

The Book Of Revelation

The Book Of Hope

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Revelation

OVERVIEW:

WITH TINY wrinkles and cries, he entered the world and, wrapped in strips of cloth, took his first nap on a bed of straw. Subject to time and to parents, he grew to manhood in Roman-occupied Palestine, his gentle hands becoming strong and calloused in Joseph's woodworking shop. As a man, he walked through the countryside and city, touching individuals, preaching to crowds, and training 12 men to carry on his work.

At every step he was hounded by those seeking to rid the world of his influence. Finally, falsely accused and tried, he was condemned to a disgraceful execution by foreign hands. And he died—spat upon, cursed, pierced by nails, and hung heavenward for all to deride. Jesus, the God-man, gave his life completely so that all might live.

At God's appointed time, the risen and ascended Lord Jesus will burst onto the world scene. Then everyone will know that Jesus is Lord of the universe! Those who love him will rejoice, greeting their Savior with hearts overflowing into songs of praise. But his enemies will be filled with fear. Allied with Satan, the enemies of Christ will marshal their legions against Christ and his armies. But who can withstand God's wrath? Christ will win the battle and reign victorious forever! Jesus, the humble suffering Servant, is also the powerful, conquering King and Judge.

Revelation is a book of hope. John, the beloved apostle and eyewitness of Jesus, proclaimed that the victorious Lord would surely return to vindicate the righteous and judge the wicked. But Revelation is also a book of warning. Things were not as they should have been in the churches, so Christ called the members to commit themselves to live in righteousness.

Although Jesus gave this revelation of himself to John nearly 2,000 years ago, it still stands as a comfort and challenge to God's people today. We can take heart as we understand John's vision of hope—Christ will return to rescue his people and settle accounts with all who defy him.

John begins this book by explaining how he received this revelation from God (Rev. 1:1-20). He then records specific messages from Jesus to the seven churches in Asia (Rev. 2:1-3:22). Suddenly the scene shifts as a mosaic of dramatic and majestic images bursts into view before John's eyes. This series of visions portrays the future rise of evil, culminating in the antichrist (Rev. 4:1-18:24). Then follows John's recounting of the triumph of the King of kings, the wedding of the Lamb, the final judgment, and the coming of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 19:1-22:5). Revelation concludes with the promise of Christ's soon return (Rev. 22:6-21), and John breathes a prayer that has been echoed by Christians through the centuries, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20).

As you read the book of Revelation, marvel with John at the wondrous panorama of God's revealed plan. Listen as Christ warns the churches, and root out any sin that blocks your relationship with him. Be full of hope, knowing that God is in control, Christ's victory is assured, and all who trust him will be saved.

THE BLUEPRINT

A. LETTERS TO THE CHURCHES (Rev. 1:1-3:22)

The vision John received opens with instructions for him to write to seven churches. He both commends them for their strengths and warns them about their flaws. Each letter was directed to a church then in existence, but also speaks to conditions in the church throughout history. Both in the church and in our individual lives, we must constantly fight against the temptation to become loveless, immoral, lenient, compromising, lifeless, or casual about our faith. The letters make it clear how our Lord feels about these qualities.

Rev. 1:1-3:22

This is a revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him concerning the events that will happen soon. An angel was sent to God's servant John so that John could share the revelation with God's other servants. [2] John faithfully reported the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ—everything he saw.

[3] God blesses the one who reads this prophecy to the church, and he blesses all who listen to it and obey what it says. For the time is near when these things will happen.

[4] This letter is from John to the seven churches in the province of Asia. Grace and peace from the one who is, who always was, and who is still to come; from the sevenfold Spirit before his throne; [5] and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness to these things, the first to rise from the dead, and the commander of all the rulers of the world.

All praise to him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by shedding his blood for us. [6] He has made us his kingdom and his priests who serve before God his Father. Give to him everlasting glory! He rules forever and ever! Amen!

[7] Look! He comes with the clouds of heaven. And everyone will see him—even those who pierced him. And all the nations of the earth will weep because of him. Yes! Amen!

[8] "I am the Alpha and the Omega—the beginning and the end," says the Lord God. "I am the one who is, who always was, and who is still to come, the Almighty One."

[9] I am John, your brother. In Jesus we are partners in suffering and in the Kingdom and in patient endurance. I was exiled to the island of Patmos for preaching the word of God and speaking about Jesus. [10] It was the Lord's Day, and I was worshiping in the Spirit. Suddenly, I heard a loud voice behind me, a voice that sounded like a trumpet blast. [11] It said, "Write down what you see, and send it to the seven churches: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea."

[12] When I turned to see who was speaking to me, I saw seven gold lampstands. [13] And standing in the middle of the lampstands was the Son of Man. He was wearing a long robe with a gold sash across his chest. [14] His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow. And his eyes were bright like flames of fire. [15] His feet were as bright as bronze refined in a furnace, and his voice thundered like mighty ocean waves. [16] He held seven stars in his right hand, and a sharp two-edged sword came from his mouth. And his face was as bright as the sun in all its brilliance.

[17] When I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. But he laid his right hand on me and said, "Don't be afraid! I am the First and the Last. [18] I am the living one who died. Look, I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and the grave. [19] Write down what you have seen—both the things that are now happening and the things that will happen later. [20] This is the meaning of the seven stars you saw in my right hand and the seven gold lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

[2:1] "Write this letter to the angel of the church in Ephesus. This is the message from the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand, the one who walks among the seven gold lampstands:

[2] "I know all the things you do. I have seen your hard work and your patient endurance. I know you don't tolerate evil people. You have examined the claims of those who say they are apostles but are not. You have discovered they are liars. [3] You have patiently suffered for me without quitting. [4] But I have this complaint against you. You don't love me or each other as you did at first! [5] Look how far you have fallen from your first love! Turn back to me again and work as you did at first. If you don't, I will come and remove your lampstand from its place among the churches. [6] But there is this about you that is good: You hate the deeds of the immoral Nicolaitans, just as I do.

[7] "Anyone who is willing to hear should listen to the Spirit and understand what the Spirit is saying to the churches. Everyone who is victorious will eat from the tree of life in the paradise of God.

[8] "Write this letter to the angel of the church in Smyrna. This is the message from the one who is the First and the Last, who died and is alive:

[9] "I know about your suffering and your poverty—but you are rich! I know the slander of those opposing you. They say they are Jews, but they really aren't because theirs is a synagogue of Satan. [10] Don't be afraid of what you are about to suffer. The Devil will throw some of you into prison and put you to the test. You will be persecuted for 'ten days.' Remain faithful even when facing death, and I will give you the crown of life.

