



# Introduction to Revelation



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## Caveat

- I am not a prophet, but may engage in prophesying.
- I am a premillennialist.
  - Second Coming occurs before the Millennium.
- I am a posttribulationist.
  - Rapture of the God's people and Return of the Messiah occur after the Great Tribulation.
- I have written considerable material on the end times, which may be found on my website. ([www.blainerobison.com](http://www.blainerobison.com))
- I will not make any predictions.



## Scripture Acronyms

- **Tanakh (תנ"ך)**
  - An acronym for the “Old Testament”
  - Torah, Genesis through Deuteronomy
  - Neviim (Prophets), historical books and prophets
  - Ketuvim (Writings), remainder
- **Besech (בש"ס) (“beh-sekh”)**
  - An acronym for the “New Testament”
  - Besorah, lit. “good news” (Gospels-Acts)
  - Sepherim, lit. “letters” (apostolic epistles)
  - Chezyōnōt, lit. “visions” (Revelation)
- **My Rationale for Besech**
  - *B'rit Hadashah* is the New Covenant with Israel & Judah, not a canon of Scripture.
  - No one refers to the Tanakh as the *B'rit Yashan*.



## Book Information



## Apocalypse of John

- **Bible Title: Revelation**
  - Grk. *apokalupsis*, unveiling
- **Authorship, 1:1**
  - From Yeshua, by His angel
  - To John (Grk. *īōannês*; Heb. *Yochanan*) the apostle
- **Date**
  - Reign of Caesar Domitian (81-96) – most scholars
  - Reign of Caesar Nero (54-68)
- **Recipients**
  - All disciples, 1:1
  - Seven congregations of Asia, 1:4
- **Purpose**
  - To unveil things that must “soon” take place.



## John the Apostle

- **Background**
  - Son of Zebedee, Matt 4:21
  - He and his brother nicknamed “sons of thunder,” Mark 3:17
  - Mother: Salome, Mark 15:40; Matt 20:20; 27:56
  - Part of apostolic inner circle, Matt 17:1
  - Acquainted with the high priest, John 18:15-16
  - Long life prophesied, John 21:21-23
- **Information from Tradition**
  - Served in Ephesus as overseer (bishop)
  - “Plunged, unhurt, into boiling oil, and then sent by Domitian to his island-exile” (Tertullian, ca. 220)
  - Opposed Cerinthus, a heretic, in Ephesus, c. 100
  - Died ca. 98–110



## Fast Facts on Revelation

- **Statistics**
  - 22 chapters, 404 verses.
- **Highlights**
  - Revelation called a “prophecy” (1:3)
  - Content revealed during exile on Patmos
  - Frequent use of numbers: two, three, seven, ten, twelve and multiples thereof
  - Mythic characters – living creatures, dragon, beasts, locusts
  - Vivid imagery – glorified Yeshua, heavenly throne
- **Overall Message**
  - Satan and the world cannot win, and Yeshua and His people cannot lose.



**Composition  
Outline  
Interpretation**



## Originality of Composition

- **Write**
  - Twelve times Yeshua told John to “write.”
  - Yeshua dictated seven letters to John.
  - Yeshua told John what to write in some portions of Revelation.
  - Yeshua also gave John freedom to use his own vocabulary and experience to describe what he saw while he was “in the Spirit.”
- **“See” & “Saw”**
  - Yeshua to John, “write ... what you see” (1:11)
  - Forty-one times John says, “I saw,” emphasizing his personal visual experience.
  - Seven times the Lord affirms Yochanan’s report by referring to what “you saw.”
  - John did not make it up!



## The Source for Writing

- **Divine Revelation**
  - John penned Revelation at the command of Yeshua.
  - Yeshua and his angels revealed the content to John.
  - John did not “cut and paste” the prophetic books of the Tanakh to create this book.
- **Personal Experience**
  - John actually saw what he said he saw and heard what he said he heard.
  - John obeyed the Lord’s instruction, recording his experience for the posterity of all believers, and that is the sum and substance of how he wrote.
  - Revelation is written in the narrative style of an autobiography and has the personal touch of a chronicle or a diary.



