

REVELATION INTRODUCTION¹

CHRIST IS THE CONQUEROR

Maybe you think that the book of Revelation is incomprehensible and possibly the most difficult book in the Bible to understand. Satan would like you to think that, because the book of Revelation proclaims Christ's victory over Satan! The book of Revelation does not intend to scare you. On the contrary, it encourages you with the fact that Jesus Christ reigns supreme and that you are 'more than conquerors' through Christ both now as well as in the future at Christ's second coming. The purpose of this study is to help you understand the book of Revelation.

The book of Revelation is an apocalypse, an unveiling or revelation of the message of Jesus Christ by means of visions that contain symbols and numbers. Jesus Christ himself gives us the keys to interpret the book of Revelation. He determines the rules by which it should be explained.

PART 1. EIGHT KEYS OR RULES FOR INTERPRETING THE BOOK OF REVELATION²

(1) First key. The book is a prophecy: the proclamation of Jesus Christ.

Read Revelation 22:6; 19:10. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Mediator of all revelation in the Bible, also of the revelation in the book of Revelation (Revelation 1:1). The Lord Jesus Christ is "the God of the spirits of the Old Testament prophets" (Revelation 22:6). The emphasis is that Jesus Christ is the God who spoke through the Old Testament prophets and the God of whom they spoke.

"The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Revelation 19:10). "The testimony of Jesus" is whatever Jesus has said in the Old Testament through his Spirit in the prophets (1 Peter 1:9-12) and in the New Testament through his Spirit in the apostles (John 16:13-15). The Author of the Old Testament and the New Testament is no one less than the Spirit of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:9-12; 2 Timothy 3:16). The emphasis of Revelation 19:10 is that whatever Jesus Christ said about God, about himself as the coming Messiah, about God's Old Testament people Israel, about Israel's continuation and extension to include believers in him from all the nations in the world (Genesis 22:18; Matthew 28:19), about the kingdom and the Church is the genuine spirit or inner content of all biblical prophecy (Revelation 19:10).

"To prophesy" literally means to speak forth, to proclaim or to preach. The Old Testament warns against so-called prophets who speak visions from their own minds and not from the mouth of God (Jeremiah 23:16-32)! The New Testament warns against the many false prophets (Matthew 24:24). Real prophecy is proclaiming Jesus Christ and the contents of the New Testament. That is what Christians should proclaim! Christians should not go beyond what is written in the Bible (1 Corinthians 4:6; cf. Revelation 22:18-19)!

To put this in another way: the spiritual gift of prophecy is to proclaim what Jesus revealed about himself, his words and works in the Bible. Biblical prophecy is therefore not making arbitrary predictions about the future of people and nations (Israel and Gentiles), but proclaiming Jesus Christ and his message! The genuine content of the Old Testament prophets is revealed in the testimony of Jesus in the New Testament! Whoever Jesus is, what he said and did is the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy (Matthew 5:17). All Jesus revealed, taught and commanded and that is now written in the New Testament is what the Old Testament prophets intended to say in their shadowy and preparatory proclamations (Matthew 5:17; Acts 3:18; Colossians 2:17; Hebrews 8:6; 10:1; 1 Peter 1:10-12).

That is why the book of Revelation must be explained (interpreted) only in the light of the Bible. And that is why the Old Testament must be interpreted only in the light of the New Testament!

(2) Second key. The message of the book is intended to bless every reader.

Read Revelation 1:3. The book of Revelation does not intend to drive people into fear. Jesus promises: "Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy (proclamation), and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it" (Revelation 1:3; 22:7). The message of the book is about the fact that Christ is the Conqueror and that Christians are more than conquerors together with Christ (Revelation 17:14; Romans 8:37-39). The message intends to stimulate Christians to fight the good fight of the faith in their own generation. It reveals the final victory of Christ and the believers in Christ. And it reveals the establishment of the final phase of his kingdom, namely, the new earth. Therefore the message of the book is intended to bless every reader!

(3) Third key. The message of the book is intended for readers from Christ's first coming to his second coming.

Read Revelation 1:1,3; 22:6,10. At the time of speaking to the apostle John Jesus said, "The revelation ... must soon take place." "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, because the time is near." (Revelation 1:1,3; 22:6,10). This means that what had been revealed in the visions in the book of Revelation begin to be realised immediately from Christ's first coming. The message of the book of Revelation affects the whole present New Testament period, from Christ's first coming to Christ's second coming. The message of the book of Revelation is a message intended for all Christians in all generations!

