

Overview of the chapters in the book:

The visions that John saw were spiritual; they never happened on or to the earth. They are much like a stage play that depicts things happening apart from the stage.

Chapter 1 – The scope of Christ’s ministry and His present glory are revealed.

Chapter 2 and 3 - John stood with Jesus among the seven churches of Asia beholding their conditions, problems, and possibilities of victory through their Lord.

Chapter 4 - a door is opened in heaven giving to John, and through him to Christ’s persecuted saints, a vision of the throne and the majestic court of the Ruler of the universe.

Chapter 5 - within the vision of heaven, God is holding a book in his hand closed with seven seals indicating that the plan of God is unrevealed and unexecuted. If it remains sealed his purposes are not realized and his plan is not carried out. No one is able to open the book except Christ who is defined as a Lamb who was slain.

Chapter 6 - 20 provide two views of God’s plan through the destruction of Satan.

Chapter 6 - 11 outlines the first view of God’s plan.

Chapter 6 - we are introduced to Christ carrying out God’s eternal purpose for man’s redemption. As the seals are broken and the scrolls unrolled, the purpose of god is revealed.

The **FIRST SEAL** is opened and reveals a white horse with Christ as the rider going forth through the gospel to conquer the souls of man according to God’s plan – the preaching of the gospel.

The **SECOND SEAL** is opened and reveals a red horse which symbolizes the persecution that would follow the preaching of the gospel which brought the saints and the world into conflict.

The **THIRD SEAL** is opened and reveals a black horse which symbolizes grief, woe and mourning, the lot of persecuted saints who followed the preaching of the gospel.

The **FOURTH SEAL** is opened and reveals a pale horse which symbolizes the judgment against the world of unregenerate people who reject the divine message.

The **FIFTH SEAL** is opened and reveals the souls of them who had been slain for the word of God. They are asking how long before their blood is avenged. They are told to wait a little time until all should be killed as they were. This is completed in 20:4.

The **SIXTH SEAL** is opened and reveals a great earthquake; the sun becomes black, the moon as blood and the stars falling from heaven. This is judgment language as used in the Old Testament. It is a judgment against a persecuting world power.

Chapter 7 - Four angels stand ready to bring destructive forces upon the unregenerate people of the earth, but are restrained while the 144,000 servants of God on earth are sealed for protection.

Chapter 8 - The SEVENTH SEAL is opened, angels are given seven trumpets and the prayers of the saints. In response to these prayers the angel casts fire upon the earth which sums up the warning of the trumpets.

The opening of the seven seals is now complete.

When the FIRST TRUMPET sounds, hail and fire are cast on the earth and one third of earth, trees and grass are burnt up. This is judgment that affects the vegetation

When the SECOND TRUMPET sounds, one third of sea life and ships are destroyed. This is judgment upon a worldly society when its center of power is cast down and its economy falls with it.

When the THIRD TRUMPET sounds, one third of the waters became bitter, and many men die. This symbolizes calamity, sorrow and bitterness of life for the earth's eminent men.

When the FOURTH TRUMPET sounds, one third of the sun, moon and stars are darkened. This symbolizes the partial darkening of human wisdom and understanding.

Chapter 9 – The FIFTH TRUMPET sounds, Satan falls from heaven and is given the key to the abyss. He is permitted to execute a limited degree of power.

The SIXTH TRUMPET sounds and the four angels that were restrained in chapter seven are loosed that they should kill one third of men using armies of 200 million horsemen which are referred to as plagues

Chapter 10 – John is given a little book and told to eat it He is told that he must prophesy again indicating additional prophecies to those already written in this first section of the book.

Chapter 11 – John is told to measure the temple, the alter and them that worship therein. The holy city, the new spiritual Jerusalem (the church) shall be tread under foot forty-two months.

Two witnesses are introduced. They are protected by God while completing the work God sent them to accomplish which is to establish the church, to preach the truth and to write it down. They are killed, then made alive.

The SEVENTH TRUMPET sounds and signals the completion of God's mystery. The first revealing of God's plan through its implementation against His enemies is complete.

The temple of God in heaven is opened giving assurance to His people that he remembers them, and that he will keep his covenant with them.

Chapter 12 - 20 outlines the second view of God's plan.

Chapter 12 –John was told in chapter 10 he must prophesy again.