## Four Interpretive Approaches

- **Idealism, or the spiritual approach**
  - An allegory of the conflict between good and evil.
  - Victorinus, 4<sup>th</sup> cent.
- **Historicism**
  - Prophecies fulfilled in history.
  - Joachim of Fiore, ca. 1200
- **Futurism**
  - Prophecies fulfilled at the end of history.
  - Francisco Ribera (1537-1591), Jesuit scholar
  - Dispensationalism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century fostered popular appeal of this approach.
- **Preterism (meaning “past”)**
  - Prophecies fulfilled in the first century.
  - Luis de Alcazar, 1614, Jesuit scholar



## Chronology of the Writing

- **Overview of the Narrative**
  - John reports the order of his experience.
- **What does “soon” mean?**
  - Obviously not in John’s lifetime (cf. Acts 1:7).
  - The Greek word refers to how long events take to be completed once started.
- **Consecutive Progression**
  - The narrative is linear with a start and end point.
  - The seals cover an indefinite period of time.
  - The seventh seal and the seventh trumpet unveil the next series.
  - The trumpet plagues require at least 5 months.
  - All the bowl plagues could occur in one day.
  - The Second Coming events occur in one day.



## Outline of the Book

- Prologue (1:1-8)
- First Vision (1:9–3:22)
  - The Glorified Messiah
  - The Messiah's Seven Messages
- Second Vision (4:1–9:21)
  - The Seven Seals (6:1–8:1)
  - Interlude: Two Multitudes (7:1-17)
  - The Seven Trumpets (8:1-9:21)
- Third Vision – Interludes (10:1–14:20)
  - Angel and the Little Book (10:1-11)
  - The Temple & the Two Witnesses (11:1-13)
  - The Heavenly War (12:1-17)
  - The Two Beasts (13:1-18)
  - Redemption and Judgment (14:1-20)



## Outline of the Book

- Fourth Vision (15:1–16:21)
  - Seven Last Plagues
- Fifth Vision (17:1–19:6)
  - Mystery Babylon (17:1-18)
  - Judgment of Babylon (18:1–19:6)
- Sixth Vision (19:7–20:15)
  - Marriage Supper of the Lamb
  - Coming of the King of Kings
  - Defeat of the Beast and Satan
  - Resurrection, the Millennium and Final Judgment
- Seventh Vision (21:1–22:5)
  - New Heavens and Earth
  - New Jerusalem
- Epilogue (22:6-21)



## Questions of Interpretation

- **Basic questions**
  - What is literal? What is symbolic?
  - How do we know what the symbolic elements mean?
- **Considerations**
  - All approaches result in taking some passages literally and some symbolically.
  - All four approaches have validity in Revelation.
  - Preterism: the author was a real person who wrote to contemporary congregations.
  - Idealism: Revelation certainly depicts an ongoing war between God and Satan.
  - Historicism: The virtues and vices depicted have occurred throughout history.
  - Futurism: Many passages point to the future, both immediate and distant.



## Interpretation Assumptions

- Revelation is meant to be understood.
- Revelation means what the author (Yeshua) intended.
  - Called “strict construction” in law.
  - “All the words from my mouth are righteous; nothing false or crooked is in them. They are all clear to those who understand and straightforward to those who gain knowledge.” (Prov 8:8-9 CJB)
- Revelation cannot contradict the rest of Scripture.
- Application of Revelation requires enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.





## Simple Study Process

- **What does it say? (Heb. *p'shat*)**
  - Historical setting
  - Grammar
  - Key words & figures of speech
- **What does it mean?**
  - Consider the context
  - Apply precedents
  - Identify theological implications
  - Interpret literally and carefully
  - Avoid inventing explanations
- **What application is appropriate? (Heb. *drash*)**
  - Moral evaluation (sin, command, character)
  - Practical evaluation (wisdom)
  - Prayer (convert the passage into prayer)



## Character of Revelation



## A Hebrew Book

- Little considered
  - The Besekh is a Jewish book, written by Jews, largely about Jews, and meant for Jews and Gentiles.
  - The book of Revelation was revealed by a Jew and written by a Jew.
  - Would those two facts influence its content?
- Transliteration of Hebrew words
  - “Abaddon,” “Amen,” “Balaam,” “Har-Mageddon,” “Hebrew,” “Israel,” “Jerusalem,” “Jesus,” “Jezebel,” “Jew,” “John,” “Satan,” “woe,” & tribes of Israel.
- Hebrew idioms
  - “small and great” (4 times) = “young and old”
  - “feet like pillars” (“legs”)