¹ See www.deltacourse.org, study 19.

² See www.dota.net, dota 01, lesson 10

(4) Fourth key. The symbols in the book represent literal realities that are much higher and greater than the literal meaning of the symbols.

Read Revelation 1:1,20; 5:6. Jesus said that he made his message known (Revelation 1:1). The word ‘to make known’ in the original Greek language means literally to make known by means of signs or symbols or figurative language or imagery! That is why we find so many symbols and numbers in the book of Revelation. And that is why we must understand what each symbol refers to. For example, in Revelation 1:12-13,16 there is a symbol of a man standing among seven lampstands and holding seven stars in his right hand. In Revelation 1:20 Jesus himself explains the meaning of these symbols. The lampstands are not literal lampstands, but represent seven congregations (churches). The seven stars are also not literal stars, but represent the angels or representatives of the seven congregations. And for example, in Revelation 5:6 “the Lamb looking as if it had been slaughtered standing in the centre of the throne” is a symbol of Jesus Christ that had died on the cross and had been resurrected.

(5) Fifth key. The numbers in the book also have symbolical meaning and represent literal realities that are much higher and greater than the literal numerical value of the number.

Read Revelation 5:6; 2:7. The number ‘seven’ is a sacred number. The number represents ‘divine perfection’. Genesis 2:1 says that God completed his work of creation by the seventh creation day. The number symbolises divine perfection in creation. In Revelation 5:6 “the Lamb with seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth”, is a symbol of Christ’s omnipotence and omniscience through his Holy Spirit in this world. And in Revelation 2:7 the seven lampstands represent the seven historical congregations in Asia Minor, which in turn represent all the congregations in the world throughout salvation history. And in Revelation chapters 2 and 3 the seven letters to these seven congregations represent Christ’s perfect personal writings to all the congregations in the world under all circumstances in history.

(6) Sixth key. The whole book is divided into seven parallel sections and each section represents the whole New Testament period.

Read Revelation 12:5; 14:14-16. Just as the four gospels are parallel proclamations of the life, work, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, so each of the seven sections of the book of Revelation represents the whole New Testament period from Christ’s first coming to his second coming, each depicted from a different perspective. For example: Section 1 (chapters 1 to 3) begins with the death, resurrection and enthronement of Jesus Christ at his first coming (Revelation 1:5) and ends with the realisation of the promises to those who overcome at his second coming (Revelation 2:7; 3:12). This section depicts the establishment of the Militant Church throughout the whole New Testament period. Section 2 (chapters 4 to 7) begins with Christ’s first coming when Christ received the authority to reveal and execute the great events in salvation history (Revelation 5:1-10) and ends with Christ’s second coming when he comes for the final judgement (Revelation 6:12-17). This section depicts the persecution of the Church by the world throughout the whole New Testament period. Section 4 (chapters 12 to 14) begins with Christ’s first coming when he is born and ascends into heaven (Revelation 12:5) and ends with Christ’s second coming when he comes to harvest the righteous and unrighteous on the final judgement day (Revelation 14:14-20). This section depicts the victory of Christ and his Church over the dragon and his helpers. Note also that the one and only ‘final battle’ is described in section 3 (Revelation 11:7), in section 4 (Revelation 13:7), in section 5 (Revelation 16:12-16), in section 6 (Revelation 19:17-19) and in section 7 (Revelation 20:7-9).

(7) Seventh key. The seven sections of the book are arranged in an ascending, climatic order.

Read Revelation 2:27; 6:12-17; 16:17-21; 20:11-15. Although the seven sections of the book of Revelation run parallel and span the entire period between Christ’s first coming and Christ’s second coming, there is nevertheless a progression in emphasis on those events that occur just before the second coming of Christ. For example: There is a progressive emphasis on the final judgement day. Section 1 announces the final judgement day (2:27), section 2 (6:12-17) and 3 (11:18) introduce the final judgement day, section 4 (14:14-20), 5 (16:17-21) and 6 (18:1-24) describe the final judgement in symbols and section 7 (20:11-15) describes the final judgement day by dropping most of the symbolism. There is also a progressive emphasis on the final state of the Church (3:12-13; 7:9-17; 11:15; 14:1-5; 15:2-4; 19:1-10; 21:1 to 22:5). And there is a progression of the message of each section of the book.

