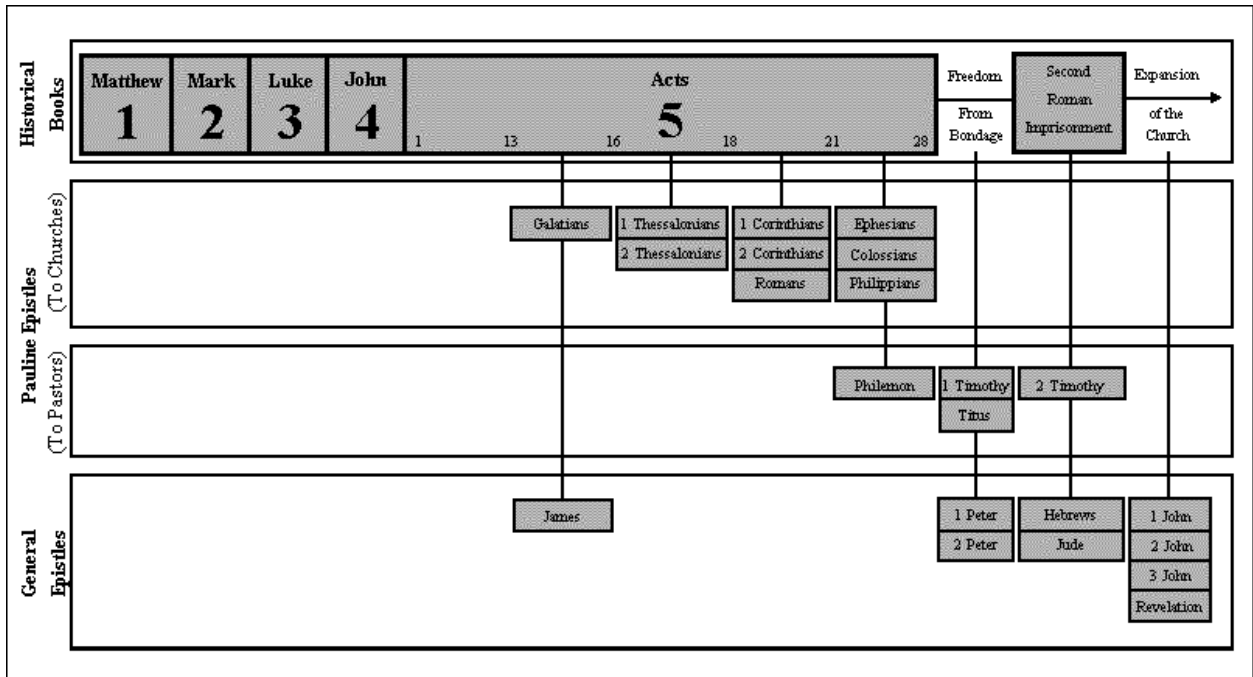
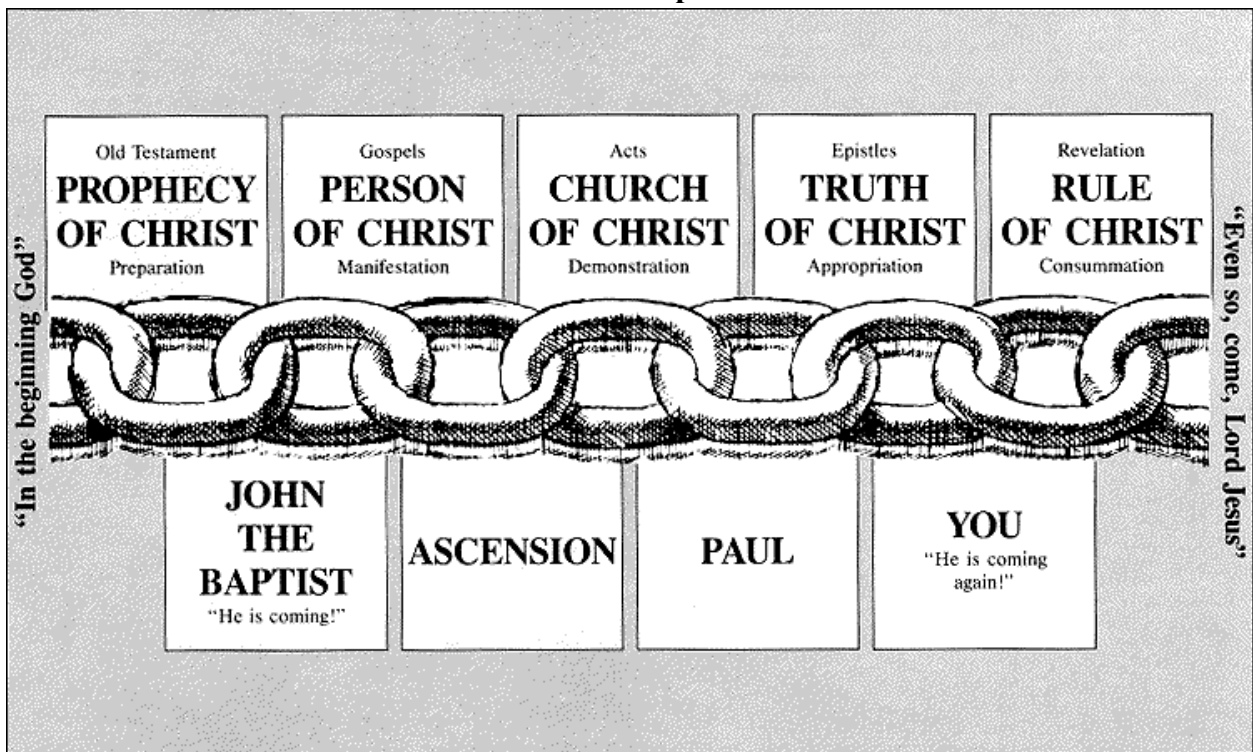


