**The Book of Revelation and You**

*The book of Revelation provides a powerful ending for the Bible. In the end, God and His people win, and evil will be forever defeated. What should we look for, and how should we live between now and then?*

Much of the book of Revelation is the story of worsening sin and the resultant suffering, climaxing in a time of woe never before experienced. However, the good news of the Bible is that Jesus Christ will return and save us from total self-destruction (Matthew 24:21-22).

Here are some of the wonderful passages in Revelation that convey this good news:

"Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!'" (Revelation 11:15).

"After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, 'Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God! For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her.' Again they said, 'Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!' And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, 'Amen! Alleluia!' Then a voice came from the throne, saying, 'Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!'

"And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, 'Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.' And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

"Then he said to me, 'Write: "Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!"' And he said to me, 'These are the true sayings of God…'"

"Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" (Revelation 19: 1-9, 11-16).

"And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years" (Revelation 20:4).

**An Overview of Revelation**

Many people get lost in the visions and symbolism of the book of Revelation. Mysterious horsemen, beasts and plagues have convinced many people that Revelation cannot be understood. But, as our booklet [*The Book of Revelation Unveiled*](http://www.ucg.org/booklet/book-revelation-unveiled/book-revelation-it-relevant-today/) points out:

"The fundamental message of the book of Revelation is simple. It promises that God will institute universal peace, prosperity and cooperation over all the earth immediately after the return of Jesus Christ. It reveals how this wonderful new world will be established and why it will never be destroyed or superseded by any other way of life or social order.

"The book of Revelation also describes an incredibly deceptive alliance of internationally powerful political and religious entities attempting to prevent Jesus' reign from ever being established. Their opposition to Him and His saints will result in a time of international turmoil and suffering unlike anything the world has ever seen."

We encourage you to read [*The Book of Revelation Unveiled*](http://www.ucg.org/booklet/book-revelation-unveiled/) along with this lesson for a more detailed understanding of this exciting last book of the Bible.

An important key to understanding Revelation is that the Bible interprets itself. Revelation is rooted in the prophecies of the Old Testament, so we find clues to the meaning of many of its symbols in Daniel and other Old Testament prophecies. Also, Jesus Christ is the revealer, the One who opens the seals (Revelation 1:1; 5:5). His Olivet Prophecy (Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21) helps provide a framework for understanding the time order of Revelation. The parallelism between Christ's Olivet Prophecy and the Revelation recorded by John "is striking and certainly not accidental... These passages form the ultimate source of his understanding of the future and his interpretation of the OT" (*Zondervan NIV Bible Commentary,* Vol. 2: New Testament, 1994, p. 1126).

One way to outline the book is around "four key visions: (1) the vision of the Son of man among the seven churches (chs. 1-3); (2) the vision of the seven-sealed scroll, the seven trumpets, the seven signs, and the seven bowls (4:1-19:10); (3) the vision of the return of Christ and the consummation of this age (19:11-20:15); and (4) the vision of the new heaven and new earth (chs. 21-22)" (ibid., p. 1130).

Let's look briefly at each of these sections.

**The Seven Churches**

God gave the book of Revelation to "show His servants—things which must shortly take place" (Revelation 1:1). Seven (a number often used to signify completeness) churches in what is now Turkey were chosen to represent the entire Church of God down through the ages. They might also represent seven consecutive eras of time from Christ's first coming to His second coming. In Revelation 2 and 3, Jesus Christ gives warning and encouragement to these seven churches that He intends all of us to learn from.

**What was the message to the last church, Laodicea?**

Revelation 3:14-22  
"And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.   
"'"Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.  
"'"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.  
"'"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."'"

Jesus Christ warns the churches out of love, to encourage us all to repent and overcome our sins and the pulls of Satan's world. He wants His people to be "the called, chosen and faithful" overcomers who will be prepared to assist Him in restoring all things in His Kingdom (Revelation 17:14; 1:6).

**The Seven Seals, Seven Trumpets and Seven Last Plagues**

The main message of Revelation is unveiled primarily through opening a scroll fastened with seven successive seals. Jesus Christ is the only one who can break the seals and open the scroll to our understanding. Revelation 6 shows the first six seals being opened. They parallel the earlier Olivet Prophecy by Jesus Christ.

