

Another overview of 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 through 20 - this section of Revelation is where the triumph of truth and righteousness for the saints who hold the truth, and the defeat and ultimate destruction of Satan along with his followers and helpers is described. The key to this section is the sealed book that God is holding in his hand. The closed seals signify that it was originally purposed in the mind of God. Its contents have been neither made known nor altered. This book symbolizes God’s eternal purpose for man’s salvation, the grand scheme of redemption. This plan was formulated in the mind of God and was a mystery – something unknown or hidden – until revealed. God purposed or planned that this salvation which existed as a mystery should be brought forth and made known in the fullness of time (Eph. 1:9-10).

Chapter 4 - a door is opened in heaven giving to John a vision of the throne and the majestic court of the Ruler of the universe.

Chapter 5 - God is holding a book in his hand closed with seven seals indicating that the plan of God is unrevealed and unexecuted.

Chapters 6 – 11 the revealing of God’s plan through the destruction of Satan and his helpers.

Chapter 6 - we are introduced to Christ carrying out God’s eternal purpose for man’s redemption.

FIRST SEAL Christ on a white horse, symbolizes conquering souls by preaching of the gospel.

SECOND SEAL red horse, symbolizes the persecution following the preaching of the gospel.

THIRD SEAL black horse, symbolizes grief, woe and mourning for those persecuted saints who followed the preaching of the gospel.

FOURTH SEAL pale horse, symbolizes judgment against those who reject the divine message.

FIFTH SEAL souls of them who were slain for the word of God ask when they will be avenged.

SIXTH SEAL earthquake, sun black, moon as blood and stars falling from heaven. This symbolizes judgment against a persecuting world power.

Chapter 7 - four angels ready to bring destruction on the unregenerate people but are restrained.

Chapter 8

SEVENTH SEAL there is a silence in heaven about a half hour. An angel casts from the altar fire upon the earth which is the heavenly response to the prayers of the saints. The seven trumpets symbolize partial judgments upon the wicked, a warning of greater judgments to come.

The opening of the seven seals is now complete.

FIRST TRUMPET hail and fire cast on the earth. This is judgment that affects the vegetation.

SECOND TRUMPET sea life and ships are destroyed. This is judgment upon a worldly society.

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

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

Chapter 9

FIFTH TRUMPET Satan falls from heaven and is given the key to the abyss.

SIXTH TRUMPET restrained angels (chap7) loosed to kill men, armies referred to as plagues.

Chapter 10

Before the seventh trumpet sounds, John is given a little book and told to eat it

Chapter 11

John is told to measure the temple (the church), the altar and them that worship therein.

Two witnesses - protected by God - establish the church, preach the truth and write it down.

After the church is established, they are killed, then made alive.

SEVENTH TRUMPET sounds and signals the completion of God's mystery

The temple of God in heaven is opened giving assurance to His people that he remembers them.

The first revealing of God's plan through its implementation against His enemies is complete.

Chapters 12 – 20 a second view of God's plan through the destruction of Satan and his helpers.

Chapter 12 - Two signs in heaven. A woman with child, Christ, and a great red dragon, Satan.

There is a war in heaven where Michael and his angels go to war with Satan and his angels

Chapter 13 - The dragon rallies two allies. The a beast from the sea and a beast the earth.

Chapter 14 - Christ is the Lamb with 144,000 followers, The messages of three angels (1) the gospel is preached to all nations, (2) Babylon is fallen (3) the beast will receive the wrath of God.

Chapter 15 – Seven angels with seven plagues - the golden bowls full of the wrath of God.

Chapter 16 – The seven angels told to pour out the seven bowls into the earth.

FIRST BOWL - sores upon those who had the mark of the beast - symbolizes the corruption of the world breaking out.

SECOND - the sea becomes became blood - symbolizes the utter putrefaction of a dead society.

THIRD BOWL - rivers and fountains become blood. Caesar worshippers given blood to drink.

FOURTH BOWL - sun becomes a blistering heat, men would not repent.

FIFTH BOWL - throne of the beast darkened, symbolizes loss of wisdom and understanding by which to guide the empire.

SIXTH BOWL - Euphrates River dried up, symbolizes a barrier to invasion 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.

SEVENTH BOWL upon the air and a voice from the throne said “it is done”.

The series of plagues from the bowls is now complete.

The cities of the nations fell and Babylon, the Roman Empire, was remembered in the sight of God, to give unto her the hot burning anger of His wrath. A collapse of the pagan world-city and its daughters is described in chapters 17 and 18.

Chapter 17 – The fall of Babylon, Rome the world power, has been introduced in the previous chapters (12 – 16), and now the nature of the city, described as a harlot, and its complete fall are enlarged upon. In the following visions, the apostle shows us by means of symbolic pictures, what befalls Babylon, the beast of the sea, and the false prophet.

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 – angel cries “Babylon the great fallen”. God has judged the harlot, and her smoke rises up forever and ever. She is cast into the lake of fire where the beast of the sea, the beast of the earth and Satan will be cast shortly.

Chapter 19 – The marriage of the lamb and the bride is now ready. Christ riding a white horse, to make war against the beast of the sea and the beast of the earth. 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*.