[11] "Anyone who is willing to hear should listen to the Spirit and understand what the Spirit is saying to the churches. Whoever is victorious will not be hurt by the second death.

[12] "Write this letter to the angel of the church in Pergamum. This is the message from the one who has a sharp two-edged sword:

[13] "I know that you live in the city where that great throne of Satan is located, and yet you have remained loyal to me. And you refused to deny me even when Antipas, my faithful witness, was martyred among you by Satan's followers. [14] And yet I have a few complaints against you. You tolerate some among you who are like Balaam, who showed Balak how to trip up the people of Israel. He taught them to worship idols by eating food offered to idols and by committing sexual sin. [15] In the same way, you have some Nicolaitans among you—people who follow the same teaching and commit the same sins. [16] Repent, or I will come to you suddenly and fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

[17] "Anyone who is willing to hear should listen to the Spirit and understand what the Spirit is saying to the churches. Everyone who is victorious will eat of the manna that has been hidden away in heaven. And I will give to each one a white stone, and on the stone will be engraved a new name that no one knows except the one who receives it.

[18] "Write this letter to the angel of the church in Thyatira. This is the message from the Son of God, whose eyes are bright like flames of fire, whose feet are like polished bronze:

[19] "I know all the things you do—your love, your faith, your service, and your patient endurance. And I can see your constant improvement in all these things. [20] But I have this complaint against you. You are permitting that woman—that Jezebel who calls herself a prophet—to lead my servants astray. She is encouraging them to worship idols, eat food offered to idols, and commit sexual sin. [21] I gave her time to repent, but she would not turn away from her immorality. [22] Therefore, I will throw her upon a sickbed, and she will suffer greatly with all who commit adultery with her, unless they turn away from all their evil deeds. [23] I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am the one who searches out the thoughts and intentions of every person. And I will give to each of you whatever you deserve. [24] But I also have a message for the rest of you in Thyatira who have not followed this false teaching ('deeper truths,' as they call them—depths of Satan, really). I will ask nothing more of you [25] except that you hold tightly to what you have until I come.

[26] "To all who are victorious, who obey me to the very end, I will give authority over all the nations. [27] They will rule the nations with an iron rod and smash them like clay pots. [28] They will have the same authority I received from my Father, and I will also give them the morning star! [29] Anyone who is willing to hear should listen to the Spirit and understand what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

[3:1] "Write this letter to the angel of the church in Sardis. This is the message from the one who has the sevenfold Spirit of God and the seven stars:

"I know all the things you do, and that you have a reputation for being alive—but you are dead. [2] Now wake up! Strengthen what little remains, for even what is left is at the point of death. Your deeds are far from right in the sight of God. [3] Go back to what you heard and believed at first; hold to it firmly and turn to me again. Unless you do, I will come upon you suddenly, as unexpected as a thief. [4] "Yet even in Sardis there are some who have not soiled their garments with evil deeds. They will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. [5] All who are victorious will be clothed in white. I will never erase their names from the Book of Life, but I will announce before my Father and his angels that they are mine. [6] Anyone who is willing to hear should listen to the Spirit and understand what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

[7] "Write this letter to the angel of the church in Philadelphia. This is the message from the one who is holy and true. He is the one who has the key of

David. He opens doors, and no one can shut them; he shuts doors, and no one can open them.

[8] "I know all the things you do, and I have opened a door for you that no one can shut. You have little strength, yet you obeyed my word and did not deny me. [9] Look! I will force those who belong to Satan—those liars who say they are Jews but are not—to come and bow down at your feet. They will acknowledge that you are the ones I love.

[10] "Because you have obeyed my command to persevere, I will protect you from the great time of testing that will come upon the whole world to test those who belong to this world. [11] Look, I am coming quickly. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take away your crown. [12] All who are victorious will become pillars in the Temple of my God, and they will never have to leave it. And I will write my God's name on them, and they will be citizens in the city of my God—the new Jerusalem that comes down from heaven from my God. And they will have my new name inscribed upon them. [13] Anyone who is willing to hear should listen to the Spirit and understand what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

[14] "Write this letter to the angel of the church in Laodicea. This is the message from the one who is the Amen—the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation:

[15] "I know all the things you do, that you are neither hot nor cold. I wish you were one or the other! [16] But since you are like lukewarm water, I will spit you out of my mouth! [17] You say, 'I am rich. I have everything I want. I don't need a thing!' And you don't realize that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. [18] I advise you to buy gold from me—gold that has been purified by fire. Then you will be rich. And also buy white garments so you will not be shamed by your nakedness. And buy ointment for your eyes so you will be able to see. [19] I am the one who corrects and disciplines everyone I love. Be diligent and turn from your indifference.

[20] "Look! Here I stand at the door and knock. If you hear me calling and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal as friends. [21] I will invite everyone who is victorious to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat with my Father on his throne. [22] Anyone who is willing to hear should listen to the Spirit and understand what the Spirit is saying to the churches."

B. MESSAGE FOR THE CHURCH (Rev. 4:1-22:21)

This revelation is both a warning to Christians who have grown apathetic and an encouragement to those who are faithfully enduring the struggles in this world. It reassures us that good will triumph over evil, gives us hope as we face difficult times, and gives guidance when we are wavering in our faith. Christ's message to the church is a message of hope for all believers in every generation.

1. Worshiping God in heaven
2. Opening the seven seals
3. Sounding the seven trumpets
4. Observing the great conflict
5. Pouring out the seven plagues
6. Seizing the final victory
7. Making everything new

Rev. 4:1-22:21

Then as I looked, I saw a door standing open in heaven, and the same voice I had heard before spoke to me with the sound of a mighty trumpet blast. The voice said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must happen after these things." [2] And instantly I was in the Spirit, and I saw a throne in heaven and someone sitting on it! [3] The one sitting on the throne was as brilliant as gemstones—jasper and carnelian. And the glow of an emerald circled his throne like a rainbow. [4] Twenty-four thrones surrounded him, and twenty-four elders sat on them. They were all clothed in white and had gold crowns on their heads. [5] And from the throne came flashes of lightning and the rumble of thunder. And in front of the throne were seven lampstands with burning flames. They are the seven spirits of God. [6] In front of the throne was a shiny sea of glass, sparkling like crystal.