**The Study of the Book of Revelation**  
**By Pastor Michael LoBrutto**

**Integration of the New Testament**



**The Links of Scripture**



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**The Author (Rev. 1:1b-2, 4, 9; 22:8)**

The Holy Spirit used the Apostle John to give us three kinds of inspired literature: the Gospel of John, the three epistles, and the Book of Revelation. His purposes may be outlined as follows:

| <i>Gospel of John</i>   | <i>Epistles</i>        | <i>Revelation</i>    |
|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Believe, 20:22          | Be Sure, 1 John 5:13   | Be ready, 22:20      |
| Life received           | Life revealed          | Life rewarded        |
| Salvation               | Sanctification         | Sovereignty          |
| Christ as - The Prophet | Christ as - The Priest | Christ as - The King |

John wrote Revelation about A.D. 95, during the reign of the Roman emperor Titus Flavius Domitian. The emperor had demanded that he be worshiped as “Lord and God,” and the refusal of the Christians to obey his edict led to severe persecution. Tradition says that it was Domitian who sent John to the Isle of Patmos, a Roman penal colony off the coast of Asia Minor. This being the location of John’s exile, perhaps it is not surprising that the word *sea* is found twenty-six times in his book.

During Christ’s earthly ministry, John and his brother James asked Jesus for special places of honor by His throne. The Lord told them that they would have to merit their thrones by sharing in His suffering. James was the first apostle martyred (Acts 12:1–2); John was the last of the Apostles to die, but he suffered on Patmos before his death (see Matt. 20:20–23).

How did the Lord convey the contents of this book to His servant? According to Revelation 1:1–2, the Father gave the revelation to the Son, and the Son shared it with the apostle, using “His angel” as intermediary. Sometimes Christ Himself conveyed information to John (Rev. 1:10ff); sometimes it was an elder (Rev. 7:13); and often it was an angel (Rev. 17:1; 19:9–10). Sometimes a “voice from heaven” told John what to say and do (Rev. 10:4). The book came from God to John, no matter what the various means of communication were; and it was all inspired by the Spirit.

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**The Symbols in the Book**

Much of the language of Revelation is symbolic. Numbers, colors, minerals, jewels, beasts, stars, and lampstands are all used to represent persons, things, or truths.

Fortunately some of these symbols are clearly explained in the book itself. For instance, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches (1:20); the great dragon is the Devil, or Satan (12:9). Clues to the meaning of other symbols are found in other parts of the Bible. The four living creatures (4:6) are almost identical with the four living creatures of Ezekiel 1:5–14. In Ezekiel 10:20 they are identified as cherubim. The leopard, bear, and lion (13:2) remind us of Daniel 7 where these wild animals refer to the world empires of Greece, Persia, and Babylon respectively. Other symbols do not seem to be clearly explained in the Scriptures, and we must be extremely careful in seeking to interpret them.

