

“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 4th 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 קטר [Neron Caesar] = 666
- [200] ר [60] ס [100] ק [50] ו [6] ו [200] ר [50] ג
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. **1st 4 seals:** 4 horsemen of Apocalypse: effects on all
- b. **5th seal:** souls of martyrs under altar
- c. **6th 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. **5th trumpet:** king of locusts is Abaddon, Apollyon
- e. **6th 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. **4th and 5th Bowl:** they did not repent!
- b. **6th Bowl: Armageddon** (16:16= 6th Bowl) = Megiddo (NW

Palestine & scene of great battles, esp. Josiah), Final Showdown!

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

1st Interlude: Rev. 7:1-17

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

1. **6th 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

2nd 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. **3rd Beatitude**: stay awake & be faithful!

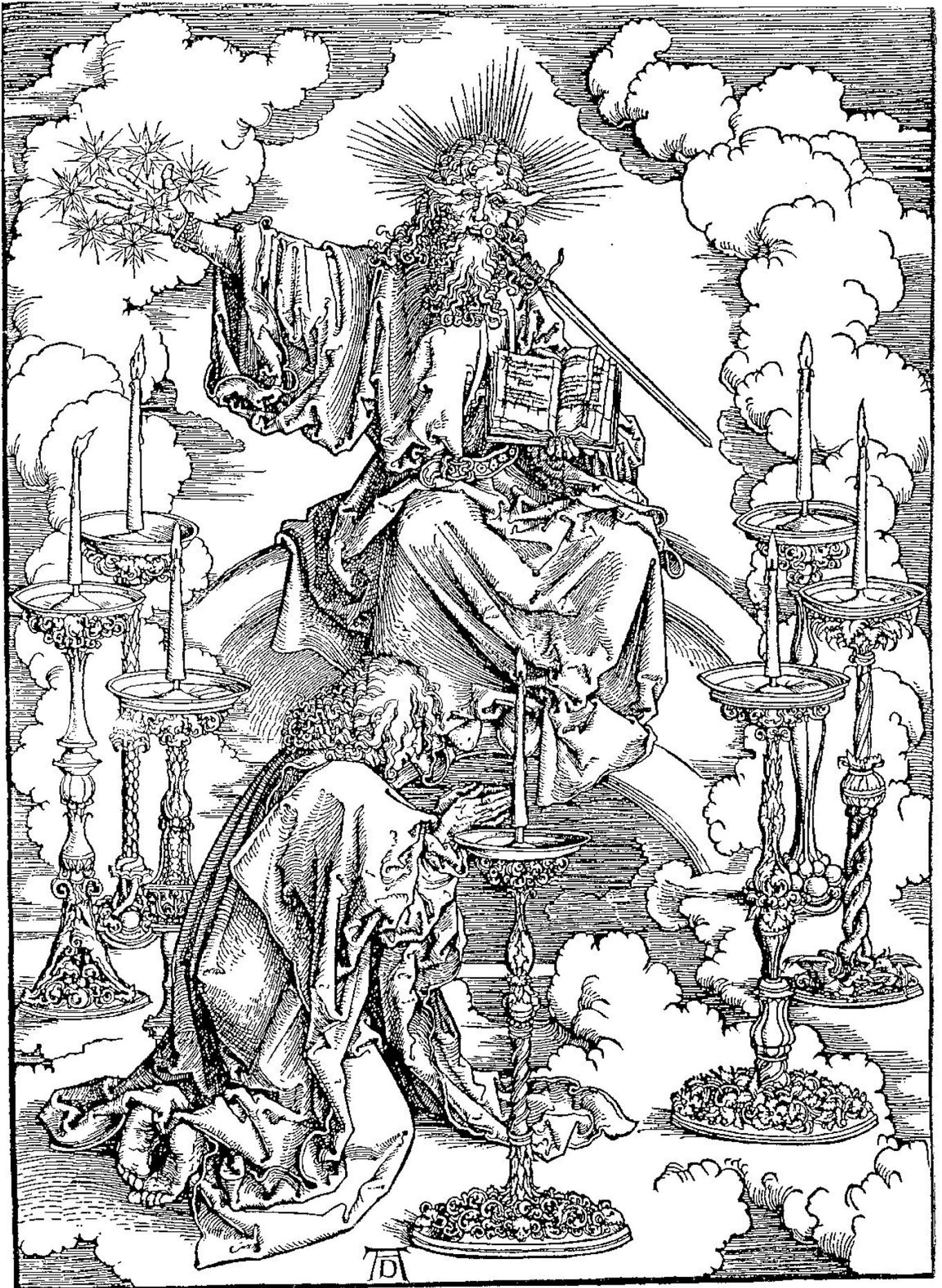
F. THE RAPTURE

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
EPHESUS (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
SMYRNA (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
PERGAMUM (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)
THYATIRA (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 Jebel: 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
SARDIS (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
PHILADELPHIA (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
LAODICEA (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

	7 Seals (6: 1-8: 1)	7 Trumpets (8: 2-11: 19)	7 Bowls (16: 1-21)
1st	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)
2nd	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)
3rd	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)
4th	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)
5th	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)
6th	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)
Inter-lude	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)
7th	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)