## A Hebrew Book

- Hebraic Grammar
  - Poor Greek
    - “Barbarous Greek” (Dionysius, 190-265)
    - Reflects translation of an original Hebrew text.
  - Conjunctions
    - Hebrew litters sentences with conjunctions.
    - Most common, *kai*, found in 369 out of 384 verses, occurring in many verses 3 or more times.
  - Vocabulary
    - The Greek of the Besekh is the Greek of the LXX.
  - Word order
    - Imitates Hebrew word order, like the LXX.
- Content
  - Many allusions to the Tanakh (Stern says “500”)
    - Few direct quotations (1:7; 4:8; 15:4)
    - No use of “it is written”



## A Hebrew Book

- **Parallels to Exodus from Egypt**
  - The evil power that persecutes God's people is spiritually called Egypt (11:8).
  - The plagues recall similar calamities that God imposed on Egypt prior to the Exodus.
  - A dragon persecutes the woman (12:3-5) and Egypt is called a dragon in Ezekiel 29:3 and Psalm 74:13.
  - Like Israel of old, the woman having escaped the dragon is nourished in the wilderness (12:6, 14).
  - As Israel, having safely cross the sea, sang the "song of Moses" so also the redeemed sing the song of Moses (15:3).
  - Revelation could then be deemed the story of the last Exodus.



## A Hebrew Book

- **The Heroes of Israel**
  - Jacob, 7:4; 21:12
  - Sons of Jacob, 7:2-8; 21:12
  - Moses, 15:3
  - David, 3:7; 5:5; 22:16
  - Twelve apostles, 21:14
- **Jewishness of Yeshua**
  - Lamb of God and Lion of Judah
  - Son of Man, Son of God, and Son of David
- **Temple parallels**
  - Altar, ark of the covenant, priestly attire, temple court, guard, hymnody, incense, pillar, sacrificial lamb, crystal sea, and trumpets.



## A Book of Seven

- The word “seven” occurs 55 times in Revelation.
- The only word that occurs more frequently than the word “seven” in Revelation is the word “God.”
- Seven congregations (1:4)
- Seven spirits (1:4)
- Seven lampstands (1:12)
- Seven stars (1:16)
- Seven lamps of fire (4:5)
- Seven seals (5:1)
- Seven horns (5:6)
- Seven eyes (5:6)
- Seven angels (8:2)
- Seven trumpets (8:2)
- Seven thunders (10:3)
- Seven thousand (11:13)
- Seven heads (12:3)
- Seven crowns (12:3)
- Seven angels (15:1)
- Seven plagues (15:1)
- Seven bowls (15:7)
- Seven mountains (17:9)
- Seven kings (17:10)



## The Man of Seven

- Seven physical characteristics (1:16-13)
  - Head, eyes, feet, voice, hand, mouth, & face
  - With seven stars and seven lampstands
- Seven “I am” sayings of Yeshua
  - 1:8, 11, 17, 18; 21:6; 22:13, 16
- Twenty-one titles for Yeshua
  - 1:1, 5, 8, 13, 18; 2:2, 12, 18; 3:7, 14; 5:5, 6; 19:11, 16; 22:20
- Specific words
  - Seven mentions of “Messiah”
  - Fourteen mentions of “Yeshua”
  - Fourteen mentions of the (Holy) “Spirit”
  - Twenty-one mentions of “Lord”
  - Twenty-eight mentions of “Lamb”



## A Book of Seven

- **Seven Beatitudes**
  - The word “blessed” occurs seven times
  - 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14
- **Seven Doxologies**
  - 4:9-11; 5:8-13; 7:9-12; 11:16-18; 14:2-3; 15:2-4; 19:1-6
- **Seven Judgments (4:1–5:14)**
  - Seven Seals, 6:1-8:1
  - Seven Trumpets, 8:2 –9:21; 11:15-19
  - Seven Bowls of Wrath (16:1-21)



## A Book of Seven

- **Letters to Seven Congregations**
  - Ephesus (2:1-7)
  - Smyrna (2:8-11) (no criticism)
  - Pergamum (2:12-17)
  - Thyatira (2:18-29)
  - Sardis (3:1-6) (all criticism)
  - Philadelphia (3:7-13) (no criticism)
  - Laodicea (3:14-22) (all criticism)
- **Recipient**
  - Recipient: “angel” = “messenger,” i.e., overseer
  - Pronouns second person singular
  - Yeshua writes to his representative leading the congregation.
  - Imagine the impact on the congregation of the publicly read letter!