(8) Eighth key. Revelation 21:1 to 22:5 reveals the ideal reality of the Church on earth at the present time before Christ’s second coming in the light of the perfect reality of the Church on the new earth after Christ’s second coming.

Read Revelation 21:2. ‘The heavenly Jerusalem’ is a symbol that represents all God’s people in heaven and on earth in the present time before Christ’s second coming (Galatians 4:24-26; Hebrews 12:22-24). The use of the present continuous tense in some verbs in Revelation 21:1 to 22:5 means that these actions are still taking place at the present time: the New Jerusalem is coming down; Christ is making everything new and genuine; and Christians are overcoming (Revelation 21:2,5,7). ‘The New Jerusalem’ is therefore not only a symbol that represents the perfect reality of God’s people on the new earth after Christ’s second coming (Revelation 21:9-10), but also a symbol of the ideal reality of God’s people on the present earth before Christ’s second coming.

PART 2. THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

(1) The book reveals God’s plan.

Revelation 1:1 says that the book of Revelation is ‘an unveiling or disclosure’ (Greek: apokalupsis). *An ‘apocalypse’ is a book that reveals God’s perspective on the events of God’s history of salvation within human (secular) history.* As in the book of Daniel in the Old Testament, God reveals the significance of events by means of visions, signs and numbers, which are all symbols of realities that God wants to make known to us.

Revelation 1:3 says that the book of Revelation is ‘a prophecy’, but then not exclusively in the sense of ‘predicting the future’. *The book of Revelation is a prophecy in the sense of a proclamation of the backward-looking (retrospective) and forward-looking (prospective) unveiling of the deepest significance of events in the past, in the present and in the future.*

The fulfilment of this prophecy began immediately when it was revealed to John in the first century after Christ. The word: ‘soon’ in Revelation 1:1 and 22:7 means ‘without delay’, ‘immediately’. Revelation 1:3 says: The time that the events of this unveiling would begin as a reality was ‘near’! The events will be completed at the second coming of Christ (22:7,17,20) and the establishment of the new heaven and new earth (21:1). Therefore, *the book of Revelation proclaims the unveiling of God’s plan within the history of the world from the first coming of Christ to the second coming of Christ.* Jesus Christ does not desire that this unveiling remains a closed book (22:10). Therefore he blesses everyone who reads the book (1:3)!

(2) The book is relevant.

Revelation 2:7 says that the seven letters in the book of Revelation is intended for all the congregations in the world throughout history. The book must be read in every congregation (cf. Colossians 4:16), because it is relevant for every Christian and every Christian congregation throughout history!

(2) The book is a blessing and an encouragement.

Revelation 1:3 (cf. 22:10-11) says that whoever reads the book or hears it being read and takes to heart what is written in it, is blessed!

The theme of the book is: ‘Christ is the Conqueror. He goes ahead to conquer (6:2). And Christians are more than conquerors through him’ (17:14; cf. Romans 8:37). The purpose of the book Revelation is to encourage Christian churches and Christians in their struggle in the world. What can encourage you more than to know the outcome of the struggle ahead of time?

(2) The book relates recurrent events.

What Jesus had revealed to John and what John had seen by means of visions are historical events that are taking place ‘now’ in the present and that would take place ‘later’ in the future (1:19). The book of Revelation describes the significance of events: in the past (especially since the first coming of Christ), in the present (the time we are living) and in the future (until the second coming of Christ). That is why this book is important for every Christian and every Christian church at all times (2:7)!

The visions depict events that keep repeating themselves within history. For example: the rider on the white horse symbolises the victorious progress of Christ and the Gospel (6:1-2). The rider on the red horse symbolises the slaughter of Christians at different times (6:3-4). The rider on the black horse symbolises the economic oppression of Christians in different places (6:5-6). And the rider on the pale horse symbolises death at different times and in different places in history (6:7-8). Throughout history the proclamation of the gospel is followed by persecution and oppression. And throughout history death reminds everyone that they need a Saviour and that they need to live holy and righteous lives.

