

## **“IT IS NEVER TOO LATE!”**

### **THE MESSAGE OF SALVATION IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION**

#### **A. Background for the Book of Revelation (= The Apocalypse)**

1. **The Original Context**: what text **MEANT, MEANS!**
2. **Apocalyptic Literature** (Between 200 BCE & 150 CE)
  - a. Ongoing battle between good & evil in the present & future
  - b. A major crisis with little hope & against insurmountable odds
3. **Author** = a Jewish-Christian, not author of 4<sup>th</sup> Gospel
4. **Major Crisis**: Choose = allegiance to emperor! Or Christ!

#### **B. The Perception of the Roman Empire in the Book of Revelation**

1. **Rome** is the richest & most powerful empire in world!
2. **No** explicit mention of Rome! **Not** a single positive statement!
3. **Worldview: Roman Empire is incarnation of Satan**
  - a. **Great Red Dragon (12:3)**: ancient serpent, Devil and Satan
  - b. **Beast from sea (13:1-10)**: Roman Empire
    - 10 horns & 7 heads, 4 beasts in Dan. 7, blasphemous names
    - #666 (13:18): gematria: Greek & Hebrew used their alphabet for both letters & numbers. נרון קסר [Neron Caesar] = 666
    - [200] ר [50] [200] ו [6] ו [50] ק [100] ס [60] ר [200]
  - c. **Beast from earth (13: 11-18)**: imperial cult: False Prophet
    - Mark of Beast**: 13:16, 17; 14:9, 11; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4
  - d. **Whore of Babylon (17:1-19:21)**: Rome/Roman Empire
    - kings & inhabitants: fornication [adultery: other gods]
    - drunk with the blood of saints & witnesses to Jesus (17:2, 6)
4. **Tolerance**: Rome did **not** demand exclusive allegiance.
5. **Emperor Worship [Imperial cult]: symbol of loyalty!**
6. **Conflict between God and Satan: Revelation 12**

#### **C. The Response of the Book of Revelation to the Roman Empire**

1. **Purpose**: **NOT** to predict future, **BUT** offer hope & encouragement to Christians **and** warn the unfaithful and unrepentant!
2. **Message**: “Be faithful unto death!” (Rev. 2:10) **NO COMPROMISE!**
  - a. Victory over sin & death through the **Cross** (11:15)
  - b. God **ALWAYS** remains in control! God wins in the end! no matter
3. **Cast of Characters/Places: A Study in Contrasts!**
  - a. The good Trinity (1:4-6) vs. the evil Trinity (Rev. 12-13)
    1. God the Almighty vs. the great red Dragon (12:3)
    2. The 7 spirits vs. The False Prophet (13:11-17)
    3. Jesus the Lamb vs. the Beast [= #666] (13:1-10, 18)
  - b. Woman Clothed with Sun (12:1) vs. Whore of Babylon (18:1)

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- c. New Jerusalem (21:2) vs. Lake of Fire (19:20)
- d. First Resurrection (20:5-6) vs. Second Death (20:6, 14)

4. **Trinity:**

a. The **God** “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty” (1:8) who sits on throne (1:8), “makes all things new!” (21:5)

b. **Seven Spirits (1:4):** fullness of God

c. **Jesus Christ (1:5-6, 13, 18):** “the faithful witness”/ “the first-born of the dead” (1:5-6), “who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood,” “who made us” a kingly & priestly people, walks among us (1:9-20), holds “the keys of death,” Lamb who conquered sin & death (5:6-12), Lord of lords & King of kings

5. **Allegiance to the Lamb!** Faithful to **word** of God (1:2, 9; 6:9)!

**Consequences** of choosing Lamb: exile, prison, economic boycott, & death. Oh, and, I almost forgot, **ETERNAL LIFE!**

D. **The Seven Messages to the Seven Churches (Rev. 2-3):**

**Message:** Repent! Be faithful! Hold fast to the Word! No compromise!

E. **The Three Sevenfold Series (Rev. 6-16)**

1. **Sources of these calamities:**

a. **Plagues in Egypt (Exodus 7-12):** water into blood (7:17-25), frogs (8:5-14), gnats (8:16-18), flies (8:20-24), cattle (9:3-6), boils and sores (9:8-11), thunder, fire, hail (9:22-26), locusts (10:12-19), darkness (10:21-23), and death of first-born (12:29-30).

b. **Joel 2-3:** The Day of the Lord is a day of darkness & gloom (2:1-3), sun turned to darkness, moon to blood (3:3-5)

c. **Amos 8-9:** fix the scales for cheating (8:5), cover earth with darkness (8:9), famine upon the land (8:11), will destroy the sinful

d. **Why these Catastrophes?** Warn; motivate to repent!