## A Book of Seven

- Seven parts to the letters
  - Salutation: “to the messenger”
  - Identification of the Yeshua as sender: “he that”
  - Assertion of knowledge: “I know your works”
  - Comment and exhortation
    - Commendation or criticism
  - Promised (or threatened) coming
  - Admonition to heed: “he that has an ear”
  - Promised blessing: “to him that overcomes”



## Significance of Seven

- Basic Meaning
  - The number seven represents fullness, completeness or perfection.
- Further Insight
  - The Heb. word for “swear” is identical to the feminine form of the word for “seven.”
  - It was not uncommon in ancient times to seal an agreement by the number “seven” (*Be'er-Sheva*, “well of seven-oath,” Gen 21:22-34; cf. Rev 10:4ff).
  - The “sevenness” of Revelation represents God’s sworn testimony that this book perfectly and truthfully discloses His will for the future, that His prophecy about the end is complete and nothing should be added or taken away (22:18-19).



## A Book of Visions

- **Vision Recipients**
  - Tanakh: Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Nadab, Abihu, Samuel, Nathan, Iddo, Zechariah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Amos, Obadiah, Nahum, Habakkuk.
  - Besekh: Zechariah; Peter, Cornelius, Paul & John.
- **Vision as means of revelation**
  - Vision: pictographic image seen while awake.
  - Dream: Vivid vision experienced during sleep.
  - Visions are not fictional literary devices.
  - Divine revelations given by vision have substantive meaning, which God may or may not explain.
  - The visions of Revelation are not difficult to understand.
  - They are difficult to believe!



## Interpreting Visionary Elements

- **Accept the narrative**
  - Accept assigned symbolic meaning.
  - Remember that John described what he saw in terms of his vocabulary.
- **Caution**
  - Be careful in assigning symbolic meaning where none is given.
  - Don't allow your imagination to get carried away (22:18).
- **Biblical study rules still apply**
  - Do not go beyond what is written, 1 Cor 4:4
  - Test interpretations with Scripture, 1Cor 14:29-32; Col 2:8, 18; 2Tim 3:16; 1Jn 4:1



## Visionary Elements Explained

- “Seven stars” = seven messengers (1:20)
- “Seven lampstands” = seven congregations (1:20)
- “Seven lamps” = seven spirits (4:5)
- “Seven eyes” = seven spirits (5:6)
- “Golden bowls full of incense” = the prayers of God’s people (5:8)
- “Two olive trees and the two lampstands” = two witnesses (11:4)
- “Frog-spirits” = demonic spirits (16:13-14)
- “Seven heads” = seven mountains (17:9)
- “Seven heads” = seven kings (17:10)
- “Ten horns” = ten kings (17:12)
- “Waters” = peoples, multitudes, nations and languages (17:15)



## The Blessing of Revelation

- “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near” (Rev 1:3)
- **A Message of Warning**
  - Remove sin from your life.
  - Expect trouble in the world.
- **A Message of Victory**
  - Satan and the Beast will be defeated.
  - The dead will be raised and Yeshua will reign.
- **A Message of Encouragement**
  - No more curse, death, tears, pain, or sorrow.
  - Instead: healing, celebration, joy, fulfillment.