A number of visions are repeated several times in the book. These are visions about the fall of Babylon (14:8; 16:19; 18:2 – 19:3; cf. 11:13); visions about the final battle (11:7; 13:7; 16:14,16; 19:17-21; 20:7-9) and visions about the final judgement (6:12-17; 11:13,18; 14:14-20; 16:16-21; 19:11-16; 20:11-15). This proves that the visions in the book of Revelation are not arranged chronologically, but in parallel sections.

The book does not predict certain demonstrable and recognizable events in the future, but reveals God’s view on history, God’s plan and the fact that God will conquer through Jesus Christ!

PART 3. SIGNS (SYMBOLS) IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

(1) The book contains signs (symbols).

Revelation 1:1 says that Christ ‘made this revelation known’ by means of an angel and the apostle John. The verb ‘to make known’ (Greek: semainō) literally means ‘to make known by means of signs or symbols’. A ‘sign or symbol’ (Greek: semeion) has significance: It is a picture that helps us to grasp the reality which God wants to reveal. Only ‘the literal reality’ which the symbol represents is much bigger than ‘the symbol’ itself. ‘The significance’ which the sign represents is much bigger than ‘the sign’! For example: ‘a congregation (church)’ (the significance) is greater than ‘a lamp stand’ (the sign) (1:20). ‘The seven congregations’ mentioned in the book represent all the congregations in the world throughout history (2:7) and are much greater than the seven historical congregations mentioned in chapter 2 and 3. ‘The sevenfold Spirit of God’ is much greater than ‘the seven lamps’ (4:5). ‘Jesus Christ’ is much greater than ‘the lamb’ that looked as if it had been slain (5:6). And ‘the uncountable multitude’ (7:9) is much greater than the symbolical number ‘144 000 that had been redeemed from the earth’ (14:1,4).

The 'signs' do not have arbitrary significance. They only have the significance which Jesus gives to it in the context! The sign of 'a woman' (12:1) represents 'humanity crowned with glory and honour' (Psalm 8:4-7) that would bring forth 'the male child' (Genesis 3:15). More specific, she represents 'God's Old Testament people' (Isaiah 54:1) that would bring forth the Messiah (Isaiah 7:14; John 4:22). 'The sign of 'an enormous red dragon' (12:3) represents only Satan (12:9). The sign of 'the male child' (12:5) represents Jesus Christ at his first coming (Luke 2:7). The sign of 'the One who will rule all the nations with an iron sceptre' (12:5) represents Jesus Christ as Judge of everyone at his second coming (19:15; Psalm 2:9; John 5:22; Acts 10:42; Romans 2:16). The sign of 'the seven angels with the seven last plagues' represent the final judgement, because "with them God's final wrath is completed" (15:1).

(2) The explanation of the signs (symbols).

The significance of a number of signs is explained by the book of Revelation itself. This explanation is the key to explain the other signs in the book of Revelation. The signs that are explained in the book of Revelation are the following:

1:20 seven stars are the seven angels (representatives)	17:9 the seven heads are seven hills (of Rome)
1:20 seven lamp stands are the seven churches	17:9 the seven heads are also seven kings
4:5 seven blazing lamps are the seven Spirits of God	17:11 the eighth king is the beast (the final antichrist)
5:6 seven eyes are the seven Spirits of God	17:12 the ten horns are ten kings
5:8 the incense is the prayers of the saints	17:15 the waters are people, nations and languages
6:8 the pale horse and its rider are Hades and Death	17:18 the woman is the great city that rules over the kings
7:9,14 the multitude is people out of the great tribulation	19:7 the bride of the lamb is the Church of the saints
11:8 the great city is (old) Jerusalem	19:8 linen is the righteous deeds/righteousness of the saints
12:5 the child is Jesus Christ (Psalm 2)	19:11-16 the rider is Christ, the LORD of lords
12:9 the dragon is Satan	20:2 the dragon is Satan
12:17 the offspring of the woman is Christians	20:14 the lake of fire is the second death (hell)
13:18 the number 666 is the number of man	21:8 the fiery lake is the second death
14:3-5 the 144000 are people redeemed by Christ	21:9-10 the bride/wife of the Lamb is (new) Jerusalem
15:1 the seven bowls contain the last plagues	21:22-23 the temple is God with the Lamb
16:13-14 the three frogs are unclean/demonic spirits	22:15 the dogs are those who practice sin
16:19 the great city is Babylon	

(2) The explanation of the numbers.