2. **Seven Seals:** proof of ownership, identity, secrecy

a. **1<sup>st</sup> 4 seals:** 4 horsemen of Apocalypse: effects on all

b. **5<sup>th</sup> seal:** souls of martyrs under altar

c. **6<sup>th</sup> seal:** cosmic upheaval; day of wrath; Who can stand?

3. **Seven Trumpets:** announce coming of king or enemy, warning

a. Both trumpets & bowls are directed to followers of Beast

b. Just as 10 plagues saved Israel, these will save unfaithful

c. Like Pharaoh’s hardness of heart: unfaithful did not repent

d. **5<sup>th</sup> trumpet:** king of locusts is Abaddon, Apollyon

e. **6<sup>th</sup> trumpet:** demonic cavalry; 1/3 killed, but others did not repent

4. **Seven Bowls:** from the temple; Focus is on God’s wrath & judgment

a. **4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Bowl:** they did not repent!

b. **6<sup>th</sup> Bowl: Armageddon** (16:16= 6<sup>th</sup> Bowl) = Megiddo (NW Palestine & scene of great battles, esp. Josiah), Final Showdown!

5. **Interlude:** interruption between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> element. Why? It puts life & death into a Christian perspective! It balances present suffering with future joy

**1<sup>st</sup> Interlude: Rev. 7:1-17**

**7:1-8:** The sealing of the 144,000: the 12 tribes of Israel: on earth

1. **6<sup>th</sup> seal:** “Who is able to stand?”

2. **To be sealed:** not a visible mark! Identified as belonging to God & under God’s special protection. Does not take away life’s difficulties, but offers strength

3. **144,000** = sealed = 14:4 (not defiled with women) = faithful

**7:9-17:** the great multitude before the throne & Lamb; in future, heaven

**2<sup>nd</sup> Interlude: Rev. 10:1-11:13**

**10:1-11:** Take & eat little scroll (Ezek. 2:1-3:3)! Commission as prophet!

**11:1-13:** Two Witnesses: to prophesy for 1260 days in sackcloth

**3rd Interlude: Rev. 16:15**

1. The **coming of Christ** will be quick & unexpected: like a thief

2. **3<sup>rd</sup> Beatitude:** stay awake & be faithful!

**F. THE RAPTURE**

1. The **scenario of events** that will happen at the end of the world.

a. At the end, Jesus will come on the clouds of heaven and the righteous will be **raptured**, that is, caught up into the air, to be with Christ.

b. Separated from sinners; endure great suffering (The Tribulation).

c. Then, Jesus will rule on earth for 1000 years (=the Millennium).

d. Finally, Jesus comes at the end in Judgment (=the Parousia)

e. The Rapture marks the beginning of the end of the world!

2. **Origins of the concept of the Rapture:** John Nelson Darby (1800-1882).

3. **Biblical Sources for the Rapture: is not** in the New Testament

a. **Matthew 24:36, 40-41:** “no one knows the day or hour...two men will be out in the field...two women will be grinding meal...”

b. **Revelation 20:4-7** = the 1000 year reign of Christ refers to that period of time between Christ’s death & resurrection & His Second Coming.