## Mysteries of Revelation



### Mysteries of the End Times

- **Term**
  - Grk. *mustêrion*, a secret; divine counsel and plans that have awaited disclosure and interpretation.
  - Translates Aram. *raz*, (only in Daniel) and Heb. *sod* (late Jewish lit.), both of which mean “secret.”
  - *Mustêrion* refers to an eschatological secret, what shall take place in the future.
- **Contrast**
  - “The secret things belong to Adonai” (Deut 29:29).
  - Yet, Isaiah says that God does not speak in secret (Isa 45:19; 48:16). Amos goes further...
  - “Adonai does nothing unless He reveals His secret counsel to His servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7)



## Mysteries of the End Times

- Explanation

- The entire plan of salvation through a suffering and victorious Messiah was revealed to the prophets.
- But, the plan was hidden in plain sight, like pieces of a puzzle (Eph 3:9).
- God's secret counsels were necessary because man cannot really be trusted (John 2:24f).
- Satan engages in unceasing warfare against God's kingdom and would certainly use any intelligence to hinder God's workings (John 10:10; cf. Eph 6:12; 1Th 2:18; 1Pet 5:8).
- What had not been known in former times was then revealed to the apostles (Matt 13:11; Eph 3:5).
- Yet, some details have not been disclosed (Matt 24:36; Rev 2:17; 19:12).



## Mysteries of the End Times

- Specific teaching identified as *mustêrion*

- The kingdom (Mark 4:11)
- The hardening of Israel (Rom 11:25)
- The good news (Rom 16:25; Eph 6:19)
- The Messiah (1Cor 2:7-8; Eph 1:9-10; Col 2:2; 4:3)
- The resurrection (1Cor 15:51)
- Body of Messiah (Eph 1:9; 3:3-6; 5:32; Col 1:27)
- Rejection of God's laws in the last days (2Th 2:7)
- The faith (1Tim 3:9)
- Godliness (1Tim 3:16)
- The seven stars and seven lampstands (Rev 1:20)
- The beast (Rev 7:7)
- Voice of the seventh angel (Rev 10:7)
- Babylon (Rev 17:5)

- There are many more puzzles in Revelation!



## Sign of the Son of Man – Rev 6:12-14

- **Great earthquake** (Rev 6:12, 14)
  - Earthquakes are signs of God's wrath.
  - Seismic activity occurs 5 times in Revelation but 3 times are "great" (6:12; 11:13; 16:18).
  - This earthquake affects much of the earth.
- **Double eclipse** (Joel 2:31; Matt 24:29; Rev 6:12)
  - Sign of Joel precedes Second Coming.
  - Moon as blood (red) = lunar eclipse (full moon)
  - Sun as sackcloth (black) = solar eclipse (new moon)
  - Divine miracle: earth and moon come into alignment for a lunar eclipse & another planetary or asteroid body "happens" along to obscure the sun.
- **Meteor shower**
  - "Stars" fall to the earth" (Rev 6:13)



## Response in Israel

- **Mourning in Repentance** (Matt 24:30)
  - All the tribes of the land will mourn in repentance.
  - At the "sign" of the Son of Man, the double eclipse.
  - Mourning precedes the Second Coming.
- **Mourning in Grief**
  - Jews will mourn for Yeshua as for an only son (Zech 12:10-14; Rev 1:7).
  - Grief results from the death itself and sorrow at what one failed to do in relation to the death.
  - The mourning in Zechariah follows the "Spirit of grace and of supplication" received from the Messiah.
  - Mourning period may last 45 days (cf. Dan 12:12).
  - The Messiah will provide consolation (Isa 66:13).



## 144,000 – Revelation 7:4-9

- **Questions**
  - Who are the 144,000?
  - What is the purpose of singling them out in contrast to the innumerable host of chapter seven?
- **Considerations**
  - Christianity says symbolic of the Church.
  - There is no mention of *ekklesia* and no symbolic interpretation.
  - Plain sense: blood offspring of Jacob.
  - Twelve is the number of Israel.
  - Distinctives: (1) Dan is missing, (2) Joseph is listed in lieu of Ephraim, (3) Judah, not Reuben, is listed first, and (4) Levi is included.
  - The great multitude (7:9) reflects the fullness of Jacob's company (Ex 35:11; Rom 11:25; Eph 2:12)



## 144,000 – Revelation 14:1-5

- **Description**
  - They are Messianic Jews, 14:1 (“Lamb’s name”).
  - They worship with a new song, 14:3.
  - They are holy in character and “first fruits,” 14:4.
  - First fruits: those who were the first in an area to receive and respond to the good news of salvation (Rom 1:16; 8:23; 16:5; 1Cor 16:15; Jas 1:18).
- **Purpose**
  - They could be the first fruits of the ministry of the two witnesses (cf. Mal 4:5f; Rev 11:3).
  - They are ardent disciples of Yeshua and witnesses of his redemption.
  - They may serve as priests in the Millennial Kingdom (cf. Isa 66:20f; Mal 3:1-4).



