

Revelation wasn't written to satisfy our curiosity about the future—it was written to strengthen our confidence in Christ today. In this message, we'll briefly review the major interpretive approaches and common questions, but we'll especially focus on what every Christian can agree on: the Lamb rules, evil is defeated, and the King returns. As we hike through the middle chapters of Revelation, don't stress about keeping every horn, seal, or bowl straight. Instead ask yourself one question: Am I living with confidence that Jesus wins?

## **The 4 Main Views for Approaching Revelation**

### 1. FUTURIST VIEW

Sees Revelation as describing future, literal events before Christ's return — including tribulation, rapture, and the millennial kingdom. There are two main types:

- Dispensational Futurist  
Believes God's plan for Israel and the Church are distinct, with the rapture occurring before a seven-year tribulation. This view emphasizes a literal fulfillment of prophecy and a detailed end-times timeline leading to Christ's millennial reign.
  - John MacArthur – Because the Time Is Near
  - John Walvoord – The Revelation of Jesus Christ
  - Charles Ryrie – Basic Theology
- Historic Premillennial Futurist  
Sees the Church enduring the tribulation before Christ's return, viewing God's people as one unified group across history. Believers are caught up to meet Christ as He returns and immediately reign with Him on earth, experiencing resurrection and glorification in that same moment.
  - John Piper – Discussed in his sermons & articles
  - George Eldon Ladd – A Commentary on the Revelation of John
  - Craig Keener – Revelation (NIV Application Commentary)
  - Michael J. Svigel – The Fathers on the Future
  - Craig Blomberg – A Case for Historic Premillennialism

### 2. IDEALIST VIEW

Sees Revelation as a symbolic picture of the ongoing battle between good and evil throughout history. Rather than predicting specific events, it reveals timeless truths about Christ's victory and offers encouragement for believers in every generation to remain faithful.

- Sam Storms – Kingdom Come
- William Hendriksen
- More Than Conquerors
- G. K. Beale – The Book of Revelation

These next two views are not as widely held as the first two views.

### 3. HISTORICIST VIEW

Sees Revelation as unfolding through church history — each section representing a period from John's day to Christ's return.

- Matthew Henry – Commentary on Revelation
- Albert Barnes – Notes on Revelation

#### 4. PRETERIST VIEW

Sees most of Revelation as fulfilled in the first century (esp. the fall of Jerusalem AD 70). There are two main types:

- Full Preterism = heretical (denies Christ's future return & resurrection).
- Partial Preterism = orthodox (affirms second coming & new creation).
  - R. C. Sproul – The Last Days According to Jesus (Partial)
  - N. T. Wright – Jesus and the Victory of God (Partial)

RESOURCES that are more devotional without picking a view:

- Max Lucado - Life Lessons from Revelation
- Jen Wilkins - Revelation: Eternal King, Everlasting Kingdom
- Tony Evans - The Book of Revelation (A RightNow Media video series)

### **The 3 Main Views on the Millennium**

- Premillennialism  
Christ returns before a literal 1,000-year reign on earth, where He rules visibly after His Second Coming.
- Amillennialism  
The millennium symbolizes Christ's present reign from heaven during the Church Age until His return.
- Postmillennialism  
The gospel will prosper throughout the world, bringing a long era of peace and righteousness before Christ's return.

### **The “7 Sevens” of Revelation**

Revelation appears to be structured around a series of “7 sevens,” giving the book a purposeful rhythm and symmetry. These cycles—churches, seals, trumpets, visions, bowls, woes, and final signs—help us see God's unfolding plan from multiple angles while keeping Christ at the center.

#### **The Seven Churches — Revelation 1:4–3:22**

Jesus walks among His churches, speaking personally to seven real congregations in Asia Minor. Each letter reveals what delights and grieves His heart — showing timeless patterns of faithfulness and failure in the Church of every age.

1. Ephesus – Lost First Love (2:1–7)  
Commended for hard work and truth, but rebuked for losing love and passion for Christ.
2. Smyrna – Faithful in Suffering (2:8–11)  
Poor in possessions but rich in faith; encouraged to be faithful unto death.
3. Pergamum – Compromised by False Teaching (2:12–17)  
Stood firm against persecution but tolerated false doctrine and immorality.
4. Thyatira – Tolerated Immorality (2:18–29)  
Known for love and service, yet deceived by a false prophetess leading many into sin.
5. Sardis – Spiritually Dead (3:1–6)  
Had a reputation for being alive, but Jesus declared them dead — urged to wake up.