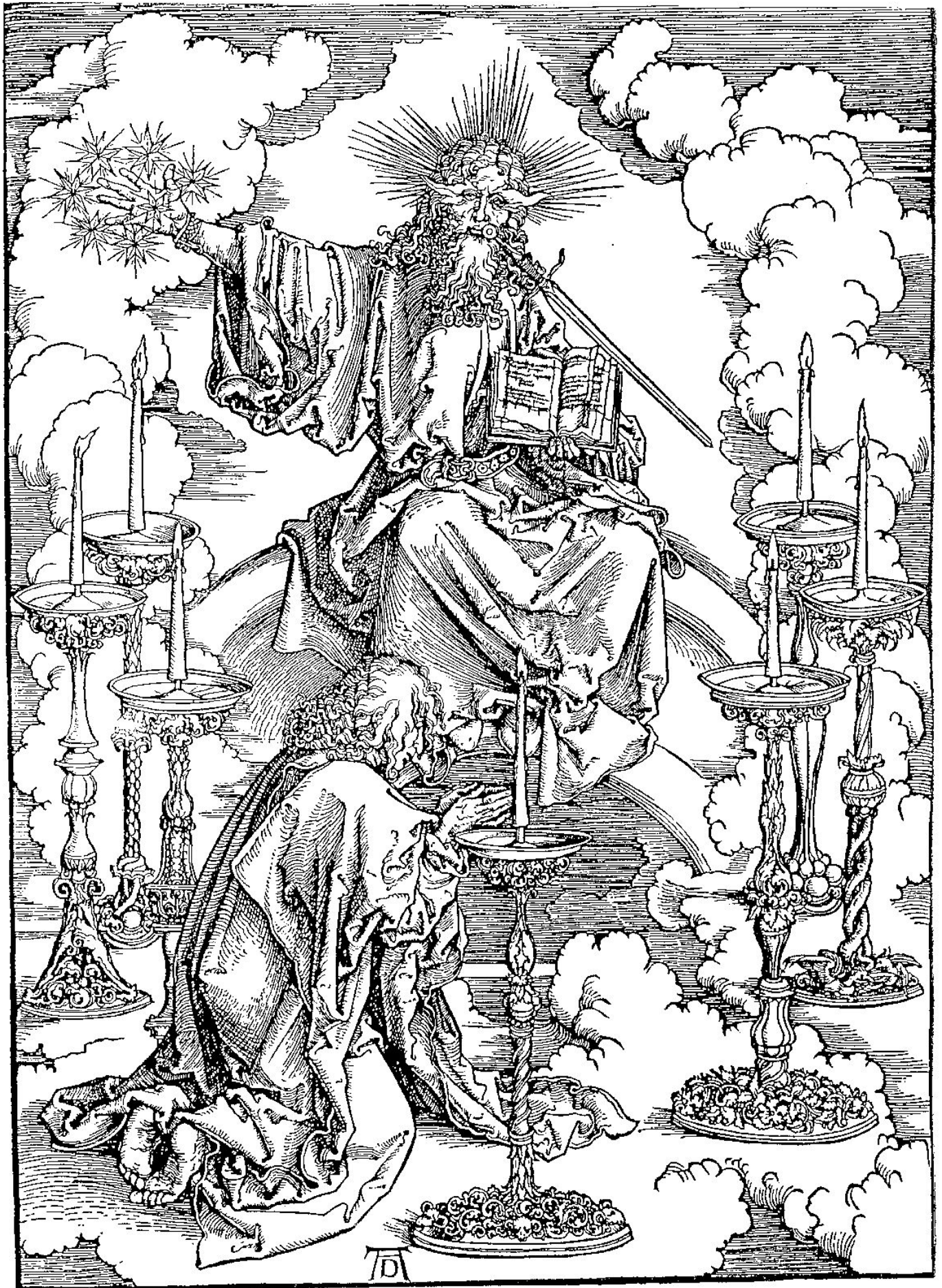
c. **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18** = Early Church expected Jesus’ return to happen in their own lifetime. Some died before Christ’s return. Would the dead, then, be at a disadvantage to those who were living?\_ No!

4. **General Comment:** very pessimistic. World doomed to destruction.

Harrington, Wilfrid J. Revelation. Collegeville, MN: A Michael Glazier Book, The Liturgical Press, 1993.

Reddish, Mitchell G. Revelation. Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary. Macon, Georgia: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, Inc., 2001.

Williamson, Peter S. Revelation. Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015.