## The Two Witnesses, Rev 11:3-11

- **General description**
  - They prophesy 1,260 days clothed in sackcloth.
  - If necessary, they kill their enemies with fire, v. 5
  - They are allowed to strike the land with any plague, as often as they desire, v. 6.
  - They declare a testimony, v. 7. (Yeshua is Messiah!)
  - They are killed by the ant-messiah, v. 8, but 3½ days later they are resurrected, v. 11.
- **Identity**
  - “Anointed ones” standing in heaven (Zech 4:14).
  - The witnesses must not have died before (Heb 9:27).
  - Elijah (2Kgs 2:11; Mal 4:5; Matt 17:11).
  - Some favor Moses (Mark 9:2-4), but he died (Deut 34:5).
  - Better choice is Enoch (Heb 11:5; Jude 1:14-15)



## Mystery of the Beast

- **Identity**
  - Beast from the sea: an oligarchy that rules the world in the end times, 13:1; 17:10-13.
  - Beast from the abyss: the titular head of the oligarchy 11:7; 13:3; 17:8.
- **Description and Activity**
  - Comes by the work of Satan, 13:1.
  - Receives a fatal wound, but healed, 13:3.
  - Considered invincible, 13:4.
  - Reigns for 42 months, 13:5.
  - Makes war against God’s people, 13:7.
  - Requires population to be marked with 666, 13:16.
  - Limits commerce to “marked” citizens, 13:17.
  - Beheads people unwilling to be marked, 20:4.
  - Destroys Babylon, 17:16.



## 666

- **Background**
  - Marking an entire population has no historical precedent.
  - Jews have been singled out in the past for marking.
- **Biblical Description**
  - Marking does not occur until the beast reigns.
  - The mark is a tattoo on the skin.
  - Nothing else qualifies as the mark of the beast.
  - Marking violates Torah (Ex 20:4; Lev 19:28).
  - Marking limits commercial activity, 13:17.
  - 666 is the number of the anti-messiah's name.
  - Letters in ancient languages stood for numbers.
  - But, what language?
  - Trying to identify the anti-messiah is pointless.



## Mystery of Babylon

- **Description**
  - Mother of harlots and abominations, 17:5
  - Murderer of the “holy ones” and their leaders, 17:6.
- **Interpretation**
  - “Babylon” and “beast” are not synonymous.
  - “Babylon” does not reflect a future development of Christianity or its religious doctrines or practices.
  - “Babylon” was a Jewish code word for Rome.
  - “Babylon” is where there are 7 mountains, 17:9.
  - “Babylon” is a great city that rules over kings, 17:18
  - “Babylon” is a great commercial power (Ch. 18).
  - “Babylon” will be destroyed by the beast, 17:16
  - The Vatican Bank and IMF programs make Rome a powerful commercial center of the world.
  - Classic case of Money vs. the Sword.



## What is the Rapture?

- **Term**
  - Grk. *arpazo*, to seize, to carry off by force; occurs 14 times in the Besekh.
  - The verb does not imply secrecy.
  - This verb is used to describe the attempted forcing of Yeshua to be king (John 6:15).
  - Promise: no one can “snatch” us from the Father’s hand (John 10:28-29).
- **Supernatural usage**
  - Philip snatched by the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:39).
  - Paul snatched up to the third heaven (2Cor 12:2).
  - Disciples on earth caught up to meet Yeshua in the air, not in heaven (1Th 4:17).
  - The child of the woman caught up to heaven (ascension of Yeshua) (Rev 12:5).



## The Rapture – 1 Thess 4:15-17

- **Three actions**
  - Yeshua will descend from heaven with a shout of the archangel and the trumpet of God.
  - The believing dead will be resurrected.
  - The living will be then be transformed and caught up in the air to meet Yeshua and the rest of the “holy ones.”
- **Important Points**
  - There is no mention (in any passage) of Raptured believers being taken to heaven.
  - Why does the meeting take place in the air?
  - Since the Rapture includes the resurrection, what conclusion can we draw from the first resurrection being described in Revelation 20?
  - Where does tribulation fit in with the Rapture?



