



# THE BOOK OF **REVELATION**

THE STORM BEFORE THE CALM



# The Book of Revelation: The Storm Before the Calm



This publication is not to be sold. It is produced as free educational material by the Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 1009 • Allen, TX 75013-0017  
972-521-7777 • 888-9-COGWA-9 (toll-free in the U.S.)

© 2015 Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the New King James Version  
(© 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.).

Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Cover and inside cover photo: Lightstock.com

**Authors:** Jim Haeffele, Ralph Levy, Paul Luecke, Chris Moen, David Treybig

**Publication Review Team:** Peter Hawkins, Jack Hendren, Don Henson, Harold Rhodes, Paul Suckling

**Editorial Reviewers:** Mike Bennett, Clyde Kilough **Doctrine Committee:** John Foster, Bruce Gore, Don Henson, David Johnson, Ralph Levy **Design:** Elizabeth Glasgow

# What Is Revelation All About?

From vivid images of carnage to sublime visions of beauty, the book of Revelation explains what will happen before and after Jesus Christ's return to earth. What does it mean for our lives—now and in the future?

**T**he book of Revelation is a mystery to most today, yet God's purpose was not to conceal, but to *reveal* to His servants things that will "shortly take place" (Revelation 1:1). Jesus Christ received this revelation from His Father and passed it on to the apostle John in a dramatic vision. The book's relevance for our day becomes clear as we consider its themes. Never before has its message become so widely available or applicable to world conditions.

The ominous storm clouds of worldwide disaster are on the horizon today. But Revelation shines a light of hope for a time of peace and calm on beyond.

## **Revealed to the Church**

John was told to write the vision and send it to the seven churches along an ancient mail route in what is today Turkey. It seems these seven were chosen to represent *all* of Christ's servants through the ages.

Christ plainly tells each congregation, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Revelation 2:7). No matter what the age, God's people must listen to and obey His instructions.

(For more on these important messages, see the "[Seven Churches of Revelation](#)" section on the LifeHopeandTruth.com website.)

## **The major theme: the Day of the Lord**

The theme of the book of Revelation is the Day of the Lord, when Jesus Christ intervenes to put down earthly rebellion and establish God's Kingdom of



righteousness, peace and joy. How that will come about was written on a scroll fastened with seals. As the seals open, the events preceding Christ's return come into view.

The language is pictorial and intense—a white horse, a fiery horse, a pale horse, a bloody slaughter, a violent earthquake. Jesus Christ explains what it means as the story flows through seals, trumpets and plagues.

To help you visualize how the contents of the book, including the seven seals, seven trumpets and seven plagues, are presented by Christ, see the accompanying “Chapter Outline of Revelation” and the “Seven Seals of Revelation” chart.

## **God's expectations**

What are we supposed to take away from reading the book of Revelation? God has a great master plan of salvation that moves toward the return of Jesus Christ to bring the peaceful Kingdom of God to the earth. That plan includes instructions and promises for members of God's Church—those the Bible calls saints—those who obediently, loyally and eagerly wait for His return.

Before the Kingdom of God begins, this world faces increasingly desperate times. We're given a preview in Revelation of what's ahead, and God expects us to be preparing. He wants us to be praying for Christ's return and for His Kingdom to come.

## **A special blessing**

As we begin, note a special blessing for those who study and internalize God's message in Revelation: “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it” (Revelation 1:3).

We pray that you will understand this important book of the Bible and be motivated to respond to its call.

# CHAPTER OUTLINE OF REVELATION

**1** Introduction.

**2-3** \*Messages to the seven churches.

**4-5** Christ proclaimed worthy to open the seals.

**6** First six seals opened.

**7** Sealing of two groups.

**8-9** The seventh seal, comprised of seven trumpets.

**10** Declaration from an angel.

**11** Two witnesses.

**12** \*The true Church through time.

**13** \*Two beasts.

**14** \*144,000 and messages from three angels.

**15-16** The seventh trumpet, comprising seven plagues.

**17-18** \*Judgment on the system called Babylon the Great.

**19** Christ returns to earth.

**20** 1,000 years, resurrections, lake of fire.

**21-22** New Jerusalem on a new earth.

\*Most of the chapters flow in chronological order, but some are insets that present background events and may cover long periods of time.

# SEVEN SEALS OF REVELATION



## FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE

### FIRST SEAL

**White Horse of  
Religious Deception**

**Revelation 6:1-2**

### SECOND SEAL

**Red Horse of  
War**

**Revelation 6:3-4**

### THIRD SEAL

**Black Horse of  
Famine**

**Revelation 6:5-6**

### FOURTH SEAL

**Pale Horse of  
Disease and Death**

**Revelation 6:7-8**

### SIXTH SEAL

**Heavenly Signs**

**Revelation 6:12-17**

### FIFTH SEAL

**Great Tribulation**

**Revelation 6:9-11**





## DAY OF THE LORD (TIME OF GOD'S WRATH)

### SEVENTH SEAL

#### Seven Trumpet Plagues

**Revelation 8:1-2**



One-third of trees and all grass burned up

**Revelation 8:7**



One-third of sea creatures die

**Revelation 8:8-9**



One-third of rivers become bitter

**Revelation 8:10-11**



One-third of sun, moon and stars darkened

**Revelation 8:12**



Locusts, symbolic of the beast's military power (Revelation 17:12-14)

**Revelation 9:1-12**

**FIRST WOE**



200-million-man army; one third of humanity killed, but humanity refuses to repent

**Revelation 9:13-21**

**SECOND WOE**



#### Seven Last Plagues

**Revelation 16:1**

**THIRD WOE**

#### FIRST PLAGUE

Sores on those who accepted the mark of the beast

**Revelation 16:2**

#### SECOND PLAGUE

Sea turns to blood; all sea creatures die

**Revelation 16:3**

#### THIRD PLAGUE

Rivers and springs turn to blood

**Revelation 16:4-7**

#### FOURTH PLAGUE

Sun scorches humanity with great heat, but people blaspheme God

**Revelation 16:8-9**

#### FIFTH PLAGUE

Beast's seat of government plagued

**Revelation 16:10-11**

#### SIXTH PLAGUE

Euphrates dried up; world's armies gathered to Armageddon (Joel 3:9-17)

**Revelation 16:12-16**

#### SEVENTH PLAGUE

Great earthquake and hail

**Revelation 16:17-21**

## Return of Jesus Christ

Revelation 11:15-18; 19:11-16; Matthew 24:30-31;  
1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16;  
Zechariah 14:1-4

# MAIN CHARACTERS OF REVELATION

The book of Revelation covers the entire sweep of history and future prophecy, with emphasis on the time leading up to Jesus Christ's return. The book introduces a variety of names and symbolic descriptions. Here are some of the major ones that can help you keep track of the action.

