

Simple Outline of the Book of Revelation

INTRODUCTION

This is the time for you to decide: “You know what? This mysterious book which I’ve ignored, it’s time to take hold of it.”

THE EARTH ABIDES FOREVER

Paragraph A. Now, there are two points that are often overlooked when people think about the end times. Point number one, some people think of Jesus as coming to rapture the Church. The Church will be raptured, we will meet the Lord in the air, but to be transformed into resurrected bodies, mobilized to take over the world. We are not captured in the air to be taken away. Jesus is not appearing and then leaving. He’s appearing and staying forever on the earth. He’s coming to stay; He’s not coming to go.

So, when we think of the world, we think of the transition plan for Jesus to take it over. The Bible doesn’t teach the end of the world; the Bible teaches the end of this age. It’s a big difference. The age is the manner in which the nations are governed. The age is going to change, but the earth isn’t going to disappear. Even at the end of the Millennium, the earth is purged with fire, but after it’s cleansed and rinsed and purged with fire, it’s continued in the new heaven and the new earth. I believe it’s the same rock, the same planet.

IT’S NOT THE END OF THE WORLD

When the broadcaster interviews the guy, as I’ve seen on talk shows, and says, “So, you believe in the end of the world?” and the preacher says, “Yes,” that’s wrong. There is no end of the world. We don’t believe in the end of the world. We believe in the end of the age, but the world goes on and on. So, that’s point number one that’s often overlooked. It always throws people off. They’re enthusiastic, and they say, “Man, this is exciting! You believe in the end of the world! Tell me about it.”

And I say, “I do not.”

They say, “What do you mean? I thought you were really into the end times.”

“I am! I study it a lot.”

THE MARRIAGE OF HEAVEN AND EARTH

OK, the second point that’s often overlooked. When Jesus comes, He brings heaven and earth together. Now, this is a new idea for some folks. Ephesians 1:9-10 says it clearly. God is going to bring the heavenly realm and the earthly realm together on the earth. We’re not going away to heaven, but heaven is coming to the earth at the time of the second coming. He is going to bring together into one all things. The heavenly and earthly realms are coming together on the earth. So, when we think of the future, the age to come, the natural realm will still continue to exist in the millennial kingdom. The natural realm won’t be suspended and done away with; rather, it will be enhanced by the supernatural realm, the power of the resurrection, the power of the Holy Spirit.

REVELATION, THE GLORY OF A MAN

OK, let’s go on. Paragraph A. Now, the book of Revelation is the glory of a man. Revelation 1:1 tells us, “The book of the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 1:1). It is His plan, but more than that, it’s the Man behind the

plan. I want to know the action plan; I want to know the battle plan, but I read the book of Revelation first to be fascinated with the Man behind the plan. It is an unveiling of a man's mind and a man's heart—the Man Christ Jesus. And it is His plan, but I don't want to be so focused on the plan that we lose sight of the Man who's the central figure of the plan.

Now, there are unique dynamics in the book of Revelation, and it requires our involvement. There are unique things happening in the book of Revelation, obviously, that have never happened before in history at this level. So, it takes a unique involvement with the Body of Christ. Studying this unique information, this action plan, will equip the Church to participate with Jesus in that hour.

KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS

Paragraph B. Now, the main theme of the book is Jesus' return to the earth to take over all the governments of the earth. The main theme of the book isn't that Jesus appears and we go away. He is appearing, we will be raptured, we will be transformed, and we will be mobilized. We will be organized, and Jesus is going to take over all the governments of every nation on the earth, and He is going to drive away all the evil leaders. He is going to kill them and remove them from the planet. That is central to the plan of the book of Revelation.

Now, that seems intense, and it is. It is intense, but it is very necessary because these evil leaders will be the most powerful oppressors in human history. They will be deeply entrenched in evil and oppression, and they will not yield, so Jesus will confront them and remove them. That is where this storyline, this conflict, comes to a head, in this confrontation. He removes them, and then He replaces all the governments of the earth. The governments will resist Him when He comes. When He appears in the sky, the 232 governments in the earth—that's how many nations there are now—won't say, "Wow!" They will say, "War! We will declare war on You. We will not yield to Your demands that our governments follow You." So they will declare war on Him.

THE CHURCH AS MOSES IN THE LATTER DAYS

Paragraph C. Now, one of the main reasons, though not the only reason, that people don't read the book of Revelation is because they have a wrong paradigm—that's a fancy word for *perspective*—a wrong perspective on the Great Tribulation. When they think of the Tribulation, many say, "I want to be gone. I want to be out of here before then," because they have a wrong view of the Great Tribulation.

As Moses released the judgment of God on Pharaoh and the nation of Egypt, he released it through prayer. Moses walked into Egypt and said, "God says, 'Let My people go.'"

Pharaoh said, "No." Moses stretched forth his hand and prayed. The stretching forth of his rod was a type of prayer, but at other times he actually prayed while he stretched forth the rod and the judgment came upon the Pharaoh. So Moses marched into town and released the judgments of God upon Pharaoh. In the same way, the Church will be in the Moses position. It won't be Pharaoh over Egypt, it will be the end-time Pharaoh, called the Antichrist, seeking to rule all the nations of the earth. He will never succeed, but that is his goal. The end-time Pharaoh will be confronted by an end-time Moses called the praying Church.

