

## INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF

# Revelation

The Bible's last book is both intriguing and puzzling. More than any other, it uses figurative and symbolic language. Every word is true, but not every word can be read in its usual sense.

Revelation's 404 verses contain as many as 278 quotes from, or allusions to, the Old Testament, especially Psalms, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah.

Four ways to interpret:

1. Preterist: applies the book primarily to the first century church in the Roman Empire
2. Historical: finds its fulfillment from the first century until the return of Christ in pagan and papal Rome, the rise of Islam, medieval Europe, the U.S., Russia, etc.
3. Futurist: expects chapters 4-19 to be fulfilled in seven years around the rapture of the church to heaven
4. Idealist: instead of relating the language to specific events, this sees an allegory encouraging anyone in difficult times to trust the final triumph of Christ over Satan

## Book of numbers

- 1 - God on the throne (4:2); Lord Jesus Christ (1:13)
- 2 - witnesses/martyrs (11:3-12)
- 3 - messages by angels (14:6-12)
- 4 - living creatures (4:6-9)
- 5 - fallen kings (17:10)
- 6 - number of man (13:18)
- 7 . . .
  - churches (chs. 1-3)
  - seals (chs. 5-8)
  - angels, trumpets (chs. 8-11)
  - heads, kings (chs. 13, 17; 12:3)
  - last plagues, bowls (chs. 15, 16, 17:1; 21:9)
  - lampstands, stars (1:13, 16, 20; 2:2)
  - Spirits of God (1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6)
  - horns, eyes (5:6)
  - thunders (10:3, 4)
  - mountains, kings (17:9-11)
- 12 - stars, tribes, gates, gems, fruits (12:1; 21:10-21; 22:2)
- 42 - months (13:5; 12:6)
- 666 - number of the beast (13:18)

1,000 - years Satan bound, saints reign (20:1-9)

144,000 - firstfruits of Israel (7:4-8; 14:1-5)

Innumerable - all the saved (5:11; 7:9-10)

## Book of worship

- Praise around heaven's throne: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!" (4:8-11; 7:11, 12; 11:16-18; 14:7; 16:5-7)
- Superlatives for Jesus Christ: "For You . . . have redeemed us to God by Your blood . . . Worthy is the Lamb . . .!" (1:8, 13-18; 2:8; 3:7; 5:9-14; 19:11-16; 22:13, 16)
- Expressed in song: "Great and marvelous are Your works . . . Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!" (14:2, 3; 15:2-4)
- Fourfold "Alleluia!": Worship God! (19:1-10)
- False worship denounced (2:14-23; 3:9-16; ch. 13; 14:9-11)

**Six blessings:** Blessed are those who . . .

- read, hear, keep these words (1:3; 22:7)
- die in the Lord (14:13)
- watch and keep their garments (16:15)
- are called to the Lamb's marriage supper (19:9)
- have part in the first resurrection (20:6)
- do His commandments (22:14)

## Traits of God's people

- Faith in Jesus Christ: He came once to cleanse and redeem by His blood (1:5; 5:9; 7:10-17; ch. 12; 19:13); He'll come again to judge and reward (1:7; 3:11; 5:10; 11:15; 14:14-20; 16:15; 19:11-21; 20:11-15; 22:7, 12, 20).
- Obedience to God's commands: The Decalogue finds support in warnings against false worship and interpersonal sins (21:8; 22:15; also 11:19 and 15:5, where *ark of His covenant* and *tabernacle of the testimony* may refer to the Ten).
- Revelation 22:14? Manuscript evidence supports both keeping the commandments (NKJV) and washing our robes (NIV). Both are sustained elsewhere (12:17; 14:12).
- Those who receive the seal of God will inherit New Jerusalem; those who take the mark of the beast will fall like Babylon.

## God's great kingdom

- What? New heaven, new earth, New Jerusalem (21:1ff)
- Who? Jesus Christ, King of kings (1:5, 6; 11:15; 12:5)
- When? For 1,000 years; for eternity (20:4; 11:15)
- Where? Over the earth and the universe (5:10; 21:2, 3)
- Why? To consummate the relationship between God and humanity (ch. 21, 22; esp. 21:3-5)
- How? By the authority and grace of the Lord God Almighty

**Revelation in a sentence:** In scenes of apocalyptic suffering and glory, Jesus Christ reveals to John the testing of saints, the judgment of sinners, and the final deliverance of the church that would shortly come to pass.