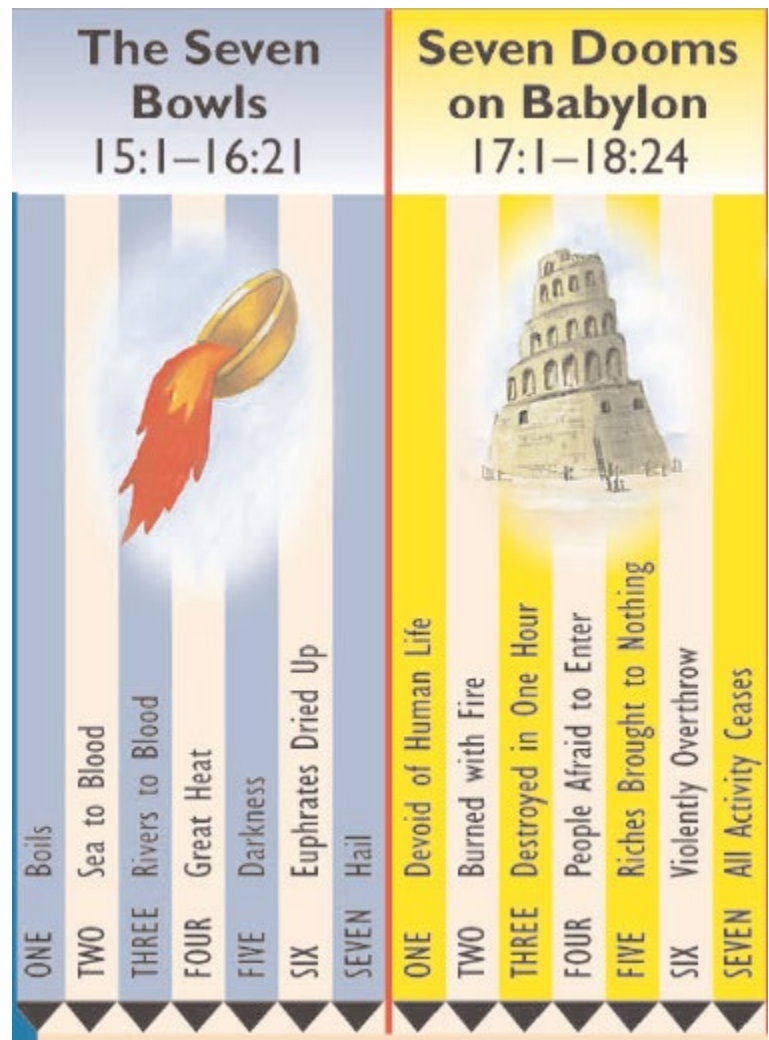
Bowl Judgments



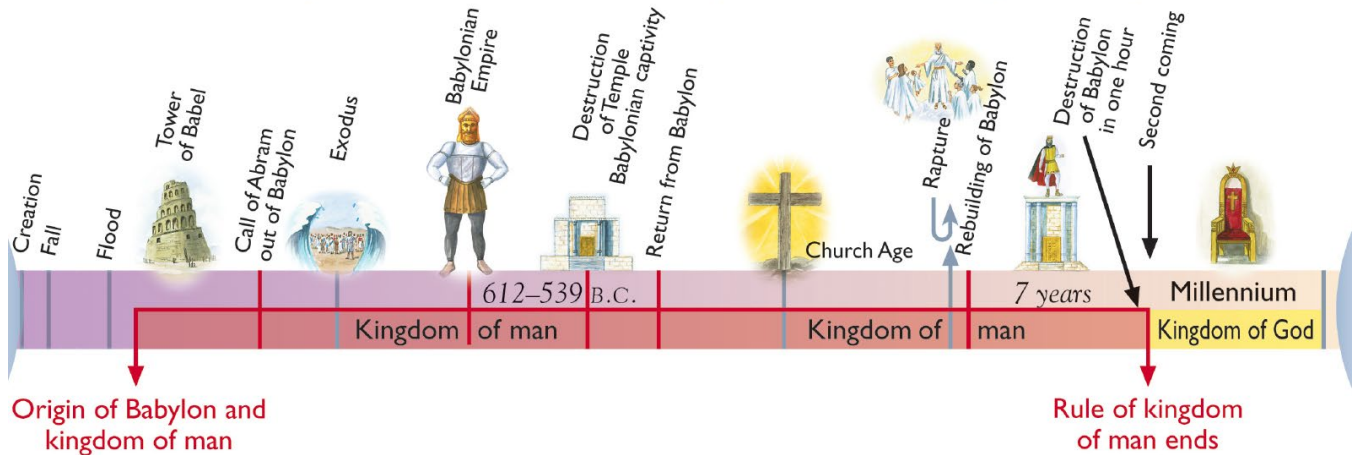
- He hears the news that the Day of Judgment is at hand, and that Babylon the Great—probably symbolic of the Roman Empire—has fallen.
- Angels begin to spill out the blood of the wicked like wine from a winepress.