The prominence of the number seven (occurring fifty-two times) alerts the interpreter to the symbolism of numbers in the Apocalypse. In Revelation, as throughout the Bible, numbers often contain symbolic as well as literal connotations. Thus, the symbolic associations provide added dimensions to the literal understanding. The numbers which most commonly contain symbolic value in Scripture are listed below, with representative references:

- 1 = Unity, primacy, independent existence (Deut. 6:4).
- 2 = An addition; hence, strength, help, confirmation (Eccl. 4:9–12).
- 3 = The simplest compound unity; the number for God (Matt. 28:19).
- 4 = The world with its four seasons and directions (Rev. 7:1).
- 5 = Man, as portrayed by the various five-membered parts of the body (Lev. 14:14–16).
- 6 = Consummate evil, failure (Rev. 13:18), because it falls short of perfection, which is represented by the number seven.
- 7 = A number representing earth crowned with heaven, the latter lending perfection or completeness to the former (Rev. 1:4).
- 10 = Five doubled; hence human completeness (Rev. 2:10).
- 12 = God's perfect manifestation of Himself to the created order (Rev. 21:12).

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**Outline of the Book of Revelation**

**Part One: “The Things Which You Have Seen” (1:1–20)**

- I Introduction 1:1–8
- II Revelation of Christ 1:9–20

**Part Two: “The Things Which Are” (2:1–3:22)**

- I Message to Ephesus 2:1–7
- II Message to Smyrna 2:8–11
- III Message to Pergamos 2:12–17
- IV Message to Thyatira 2:18–29
- V Message to Sardis 3:1–6
- VI Message to Philadelphia 3:7–13
- VII Message to Laodicea 3:14–22

**Part Three: “The Things Which Will Take Place after This” (4:1–22:21)**

- I Person of the Judge 4:1–5:14
  - A The Throne of God 4:1–11
  - B The Sealed Book 5:1–14
- II Prophecies of Tribulation 6:1–19:6
  - A Seven Seals of Judgment 6:1–8:5
    - 1 First Seal 6:1–2
    - 2 Second Seal 6:3–4
    - 3 Third Seal 6:5–6
    - 4 Fourth Seal 6:7–8
    - 5 Fifth Seal 6:9–11
    - 6 Sixth Seal 6:12–17
    - 7 144,000 Jews 7:1–8
    - 8 Great Multitude of Gentiles 7:9–17
    - 9 Seventh Seal 8:1–5
  - B Seven Trumpets of Judgment 8:6–11:19
    - 1 First Trumpet 8:6–7
    - 2 Second Trumpet 8:8–9
    - 3 Third Trumpet 8:10–11
    - 4 Fourth Trumpet 8:12–13
    - 5 Fifth Trumpet 9:1–12
    - 6 Sixth Trumpet 9:13–21
    - 7 Little Book 10:1–11
    - 8 Two Witnesses 11:1–14
    - 9 Seventh Trumpet 11:15–19

**The Study of the Book of Revelation**  
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- C Explanatory Prophecies 12:1–14:20
  - 1 The Woman 12:1–6
  - 2 The War in Heaven 12:7–12
  - 3 The War on Earth 12:13–17
  - 4 The Beast Out of the Sea 13:1–10
  - 5 The Beast Out of the Earth 13:11–18
  - 6 The 144,000 14:1–5
  - 7 The Three Angels' Announcements 14:6–13
  - 8 The Harvest Judgment 14:14–20
  
- D Seven Bowls of Judgment 15:1–19:6
  - 1 Preparation for the Bowl Judgments 15:1–8
  - 2 First Bowl 16:1–2
  - 3 Second Bowl 16:3
  - 4 Third Bowl 16:4–7
  - 5 Fourth Bowl 16:8–9
  - 6 Fifth Bowl 16:10–11
  - 7 Sixth Bowl 16:12–16
  - 8 Seventh Bowl 16:17–21
  - 9 Overthrow of the Great Harlot 17:1–18
    - a Great Harlot Is Described 17:1–6
    - b Great Harlot Is Destroyed 17:7–18
  - 10 Overthrow of Babylon the Great 18:1–19:6
    - a Babylon the Great Is Destroyed 18:1–8
    - b Earth Mourns Babylon's Destruction 18:9–19
    - c Heaven Rejoices Babylon's Destruction 18:20–19:6
  