6. Philadelphia – Faithful and Enduring (3:7–13)  
Small in strength yet steadfast in obedience; promised an open door and protection from trial.
7. Laodicea – Lukewarm and Self-Sufficient (3:14–22)  
Spiritually complacent and blind to their need; invited to open the door to Christ for true riches.

**Spiritual Lesson:**

The risen Christ still walks among His churches today — seeing our love, our compromise, and our endurance. His call is the same now as then: return to your first love, remain faithful, and overcome through Him.

**The Seven Seals — Revelation 6:1–8:1**

When the Lamb begins opening the seven seals of God’s scroll, each one unveils a force at work in human history — judgment, suffering, and perseverance — all under Christ’s sovereign control.

1. White Horse – Conquest (6:1–2)  
Symbol of human ambition and the drive to dominate.
2. Red Horse – War (6:3–4)  
Bloodshed and violence unleashed across the earth.
3. Black Horse – Famine (6:5–6)  
Scarcity and economic collapse follow conflict.
4. Pale Horse – Death (6:7–8)  
Death claims a fourth of the earth through sword, famine, and plague.
5. The Cry of the Martyrs (6:9–11)  
Souls under the altar plead for justice and are told to rest until God’s plan is complete.
6. Cosmic Upheaval (6:12–17)  
Earthquakes, darkened sun, and falling stars — nature itself trembling at divine wrath.
7. Silence in Heaven (8:1)  
A profound pause — heaven stills before the next wave of judgment.

**Spiritual Lesson:**

Even in chaos and crisis, Jesus holds the scroll. The forces of conquest, war, famine, and death are not beyond His authority. History is not random — it unfolds under the Lamb’s rule.

**The Seven Trumpets — Revelation 8:2–11:19**

After the silence of the seventh seal, seven angels sound seven trumpets — each blast announcing partial judgments meant to warn, not destroy. The goal is repentance before the final outpouring of wrath.

1. Hail and Fire Mixed with Blood (8:7)  
A third of the earth, trees, and grass burned — judgment on the natural world.
2. A Great Mountain Thrown into the Sea (8:8–9)  
A third of the sea becomes blood; ships and sea life destroyed.
3. The Star “Wormwood” Falls (8:10–11)  
A third of the rivers and springs become bitter; many die from poisoned water.
4. Darkness Strikes the Heavens (8:12)  
A third of sun, moon, and stars darkened — a warning that light itself is fading.
5. Demonic Locusts Released (9:1–12)  
Torment those without God’s seal; a vision of spiritual and psychological anguish.

6. Four Angels and a Deadly Army (9:13–21)

A third of humanity killed, yet people still refuse to repent.

7. Heaven’s Kingdom Declared (11:15–19)

Voices in heaven proclaim, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.”

Spiritual Lesson:

God’s judgments are merciful warnings — intended to shake people awake before the end. Each trumpet reminds us: God is patient, but not indifferent. He calls the world — and us — to repentance while there’s still time.

**The Seven Histories — Revelation 12:1–15:5**

Revelation pauses the sequence of judgments to reveal the spiritual story behind human history — the cosmic conflict between Christ and Satan. Through vivid signs, John sees the invisible battle between the woman and the dragon, the beasts and the Lamb, showing that every earthly struggle has a heavenly dimension.

1. The Woman and the Dragon (12:1–6)

A radiant woman gives birth to a male child — Christ — whom the dragon tries to destroy.

2. War in Heaven (12:7–12)

Michael and his angels cast the dragon (Satan) down to earth.

3. The Beast from the Sea (13:1–10)

Represents political power used to persecute the saints.

4. The Beast from the Earth (13:11–18)

A false prophet who deceives the world into worshiping the beast.

5. The Lamb and the 144,000 (14:1–5)

The faithful stand redeemed with Christ, marked by His name.

6. Three Angels’ Messages (14:6–13)

Announcements of judgment, warning, and encouragement to persevere.

7. The Harvest and the Song of the Redeemed (14:14–15:5)

The Son of Man reaps the earth — judgment for the wicked, rest for the righteous.

Spiritual Lesson:

The ultimate battle isn’t fought with swords or politics — it’s fought with faith and testimony.

Satan’s fury is real, but his defeat is certain. Believers conquer not by strength, but by the blood of the Lamb.

**The Seven Bowls — Revelation 15:1–16:21**

After songs of worship in heaven, seven angels pour out seven bowls of God’s wrath on the unrepentant earth. Unlike the earlier judgments (which were partial), these are complete and final. Heaven declares, “It is done!” — the end of rebellion and the vindication of God’s holiness.