While the righteous sing hymns to Moses and Jesus, seven angels empty seven bowls of plagues across the Earth, bringing suffering and destruction to the wicked.

- People refuse to repent, and instead curse God. With the pouring out of the seventh bowl, “it is done” (16:17).



Babylon in History and Prophecy



John is shown a vision of the Whore of Babylon, who symbolizes the Roman Empire.

- An angel announces the fall of Babylon and warns God’s faithful to abandon Rome, lest they be punished together with the wicked.
- Those wicked people who made their livings from Rome’s trade will mourn her downfall, but the righteous will rejoice.

Many voices surrounding the throne of God sing his praises at the news, and announce that the Lamb, Jesus, is soon to be wedded to his “bride,” the faithful of God (19:7).

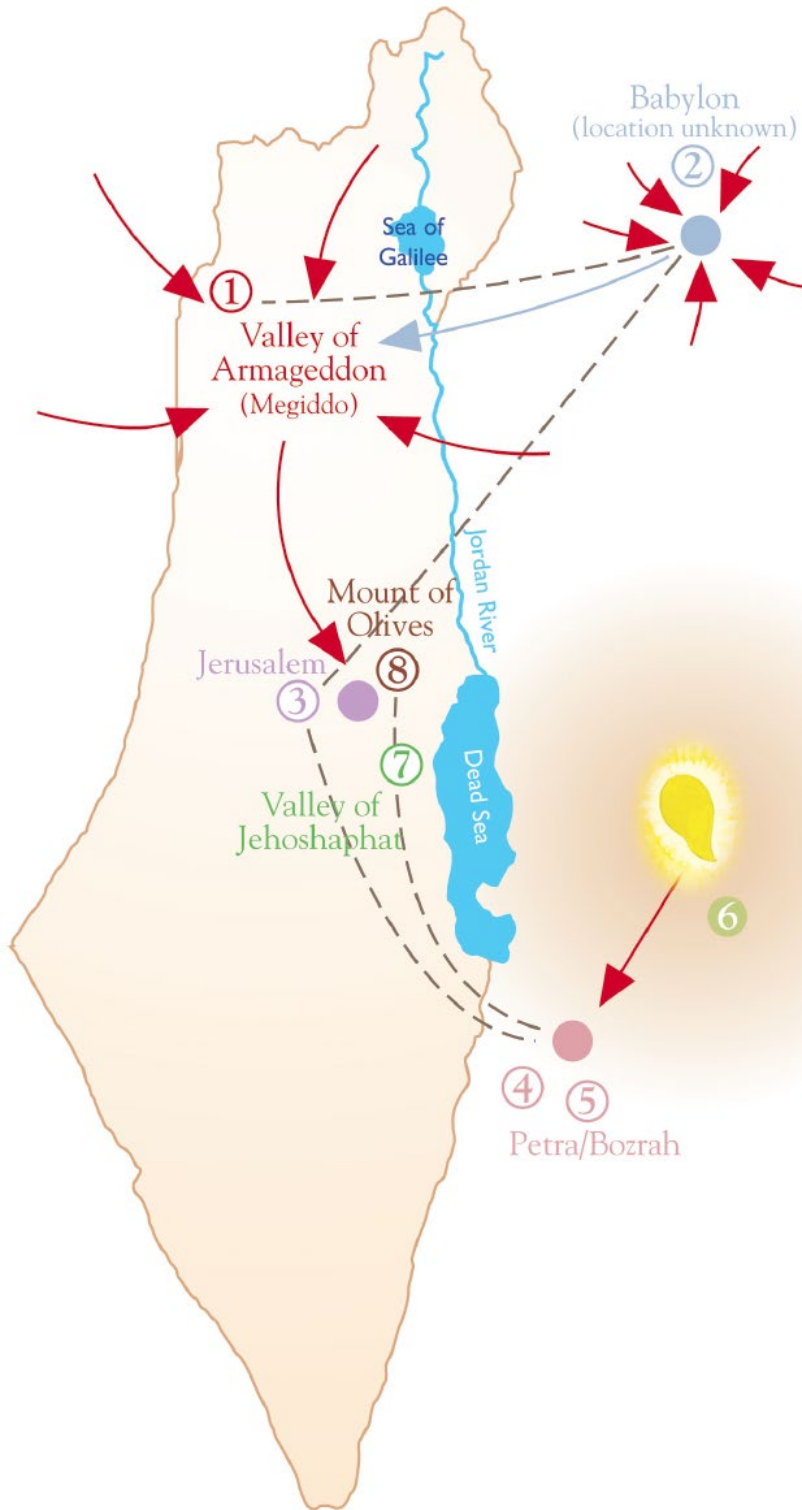
- John is ordered to write the wedding announcement: “Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb” (19:9).