2	witnesses (11:3; cf. Luke 10:1)
3	the Triune God (1:4-5; cf. Matthew 28:19)
3½	a divinely limited period of oppression (11:2-3,9,11;12:6,14;13:5): e.g. the great draught in the time of Elijah (Luke 4:25; James 5:17) e.g. the oppression under Antiochus IV, one of the many antichrists (Daniel 7:23-27).
4	the present earth or world (7:1; cf. Jeremiah 49:36) and also impenitent humanity (9:21)
6	man with his limitations (13:16-18)
7	God's perfection and completeness (1:4) in his acts towards man: seven lamp stands (God's Church); seven seals (God's guidelines for history); seven trumpets (God's warning judgements); seven bowls (God's final judgements). Also the enemy makes a false claim to omnipotence (12:3; 13:1; 17:3,7,9).
10	completeness with respect to people: ten commandments for people (Read Exodus 20:1-17) ten silver coins as the possessions entrusted to people (Luke 15:8) ten horns to attack people (12:3) ten kings as bearers of authority among people (17:12).
12	God's work in the world (3x4) results in God's people during the Old Testament period: the 12 tribes of Israel (12:1; 21:12,21) and in God's people during the New Testament period: the 12 apostles (21:14; Ephesians 2:20)
24	(12+12) the representatives of God's Old Testament people and his New Testament people in heaven (4:4) who worship and praise God in his heavenly temple (cf. 1 Chronicles 24:1-19)
1 000	(10 x 10 x 10) the absolute completeness (10) determined by God (3): a divinely determined period of time (Read 20:1-7) that stretches across all generations (Psalm 90:1-4; 105:8)
12 000	(12 000 length, 12 000 width, 12 000 height) the result of the absolute complete (1000) work of salvation of the Triune God (3) among the people of the world (4) = the New Jerusalem (21:9,10,16; cf. Hebrews 12:22-24)
144 000	(12x12x1000) the absolute complete number (1000) of God's redeemed people in the Old Testament (12) and in the New Testament (12) (7:3-4; 14:1-3; cf. Romans 11:12,25-26).

PART 4. THE STRUCTURE (BUILD UP) OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION ³

The book of Revelation is divided into seven parallel sections, each with a theme of events that take place from the first coming of Christ to the second coming of Christ.

Almost each section has the same structure (See PART 5):

1. a definite beginning
2. a long period of events, followed by
3. a short period of events shortly before the second coming of Christ
4. a definite end
5. and a description of eternity

(1) Section 1: The establishment of the Militant Church in the world (Revelation 1-3).

Theme: Jesus and the seven lamp stands (his Church) shine in the dark world.

“Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:20). And “You are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14).

Recurring events: Between the first and second coming of Christ new congregations are continuously planted. They come into being through the preaching of the Word and the application of God’s Word in the hearts of people by the Holy Spirit. The congregations are ‘lamp stands’, the bearers of light amidst the world lying in darkness. Jesus walks and works amidst all his congregations. He wrote his seven letters to all congregations in the world.

The letters to the 7 churches nearly all have the same structure: 7 divisions

1. *The addressee:* (“To the angel of the church in write.”)
These ‘angels’ are the leaders of the congregations. The letters are directed to all the congregations, its leaders and its members in the whole world (2:7).
2. *Description of the Author, Jesus:* (“These are the words of him who”)
Each description is related to the condition of that church.
3. A recommendation: (“I know”)
4. A condemnation: (“Yet I hold this against you”)
5. A command: (“Remember ...”, “Do not be afraid ...”, “Repent...”, or “Hold on to what you have until I come.”) The congregations must act, so that they may change and be able to overcome.
6. An exhortation: (“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”)
7. A promise: (“To him who overcomes I will give”)
These promises are for those who resist temptations, bear oppression and obey God’s commandments. Each promise is related to the condition of that church. In the last four letters the exhortation and promise are switched.

The conditions described in the seven historical letters re-occur again and again in all the churches in the world throughout history. Therefore these letters remain relevant for each church!

(2) Section 2: The persecution of the Militant Church in the world (Revelation 4-7).