## SATAN

Satan the devil is the archenemy of God who influences all the other enemies of God.

## THE DRAGON

The dragon in Revelation 12 is identified as Satan and "the serpent of old" who deceives the whole world (verse 9). See more about the dragon in the article "[Revelation 12: Who Are the Woman, Child and Dragon?](#)" (Note that these article links are from [LifeHopeandTruth.com](#).)



## THE BEAST

The first beast of Revelation 13:1-8 is a powerful empire whose end-time civil leader will have authority "over every tribe, tongue, and nation" (verse 7). The beast especially refers to an end-time revival of the Holy Roman Empire.

## THE SECOND BEAST OF REVELATION 13:11-15

A religious organization and leader who will use miraculous powers to deceive mankind (verses 13-14) and will "cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed" (verse 15).

## THE FALSE PROPHET

The end-time religious leader of the second beast (Revelation 16:13).



## THE SCARLET WOMAN (GREAT HARLOT)

Another name for the second beast as described in Revelation 17. This religious organization (also referred to as Babylon the Great) directs the revivals of the Holy Roman Empire. See more on this in the article "[Revelation 17: Who Is the Scarlet Woman?](#)"



## JESUS CHRIST

The Son of God who revealed the book of Revelation. He is also known by many other names in the book, including the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, the Lamb and the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

## THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF REVELATION 2 AND 3

Congregations of the Church of God on a mail route in modern Turkey. They appear to represent the whole Church, eras of the Church, as well as messages that all Christians need to hear and heed. See the articles in the **"Seven Churches of Revelation"** section of the LifeHopeandTruth.com website for more details.



## THE 144,000

Revelation 7 identifies the 144,000 as representing 12,000 from each tribe of Israel with the exception of the tribe of Dan. Apparently the 144,000 will be people who, during the Great Tribulation, repent of their sins and are sealed for salvation. For more about this, see the article **"144,000."**

## THE GREAT MULTITUDE

This great multitude will include people from "all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues [languages]" (Revelation 7:9) "who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (verse 14). For more about this, see the article **"144,000."**

## THE TWO WITNESSES

Revelation 11 tells the story of two individuals God will send to represent Him and to prophesy for 3½ years (Revelation 11:3) before Christ's return. The two witnesses will have great power to get people's attention through miracles and plagues. God will allow them to be killed, but will resurrect them after 3½ days. See more about these servants of God and their message in the article **"Two Witnesses."**

## THE WOMAN

The woman with "a garland of twelve stars" who was "with child" in Revelation 12:1-2 represents Old Testament Israel, to whom Jesus Christ was born. Later in Revelation 12 the woman represents the New Testament Church.

## THE CHILD

The Child born to the woman in Revelation 12 refers to Jesus Christ at His first coming to earth. See more in the article **"Revelation 12: Who Are the Woman, Child and Dragon?"**



## THE BRIDE, THE WIFE OF THE LAMB

The Church, made up of the saints of God, will make itself ready to marry Christ (Revelation 19:7-9). See more in the article **"Marriage Supper of the Lamb."**



## Seven Seals

The book of Revelation speaks of seven seals being opened before the return of Jesus Christ to earth. What are the meanings of these seals?

**T**he fifth chapter of the book of Revelation shows a scroll being presented to Christ in heaven. This scroll is protected by seven seals, and Christ is honored as the only One worthy to open these seals. Once opened, the scroll reveals events that will occur before and during Christ's second coming.

The first six seals are all opened in Revelation 6. The seventh seal is opened in chapter 8 and continues through much of the rest of the book. The seventh seal represents the Day of the Lord and is actually the main theme of the book. The Day of the Lord is the time of Christ's intervention in this world to wrest control from Satan and from the rebellious human rulers under him and to establish the Kingdom of God here on earth. (The Day of the Lord is explained in more detail in the next chapter.)

So the first six seals will lead up to the Day of the Lord.

### **The first four seals: four horsemen of the Apocalypse**

The first four of the seals are presented as messengers riding different-colored horses, so they are commonly called the four horsemen of the Apocalypse (from the Greek word for Revelation).

What are these four horsemen? They represent events that have been ongoing since this prophecy was given and that will intensify before the return of Jesus Christ.

Since Christ is the One opening these seals and revealing what will happen in this world before His return, is there anywhere else in the Bible that He discloses these events? In fact, He did so shortly before His death in a section

known as the Olivet Prophecy (given on the Mount of Olives), recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21.

Seeing what Christ said in this prophecy helps us identify what each of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse represents.

In Matthew 24:3 Christ's disciples asked, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" In the comparison chart below, notice how Christ's answer lines up exactly with what He gave years later in the book of Revelation.

## JESUS PROPHESED THE FOUR HORSEMEN

### Matthew 24

:5 "For many will come **in My name**, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and **will deceive many.**"

### Revelation 6

:2 **White horse** and rider with a bow.

### Description/Identity

**RELIGIOUS DECEPTION** would be the first major trend to develop after Christ's departure from earth—that is, some would falsely represent Christ, deceiving many. (In Revelation 19:11-15 we see Christ on a white horse, but with a sword, not a bow.)

:6 "And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. ... But the end is not yet.

:7a "For **nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.**"

:3-4 **Red horse** and rider with a sword, taking peace from the earth and causing people to kill one another.

**WARS** have continued around the world since Christ left the earth. But warfare between great nations and kingdoms (including "world wars," which began in the 20th century) will increase in the end time.

:7b "And there will be **famines, ...**"

:5-6 **Black horse** and rider with scales to weigh scarce food supplies.

**FAMINES** will increase around the world as the end draws near. Famines are frequently caused by droughts, wars and overpopulation.

:7c "... **pestilences, ...**"

:7-8 **Pale horse** (literally *chloros*, a pale green color) and rider named "Death."