In the center and around the throne were four living beings, each covered with eyes, front and back. [7] The first of these living beings had the form of a lion; the second looked like an ox; the third had a human face; and the fourth had the form of an eagle with wings spread out as though in flight. [8] Each of these living

beings had six wings, and their wings were covered with eyes, inside and out. Day after day and night after night they keep on saying,

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty—
the one who always was, who is, and who is still to come."

[9] Whenever the living beings give glory and honor and thanks to the one sitting on the throne, the one who lives forever and ever, [10] the twenty-four elders fall down and worship the one who lives forever and ever. And they lay their crowns before the throne and say,

[11] "You are worthy, O Lord our God,
to receive glory and honor and power.
For you created everything,
and it is for your pleasure that they exist and were created."

[5:1] And I saw a scroll in the right hand of the one who was sitting on the throne. There was writing on the inside and the outside of the scroll, and it was sealed with seven seals. [2] And I saw a strong angel, who shouted with a loud voice: "Who is worthy to break the seals on this scroll and unroll it?" [3] But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll and read it.

[4] Then I wept because no one could be found who was worthy to open the scroll and read it. [5] But one of the twenty-four elders said to me, "Stop weeping! Look, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the heir to David's throne, has conquered. He is worthy to open the scroll and break its seven seals."

[6] I looked and I saw a Lamb that had been killed but was now standing between the throne and the four living beings and among the twenty-four elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God that are sent out into every part of the earth. [7] He stepped forward and took the scroll from the right hand of the one sitting on the throne. [8] And as he took the scroll, the four living beings and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp, and they held gold bowls filled with incense—the prayers of God's people!

[9] And they sang a new song with these words:

"You are worthy to take the scroll
and break its seals and open it.

For you were killed, and your blood has ransomed people for God
from every tribe and language and people and nation.

[10] And you have caused them to become God's kingdom and his priests.
And they will reign on the earth."

[11] Then I looked again, and I heard the singing of thousands and millions of angels around the throne and the living beings and the elders. [12] And they sang in a mighty chorus:

"The Lamb is worthy—the Lamb who was killed.
He is worthy to receive power and riches
and wisdom and strength
and honor and glory and blessing."

[13] And then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea. They also sang:

"Blessing and honor and glory and power
belong to the one sitting on the throne
and to the Lamb forever and ever."

[14] And the four living beings said, "Amen!" And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped God and the Lamb.

[6:1] As I watched, the Lamb broke the first of the seven seals on the scroll. Then one of the four living beings called out with a voice that sounded like thunder, "Come!" [2] I looked up and saw a white horse. Its rider carried a bow, and a crown was placed on his head. He rode out to win many battles and gain the victory.

[3] When the Lamb broke the second seal, I heard the second living being say, "Come!" [4] And another horse appeared, a red one. Its rider was given a mighty sword and the authority to remove peace from the earth. And there was war and slaughter everywhere.

[5] When the Lamb broke the third seal, I heard the third living being say, "Come!" And I looked up and saw a black horse, and its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. [6] And a voice from among the four living beings said, "A loaf of wheat bread or three loaves of barley for a day's pay. And don't waste the olive oil and wine."

[7] And when the Lamb broke the fourth seal, I heard the fourth living being say, "Come!" [8] And I looked up and saw a horse whose color was pale green like a corpse. And Death was the name of its rider, who was followed around by the

Grave. They were given authority over one-fourth of the earth, to kill with the sword and famine and disease and wild animals.

[9] And when the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of all who had been martyred for the word of God and for being faithful in their witness. [10] They called loudly to the Lord and said, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long will it be before you judge the people who belong to this world for what they have done to us? When will you avenge our blood against these people?" [11] Then a white robe was given to each of them. And they were told to rest a little longer until the full number of their brothers and sisters—their fellow servants of Jesus—had been martyred.

[12] I watched as the Lamb broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake. The sun became as dark as black cloth, and the moon became as red as blood. [13] Then the stars of the sky fell to the earth like green figs falling from trees shaken by mighty winds. [14] And the sky was rolled up like a scroll and taken away. And all of the mountains and all of the islands disappeared. [15] Then the kings of the earth, the rulers, the generals, the wealthy people, the people with great power, and every slave and every free person—all hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains. [16] And they cried to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of the one who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. [17] For the great day of their wrath has come, and who will be able to survive?"

[7:1] Then I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds from blowing upon the earth. Not a leaf rustled in the trees, and the sea became as smooth as glass. [2] And I saw another angel coming from the east, carrying the seal of the living God. And he shouted out to those four angels who had been given power to injure land and sea, [3] "Wait! Don't hurt the land or the sea or the trees until we have placed the seal of God on the foreheads of his servants."

[4] And I heard how many were marked with the seal of God. There were 144,000 who were sealed from all the tribes of Israel:

[5] from Judah — 12,000

from Reuben — 12,000

from Gad — 12,000

[6] from Asher — 12,000

from Naphtali — 12,000

from Manasseh — 12,000
[7] from Simeon — 12,000
from Levi — 12,000
from Issachar — 12,000
[8] from Zebulun — 12,000
from Joseph — 12,000
from Benjamin — 12,000

[9] After this I saw a vast crowd, too great to count, from every nation and tribe and people and language, standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white and held palm branches in their hands. [10] And they were shouting with a mighty shout, "Salvation comes from our God on the throne and from the Lamb!"

[11] And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living beings. And they fell face down before the throne and worshiped God. [12] They said,

"Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom
and thanksgiving and honor and power and strength
belong to our God forever and forever. Amen!"

[13] Then one of the twenty-four elders asked me, "Who are these who are clothed in white? Where do they come from?"

[14] And I said to him, "Sir, you are the one who knows."

Then he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb and made them white. [15] That is why they are standing in front of the throne of God, serving him day and night in his Temple. And he who sits on the throne will live among them and shelter them. [16] They will never again be hungry or thirsty, and they will be fully protected from the scorching noontime heat. [17] For the Lamb who stands in front of the throne will be their Shepherd. He will lead them to the springs of life-giving water. And God will wipe away all their tears."

[8:1] When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence throughout heaven for about half an hour. [2] And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and they were given seven trumpets.

[3] Then another angel with a gold incense burner came and stood at the altar. And a great quantity of incense was given to him to mix with the prayers of God's people, to be offered on the gold altar before the throne. [4] The smoke of the incense, mixed with the prayers of the saints, ascended up to God from the altar

where the angel had poured them out. [5] Then the angel filled the incense burner with fire from the altar and threw it down upon the earth; and thunder crashed, lightning flashed, and there was a terrible earthquake.

[6] Then the seven angels with the seven trumpets prepared to blow their mighty blasts.