Theme: The 7 seals of oppression and persecution are broken.

“In this world you (will) have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33b).

Recurring events: The seals reveal God’s guidelines with respect to Christ’s conquering and the persecutions, oppressions, disasters and suffering that follow. The Church is exposed to these events from Christ’s first coming to Christ’s second coming.

The first seal will always be followed by the second, third, fourth and fifth seals. This reveals the fact that Christ’s triumphant progress in the world and the proclamation of the gospel will always be followed by persecution and oppression of Christians, by disasters that hit everyone in the world and even by martyrdom. These events take place again and again in different places in the world and at different times in history, also in our time. The sixth seal represents the final judgement. The seventh seal introduces the fact that the breaking of the seals are followed by the sounding of the trumpets, that is, that the world’s persecutions evoke God’s warning judgements.

³ W. Hendriksen, *More than Conquerors*, 1960.

(3) Section 3: God's chastising and warning judgements over the world (revelation 8-11).

Theme: The 7 trumpets symbolise God's present chastising and warning judgements. They are not yet God's final judgements

"Will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? (Luke 18:7).

Recurring events: From Christ's first coming to Christ's second coming God brings his chastising and warning judgements over the godless and wicked world, which persecutes and oppresses the Church.

The fifth trumpet symbolises the destructive results of evil spirits in the lives of the unbelievers. The sixth trumpet symbolises the destructive results of wars in the history of the world. The seventh trumpet symbolises the final judgement (just as the sixth seal). Many people persist in hardening their hearts and they refuse to repent. Therefore the trumpets of God's warning judgements are followed by the bowls of God's final wrath. Also the events under section 3 take place again and again in different places and at various times.

(4) Section 4: The victories of Jesus Christ and his Church over Satan and his helpers (Revelation 12-14).

Theme: The woman and the male child are persecuted by the dragon and his helpers. The enemies of Christ and his Church are introduced: the dragon, the beast, the false prophet, the prostitute Babylon and the people who bear the mark of the beast.

"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel" (Genesis 3:15).

Recurring events: From the first coming to the second coming of Jesus Christ the visible conflict between the Militant Church and the world is in reality the deeper invisible conflict between Christ and Satan.

(5) Section 5: God's final and decisive wrath over hardened people in the world (Revelation 15-16).

Theme: The 7 bowls of final judgements are poured out on the people who bear the mark of the beast.

"Because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath when his righteous judgement will be revealed" (Romans 2:5).

Recurring events: From Christ's first coming to Christ's second coming God's final and decisive wrath is poured out again and again on the godless and wicked people. They persist in hardening their hearts (16:9,11,21; cf. 9:20-21) against God and his warning judgements (the trumpets). They are the people who bear the mark of the beast (16:2). Already before their death these people have passed the limit between God's merciful patience and his holy and righteous wrath (cf. Matthew 12:32; 1 John 5:16) (*Read* Romans 1:18-32). Every time these godless and wicked people refuse to repent, God's chastising and warning judgements (the trumpets) turn into his final and decisive judgements (the bowls). For them there will be no more opportunity to repent (cf. Isaiah 6:9-10; Matthew 13:14-15). 'My Spirit will not contend with man forever' (Genesis 6:3). On the final judgement day God's final and decisive wrath is at the same time his complete wrath (15:1).

The fifth bowl represents God's judgement of all antichristian governments together with their politics and economics that are accompanied by oppressions and persecutions. They are plunged into moral, spiritual and even demonic darkness. The sixth bowl represents the final battle in the history of the world. The seventh bowl represents the final judgement (just as the sixth seal and the seventh trumpet).

(6) Section 6: God's inescapable judgement of the prostitute Babylon, the beast and the false prophet (Revelation 17-19).

Theme: The great prostitute Babylon, the beast and the false prophet are finally completely defeated. The Victor is Jesus Christ. There will be joy and a feast in heaven when the prostitute Babylon has fallen and the Bride celebrates her wedding to the Lamb.

"The world and its desires pass away" (1 John 2:17a).

Recurring events: From Christ's first coming to Christ's second coming Satan's immoral powers (the prostitute) is again and again frustrated by Satan's political powers (the beast and the kings). The final defeat and destruction of Satan's allies (the prostitute, the beast and the false prophet) is inescapable and complete!