**PESTILENCE** (disease on a large scale, that is, epidemics and pandemics) increases around the world. Wars, famines and extensive travel contribute to the rapid spread of pestilence.



An important point to realize is that once each seal is opened, it *remains open!* In other words, each seal is *added* to the seals previously opened and taking their toll, and they all greatly intensify as the end of this world draws near.

Notice the enormous effect of these first four seals (horsemen) in Revelation 6:8: “And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth.” This indicates that the first four seals will ultimately result in a death toll of one-fourth the earth’s population.

This summary statement also adds something else that will contribute to the death toll—beasts of the earth, which kill as carriers of pestilence and as ravenous predators.

The first four seals are clearly already open, and the four horsemen of the Apocalypse have been riding through the years, taking their toll on populations. But many other prophecies in the Bible show that their destruction will multiply greatly as the next seal—the fifth seal or Great Tribulation—is about to open. Christ reveals that this world is about to undergo great devastation due to the rebellion of humanity against our Creator.

### **Fifth seal: Great Tribulation**

“When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, ‘How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?’ Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed” (Revelation 6:9-11).

The fifth seal represents the Great Tribulation that will be directed against the physical descendants of Jacob, along with faithful members of God’s Church.

Describing this time, Jesus said, “For then there will be *great tribulation*, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved [alive]; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened” (Matthew 24:21-22; see also Revelation 13:7).

This seal represents Satan's anger, which will be directed against all who refuse to submit to his evil henchmen, the beast and false prophet. It will especially be against the modern nations that descended from the 12 tribes of Israel and the remnant of God's Church (Jeremiah 30:7; Revelation 12:17). (See our articles "[12 Tribes of Israel Today: Who Are They?](#)" and "[Jacob's Trouble](#)" for more on this.)

Warning people of these end-time actions by Satan, Revelation 12:12 says, "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."

### **Sixth seal: cosmic disturbances**

Describing what he saw when the sixth seal was opened, John wrote: "And behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place" (Revelation 6:12-14).

These supernatural events had long before been foretold as signs announcing the Day of the Lord, the time of Christ's return to earth. The prophet Joel had described this as "a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness" and a time when "the sun and moon will grow dark, and the stars will diminish their brightness. ... The heavens and earth will shake" (Joel 2:2; 3:15-16).

As these awesome events occur, mankind will realize that God will soon bring punishment because of disobedience to His laws. "And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?'" (Revelation 6:15-17).

### **The seventh seal: the wrath and mercy of God**

The seventh seal, which includes a sequence of seven trumpets, begins in Revelation 8. The Day of the Lord begins when this seal is opened. It represents both "the wrath of the Lamb" (Revelation 6:16), which Christ will bring upon mankind because of disobedience to God's laws, and the mercy of God, which

will eventually come through the return of Jesus Christ to this earth to establish the Kingdom of God.

Before the beginning of the seventh seal, God is going to seal (protect) a group of 144,000 people, representing the 12 tribes of Israel, and a great multitude (Revelation 7:3-4, 9). Read more about God's protection in the articles "[144,000](#)," "[Place of Safety](#)" and "[The Wrath of God: How to Survive](#)."

The Greek word *sphragizo*, translated "sealed," can mean stamped or marked for security. This same word is used by Paul in Ephesians 1:13 to describe members of the Church of God who were "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" and in Ephesians 4:30 to describe Church members who were "sealed for the day of redemption." Many of these faithful people are thus going to be protected from the punishments soon to come upon the rest of mankind—people who are in rebellion against God (Revelation 9:4).

As the seventh seal begins, seven trumpets, representing a series of punishments, prepare to sound (Revelation 8:6). By the time of the fifth trumpet, the punishment will be so severe that "men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them" (Revelation 9:6). During the sixth trumpet, a third of mankind will be killed (verse 18).

The seventh trumpet announces that "the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ" (Revelation 11:15). The seventh trumpet also includes "seven last plagues," also called "bowls full of the wrath of God." These continue until "the wrath of God is complete" (Revelation 15:1 and 7) because, sadly, many people will still not repent or accept the returning Jesus Christ.

In the next chapter we will see more details about the momentous events of the seventh seal—the Day of the Lord—which is the main theme of the book of Revelation.



# The Day of the Lord

A major theme of Revelation is the period known throughout the Bible as the Day of the Lord. This is the time when God intervenes in this evil world.

**A**lthough God's plan for mankind will eventually result in peace and prosperity for all who worship and obey Him, painful correction and supernatural intervention will be required to convince humans to repent of their sins. These actions by God are referred to in the Bible as the Day of the Lord.

Before the Day of the Lord, there will be a time of tribulation during which Satan will vent his wrath on those who won't follow him (Mark 13:19; Revelation 12:12). Satan will do this in part by giving power and authority to political and religious leaders, who will establish a powerful government that will be used as a tool to persecute God's people for 3½ years (42 months, Revelation 13:5). This period is known as the Great Tribulation, and it will bring humanity to the brink of self-destruction (Matthew 24:21-22).

The Day of the Lord begins after Satan has unleashed his wrath and after a series of heavenly signs that will demonstrate God's power and authority (Joel 2:30-31; Revelation 6:12-16). During this time God will intervene with a series of punishments for the purpose of bringing rebellious people to repentance. The Day of the Lord is also called "the great day of His wrath" (Revelation 6:17) because of God's righteous anger against the corruption and destruction caused by sin and rebellion (Isaiah 13:6-13).

The Day of the Lord begins with the opening of the seventh seal (Revelation 8:1) and encompasses much of the rest of the book of Revelation, including the seven trumpet plagues and the seven last plagues (Revelation 16). Only those who have been found faithful will be shielded from these punishments (Revelation 7:2-3; 9:4; 14:9-10).

God's wrath will soon accomplish its righteous purpose, and He will mercifully prevent humanity from annihilating itself. Jesus Christ will then set up His beautiful and peaceful Kingdom.

## **Why is the Day of the Lord necessary?**

To understand why such a terrible time of punishment is necessary, we have to go back to the beginning and understand God's purpose for creating man and see how Satan and sin have corrupted this world.

“Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.” With these words, God formed Adam of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (Genesis 1:26; 2:7). Endowed with self-awareness, free will, imagination and conscience, humanity was created to develop these unique gifts and eventually—with divine help—the righteous moral character of God Himself.