[7] The first angel blew his trumpet, and hail and fire mixed with blood were thrown down upon the earth, and one-third of the earth was set on fire. One-third of the trees were burned, and all the grass was burned.

[8] Then the second angel blew his trumpet, and a great mountain of fire was thrown into the sea. And one-third of the water in the sea became blood. [9] And one-third of all things living in the sea died. And one-third of all the ships on the sea were destroyed.

[10] Then the third angel blew his trumpet, and a great flaming star fell out of the sky, burning like a torch. It fell upon one-third of the rivers and on the springs of water. [11] The name of the star was Bitterness. It made one-third of the water bitter, and many people died because the water was so bitter.

[12] Then the fourth angel blew his trumpet, and one-third of the sun was struck, and one-third of the moon, and one-third of the stars, and they became dark. And one-third of the day was dark and one-third of the night also.

[13] Then I looked up. And I heard a single eagle crying loudly as it flew through the air, "Terror, terror, terror to all who belong to this world because of what will happen when the last three angels blow their trumpets."

[9:1] Then the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen to earth from the sky, and he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit. [2] When he opened it, smoke poured out as though from a huge furnace, and the sunlight and air were darkened by the smoke.

[3] Then locusts came from the smoke and descended on the earth, and they were given power to sting like scorpions. [4] They were told not to hurt the grass or plants or trees but to attack all the people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

[5] They were told not to kill them but to torture them for five months with agony like the pain of scorpion stings. [6] In those days people will seek death but will not find it. They will long to die, but death will flee away!

[7] The locusts looked like horses armed for battle. They had gold crowns on their heads, and they had human faces. [8] Their hair was long like the hair of a woman, and their teeth were like the teeth of a lion. [9] They wore armor made of iron, and their wings roared like an army of chariots rushing into battle. [10] They had tails that stung like scorpions, with power to torture people. This power was given to them for five months. [11] Their king is the angel from the bottomless pit; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon—the Destroyer.

[12] The first terror is past, but look, two more terrors are coming!

[13] Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice speaking from the four horns of the gold altar that stands in the presence of God. [14] And the voice spoke to the sixth angel who held the trumpet: "Release the four angels who are bound at the great Euphrates River." [15] And the four angels who had been prepared for this hour and day and month and year were turned loose to kill one-third of all the people on earth. [16] They led an army of 200 million mounted troops—I heard an announcement of how many there were.

[17] And in my vision, I saw the horses and the riders sitting on them. The riders wore armor that was fiery red and sky blue and yellow. The horses' heads were like the heads of lions, and fire and smoke and burning sulfur billowed from their mouths. [18] One-third of all the people on earth were killed by these three plagues—by the fire and the smoke and burning sulfur that came from the mouths of the horses. [19] Their power was in their mouths, but also in their tails. For their tails had heads like snakes, with the power to injure people.

[20] But the people who did not die in these plagues still refused to turn from their evil deeds. They continued to worship demons and idols made of gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood—idols that neither see nor hear nor walk! [21] And they did not repent of their murders or their witchcraft or their immorality or their thefts.

[10:1] Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, surrounded by a cloud, with a rainbow over his head. His face shone like the sun, and his feet were like pillars of fire. [2] And in his hand was a small scroll, which he had unrolled. He stood with his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land. [3] And he gave a great shout, like the roar of a lion. And when he shouted, the seven thunders answered.

[4] When the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write. But a voice from heaven called to me: "Keep secret what the seven thunders said. Do not write it down."

[5] Then the mighty angel standing on the sea and on the land lifted his right hand to heaven. [6] And he swore an oath in the name of the one who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and everything in it, the earth and everything in it, and the sea and everything in it. He said, "God will wait no longer. [7] But when the seventh angel blows his trumpet, God's mysterious plan will be fulfilled. It will happen just as he announced it to his servants the prophets."

[8] Then the voice from heaven called to me again: "Go and take the unrolled scroll from the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land."

[9] So I approached him and asked him to give me the little scroll. "Yes, take it and eat it," he said. "At first it will taste like honey, but when you swallow it, it will make your stomach sour!" [10] So I took the little scroll from the hands of the angel, and I ate it! It was sweet in my mouth, but it made my stomach sour. [11] Then he said to me, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages, and kings."

[11:1] Then I was given a measuring stick, and I was told, "Go and measure the Temple of God and the altar, and count the number of worshipers. [2] But do not measure the outer courtyard, for it has been turned over to the nations. They will trample the holy city for 42 months. [3] And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will be clothed in sackcloth and will prophesy during those 1,260 days."

[4] These two prophets are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of all the earth. [5] If anyone tries to harm them, fire flashes from the mouths of the prophets and consumes their enemies. This is how anyone who tries to harm them must die. [6] They have power to shut the skies so that no rain will fall for as long as they prophesy. And they have the power to turn the rivers and oceans into blood, and to send every kind of plague upon the earth as often as they wish.

[7] When they complete their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the bottomless pit will declare war against them. He will conquer them and kill them. [8] And their bodies will lie in the main street of Jerusalem, the city which is called "Sodom" and "Egypt," the city where their Lord was crucified. [9] And for three and a half days, all peoples, tribes, languages, and nations will come to stare at their bodies. No one will be allowed to bury them. [10] All the people who belong to this world will give presents to each other to celebrate the death of the two prophets who had tormented them.

[11] But after three and a half days, the spirit of life from God entered them, and they stood up! And terror struck all who were staring at them. [12] Then a loud voice shouted from heaven, "Come up here!" And they rose to heaven in a cloud as their enemies watched.

[13] And in the same hour there was a terrible earthquake that destroyed a tenth of the city. Seven thousand people died in that earthquake. And everyone who did not die was terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

[14] The second terror is past, but look, now the third terror is coming quickly.

[15] Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices shouting in heaven: "The whole world has now become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign forever and ever."

[16] And the twenty-four elders sitting on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped him. [17] And they said,

"We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty,
the one who is and who always was,
for now you have assumed your great power
and have begun to reign.

[18] The nations were angry with you,
but now the time of your wrath has come.
It is time to judge the dead and reward your servants.
You will reward your prophets and your holy people,
all who fear your name, from the least to the greatest.
And you will destroy all who have caused destruction on the earth."

[19] Then, in heaven, the Temple of God was opened and the Ark of his covenant could be seen inside the Temple. Lightning flashed, thunder crashed and roared; there was a great hailstorm, and the world was shaken by a mighty earthquake.