In the final battle, the gates of heaven open, and Jesus, clad now as a warrior named “Faithful and True,” leads the hosts of heaven in a war against the beast and the kings of the Earth (19:11).

- The beast and his false prophet are hurled into a fiery lake, and the other opponents of Jesus are killed.
- Together with the saints, Jesus reigns for 1,000 glorious years.
- At the end of the 1,000 years, Satan gathers his forces, Gog and Magog, and again leads them into battle against the saints, but they are consumed by fire.
- Satan, too, is hurled into the fiery pit.

On the Day of Judgment, which follows immediately, everyone is resurrected and judged “according to their works” (20:12).

The Campaign of Armageddon



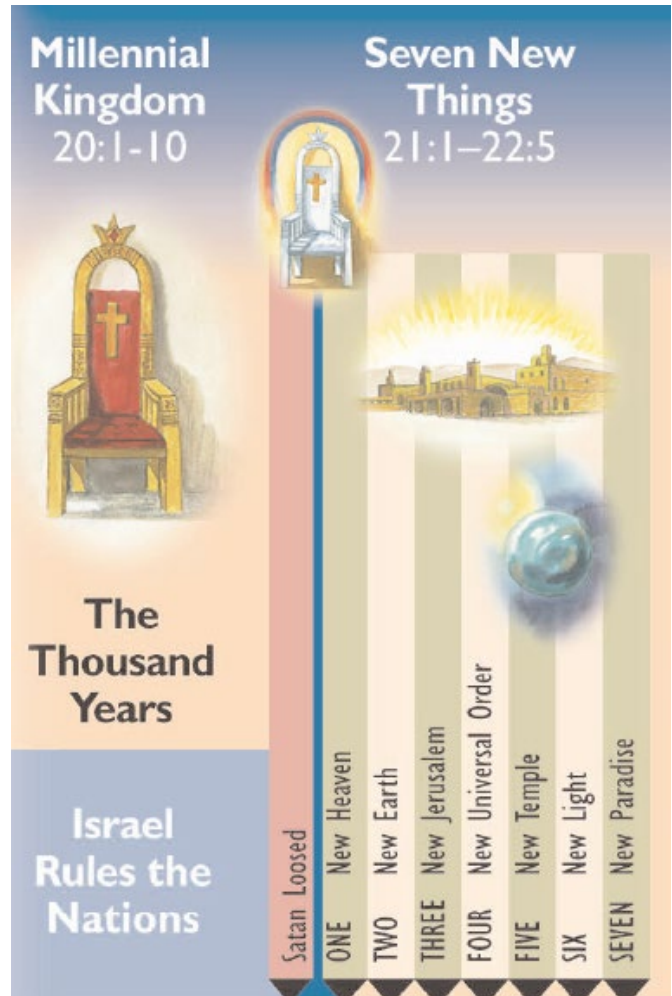
The Eight Stages

1. Gathering of the Armies of the Antichrist
2. Destruction of Babylon
3. The Fall of Jerusalem
4. The Armies of the Antichrist at Bozrah
5. Israel's Regeneration
6. Second Coming of Christ
7. End of Fighting at the Valley of Jehoshaphat
8. Victory Ascent upon the Mount of Olives

- After Judgment Day, John sees a vision of “a new heaven and a new earth,” and a new holy city of Jerusalem descended from heaven (21:1).
- The New Jerusalem is a picture of shining perfection, carved of precious stones and lit by the glory of God and Jesus, who are present in Jerusalem instead of a temple.

John is commanded to publicize the vision that he has received: “Do not seal up the words of the prophesy of this book, for the time is near” (22:10).

In the conclusion of Revelation, Jesus himself promises that God will come soon to reward the righteous and punish the wicked.



The New Heavens and New Earth

- Satan removed from further influence in history (Rev 20:10)
- No longer any sea (Rev 21:1)
- No longer any death, crying, or pain (Rev 21:4)
- All things made new (Rev 21:1)
- No longer any night (Rev 21:25)
- No longer any unclean, nor those practicing abomination and lying (Rev 21:1)
- No longer any curse (Rev 22:3)
- No longer any sun (Rev 22:5)
- Believers are able to see the Father face to face (Rev 22:4)