But the Bible reveals the existence of an evil spirit being known as Satan, who currently rules the earth and has been responsible for deceiving the whole world (Luke 4:6; John 14:30; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4; Revelation 12:9). (For more about the origin of Satan and of evil, download our free booklet [\*Why Does God Allow Evil and Suffering?\*](#))

Satan is a liar and a murderer (John 8:44). Though he cannot force people to make wrong choices, Satan can influence their behavior by stirring up thoughts and emotions. Through subtle manipulation, he appeals to man's natural inclinations and provokes people to devise and commit evil while persuading them that these are good things (Isaiah 5:20; 2 Corinthians 11:14). Such was the case with Adam and Eve. Satan's lies led them to question what God had told them and to take matters into their own hands.

By rejecting God's instructions and choosing to eat from the forbidden tree in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve set in motion a pattern of rebellious attitudes and choices that separated them and us from our Creator. Sin had tainted the relationship. They chose to decide for themselves what is right and wrong.

So they were expelled from Eden, and they lost their close relationship with God. Their choice led to death for them and for all who would follow in their footsteps (Romans 5:12; Genesis 3).



By continuing to reject God's perfect and beneficial laws, humanity has been progressively taking on more and more of the evil and destructive attributes of God's adversary, Satan the devil. In spite of God's warnings, humanity has refused to repent. Already God has had to intervene twice to slow the vicious cycle of sin that destroys and corrupts everything good that God has made—at the time of Noah and at the Tower of Babel (Genesis 6:5-13; 11:5-9).

The Day of the Lord will mark the pivotal intervention of the righteous God to put down all evil and finally establish His Kingdom on earth.

## **After the Day of the Lord**

God's purpose is not to destroy humanity, but to get people's attention so they will repent of their sins that have caused so much misery since creation (Joel 2:12-13; Revelation 3:19). Unfortunately, even in the midst of the Day of the Lord, most will still not repent (Revelation 9:20-21; 16:8-9).

Christ will then return to earth with a mighty army to put an end to Satan's rule and the human rebellion he has inspired (Revelation 19:11-16; 20:2). Though human armies will gather at Armageddon and then try to fight the returning Christ, they will be soundly defeated. (See more about this in the article about [Armageddon](#) on the LifeHopeandTruth.com website.) Then finally the people of a humbled world will repent and seek to learn God's way (Isaiah 2:2-4).

For those who have been invited into a relationship with God and have committed their lives to His service, now is the time to prepare for the perilous time that is coming upon the whole world and to sound the warning to all who will listen.

The warning message also includes hope! It's the gospel (good news) of the peaceful and productive Kingdom of God that Jesus Christ will set up when He returns.

For more vitally important information about why God is angry and how we should respond, see the articles "[Wrath of God](#)" and "[The Wrath of God: How to Survive](#)" on our website.



# God's Enemies Will Be Defeated

Revelation describes many enemies of God, sometimes using various colorful names for the same foes. In the end, all of these enemies will be defeated.

Satan the devil is the ultimate enemy of God, and the book of Revelation describes a number of people and organizations that fall under his sway. In fact, he has deceived the “whole world” (Revelation 12:9).

In the end, his efforts to thwart the plan of God will be defeated, but not because Satan didn’t give it his best effort. The descriptions of the powerful and vicious beasts and other enemies in his service are truly frightening.

### **The beasts of Revelation 13**

Now, let’s look at the time before the Day of the Lord when the enemies of God, emboldened by Satan, reach the pinnacle of their power.

In Revelation 13 the apostle John recorded a vision he had been given of two beasts that would arise before Christ’s return. The first beast represents a powerful empire and civil leader who will have authority “over every tribe, tongue, and nation” (verse 7).

In this vision, John foresaw the dragon, Satan, giving the beast his position of authority (verse 2) and all the world following this leader and his practice of worshipping the dragon (verses 3-4). All those whose names are not written in God’s Book of Life will worship this human leader (verses 4, 8; for more about this book, see the article “[The Book of Life](#)”).

In this same vision, John saw a second beast arise from the earth and support the first beast. This second beast had “two horns like a lamb [pretending to represent Christ, the Lamb of God] and spoke like a dragon [symbolic of

Satan]” (verse 11). This will be a religious organization led by a man who will use miraculous powers to deceive mankind (verses 13-14).

In other passages of the Bible, this miracle-working individual representing this second beast is called “the man of sin” (2 Thessalonians 2:3, 9) and “the false prophet” (Revelation 16:13; 19:20). For a more complete explanation of this religious leader’s names and role, see the article “[Antichrist](#)” on the LifeHopeandTruth.com website.

In the future, this religious leader that John saw in vision will force people, upon threat of death, to submit to and even worship the seemingly invincible civil government that will come to rule much of the world.

One way this religious leader will enforce compliance is to control the world’s economy. As John noted in his vision, this future religious leader “causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666” (Revelation 13:16-18).

The “mark or name of the beast, or the number of his name” will identify these individuals as ones who support this satanic power. See the articles “[Mark of the Beast](#)” and “[666: The Number of the Beast](#)” on our website for information you need to know about this mark and number.

## **The beasts and the Roman Empire**

The book of Revelation should be read in the context of the prophecies recorded in the book of Daniel. Through a dream given to King Nebuchadnezzar, God revealed that there would be four great empires from that time forward (Daniel 2:31-43). History has shown these to be the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek and Roman Empires.

Later, Daniel was shown a vision of four beasts, which also represented these four empires. As for the fourth beast, “it had ten horns” (Daniel 7:7). “The horn is a symbol of power, and is frequently so used as an emblem or symbol in Daniel” (*Albert Barnes’ Notes on the Bible*, Daniel 7:7-8).

Daniel then wrote: “I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were

plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words” (verse 8).

The horns represented the power of the Roman Empire, and the little horn represented a related religious system. In vision, Daniel saw this religious leader “making war against the saints, and prevailing against them until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom” (verses 21-22).

One of the hallmarks of this religious system is its work to “change times and laws” (verse 25), referring to God’s Sabbath, holy days and other biblical laws. It also persecuted those who refused to give up those biblical times and laws.

What we learn from the preceding verses is that this fourth beast, which history has shown to be the Roman Empire, will have a final revival; and its last religious leader will be in existence at Christ’s return.