[12:1] Then I witnessed in heaven an event of great significance. I saw a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon beneath her feet, and a crown of twelve stars on her head. [2] She was pregnant, and she cried out in the pain of labor as she awaited her delivery.

[3] Suddenly, I witnessed in heaven another significant event. I saw a large red dragon with seven heads and ten horns, with seven crowns on his heads. [4] His tail dragged down one-third of the stars, which he threw to the earth. He stood

before the woman as she was about to give birth to her child, ready to devour the baby as soon as it was born.

[5] She gave birth to a boy who was to rule all nations with an iron rod. And the child was snatched away from the dragon and was caught up to God and to his throne. [6] And the woman fled into the wilderness, where God had prepared a place to give her care for 1,260 days.

[7] Then there was war in heaven. Michael and the angels under his command fought the dragon and his angels. [8] And the dragon lost the battle and was forced out of heaven. [9] This great dragon—the ancient serpent called the Devil, or Satan, the one deceiving the whole world—was thrown down to the earth with all his angels.

[10] Then I heard a loud voice shouting across the heavens,

"It has happened at last—the salvation and power and kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ! For the Accuser has been thrown down to earth—the one who accused our brothers and sisters before our God day and night. [11] And they have defeated him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of their testimony. And they were not afraid to die. [12] Rejoice, O heavens! And you who live in the heavens, rejoice! But terror will come on the earth and the sea. For the Devil has come down to you in great anger, and he knows that he has little time."

[13] And when the dragon realized that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the child. [14] But she was given two wings like those of a great eagle. This allowed her to fly to a place prepared for her in the wilderness, where she would be cared for and protected from the dragon for a time, times, and half a time.

[15] Then the dragon tried to drown the woman with a flood of water that flowed from its mouth. [16] But the earth helped her by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that gushed out from the mouth of the dragon. [17] Then the dragon became angry at the woman, and he declared war against the rest of her children—all who keep God's commandments and confess that they belong to Jesus.

[13:1] [12:18] Then he stood waiting on the shore of the sea.

[1] And now in my vision I saw a beast rising up out of the sea. It had seven heads and ten horns, with ten crowns on its horns. And written on each head were

names that blasphemed God. [2] This beast looked like a leopard, but it had bear's feet and a lion's mouth! And the dragon gave him his own power and throne and great authority.

[3] I saw that one of the heads of the beast seemed wounded beyond recovery—but the fatal wound was healed! All the world marveled at this miracle and followed the beast in awe. [4] They worshiped the dragon for giving the beast such power, and they worshiped the beast. "Is there anyone as great as the beast?" they exclaimed. "Who is able to fight against him?"

[5] Then the beast was allowed to speak great blasphemies against God. And he was given authority to do what he wanted for forty-two months. [6] And he spoke terrible words of blasphemy against God, slandering his name and all who live in heaven, who are his temple. [7] And the beast was allowed to wage war against God's holy people and to overcome them. And he was given authority to rule over every tribe and people and language and nation.

[8] And all the people who belong to this world worshiped the beast. They are the ones whose names were not written in the Book of Life, which belongs to the Lamb who was killed before the world was made.

[9] Anyone who is willing to hear should listen and understand. [10] The people who are destined for prison will be arrested and taken away. Those who are destined for death will be killed. But do not be dismayed, for here is your opportunity to have endurance and faith.

[11] Then I saw another beast come up out of the earth. He had two horns like those of a lamb, and he spoke with the voice of a dragon. [12] He exercised all the authority of the first beast. And he required all the earth and those who belong to this world to worship the first beast, whose death-wound had been healed. [13] He did astounding miracles, such as making fire flash down to earth from heaven while everyone was watching.

[14] And with all the miracles he was allowed to perform on behalf of the first beast, he deceived all the people who belong to this world. He ordered the people of the world to make a great statue of the first beast, who was fatally wounded and then came back to life. [15] He was permitted to give life to this statue so that it could speak. Then the statue commanded that anyone refusing to worship it must die.

[16] He required everyone—great and small, rich and poor, slave and free—to be given a mark on the right hand or on the forehead. [17] And no one could buy or sell anything without that mark, which was either the name of the beast or the number representing his name. [18] Wisdom is needed to understand this. Let the one who has understanding solve the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man. His number is 666.

[14:1] Then I saw the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with him were 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. [2] And I heard a sound from heaven like the roaring of a great waterfall or the rolling of mighty thunder. It was like the sound of many harpists playing together.

[3] This great choir sang a wonderful new song in front of the throne of God and before the four living beings and the twenty-four elders. And no one could learn this song except those 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. [4] For they are spiritually undefiled, pure as virgins, following the Lamb wherever he goes. They have been purchased from among the people on the earth as a special offering to God and to the Lamb. [5] No falsehood can be charged against them; they are blameless.

[6] And I saw another angel flying through the heavens, carrying the everlasting Good News to preach to the people who belong to this world—to every nation, tribe, language, and people. [7] "Fear God," he shouted. "Give glory to him. For the time has come when he will sit as judge. Worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all the springs of water."

[8] Then another angel followed him through the skies, shouting, "Babylon is fallen—that great city is fallen—because she seduced the nations of the world and made them drink the wine of her passionate immorality."

[9] Then a third angel followed them, shouting, "Anyone who worships the beast and his statue or who accepts his mark on the forehead or the hand [10] must drink the wine of God's wrath. It is poured out undiluted into God's cup of wrath. And they will be tormented with fire and burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb. [11] The smoke of their torment rises forever and ever, and they will have no relief day or night, for they have worshiped the beast and his statue and have accepted the mark of his name. [12] Let this encourage God's holy people to endure persecution patiently and remain firm to the end, obeying his commands and trusting in Jesus."

[13] And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this down: Blessed are those who die in the Lord from now on. Yes, says the Spirit, they are blessed

indeed, for they will rest from all their toils and trials; for their good deeds follow them!"

[14] Then I saw the Son of Man sitting on a white cloud. He had a gold crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand.

[15] Then an angel came from the Temple and called out in a loud voice to the one sitting on the cloud, "Use the sickle, for the time has come for you to harvest; the crop is ripe on the earth." [16] So the one sitting on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the whole earth was harvested.

[17] After that, another angel came from the Temple in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle. [18] Then another angel, who has power to destroy the world with fire, shouted to the angel with the sickle, "Use your sickle now to gather the clusters of grapes from the vines of the earth, for they are fully ripe for judgment." [19] So the angel swung his sickle on the earth and loaded the grapes into the great winepress of God's wrath. [20] And the grapes were trodden in the winepress outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress in a stream about 180 miles long and as high as a horse's bridle.