## Tribulation

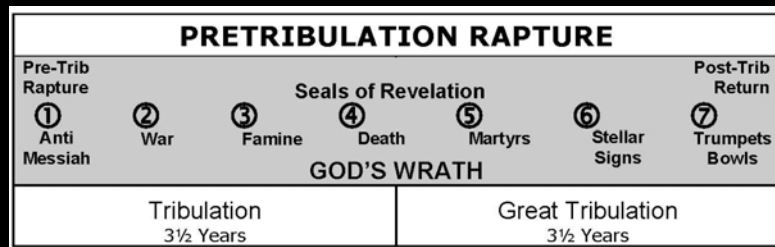
- **Definition**
  - Grk. *thlipsis*, means affliction, pressure or oppression, and is a word picture of being crushed under a weight.
- **Application**
  - Persecution of Yeshua's disciples (Matt 13:21; 24:9; John 16:33; Acts 14:22; Rom 5:3; 8:35; 12:12; 2Cor 1:4; 7:4; 1Th 3:4; Rev 1:9; 2:9-10)
  - Punishment meted out by God on his enemies commencing at the Second Coming and continuing for eternity (Rom 2:9; 2Th 1:6).
  - Not equal with God's wrath, because the righteous do not suffer His wrath (Rom 5:9; 1Th 5:9).



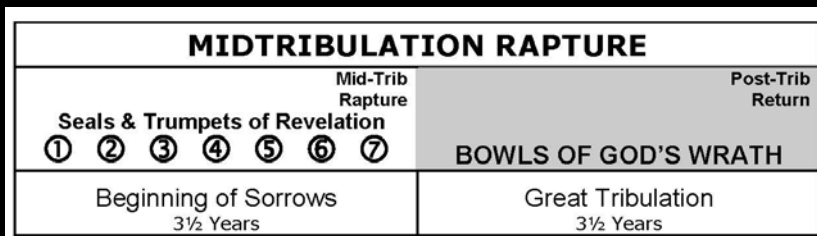
## Great Tribulation – Rev 7:14

- **Definition**
  - Greatest *thlipsis* in history (Matt 24:21).
- **Dispensationalist Viewpoint**
  - The tribulation period is 7 years based on Dan 9:27.
- **Rebuttal**
  - There is no “tribulation period” of seven years anywhere in Scripture.
  - The great tribulation begins with the abomination of desolation (Dan 12:11; Matt 24:21)
  - The great tribulation lasts 3½ years (cf. Dan 7:25; 12:1, 7, 11; Rev 11:2-3; 12:6; 13:5).
  - The great tribulation is the beast's war on disciples (Dan 12:7; Rev 5:9-11; 7:13-14; 11:7; 12:17; 13:7).
  - NOT God's wrath in the trumpet and bowl plagues.





- A secret rapture occurs seven years before the public revelation of Messiah.
- This seven years is the “tribulation period.”
- Believers enjoy the marriage supper in heaven.
- Propagated by John Darby (1800-1881) and a key doctrine in Dispensationalism.
- The rapture occurs at Rev 4:1.



- Believers will be present for the first half of the anti-messiah’s reign and then be raptured at the mid-point to be spared the trumpets and bowls of wrath.
- Introduced by Norman B. Harrison in 1941.
- The rapture occurs at Rev 11:11.



PREWRATH RAPTURE							
Seals of Revelation						Rapture (Between 6 <sup>th</sup> & 7 <sup>th</sup> Seal)	Post-DOL Return
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦ GOD'S WRATH	
Beginning of Sorrows			Great Tribulation		Trumpets Day of the Lord	Bowls Israel mourns	
3½ Years			3½ Years		30 days		

- A variation of the mid-tribulation position.
- Introduced by Marvin Rosenthal in 1990.
- The Rapture (Rev 6:9) occurs after the great tribulation but before the Day of Wrath (Rev 6:12).



POSTTRIBULATION RAPTURE							
Seals of Revelation							
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	
Signs of the End				Great Tribulation	Sign of the Son of Man	Trumpet Plagues	Bowls of Wrath
				3½ Years, but cut short for the sake of the elect	1 day	5+ months	Rapture Second Coming Day of the Lord

- The revelation of the Messiah and the resurrection form a single event after the great tribulation (Rev 19:7–20:4; cf. Matt 24:29-31).
- There is no passage anywhere in the Besekh that proves conclusively otherwise.