The final form of this empire will be comprised of “ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast ... and will give their power and authority to the beast” (Revelation 17:12-13).

This final revival of the Roman Empire will consist of 10 nations or groups of nations voluntarily uniting under a single leader. This power will be centered in Europe—the heartland of every previous revival of the Roman Empire. Under the influence of Satan, they will actually fight against Christ when He returns to establish the Kingdom of God here on earth (verse 14).

## **The scarlet woman symbolizes spiritual infidelity**

The same enemies are presented in a different way in Revelation 17, which documents the work of a powerful, false religious system that has long deceived and ruled over numerous nations and peoples.

Revelation 17 begins by identifying the woman in this chapter as a “harlot” (verse 1) “with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication” (verse 2). This seems to refer to political intrigues in which the leaders of these nations collaborate with this religious power, with each party seeking its own advantage.

This religious system’s influence was and is extensive. The description of her as

one “who sits on many waters” (verse 1) is later explained: “The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues” (verse 15). In verse 2 she is further described as making the inhabitants of the earth “drunk with the wine of her fornication”—in other words, drawing vast numbers of people into false religious teachings.

In the Bible, spiritual fornication can represent false religious teachings and practices, such as those adopted from pagan religions. God sees this as infidelity to Him and the pure doctrines revealed in the Bible. God’s true Church, on the other hand, is described as a chaste virgin (2 Corinthians 11:2; see also Revelation 19:7-8)—the exact opposite of the harlot.

The harlot is dressed in purple and scarlet, appearing to be a woman of wealth and authority. The contrast to this beautifully impressive exterior is that her cup is filled with “abominations and the filthiness of her fornication” (Revelation 17:4). In other words, she deceives many by her appearance. Although she looks beautiful and has the trappings of wealth, luxury and authority, her actions break the commandments of God and are an abomination to God.

## **Mystery, Babylon the Great**

In verse 5 we see the woman’s name: “MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.”

The reference to Babylon indicates that, just as Babylon (the first of the four empires foretold by God in the book of Daniel) had spread and enforced its false, idolatrous form of worship, so would this “woman.” This mother of harlots, while appearing to be Christian, would produce “daughters” with similar false doctrines—teachings that would be in opposition to what Jesus and His disciples taught.

We are told that this false religious system will deceive and dominate the world. This “woman” is also called “that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth,” which at the time of John would have been a clear reference to Rome (Revelation 17:18). It will also be responsible for the deaths of the faithful “martyrs of Jesus,” who, like all the saints, “keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” (verse 6; Revelation 14:12).

In fact, as we saw in Daniel 7, this religious system has a long history of persecuting and martyring those who resisted its authority and teachings.



## The woman and the beast

One of the most intriguing descriptions of the woman of Revelation 17 is found in verse 3: “And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.”

Who and what is this strange beast?

The first beast of Revelation 13 and the scarlet beast of Revelation 17, though representing different aspects, both include a continuation of the fourth great historical empire (the Roman Empire) prophesied in Daniel 7:1-8. This kingdom was prophesied to receive a “deadly wound” before rising again before the end of this age (Revelation 13:1, 3). Although the human leader of this empire is also called “the beast” in Revelation 19:20, here (in Revelation 17:3) this seems to refer to the empire.

It appears that the woman sitting on the beast controls or rules the beast—as the rider on a horse controls or directs it.

What do all these biblical clues about the identity of the false religious system add up to? What great religious power has been associated with the revivals of the Roman Empire? What religious system has taken upon itself to change the biblical seventh-day Sabbath and holy days and other laws of the Bible? Which religious system has persecuted and even martyred those who continued to keep the Sabbath, Passover and other laws of the Bible? Which religious system has adopted festivals and worship practices from ancient paganism and has passed on such teachings to its “daughter” churches? What church has had great influence over the kings and emperors of Europe and is inseparably associated with Rome?

Considering all these things, many students of the Bible and the history of Europe and the Holy Roman Empire have come to an unmistakable conclusion. Though many of its followers through the centuries have been sincere and unaware of what these prophecies reveal, there is a universal church that fits these biblical clues.

For example, in his commentary on Revelation 17:3, Adam Clarke explains, “This is a representation of the Latin [Roman] Church in her highest state of antichristian prosperity, for she sits upon the scarlet coloured beast, a striking emblem of her complete domination over the secular Latin [Roman] empire” (*Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible*). It is because of its domination by

the Roman Catholic Church that the empire became known as the “Holy” Roman Empire.

Putting all this information together, the scarlet woman—the Roman Catholic Church—was prophesied to ride or control successive continuations of the Holy Roman Empire, the last of which will arise at the end of this age. This last revival of the Roman Empire will be a combination of 10 kings (or leaders) that will come together to form a final, short-lived resurgence of this empire. (For more about this from history and prophecy, see the article “[What Is Babylon?](#)” on our website.)

This end-of-the-age empire—which the scarlet woman will control for a short time—will receive its power from Satan the devil.

## **The end of the scarlet woman and all of God’s enemies**

Because of the influence of Satan and the woman clothed in scarlet, the 10 horns or kings “will give their power and authority to the beast” (Revelation 17:13) and “receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast” (verse 12). Before their short rule is over, these kings “will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings” (verse 14).

Under God’s influence and apparently realizing that they had been deceived or disappointed by the scarlet woman, they will then turn on her and destroy her. “And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled” (verses 16-17).

## **A final warning**

God promises an end to the evil empire of the beast, the false religion of the second beast (the scarlet woman) and the whole Babylonian system. But that end comes with a warning to all believers to act before it is too late. “And I heard another voice from heaven saying, ‘Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues’” (Revelation 18:4).

May we all heed this warning so we will not share in the sins of modern Babylon or any of the enemies of God. And let us pray for the time when all of God’s enemies will be subdued and God’s Kingdom of peace can spread around the world.



# Christ's Return and the Millennium of Peace

After God's enemies are defeated, Jesus Christ will rule on earth as King of the Kingdom of God, bringing a thousand years of peace. What will this Millennium mean for you?

In an unstable world threatened by wars, terrorism, weather disturbances and natural disasters, the concept of a *1,000-year* period of peace—often called the *Millennium*—fascinates us.