[15:1] Then I saw in heaven another significant event, and it was great and marvelous. Seven angels were holding the seven last plagues, which would bring God's wrath to completion. [2] I saw before me what seemed to be a crystal sea mixed with fire. And on it stood all the people who had been victorious over the beast and his statue and the number representing his name. They were all holding harps that God had given them. [3] And they were singing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb:

"Great and marvelous are your actions,
Lord God Almighty.
Just and true are your ways,
O King of the nations.
[4] Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name?
For you alone are holy.
All nations will come and worship before you,
for your righteous deeds have been revealed."

[5] Then I looked and saw that the Temple in heaven, God's Tabernacle, was thrown wide open! [6] The seven angels who were holding the bowls of the seven plagues came from the Temple, clothed in spotless white linen with gold belts

across their chests. [7] And one of the four living beings handed each of the seven angels a gold bowl filled with the terrible wrath of God, who lives forever and forever. [8] The Temple was filled with smoke from God's glory and power. No one could enter the Temple until the seven angels had completed pouring out the seven plagues.

[16:1] Then I heard a mighty voice shouting from the Temple to the seven angels, "Now go your ways and empty out the seven bowls of God's wrath on the earth."

[2] So the first angel left the Temple and poured out his bowl over the earth, and horrible, malignant sores broke out on everyone who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his statue.

[3] Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became like the blood of a corpse. And everything in the sea died.

[4] Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs, and they became blood. [5] And I heard the angel who had authority over all water saying, "You are just in sending this judgment, O Holy One, who is and who always was. [6] For your holy people and your prophets have been killed, and their blood was poured out on the earth. So you have given their murderers blood to drink. It is their just reward." [7] And I heard a voice from the altar saying, "Yes, Lord God Almighty, your punishments are true and just."

[8] Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, causing it to scorch everyone with its fire. [9] Everyone was burned by this blast of heat, and they cursed the name of God, who sent all of these plagues. They did not repent and give him glory.

[10] Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom was plunged into darkness. And his subjects ground their teeth in anguish, [11] and they cursed the God of heaven for their pains and sores. But they refused to repent of all their evil deeds.

[12] Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great Euphrates River, and it dried up so that the kings from the east could march their armies westward without hindrance. [13] And I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs leap from the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. [14] These miracle-working demons caused all the rulers of the world to gather for battle against the Lord on that great judgment day of God Almighty.

[15] "Take note: I will come as unexpectedly as a thief! Blessed are all who are watching for me, who keep their robes ready so they will not need to walk naked and ashamed."

[16] And they gathered all the rulers and their armies to a place called Armageddon in Hebrew.

[17] Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air. And a mighty shout came from the throne of the Temple in heaven, saying, "It is finished!" [18] Then the thunder crashed and rolled, and lightning flashed. And there was an earthquake greater than ever before in human history.

[19] The great city of Babylon split into three pieces, and cities around the world fell into heaps of rubble. And so God remembered all of Babylon's sins, and he made her drink the cup that was filled with the wine of his fierce wrath. [20] And every island disappeared, and all the mountains were leveled. [21] There was a terrible hailstorm, and hailstones weighing seventy-five pounds fell from the sky onto the people below. They cursed God because of the hailstorm, which was a very terrible plague.

[17:1] One of the seven angels who had poured out the seven bowls came over and spoke to me. "Come with me," he said, "and I will show you the judgment that is going to come on the great prostitute, who sits on many waters. [2] The rulers of the world have had immoral relations with her, and the people who belong to this world have been made drunk by the wine of her immorality."

[3] So the angel took me in spirit into the wilderness. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that had seven heads and ten horns, written all over with blasphemies against God. [4] The woman wore purple and scarlet clothing and beautiful jewelry made of gold and precious gems and pearls. She held in her hand a gold goblet full of obscenities and the impurities of her immorality. [5] A mysterious name was written on her forehead: "Babylon the Great, Mother of All Prostitutes and Obscenities in the World." [6] I could see that she was drunk—drunk with the blood of God's holy people who were witnesses for Jesus. I stared at her completely amazed.

[7] "Why are you so amazed?" the angel asked. "I will tell you the mystery of this woman and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns. [8] The beast you saw was alive but isn't now. And yet he will soon come up out of the bottomless pit and go to eternal destruction. And the people who belong to this world, whose names were not written in the Book of Life from before the world began, will be amazed at the reappearance of this beast who had died.

[9] "And now understand this: The seven heads of the beast represent the seven hills of the city where this woman rules. They also represent seven kings. [10] Five kings have already fallen, the sixth now reigns, and the seventh is yet to come, but his reign will be brief. [11] The scarlet beast that was alive and then died is the eighth king. He is like the other seven, and he, too, will go to his doom. [12] His ten horns are ten kings who have not yet risen to power; they will be appointed to their kingdoms for one brief moment to reign with the beast. [13] They will all agree to give their power and authority to him. [14] Together they will wage war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will defeat them because he is Lord over all lords and King over all kings, and his people are the called and chosen and faithful ones."

[15] And the angel said to me, "The waters where the prostitute is sitting represent masses of people of every nation and language. [16] The scarlet beast and his ten horns—which represent ten kings who will reign with him—all hate the prostitute. They will strip her naked, eat her flesh, and burn her remains with fire. [17] For God has put a plan into their minds, a plan that will carry out his purposes. They will mutually agree to give their authority to the scarlet beast, and so the words of God will be fulfilled. [18] And this woman you saw in your vision represents the great city that rules over the kings of the earth."

[18:1] After all this I saw another angel come down from heaven with great authority, and the earth grew bright with his splendor. [2] He gave a mighty shout, "Babylon is fallen—that great city is fallen! She has become the hideout of demons and evil spirits, a nest for filthy buzzards, and a den for dreadful beasts. [3] For all the nations have drunk the wine of her passionate immorality. The rulers of the world have committed adultery with her, and merchants throughout the world have grown rich as a result of her luxurious living."

[4] Then I heard another voice calling from heaven, "Come away from her, my people. Do not take part in her sins, or you will be punished with her. [5] For her sins are piled as high as heaven, and God is ready to judge her for her evil deeds. [6] Do to her as she has done to your people. Give her a double penalty for all her evil deeds. She brewed a cup of terror for others, so give her twice as much as she gave out. [7] She has lived in luxury and pleasure, so match it now with torments and sorrows. She boasts, 'I am queen on my throne. I am no helpless widow. I will not experience sorrow.' [8] Therefore, the sorrows of death and mourning and famine will overtake her in a single day. She will be utterly consumed by fire, for the Lord God who judges her is mighty."