**How did Jesus describe the adversities that would lead up to the heavenly signs?**

Matthew 24:4-9, 29 (emphasis added)  
And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will *deceive many.*   
"And you will hear of *wars and rumors of wars.* See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be *famines, pestilences,* and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.   
"Then they will *deliver you up to tribulation and kill you,* and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake…  
"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and *the powers of the heavens will be shaken."*

Notice the parallels with the first six seals - covered in more detail in [*The Book of Revelation Unveiled*](http://www.ucg.org/booklet/book-revelation-unveiled/seals-prophetic-scroll/)

* First seal (white horse): False religion (Revelation 6:1-2; Matthew 24:4-5).
* Second seal (red horse): War (Revelation 6:3-4; Matthew 24:6-7).
* Third seal (black horse): Famines (Revelation 6:5-6; Matthew 24:7).
* Fourth seal (pale horse): Pestilence and the mounting death toll (Revelation 6:7-8; Matthew 24:7).
* Fifth seal: Religious persecution and tribulation (Revelation 6:9-11; Matthew 24:9).
* Sixth seal: Heavenly signs (Revelation 6:12-14; Matthew 24:29).

After the heavenly signs will come "the great day of His wrath" (Revelation 6:17), known throughout the Bible as the "day of the Lord" (Joel 2:30-31). The Day of the Lord is the subject of the seventh seal and much of the rest of the book of Revelation.

The seventh seal is further broken down into seven parts, with each announced by a trumpet. [*The Book of Revelation*](http://www.ucg.org/booklet/book-revelation-unveiled/day-lord-finally-arrives/) booklet explains:

"Combined, the seven trumpets (chapters 8-11) provide a *summary* of what will happen during the time known as the Day of the Lord. Revelation explains and describes the punishment each trumpet blast heralds.

"Most of the following chapters (12-20) fill in details concerning the Day of the Lord, particularly about the persecuting worldly powers led and controlled by Satan and about Jesus' victory over those powers." (See the chapter "[The Day of the Lord Finally Arrives](http://www.ucg.org/booklet/book-revelation-unveiled/day-lord-finally-arrives/)" for more details.)

The seventh trumpet announces the long-awaited return of Jesus Christ (Revelation 11:15)! But it also signals the coming of the seven last plagues to finally bring rebellious humanity to the point of repentance and willingness to submit to the King of Kings (Revelation 15:1). (This is covered in the chapter "[The Destruction of Satan's Kingdom](http://www.ucg.org/booklet/book-revelation-unveiled/destruction-satans-kingdom/).")

**The Return of Jesus Christ**

Satan's last-ditch attempt will be to gather all the remaining armies of the world to fight against the returning Jesus Christ. After gathering at Armageddon, the armies move toward Jerusalem where the final battle will take place. Of course, human armies and armaments will be no match for our Almighty Savior and King (Zechariah 14:1-4, 12-13; Revelation 19:19-21).

Then, under Jesus Christ's righteous rule, assisted by His saints, the time of healing and restoring all things will come. It will be a time of great rejoicing, as the way of peace is finally taught and God's way is spread around the world (Isaiah 2:2-4; 11:9).

Other wonderful scriptures about the time of Jesus Christ's return were quoted at the beginning of this lesson.

**The New Jerusalem and New Heaven and New Earth**

"Chapters 21 and 22 of Revelation describe the many exciting things John sees in vision about the new heaven and new earth. He wrote, 'the first heaven and the first earth had passed away' and also 'there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away' (Revelation 21:1, 4). The Bible gives us ample evidence that eternal life in the Kingdom of God will be paradise!" (Quoted from "[A Glimpse Into Your Eternal Future](http://www.freebiblestudyguides.org/bible-teachings/prophecy-your-eternal-future.htm)"; see this lesson for more about this wonderful time.)

**What did Jesus say at the end of Revelation? How did John respond?**

Revelation 22:20  
He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

This sin-sick and suffering world desperately needs the return of Jesus Christ. He calls on His Church to spread the good news of His coming and of the Kingdom of God. He tells us that "this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come" (Matthew 24:14). He tells us He is coming quickly. And John eagerly responded, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"

Do we have the same eagerness and urgency?