Revelation 19 describes the return of Jesus Christ, coming in glory and power to take over the kingdoms of this world and to institute a new, just reign here on earth (verses 11-16). At the sounding of the seventh trumpet, Jesus will resurrect His faithful followers. Then He will put down rebellion and institute the Kingdom of God.

## **First resurrection**

At His return, Jesus Christ will send His angels to gather “His elect”—the saints who will be given eternal life and a place in God’s Kingdom (Matthew 24:31).

This group of faithful people will include those who are alive and those true Christians who have died (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). They will be raised in this first resurrection and changed into spirit at Christ’s return (1 Corinthians 15:50-53). It is this select group that will be the Bride of Christ and be at the marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:6-9). See more about this in the article “[Marriage Supper of the Lamb](#)” on the LifeHopeandTruth.com website.

## **Satan bound**

Next in Revelation 20, we read of one of the first events to take place following the return of Jesus Christ the Messiah:

“Then I [the apostle John] saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the

dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while” (Revelation 20:1-3).

Here we read for the first time of the duration of this initial phase of the reign of God on earth—1,000 years! We are also given insight into why it will be such a different world: Satan the devil, the enemy of God and His plan, will be banished. What a wonderful way to start the Millennium (from the Latin word for thousand years)!

## **Saints will rule**

Then John writes more about those raised in the first resurrection in Revelation 20: “And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them [the saints of God]. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years” (verse 4).

Here we see that the saints of God, those who refused to follow Satan’s ways (and specifically the beast power of the last days), will have the privilege of reigning with Jesus Christ for 1,000 years.

Here in Revelation 20 we read the phrase *1,000 years* six times. This chapter makes it clear there will indeed be a millennial reign of Jesus Christ on earth and that it will be a much better time than this age of man that precedes it.

## **More prophecies of the Millennium**

But that’s by no means the whole story. Though the use of the phrase *thousand years* is limited, we learn wonderful facts about the coming Millennium in many other passages of the Bible.

Elsewhere—especially in the writings of the Old Testament prophets—we can read of the impact the ruling Kingdom of God will have. During the Millennium, God will bring world peace, economic stability and the restoration of true education and right values.

For example, Isaiah wrote: “Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that

the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it.

“Many people shall come and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.’ For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore” (Isaiah 2:2-4).

The earth, devastated by end-time events, will be repaired and refreshed.

“Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will also enable you to dwell in the cities, and the ruins shall be rebuilt. The desolate land shall be tilled instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass by. So they will say, “This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited”’” (Ezekiel 36:33-35).

Christ's reign as King of Kings will be marked by the healing of diseases and disabilities (Jeremiah 30:17; Isaiah 35:5-6), abundant prosperity (Amos 9:13-15), universal peace and, most importantly, the opportunity for people to live God's way of life and have their sins forgiven.

The Millennium is going to be a wonderful and exciting time—something we can eagerly look forward to.





# Judgment of God

Revelation 20 reveals the steps Christ will take after returning to earth to add children to God's eternal family. How will the judgment of God take place?



People long for a peaceful and prosperous world—not understanding that it will come about, but only after Jesus returns and establishes God’s Kingdom. After all, it is the events prophesied in the book of Revelation that will finally bring justice and peace to our sin-filled world.

The teaching that all people will face the judgment of God stretches back in time to man’s earliest beginnings. God had instructed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. And God had reasoned with their son, Cain, saying, “If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but *you should rule over it*” (Genesis 4:7).

As we reviewed in an earlier chapter, mankind has gone astray from God from the beginning. Unfortunately, humans have not successfully ruled over their sinful desires. Scripture explains that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23) and, since “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23), all humans deserve death. But God in His mercy has established a plan so that our sins can be forgiven through repentance and baptism (Acts 2:38).

Many understand that Christ came to earth some 2,000 years ago to give His life to pay the penalty for our sins. As John explained: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). The book of Hebrews adds that Jesus “will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation” (Hebrews 9:28).

## **Judgment is an opportunity**

What we can determine from these passages is that God's judgment is not necessarily something to fear because it is also our opportunity to become part of God's eternal family.

Of course, if we do evil, it is indeed "a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31). On the other hand, if we love God and serve Him, He promises to be merciful and compassionate. "For the LORD will judge His people and have compassion on His servants" (Deuteronomy 32:36).

We should also note that God's judgment is a *process*. God watches us over time, observing how we mature (Matthew 5:48), overcome (Revelation 2:7; 3:21) and live according to His will (Matthew 7:21). Ultimately, God will make the determination whether He will grant a person the gift of eternal life—but only after He gives each one the understanding, time and opportunity to build righteous character by striving to live as He desires (Romans 2:6-9).

For members of the Church of God, who understand God's laws and who have committed to keeping them, the time of judgment is now. As Peter wrote, "For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house [Church] of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?" (1 Peter 4:17).

This brings us to Revelation 20, which explains what Jesus will do to eliminate religious deception and make it possible for everyone to understand His teaching. It also explains how God will complete His plan of salvation—which includes the judgment of God on all humanity—through three resurrections.

In the previous chapter of this booklet we discussed the first resurrection, the binding of Satan and the Millennium of peace that are described in the beginning of Revelation 20. After these important stages of God's judgment, God allows Satan to be free again for a short time.

## **Satan released**

"Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea" (Revelation 20:7-8).

How sad that after the world and its citizens have experienced all the joys and

privileges of living under the righteous rule of Jesus Christ, many are going to be deceived by Satan, the archenemy of mankind!

This army that's inspired by Satan will be destroyed, and Satan will be cast into the lake of fire (verses 9-10).

What the Bible teaches is that the lake of fire, also called the everlasting fire, will be “prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41, also see Jude 1:6-7). As spirit beings, they cannot be harmed by fire, but they will be cast into this lake of fire before their final punishment of being thrust out into “the blackness of darkness forever” as described by Jude. There they will be restrained forever (Jude 1:13).

## **The second resurrection**

After this, there will be a second resurrection for “the rest of the dead” (Revelation 20:5). Who are these people called “the rest of the dead”?

The first resurrection involved those who had been called by God, who were faithful in this physical life, and who were resurrected to eternal life at Jesus' return. This second resurrection will be a restoration of physical life for humans who have never had the opportunity to hear and really understand God's expectations of humanity. In this resurrection, humans will rise from the grave and live again during the time of the “great white throne” judgment (Revelation 20:11-12).