[9] And the rulers of the world who took part in her immoral acts and enjoyed her great luxury will mourn for her as they see the smoke rising from her charred remains. [10] They will stand at a distance, terrified by her great torment. They will cry out, "How terrible, how terrible for Babylon, that great city! In one single moment God's judgment came on her."

[11] The merchants of the world will weep and mourn for her, for there is no one left to buy their goods. [12] She bought great quantities of gold, silver, jewels, pearls, fine linen, purple dye, silk, scarlet cloth, every kind of perfumed wood, ivory goods, objects made of expensive wood, bronze, iron, and marble. [13] She also bought cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, olive oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle, sheep, horses, chariots, and slaves—yes, she even traded in human lives.

[14] "All the fancy things you loved so much are gone," they cry. "The luxuries and splendor that you prized so much will never be yours again. They are gone forever."

[15] The merchants who became wealthy by selling her these things will stand at a distance, terrified by her great torment. They will weep and cry. [16] "How terrible, how terrible for that great city! She was so beautiful—like a woman clothed in finest purple and scarlet linens, decked out with gold and precious stones and pearls! [17] And in one single moment all the wealth of the city is gone!"

And all the ship owners and captains of the merchant ships and their crews will stand at a distance. [18] They will weep as they watch the smoke ascend, and they will say, "Where in all the world is there another city like this?" [19] And they will throw dust on their heads to show their great sorrow. And they will say, "How terrible, how terrible for the great city! She made us all rich from her great wealth. And now in a single hour it is all gone."

[20] But you, O heaven, rejoice over her fate. And you also rejoice, O holy people of God and apostles and prophets! For at last God has judged her on your behalf.

[21] Then a mighty angel picked up a boulder as large as a great millstone. He threw it into the ocean and shouted, "Babylon, the great city, will be thrown down as violently as I have thrown away this stone, and she will disappear forever. [22] Never again will the sound of music be heard there—no more harps, songs, flutes, or trumpets. There will be no industry of any kind, and no more milling of grain.

[23] Her nights will be dark, without a single lamp. There will be no happy voices of brides and grooms. This will happen because her merchants, who were the greatest in the world, deceived the nations with her sorceries. [24] In her streets the blood of the prophets was spilled. She was the one who slaughtered God's people all over the world."

[19:1] After this, I heard the sound of a vast crowd in heaven shouting, "Hallelujah! Salvation is from our God. Glory and power belong to him alone. [2] His judgments are just and true. He has punished the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and he has avenged the murder of his servants." [3] Again and again their voices rang, "Hallelujah! The smoke from that city ascends forever and forever!"

[4] Then the twenty-four elders and the four living beings fell down and worshiped God, who was sitting on the throne. They cried out, "Amen! Hallelujah!"

[5] And from the throne came a voice that said, "Praise our God, all his servants, from the least to the greatest, all who fear him."

[6] Then I heard again what sounded like the shout of a huge crowd, or the roar of mighty ocean waves, or the crash of loud thunder: "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. [7] Let us be glad and rejoice and honor him. For the time has come for the wedding feast of the Lamb, and his bride has prepared herself. [8] She is permitted to wear the finest white linen." (Fine linen represents the good deeds done by the people of God.)

[9] And the angel said, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb." And he added, "These are true words that come from God."

[10] Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said, "No, don't worship me. For I am a servant of God, just like you and other brothers and sisters who testify of their faith in Jesus. Worship God. For the essence of prophecy is to give a clear witness for Jesus."

[11] Then I saw heaven opened, and a white horse was standing there. And the one sitting on the horse was named Faithful and True. For he judges fairly and then goes to war. [12] His eyes were bright like flames of fire, and on his head were many crowns. A name was written on him, and only he knew what it meant. [13] He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and his title was the Word of God. [14] The armies of heaven, dressed in pure white linen, followed him on white horses. [15] From his mouth came a sharp sword, and with it he struck down the

nations. He ruled them with an iron rod, and he trod the winepress of the fierce wrath of almighty God. [16] On his robe and thigh was written this title: King of kings and Lord of lords.

[17] Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, shouting to the vultures flying high in the sky: "Come! Gather together for the great banquet God has prepared. [18] Come and eat the flesh of kings, captains, and strong warriors; of horses and their riders; and of all humanity, both free and slave, small and great."

[19] Then I saw the beast gathering the kings of the earth and their armies in order to fight against the one sitting on the horse and his army. [20] And the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who did mighty miracles on behalf of the beast—miracles that deceived all who had accepted the mark of the beast and who worshiped his statue. Both the beast and his false prophet were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. [21] Their entire army was killed by the sharp sword that came out of the mouth of the one riding the white horse. And all the vultures of the sky gorged themselves on the dead bodies.

[20:1] Then I saw an angel come down from heaven with the key to the bottomless pit and a heavy chain in his hand. [2] He seized the dragon—that old serpent, the Devil, Satan—and bound him in chains for a thousand years. [3] The angel threw him into the bottomless pit, which he then shut and locked so Satan could not deceive the nations anymore until the thousand years were finished. Afterward he would be released again for a little while.

[4] Then I saw thrones, and the people sitting on them had been given the authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony about Jesus, for proclaiming the word of God. And I saw the souls of those who had not worshiped the beast or his statue, nor accepted his mark on their forehead or their hands. They came to life again, and they reigned with Christ for a thousand years. [5] This is the first resurrection. (The rest of the dead did not come back to life until the thousand years had ended.) [6] Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. For them the second death holds no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him a thousand years.

[7] When the thousand years end, Satan will be let out of his prison. [8] He will go out to deceive the nations from every corner of the earth, which are called Gog and Magog. He will gather them together for battle—a mighty host, as numberless as sand along the shore. [9] And I saw them as they went up on the broad plain of

the earth and surrounded God's people and the beloved city. But fire from heaven came down on the attacking armies and consumed them.

[10] Then the Devil, who betrayed them, was thrown into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur, joining the beast and the false prophet. There they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

[11] And I saw a great white throne, and I saw the one who was sitting on it. The earth and sky fled from his presence, but they found no place to hide. [12] I saw the dead, both great and small, standing before God's throne. And the books were opened, including the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to the things written in the books, according to what they had done. [13] The sea gave up the dead in it, and death and the grave gave up the dead in them. They were all judged according to their deeds. [14] And death and the grave were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death—the lake of fire. [15] And anyone whose name was not found recorded in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire.