Two signs are seen in heaven. A woman with child waiting to be delivered and a great red dragon, who is Satan, waiting to devour the child as it is born.

There is a war in heaven where Michael and his angels go to war with Satan and his angels. Satan is defeated and attacks the woman then the seed of the woman, which are individual Christians.

Chapter 13 – The dragon rallies two allies. The first is a beast coming up out of the sea. The second is a beast coming up out of the earth which is later referred to as the false prophet. The number of the beast, six-six-six, is the number of the beast.

Chapter 14 - Christ is the Lamb with 144,000 of his followers (those sealed in chapter 7) standing on the Mount. Three angels (1) make known that the gospel is preached to all nations, (2) declare that Babylon is fallen and (3) the beast will receive the wrath of God.

Chapter 15 – Seven angels are seen as a sign in heaven with seven plagues which are the golden bowls full of the wrath of God. No one could enter the temple until the seven plagues were finished.

Chapter 16 – The seven angels are told to pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God into the earth.

The **FIRST ANGEL Poured out his bowl** and it became grievous sores upon those who had the mark of the beast. As in the human body, this is the corruption of the world breaking out.

The **SECOND ANGEL Poured out his bowl** into the sea. It became blood as of a dead man, and everything in and on the sea died. This symbolizes the utter putrefaction of a dead society.

The **THIRD ANGEL Poured out his bowl** into the rivers and fountains and they became blood. Since Caesar worshippers had poured out the blood of the saints and prophets, they are now given blood to drink.

The **FOURTH ANGEL Poured out his bowl** upon the sun which would scorch the same men. This plague turned the sun into a source of blistering heat burning and painful, by which men were scorched. They blasphemed God and would not repent.

The **FIFTH ANGEL Poured out his bowl** upon the throne of the beast and his kingdom was darkened. This indicates the loss of wisdom and understanding by which to guide the empire.

The **SIXTH ANGEL Poured out his bowl** upon the Euphrates River and it was dried up. The Euphrates here is not a physical or geographical location; it symbolizes a barrier or deterrent to invasion, which is now removed.

There is a gathering of the forces of God and Satan for a battle at a place called Har-Magedon (Armageddon) which is fought and won by the Lord in chapter 19.

The **SEVENTH ANGEL Poured out his bowl** upon the air and a voice from the throne said “it is done”. Air would be an appropriate emblem of the prevailing influence or surroundings of the realm in which the wicked live, move, and breathe, being dominated by the devil.

The series of plagues is now complete.

Chapter 17 – In this chapter and chapter 18 is a description of the collapse of the pagan world-city.

John is shown the judgment of the great harlot symbolizing Rome which in turn symbolized the world of lust and seduction. A description of this harlot is given in the rest of this chapter.

Chapter 18 – An angel from heaven cries mightily “Babylon the great is fallen”. God reveals the total collapse of the harlot and she is cast into the lake of fire.

Chapter 19 – The marriage of the lamb and the bride is now ready. A white horse is revealed in heaven, with Christ riding on the horse, to make war against the beast of the sea and the beast of the earth, the false prophet who were gathered in chapter 16. No battle is described. The beast and the false prophet are cast into the lake of fire. The victory is won; the defeat of the beast and the false prophet, is complete.

Chapter 20 – Satan has lost his allies and is bound in the abyss for a thousand years. The souls from the fifth seal in chapter 6 reign with Christ for a thousand years. After the thousand years, Satan is loosed from his prison and gathers his forces but is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. Christ is seen sitting on a great white throne judging the nations. Death and Hades are now cast into the lake of fire which is the second death.

The defeat of Satan and his forces against God and truth is total – complete and final.

Chapter 21 – This chapter portrays the final glory of the church as it comes to rest with God beyond time. An angel shows John the bride, the wife of the Lamb, the holy city Jerusalem coming down from heaven.

Chapter 22 – John is told not to seal the words of the prophecy of this book, “for the time is at hand”. The book was to be sent to the churches at that time, its content made applicable to all churches, its message was to be made known, its warnings were to be heeded and its hearers encouraged by the divine assurance of victory.

One commentator (Hailey’s book page 324) has well observed that the seven seals *reveal*, the seven trumpets *announce* and *warn*, and the seven bowls *execute*.