This period of the judgment of God, which includes the opportunity to receive salvation, is pictured by the Eighth Day or Last Great Day festival. For more about this, see the article “[The Last Great Day](#)” on the Life, Hope & Truth website. (In fact, three other annual festivals also picture major events revealed in the book of Revelation. See “[The Greatest Story Never Told.](#)”)

To learn more about what the Bible teaches about the resurrections, be sure to read the article “[Resurrections: What Are They?](#)” on the Life, Hope & Truth website.

## **The third resurrection**

After faithful people who are being called during this age have been given eternal life in the first resurrection (John 6:44) and people who were not called by God during this present age have been given an opportunity to receive salvation in the second resurrection, there remains one more category of people.

These are ones who knew God's truth yet refused to accept it and live by it.

Since they were fully able to understand and act upon God's truth, He judged them during their lives just as He judges the faithful. There is no further period of judging for these people. Their time of judging is complete. However, these individuals died, never having received the ultimate judgment—sentencing—from God.

According to Revelation 20:13-14, some will be brought back to physical life to be punished for their unrighteous conduct—they will be mercifully destroyed for eternity by means of the lake of fire, which will then engulf the entire earth (2 Peter 3:7).

Hebrews 9:27 states, "And it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment." In other words, God renders His determination (judgment) after a person has lived his or her life, established his or her character and died. The punishment for those who have refused to accept God's gift of salvation is to be resurrected and die a "second death" (Revelation 20:6, 14), a final death from which there is no resurrection or hope for life once again.

In summary, Revelation 20 shows God's judgment on Satan and explains the judgment of God on humanity, which includes the opportunity for humans to receive salvation.



# New Jerusalem and Eternity

After all the horrors described in Revelation, the last two chapters present a vision of beauty, peace and calm almost beyond comprehension. God promises to wipe away all tears and dwell with His children for eternity.

**A**fter God's time of judgment is concluded, a fire will engulf the entire planet, melting all the elements and works of earth's history (2 Peter 3:10-13). After this, the Bible describes a pure, transformed new earth—one which can never grow old or corrupt (Isaiah 65:17; 66:22). It is this new earth upon which the city of New Jerusalem will descend.

### **New Jerusalem comes to earth**

“Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Revelation 21:2). Here we notice that God the Father is still in heaven at this point and that this city is from Him; He *prepared* it.

As for the residents of this city, Revelation 3:12 identifies overcomers of this age as the inhabitants of New Jerusalem: “He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God *and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God.*” Notice also Hebrews 11:10, 16 showing that this city is prepared for God's faithful elect.

### **No more death, sorrow or crying**

We now come to one of the most encouraging prophecies in the Bible: “And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away’” (Revelation 21:3-4).

Here we see that God the Father's *new* place of residence will be *the new earth*, where He will dwell with His immortal family. It is most interesting to realize that while heaven is God's current dwelling place, *earth* is destined to become His future home!

Promises in God's Word, such as in Psalm 37, take on much more meaning in light of this reality. "But those who wait on the LORD, they shall inherit the *earth*" (verse 9). "But the meek shall inherit the *earth*" (verse 11). "For those blessed by Him shall inherit the *earth*" (verse 22).

## **A description of the city**

New Jerusalem is described as an amazing city!

**ILLUMINATION:** In Revelation 21:9-10 we read of an angel showing John "the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God." John then says that this is a magnificent city, "having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal" (Revelation 21:11). The luminescence or radiance of the city is described as being like a precious, translucent gem.

We are also told that "the city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light" (Revelation 21:23). The shining brilliance of God and Christ will provide light in all directions throughout the city.

**A WALL AND GATES:** The city is described as having "a great and high wall with twelve gates" (Revelation 21:12-13). Angels stand at these gates, each named after one of the 12 tribes of Israel.

Above the foundations, the wall of the city extends upward about 250 feet (verse 17), constructed entirely of jasper and continuous on all four sides. In this wall are the three gateways, each made of a single, enormous pearl. If evenly spaced in the wall, these gateways would be some 375 miles apart!

**FOUNDATIONS:** The city's 12 foundations carry the names of the apostles (Revelation 21:14). Thousands of years prior, Christ had said that each of His 12 apostles would sit on a throne over a tribe of Israel (Luke 22:28-30). As a spiritual parallel, Christ's Church today is "*built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone*" (Ephesians 2:20).



SIZE: Revelation 21:16 tells us that “the city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal.” According to most sources, the physical dimensions described here are astonishing—some 1,500 miles in each direction! (For comparison, the United States is about 1,300 miles north to south.)

Some of Christ’s final words to His disciples were, “In My Father’s house are *many* mansions” (John 14:2). The word *mansions* is translated from the Greek word *mone*, which means dwelling, abode, permanent place of residence or home. Christ was indeed correct in stating that His Father’s house had much space in which to dwell.

It is also interesting to note that New Jerusalem has no *separate* temple—God the Father and Christ “*are its temple*” (Revelation 21:22).

CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS: “The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones. . . . The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street [*plateia*, meaning a wide ‘plat’ or ‘place,’ as in an open square] of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass” (Revelation 21:18-21).

Any physical structure this high is impossible by our understanding of physics. But while New Jerusalem is described as constructed of various and distinctive materials familiar to us, it is apparently of a *spirit* composition that supersedes the laws of physics as we know them.

The city itself is described as being of pure, translucent gold. This is how John sees it, having no other words or frame of reference from his life to describe what he is seeing. While he sees that it is constructed of a variety of distinct materials, it is at the same time dazzling beyond what our human eyes have ever seen.

A DYNAMIC CITY: Revelation 21:24-25 explains, “And the nations . . . shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there).”

Since it is always daytime in New Jerusalem, the gates are always open, which implies a regular passage of people into and out of the city. Who are these kings and nations outside the city? This is where we accept the fact that God

has not chosen to reveal all details about the earth's amazing future, and we can merely speculate.

Even though we do not know everything about God's future holy city, we can confidently believe what God said through King David: "In your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore" (Psalm 16:11).

This is only a tiny glimpse into what we can look forward to experiencing in the Kingdom of God for eternity! Explore more about God's eternal plan in the articles "[What Is the Kingdom of God?](#)" "[Purpose of Life](#)" and "[Children of God.](#)"

# Revelation and You

The book of Revelation ties together the whole message of the Bible, summing up God's plan and desire for each of us. How will we respond?