## Reasons I'm a Posttribulationist

- Yeshua asked the Father not to remove his disciples (John 17).
- The “first” resurrection occurs at or after the defeat of the beast’s army (Rev 20).
- The resurrection occurs on the last day of the present age (John 6:39-40, 44, 54; 11:24; 12:48).
- A secret rapture is contrary to the harvest parables (Matt 3:12; 13:24-25, 30, 47-50).
- Second coming like Noah’s time (Matt 24:36-41).
- Gathering of the disciples occurs after the great tribulation (Matt 24:21, 29-31; Mark 13:27).
- Resurrection occurs at the last trumpet (1Cor 15:50). The last trump announces the Day of the Lord (Rev 11:15-19).



## Marriage Supper of the Lamb

- **Announcement, 19:7-9**
  - The text presents an invitation to a feast, not a description of a feast.
  - No mention of the supper being held in heaven.
  - The verb “has come” means that the time has arrived as part of the posttribulation Second Coming that follows in 19:11.
- **The Coming Feast**
  - Yeshua will eat and drink with his disciples again (Luke 12:37; 22:29-30).
  - Yeshua’s community will also share a table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Matt 8:11; Luke 13:29; 22:29-30).



## Mystery of the Resurrection – Rev 20:5

- **Dust Collection**

- Most believers conceive of resurrection as an event in which the dead are on the earth and they will rise out of the ground to meet Yeshua in the air.
- The process involves collecting all the dust of the long-dead and returning souls to their original bodies for transformation.

- **New Tents**

- However, deceased believers are in heaven (2Cor 5:7; Rev 6:9; 79).
- The perishable does not inherit the imperishable (1Cor 15:50-51).
- Our new bodies are in heaven (2Cor 5:1).
- Resurrection is the process of our spirits occupying new immortal bodies, not “rehabbing” old ones.



## The Millennium – Interpretations

- **Term**

- Grk. *chilioi*, a thousand; Rev 20:1-7. The word occurs 6 times in 7 verses.

- **Chiliasm**

- Six days of creation foretell 6,000 years of history (2Pet 3:8; Epistle of Barnabas; cf. Sanhedrin 97a).
- Yeshua will reign literally 1,000 years on the earth from Jerusalem after the Second Coming.
- Christian viewpoint in 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> cent.

- **Amillennialism**

- No literal millennium before or after Second Coming.
- Christian viewpoint beginning in 4<sup>th</sup> cent.
- “Millennium” often thought of as the “church age.”



## The Millennium – Interpretations

- **Postmillennialism**
  - The Second Coming follows the millennium.
  - The “millennium” is a time for the world to come under God’s rule to prepare for Yeshua.
  - Began with Daniel Whitby (1638-1725).
  - This viewpoint waned with World War I.
- **Premillennialism**
  - The millennium follows the Second Coming.
  - Most take the time literally, but some figuratively.
  - Greatest development began in the 19<sup>th</sup> cent.
- **Revelation usage**
  - The narrative offers no hint of symbolic meaning.
  - First time pertains to incarceration of Satan.
  - Second time refers to those reigning with Yeshua.
  - Why a millennium? (cf. 1Cor 15:25-26)



## The New Jerusalem, Ch. 21

- **Description – The Capitol of Israel**
  - A cube, 12,000 *stadia* (1500 miles) each direction.
  - 12 edges @ 12,000 *stadia* = 144,000 (number of Israel)
  - The wall’s thickness is 144 cubits. (Israel again!)
  - Building materials resembled precious stones, v11.
  - 12 gates with names of the sons of Jacob, v12.
  - 12 foundation stones with names of the apostles, v14.
  - No temple in it, v22.
  - No need of sun or moon to provide light, v23.
- **Paul’s Teaching**
  - “Jerusalem above ... is our mother” (Gal 4:26).
  - Our citizenship is in heaven (Php 3:20).
  - Abraham looked for this city (Heb 11:10).
  - “city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (Heb 12:22).
  - “we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come” (Heb 13:14).