- III Prophecies of the Second Coming 19:7–21
  - A Marriage Supper of the Lamb 19:7–10
  - B Second Coming of Christ 19:11–21
- IV Prophecies of the Millennium 20:1–15
  - A Satan Is Bound 1000 Years 20:1–3
  - B Saints Reign 1000 Years 20:4–6
  - C Satan Is Released and Leads Rebellion 20:7–9
  - D Satan Is Tormented Forever 20:10
  - E Great White Throne Judgment 20:11–15
- V Prophecies of the Eternal State 21:1–22:5
  - A New Heaven and Earth Are Created 21:1
  - B New Jerusalem Descends 21:2–8
  - C New Jerusalem Is Described 21:9–22:5
- VI Conclusion

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**The Four Viewpoints of Interpreting the Book of Revelation**

| <b>Preterist</b>  | <b>Historicist</b>   | <b>Futurist</b>   | <b>Spiritual</b>  |
|---|--|---|---|
| <p>Sees the fulfillment of Revelation's prophecies as already having occurred in what is now the ancient past, not long after the author's own time. Thus the fulfillment was in the future from the point of view of the inspired author, but it is in the past from our vantage point in history. Some <i>preterists</i> believe that the final chapters of Revelation look forward to the second coming of Christ. Others think that everything in the book reached its culmination in the past.</p> | <p>The <i>historicist</i> approach, which is the historic Protestant interpretation of the book, sees the Book of Revelation as a prewritten record of the course of history from the time of the apostle to the end of the world. Fulfillment is thus considered to be in progress at present and has been unfolding for nearly two thousand years.</p> | <p>The <i>futurist</i> approach postulates that the majority of the prophecies of the Book of Revelation have never yet been fulfilled and await future fulfillment. <i>Futurist</i> interpreters usually apply everything after chapter four to a relatively brief period before the return of Christ.</p> | <p>The <i>spiritual</i> approach (often called the <i>idealist</i> or <i>symbolic</i> approach) to Revelation does not attempt to find individual fulfillments of the visions but takes Revelation to be a great drama depicting transcendent spiritual realities, such as the spiritual conflict between Christ and Satan, between the saints and the antichristian world powers, and depicting the heavenly vindication and final victory of Christ and his saints. Fulfillment is seen either as entirely spiritual or as recurrent, finding representative expression in historical events throughout the age, rather than in one-time, specific fulfillments. The prophecy is thus rendered applicable to Christians in any age.</p> |

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**The Theology of the Book of Revelation**

The book titles itself “The Revelation of Jesus Christ” (1:1).

Christ is pictured as

- ⇒ the glorified Son of Man (1:12–16),
- ⇒ the Lion of Judah (5:5),
- ⇒ the worthy Lamb (5:8–13),
- ⇒ the Son who will rule all (12:5),
- ⇒ the Bridegroom (19:7–9),
- ⇒ the conquering King of kings and Lord of lords (19:16),
- ⇒ the rightful Ruler of His earthly (20:4–6) and eternal (22:1, 3) kingdoms.

It must never be forgotten that “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (19:10). His person, victory, and rule result in worship and praise throughout the Book of Revelation.

The book details Christ’s directions to the churches (chs. 2; 3) and describes “the wrath of the Lamb” (6:16), His judgments on the sinful world (chs. 6; 8; 9; 14; 16—18) prior to His Second Coming (19:11–21). This focus on the last times is completed by a brief description of the Lord’s thousand-year reign (20:2–6), His judgment of the entire existing created order (20:4, 11–15), and His eternal rule (21:1—22:5).

The death, resurrection (1:5), and ascension (12:5) of Jesus Christ are the historical backdrop for His gracious offer of redemption from sin and eternal life (22:14, 17). Believers (2:5) and unbelievers (9:20, 21) both are urged to repent and to overcome by “the blood of the Lamb” (12:11). Those who obey are a royal priesthood for the Lord (1:6; 5:9, 10) and will reign with Him (20:4, 6). Their prayers are continually before God’s heavenly throne (5:8; 8:3, 4).

In the power of the Holy Spirit, John received great visions (1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10) as well as crucial messages that the church needed to hear (2:7). In the spiritual realm, Revelation depicts a divine struggle against Satan and his demons (2:9, 10, 13, 24; 3:9). Yet this battle against the deceiver of the world and the “accuser of our brethren” has already been won by the blood of the Lamb (12:9–11). All that remains is for Satan and his followers is to be sentenced to their just, eternal punishment by the Lord (19:20—20:3, 10). Their doom is sure.