THE ANGEL	THE SPEAKER	COMMENDATION	CRITICISM	EXHORTATION	APPEAL	PROMISE
<b>EPHESUS</b> (2: 1-7)	Holds 7 stars & walks among 7 lampstands (2:1)	“I know” your works, endurance, hate Nicolaitans	“But” you abandoned the love you had at first	Remember, repent Or I will remove lampstand (2:5)	Hear what spirit says to churches: 2:7	“To one who conquers” tree of life
<b>SMYRNA</b> (2: 8-11)	1st and Last, died & came to life (2:8)	Affliction & poverty Slander from synagogue, imprisoned		Be faithful unto death (2:10)	Hear what spirit says to churches: 2:11	Crown of life; no 2nd death: 2:11
<b>PERGAMUM</b> (2: 12-17)	Sharp two-edged sword (2:12)	Hold fast my name Not deny your faith, Antipas (2:13)	Some hold teaching of Balaam, Nicolaitans	Repent then, if not, I will come soon (2:16)	Hear what spirit says to churches: 2:17	Manna, white stone (2:17)
<b>THYATIRA</b> (2: 18-29)	Son of God, eyes like fire, feet like bronze (2:18)	Your works, love, faith, service, patient endurance (2:19)	You tolerate Jezebel: practice fornication & eat meat	Hold fast what you have until I come (2:25)	Hear what spirit says to churches: 2:29	Rule w/ iron rod, morning star:2:28
<b>SARDIS</b> (3: 1-6)	Has 7 spirits of God & 7 stars (3:1)	[a few have not soiled clothes, but walk in white]	Alive but dead Wake up, strengthen	Remember what you received & hear; obey, repent	Hear what spirit says to churches: 3:6	Robes, Book of life, good word: 3:5
<b>PHILADELPHIA</b> (3: 7-13)	Holy one, true one, has Key of David (3:7)	You kept my word & not denied my name (3:8)		Coming soon; hold fast so no one seizes crown: 3:11	Hear what spirit says to churches: 3:13	Pillar temple, name on you: 3:12
<b>LAODICEA</b> (3: 14-22)	Amen, faithful & true witness, origin (3:14)		Neither cold nor hot; poor, blind, naked; spit out	Be earnest & repent; buy gold, robes, salve; 3:19	Hear what spirit says to churches: 3:22	A place on throne with Jesus: 3:21

	<b>7 Seals (6: 1-8: 1)</b>	<b>7 Trumpets (8: 2-11: 19)</b>	<b>7 Bowls (16: 1-21)</b>
<b>1st</b>	White horse with a bow Came to conquer (6:1-2)	Hail & fire: 1/3 of earth & trees, all green grass burned up (8:7)	Foul sores on those with mark of beast & worshipped its image (16:1-2)
<b>2nd</b>	Bright red horse with a sword Take peace (6:3-4)	Mountain burning into sea; 1/3 of sea, creatures, ships (8:8-9)	Sea became like blood & every living thing in sea died (16:3)
<b>3rd</b>	Black horse with a pair of scales Famine (6:5-6)	Great star blazing on 1/3 of rivers & springs: Wormwood = bitter 8:10-11	Rivers & springs became like blood (16:4-7)
<b>4th</b>	Pale green horse: Death & Hades to kill 1/4 of earth (6:7-8)	1/3 of sun, moon, stars were struck: 1/3 of light was darkened (8:12-13)	Scorched by heat of sun; cursed God & did not repent (16:8-9)
<b>5th</b>	Under altar: those slaughtered for Word of God (6:9-11)	(1st Woe): locusts from bottomless pit; King = Apollyon (9:1-12)	Throne of beast: darkness; gnawed tongue; cursed God & did not repent (16:10-11)
<b>6th</b>	Cosmic upheaval: earthquake, black sun, who can stand? 6:12-17	(2nd Woe): demonic calvary: smoke & sulfur; 1/3 humankind (9:13-21)	River Euphrates: dried up; 3 foul spirits; Armagedon (16:12-14, 16)
<b>Inter- lude</b>	144,000 = sealed on forehead & great multitude (7:1-17)	Eat the scroll! Bitter & sweet The 2 witnesses (10:1-11:13)	"I am coming like a thief!" Stay awake & be clothed (16:15)
<b>7th</b>	Silence for half an hour (8:1)	(3rd Woe): Kingdom of world = Lord & his Messiah (11:15-19)	The air: "It is done!" Lightning, thunder, earthquake, hailstones (16:17-21)