1. Painful Sores (16:2)

Afflicts those who bear the mark of the beast.

2. Sea Turns to Blood (16:3)

All marine life dies — total devastation of creation.

3. Rivers and Springs Become Blood (16:4–7)

God’s righteous retribution: those who shed blood now drink it.

4. Scorching Heat (16:8–9)

Intense fire and heat fall, yet people still refuse to repent.

5. Darkness on the Beast's Kingdom (16:10–11)  
Deep spiritual and physical darkness covers the realm of evil.
6. The Euphrates Dried Up / Armageddon (16:12–16)  
The way opens for the kings of the earth to gather for the final battle.
7. Earthquake and Hailstorm (16:17–21)  
The greatest quake in history splits cities; heaven declares, “It is done!”

**Spiritual Lesson:**

God's mercy has a limit — and His justice will one day be complete. For those in Christ, that justice fell on Jesus at the cross; for those who reject Him, it falls at the end. The cross or the cup — everyone must face one.

**The Seven Words of Woe — Revelation 17:1–19:10**

John is shown the fall of Babylon the Great — the symbol of humanity's pride, corruption, and rebellion against God. Her power seduces kings, corrupts commerce, and intoxicates the nations. When she falls, the world mourns her loss, but heaven rejoices that justice has finally come.

1. The Great Prostitute on the Beast (17:1–6)  
Babylon pictured as a seductive woman, drunk on the blood of the saints.
2. Explanation of the Beast (17:7–18)  
The beast's temporary reign and eventual destruction revealed.
3. Babylon's Fall Announced (18:1–8)  
God's judgment declared; her sins reach heaven, her fall is certain.
4. Kings Lament (18:9–20)  
Earthly rulers grieve the loss of luxury and power.
5. Merchants Lament (18:11–17)  
Economic collapse — greed and materialism exposed as false gods.
6. Sailors Lament (18:17–19)  
Global trade and wealth shattered in an instant.
7. Heaven Rejoices (19:1–10)  
The multitude in heaven praises God: “Hallelujah! Salvation and glory belong to our God!”

**Spiritual Lesson:**

The world's systems of power, pleasure, and pride will one day collapse. Don't build your life on Babylon's promises — they can't last. Instead, live for the kingdom that cannot be shaken, where heaven rejoices forever.

**The Seven Last Signs — Revelation 19:11–21:8**

Heaven opens, and Christ returns as the conquering King. Evil is defeated, Satan is bound, judgment is rendered, and eternity begins. This final vision shows God's ultimate victory and the fulfillment of His promise to make all things new.

1. Christ the Rider on the White Horse (19:11–16)  
Jesus appears as Faithful and True, the King of kings and Lord of lords, coming in righteous judgment.
2. The Beast and False Prophet Defeated (19:17–21)  
Evil's final rebellion crushed; its leaders cast into the lake of fire.
3. Satan Bound (20:1–3)  
The dragon is restrained for a thousand years — evil no longer deceives the nations.

4. Saints Reign with Christ (20:4–6)  
The faithful share in Christ’s rule during His millennial kingdom.
5. Satan Released and Defeated (20:7–10)  
After a brief rebellion, Satan is destroyed forever.
6. The Great White Throne Judgment (20:11–15)  
The dead are raised and judged according to their deeds; death and Hades are no more.
7. The New Heaven and New Earth (21:1–8)  
God wipes every tear; His people dwell with Him forever in a world made new.

**Spiritual Lesson:**

The story ends with Christ victorious and His people restored. Evil does not get the final word — Jesus does. Live today in light of the King’s certain return and eternal reign.

**What We Can All Agree On.**

From Revelation 19:11 onward, nearly every interpreter agrees the focus is on the Second Coming of Christ, Satan’s defeat, the final judgment, and the beginning of eternity.

*Revelation 19:11–16, I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. “He will rule them with an iron scepter.” He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS*

**The Lamb Rules**

**Evil is defeated**

**The King returns**

Revelation 1:15, *The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our Lord...& He shall reign forever & ever.*

**How Would You Play If You Knew You Couldn’t Lose?**

- Endure faithfully: Tribulation is temporary; victory is eternal.
- Worship continually: Heaven’s song never stops, even in the chaos.
- Hope confidently: The Lamb’s triumph is not in doubt.
- Unite humbly: Disagree on details, agree on the destination.

For further study please text REVELATION to (951)425-4425.