[21:1] Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. [2] And I saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a beautiful bride prepared for her husband.

[3] I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, "Look, the home of God is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. [4] He will remove all of their sorrows, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. For the old world and its evils are gone forever."

[5] And the one sitting on the throne said, "Look, I am making all things new!" And then he said to me, "Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true." [6] And he also said, "It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega—the Beginning and the End. To all who are thirsty I will give the springs of the water of life without charge! [7] All who are victorious will inherit all these blessings, and I will be their God, and they will be my children. [8] But cowards who turn away from me, and unbelievers, and the corrupt, and murderers, and the immoral, and those who practice witchcraft, and idol worshipers, and all liars—their doom is in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur. This is the second death."

[9] Then one of the seven angels who held the seven bowls containing the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come with me! I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb."

[10] So he took me in spirit to a great, high mountain, and he showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. [11] It was filled with the glory of God and sparkled like a precious gem, crystal clear like jasper. [12] Its walls were broad and high, with twelve gates guarded by twelve angels. And the names of the twelve tribes of Israel were written on the gates. [13] There were three gates on each side—east, north, south, and west. [14] The wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were written the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

[15] The angel who talked to me held in his hand a gold measuring stick to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. [16] When he measured it, he found it was a square, as wide as it was long. In fact, it was in the form of a cube, for its length and width and height were each 1,400 miles. [17] Then he measured the walls and found them to be 216 feet thick (the angel used a standard human measure).

[18] The wall was made of jasper, and the city was pure gold, as clear as glass. [19] The wall of the city was built on foundation stones inlaid with twelve gems: the first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, [20] the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysolite, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst.

[21] The twelve gates were made of pearls—each gate from a single pearl! And the main street was pure gold, as clear as glass.

[22] No temple could be seen in the city, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. [23] And the city has no need of sun or moon, for the glory of God illuminates the city, and the Lamb is its light. [24] The nations of the earth will walk in its light, and the rulers of the world will come and bring their glory to it. [25] Its gates never close at the end of day because there is no night. [26] And all the nations will bring their glory and honor into the city. [27] Nothing evil will be allowed to enter—no one who practices shameful idolatry and dishonesty—but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

[22:1] And the angel showed me a pure river with the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb, [2] coursing down the center of the main street. On each side of the river grew a tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, with a fresh crop each month. The leaves were used for medicine to heal the nations.

[3] No longer will anything be cursed. For the throne of God and of the Lamb will be there, and his servants will worship him. [4] And they will see his face, and his name will be written on their foreheads. [5] And there will be no night there—

no need for lamps or sun—for the Lord God will shine on them. And they will reign forever and ever. [6] Then the angel said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true: 'The Lord God, who tells his prophets what the future holds, has sent his angel to tell you what will happen soon.' "[7] "Look, I am coming soon! Blessed are those who obey the prophecy written in this scroll."

[8] I, John, am the one who saw and heard all these things. And when I saw and heard these things, I fell down to worship the angel who showed them to me. [9] But again he said, "No, don't worship me. I am a servant of God, just like you and your brothers the prophets, as well as all who obey what is written in this scroll. Worship God!"

[10] Then he instructed me, "Do not seal up the prophetic words you have written, for the time is near. [11] Let the one who is doing wrong continue to do wrong; the one who is vile, continue to be vile; the one who is good, continue to do good; and the one who is holy, continue in holiness."

[12] "See, I am coming soon, and my reward is with me, to repay all according to their deeds. [13] I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End."

[14] Blessed are those who wash their robes so they can enter through the gates of the city and eat the fruit from the tree of life. [15] Outside the city are the dogs—the sorcerers, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idol worshipers, and all who love to live a lie.

[16] "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this message for the churches. I am both the source of David and the heir to his throne. I am the bright morning star."

[17] The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." Let each one who hears them say, "Come." Let the thirsty ones come—anyone who wants to. Let them come and drink the water of life without charge. [18] And I solemnly declare to everyone who hears the prophetic words of this book: If anyone adds anything to what is written here, God will add to that person the plagues described in this book. [19] And if anyone removes any of the words of this prophetic book, God will remove that person's share in the tree of life and in the holy city that are described in this book.

[20] He who is the faithful witness to all these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon!"

Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!

[21] The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you all.

MEGATHEMES

THEME: God's Sovereignty

EXPLANATION:

God is sovereign. He is greater than any power in the universe. God is not to be compared with any leader, government, or religion. He controls history for the purpose of uniting true believers in loving fellowship with him.

IMPORTANCE:

Though Satan's power may temporarily increase, we are not to be led astray. God is all-powerful. He is in control. He will bring his true family safely into eternal life. Because he cares for us, we can trust him with our very lives.

THEME: Christ's Return

EXPLANATION:

Christ came to earth as a "Lamb," the symbol of his perfect sacrifice for our sin. He will return as the triumphant "Lion," the rightful ruler and conqueror. He will defeat Satan, settle accounts with all those who reject him, and bring his faithful people into eternity.

IMPORTANCE:

Assurance of Christ's return gives suffering Christians the strength to endure. We can look forward to his return as King and Judge. Since no one knows the time when he will appear, we must be ready at all times by keeping our faith strong.

THEME: God's Faithful People

EXPLANATION:

John wrote to encourage the church to resist the demands to worship the Roman emperor. He warns all God's faithful people to be devoted only to Christ. Revelation identifies who the faithful people are and what they should be doing until Christ returns.

IMPORTANCE:

You can take your place in the ranks of God's faithful people by believing in Christ. Victory is sure for those who resist temptation and make loyalty to Christ their top priority.

THEME: Judgment

EXPLANATION:

One day God's anger toward sin will be fully and completely unleashed. Satan will be defeated with all of his agents. False religion will be destroyed. God will reward the faithful with eternal life, but all who refuse to believe in him will face eternal punishment.

IMPORTANCE:

Evil and injustice will not prevail forever. God's final judgment will put an end to these. We need to be certain of our commitment to Jesus if we want to escape this great final judgment. No one who rejects Christ will escape God's punishment.

THEME: Hope

EXPLANATION: One day God will create a new heaven and a new earth. All believers will live with him forever in perfect peace and security. Those who have already died will be raised to life. These promises for the future bring us hope.

IMPORTANCE: Our great hope is that what Christ promises will come true. When we have confidence in our final destination, we can follow Christ with unwavering dedication no matter what we must face. We can be encouraged by know that Christ will return.

An invitation is given to open your heart's door.

Rev. 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

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Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*.

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