A comparison of the themes found in the first book of the Bible, Genesis, and the concluding book of the Bible, Revelation, reveals an amazing unity and completeness of God's Word. Written and compiled under the inspiration of God, the final book comes back to and completes themes introduced in the first.

Genesis describes the preparation of the earth for mankind and an intimate relationship between God and humans. It also speaks of a "tree of life," representing eternal life (Genesis 3:22).

Adam and Eve rejected God's instructions and ate of "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Genesis 2:17; 3:6). Because of this sinful action, Adam and Eve lost their close relationship with God, were expelled from the Garden of Eden and were denied access to "the tree of life" (Genesis 3:10, 24).

For some 6,000 years mankind in general has followed Adam and Eve's example of disobedience. Other than the few firstfruits that God has called through the ages, which includes those in His Church, most of humanity has been blinded by Satan to God's eternal truths (Revelation 12:9).

The book of Revelation is the promise from God of a completely new world and a restoration of a close relationship between God and man. In short, this book is the culmination of God's dealing with human beings.

## **God's desire**

While Revelation begins with the explanation that this message was given to show Christ's servants "things which must shortly take place" (Revelation 1:1), the remainder of the text shows that it is far more than simply a prophecy of what is to come. In addition to providing an outline of end-time events, this message from God the Father reveals His wonderfully comforting nature by which He "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4).

This loving desire of God the Father is a clear depiction of His grace in action—which provides the only way humans can be saved (Ephesians 2:5, 8; Titus 3:7). Yet God's grace does not mean that He winks at or ignores sin.

To the contrary, the book of Revelation includes several admonitions for those who are responding to God to "repent" of their sins (Revelation 2:5, 16, 21, 22; 3:3, 19; 9:20, 21; 16:9, 11) as well as three explanations that those who respond to God keep His commandments (Revelation 12:17; 14:12; 22:14). And as the events of the book of Revelation unfold, a voice from heaven urges people to leave the ungodly ways of the world saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues" (Revelation 18:4).

Many today think of the 10 Commandments as suggestions rather than commandments of God. Many no longer obey the Fourth Commandment, which tells us to worship God on the seventh day of the week, from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset (Exodus 20:8-11). Many also ignore His instruction to keep His annual holy days (Leviticus 23:2, 4). Instead of observing these holy days as Jesus, His apostles and the New Testament Church did, many have dropped these biblically commanded festivals and adopted humanly devised holidays such as Christmas and Easter.

The book of Revelation confirms the Old Testament promises that Jesus will return to earth to "judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with His truth" (Psalm 96:13; also see Psalm 98:9 and Acts 17:31). Since "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8), He is going to judge everyone by the same commandments that He and the Father gave His people thousands of years ago.

The book of Revelation explains what conditions on earth will be like when Christ returns, how He will administer the wrath of God upon rebellious sinners and how He will establish the Kingdom of God upon the earth and reeducate people to God's eternal commands.

God's desire is for us to learn and live our lives according to God's instructions now so we can become members of God's eternal family when Jesus Christ returns. We are always pleased to assist people in their efforts to understand and respond to our Creator, so feel free to contact us if you have questions.

### **Heed God's call!**

As we have seen, the book of Revelation is a revelation of what will soon occur, as well as God's admonition and encouragement for us to do as He commands.

The book begins with a blessing upon those who read it (Revelation 1:3) and includes these encouraging words in its final chapter: "Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book" and "behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work" (Revelation 22:7, 12).

May we all heed this godly call!

# WANT TO KNOW MORE?

The Church of God, a Worldwide Association, has published many related articles on its website [LifeHopeandTruth.com](http://LifeHopeandTruth.com). Here are some of them:

What Is Repentance? and other articles in the Change section.

The 10 Commandments for Today.

What Is the Kingdom of God? Purpose of Life.

Resurrections: What Are They?

Seven Churches of Revelation.

Great Tribulation.

The 144,000.

Wrath of God.

The Wrath of God: How to Survive.

Two Witnesses.

Revelation 12: Who Are the Woman, Child and Dragon?

Place of Safety.

Armageddon: What Is It?

Antichrist.

666: The Number of the Beast.

Mark of the Beast.

Revelation 17: Who Is the Scarlet Woman?

What Is Babylon?

Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

We also welcome your questions, which you can send using the form on our [Ask a Question](#) page.



**ASK A  
QUESTION**

# About **LifeHope&Truth**

LifeHopeandTruth.com exists to fill a critical void in this world: the lack of understanding about the purpose of life, the lack of realistic hope for a better future and the lack of truth!

Neither religion nor science has satisfactorily addressed these issues, so people today are of divided opinions, confused or, worst of all, don't care anymore. The ancient words of the prophet Isaiah ring so true today: "Truth is fallen in the street." Why? Is it because God was right when He warned that humans are inclined to reject Him and usually choose not to know Him?

We are here for people who are searching for answers, who are ready to prove all things or who are hungry for more than what they've been taught most of their lives about God, the Bible, the meaning of life and how to live. We want to help you truly understand the good news of the gospel and fulfill Jesus Christ's admonition to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."

LifeHopeandTruth.com is sponsored by the Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc. It is supported by the generous contributions of donors and members of the Church around the world, who make it possible for everything on this site to be free of charge based on Jesus Christ's statement, "Freely you have received, freely give." You will never be charged or made to feel obligated for anything on this site.

The Church of God, a Worldwide Association, has congregations around the world in more than 50 countries, with headquarters in the United States near Dallas, Texas. To learn more about the Church, please visit our website **cogwa.org**.

## More from LifeHopeandTruth.com



Wake up to daily inspiration right in your inbox! Subscribe at **LifeHopeandTruth.com**.



Get the latest blogs from Life, Hope & Truth as soon as they're posted. Subscribe at **LifeHopeandTruth.com**.



Never miss a post! Subscribe at **LifeHopeandTruth.com** to receive the week's latest articles and updates.



Read our bimonthly magazine that will give you refreshing and practical answers to the questions that affect your life! Subscribe for free at **LifeHopeandTruth.com**.

## Connect With Us!



LifeHopeTruth @LifeHopeTruth Life, Hope & Truth Life, Hope & Truth LifeHopeandTruth info@cogwa.org