(7) Section 7: God's Kingdom in its present and its final phase (Revelation 20-22).

Theme: The dragon is finally defeated and destroyed. The earth is renewed and the heavenly Jerusalem descends onto the new earth.

"In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us" (Romans 8:37).

Recurring events: God's kingdom in its present phase is a reality on earth in which Satan is presently bound (Matthew 12:28-30; John 12:31-32; Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:8b; Revelation 12:7-10). Although Satan remains bound (i.e. his power and influence remains curbed/curtailed/ limited) with respect to his deceiving the nations between Christ's first coming and almost Christ's second coming, he still is very powerful and causes very much damage throughout the New Testament period. But he cannot deceive the nations, that is, he cannot prevent the gospel being proclaimed to all the nations in the world and he cannot prevent God from robbing people out of his dominion (*Read* 20:1-3; Colossians 1:13)!

'The souls' of Christians who die are immediately translated into the presence of Jesus Christ (*Read* 20:4-6; Philippians 1:23; John 11:25). This spiritual resurrection is called 'the first resurrection'. They now participate in all the activities of Jesus Christ in heaven: they 'sit' with him on his throne (3:21), they 'stand' with him on Mount Zion (14:1) and 'sing' before his throne (14:3). And they praise the righteousness of God's works and ways (his government, salvation and judgments) (15:2-3).

Christ's second coming makes an abrupt end to 'the final battle', his enemies and Satan (*Read* 20:7-10). Jesus Christ resurrects all the dead at the same time (John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15). This physical resurrection represents 'the second resurrection'. Jesus Christ conducts the final judgement of people (*Read* 20:11-15) and of the universe (20:11; cf. Matthew 24:29; Romans 8:19-21; 2 Peter 3:10) and renews all things (*Read* 21:1 – 22:5; cf. Acts 3:21). It is then that God's kingdom reaches its final and completely perfect phase as the New Jerusalem on the new earth.

Note:

- 'The final battle' is described in the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th sections
- 'The fall of Babylon' is described in the in 4th, 5th and 6th sections
- And 'the final judgement' is described in the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th sections

The seven sections in the book of Revelation are therefore parallel and not consecutive.

The sections 1–4 (Revelation 1–14) is more concerned with events that take place during the whole New Testament period. And the sections 5–7 (Revelation 15–22) is more concerned with events that take place in the end-time. Throughout the book of Revelation there is an increasing measure of spiritual struggle and a growing emphasis on the end-time events.

PART 5. THE OVERVIEW OF THE SEVEN SECTIONS OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

(1) Themes.

- Section 1. The establishment of the Militant Church in the world.
- Section 2. The persecution of the Militant Church by the world.
- Section 3. God's chastising and warning judgements of the world.
- Section 4. The victory of Jesus Christ and his Church over Satan and his helpers.
- Section 5. God's final and decisive wrath over hardened people in the world.
- Section 6. God's inescapable judgement of the prostitute, the beast and the false prophet.
- Section 7. God's kingdom in its present phase and final phase.

2. Overview

Introduction: Revelation 1:1-8

Section	Chapter	Beginning	Long period	Short period	The end-time	Eternity
1.	1	1:9-20				
	2		2:1-29		2:7,11,17,26-29	2:7,11,17,26-29
	3		3:1-22	3:10	3:5-6,12,21-22	3:5-6,12,21-22
2.	4	4:1-11				
	5	5:1-14				
	6		6:1-11		6:12-17	
	7	7:1-8				7:9-17
	8				8:1	
3.	7	7:1-8				
	8	8:2-5	8:6-13			
	9		9:1-21			
	10	10:1-11			10:7	
	11	11:1-2a	11:2b-6	11:7-10	11:11-14,17-19	11:15-16
4.	12	12:1-10	12:6,11-17			
	13		13:1-6,11-14	13:7-10,15-18		
	14				14:6-13,14-20	14:1-5
5.	15	15:1,5	15:6-8			15:2-4
	16		16:1-11	16:12-16	16:17-21	
6.	17	17:3	17:1-18			
	18				18:1-24	
	19			19:17-19	19:11-16,20-21	19:1-10
7.	20	20:1-3	20:4-6	20:7-10	20:11-15	
	21					21:1-27
	22					22:1-5

Conclusion: Revelation 22:6-21