THE STORY OF EXODUS REPEATED ON A GLOBAL LEVEL

Now, of course, the two primary figures will be the two witnesses, but the praying Church and the two witnesses will all be working together under the leadership of Jesus. As Moses stretched forth his rod and the judgment came on Pharaoh, so the praying Church will pray and the judgments will come on the Antichrist. The

point is this: The Great Tribulation is God's judgment against the Antichrist, not God's judgment on the Church. The plagues of Egypt were not a judgment on the children of Israel, they were not a judgment on Moses, they were a judgment on Pharaoh and the nation of Egypt.

The book of Revelation is the Moses-deliverance story retold on a global, end-time level. It's a very dynamic story. I mean, if you had gone to Moses and said, "Moses, are you praying to be raptured before you go to meet Pharaoh?" he would say, "No, I have been preparing my whole life to meet Pharaoh. For such a time as this have I come into the kingdom." He wasn't trying to get out of the confrontation; he wanted to be prepared for it.

THE BOOK OF ACTS REPEATED ON A GLOBAL LEVEL

Paragraph C. The miracles in the book of Exodus and the miracles in the book of Acts are going to be joined together and multiplied on a global level. I mean, imagine the miracles in the book of Exodus when Moses released the plagues. Imagine the miracles in the book of Acts. They are going to be combined and multiplied on a global level, and they're going to be released by prayer. That's the paradigm, I believe, of understanding the book of Revelation. It is the greatest hour of power for the Church in history, far beyond the book of Acts.

Paragraph D. The book of Acts describes the acts of the Holy Spirit. That's what the title of the book of Acts means. It means the acts of the Holy Spirit through the early Church or through the apostles. It's the acts of the Holy Spirit. The book of Revelation will be the acts of the Holy Spirit through the end-time Church. So I refer to the book of Revelation as the end-time book of Acts. It's the book of Acts written in advance for the end-time Church. It's the most remarkable document. I mean, imagine if Peter, James, and John had the whole book of Acts on the day of Pentecost, before it happened; if they saw the whole twenty-eight chapters ahead of time. The end-time Church has the whole book of Acts, the end-time book of Acts, written in advance. It's called the book of Revelation, and it must be understood by the praying Church.

REVELATION, A CANONIZED PRAYER MANUAL

Now, I refer to it as a canonized prayer manual. *Canonized* is one of the few big words I have in this document. *Canonized* means one basic thing for our purposes: it means it's inspired. The book of Matthew is canonized, meaning it's in the Bible. The book of John is canonized; that means it's in the Bible. We have an "in-the-Bible" prayer manual. It's *canonized*. It's the end-time prayer manual that's written in the Bible, so we know it's infallible in its inspiration. I mean, you could have the greatest intercessor write a prayer manual and you would say, "Thank you; it's helpful." But it's not canonized; it's not infallible. It's not the Bible itself. We have a prayer manual that is, itself, the very Word of God. It's called the book of Revelation. It's a prayer manual.

"THE GATES OF HELL SHALL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST IT"

Let's look at Matthew 16:18 and 19. You know this statement. Jesus said, "I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mt. 16:18, KJV). He said, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" (Mt. 16:19, NKJV).

Jesus made several points here in Matthew 16:18 and 19. Number one, He says, "I am building a Church that the gates of Hades" —that means hell— "will not triumph over." He means that for 2,000 years, but particularly this is a prophecy for the generation He returns. When the Antichrist, who is the most demonized man in history, is on the planet seeking to rule the nations and the power of hell is breaking forth, Jesus says, "Mark

My Word, hell itself, the Antichrist, and his empire will not win. In that hour, you will win, Church of Jesus Christ.”

THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM

Now, this verse is applicable for 2,000 years, but it has its full, greatest fulfillment in the context of the Book of Revelation. Here’s what He said in verse 19; this is not small: “I will give you the keys to the kingdom.” Part of the keys to the kingdom is prayer and worship. He says, “Here’s what you’re going to do with the keys, you unlock doors and you lock doors. With these keys called prayer and intercession, you will bind bad things.” In other words, “You will lock the door to bad things. You will use the keys of prayer to bind, to stop Satan’s activity. You will use the keys and you will open the door to God’s activity.”

So what Jesus is saying is, there’s coming an hour when the gates of hell will be assaulting the Church on the earth in an open global confrontation. Of course, that confrontation is in the book of Revelation. He said, “But what I want to assure you before the confrontation escalates to that level is that you have keys, the praying Church. You will bind, you will stop, the negative works of Satan. And you will loose the positive, the activity of the Holy Spirit.” So that’s actually a prophecy in Matthew 16. Again, it applies to all 2,000 years of church history, but it has its greatest fulfillment in the generation the Lord returns.

WILL WE GO UP OR GROW UP?

Now, I’m setting up and giving you a picture of the book before we look at the structure. The structure is quite simple, but I’m setting it up for you here, first because so many have the idea that they want to get out of here. They’re just waiting to leave at any moment. The Lord raptures us and we’re out of here. They’re waiting to go up while the Holy Spirit is waiting for us to grow up, for real, to be involved in the plan. Again, Moses wasn’t trying to avoid the confrontation with Pharaoh. He spent his life preparing for the confrontation with Pharaoh.

TWENTY-ONE PRIMARY JUDGMENTS

Paragraph F. There are twenty-one primary judgment events in the book of Revelation. There are seven seals, seven trumpets, seven bowls of wrath, twenty-one events, and there are even more than that, the fall of Babylon and a few other things. But there are twenty-one primary judgment events.

These judgment events don’t happen to us. They’re not judgments against us; they’re judgments released through us. The plagues of Egypt weren’t judgments on Moses; they were judgments released by Moses, not judgments for Moses. So these judgments won’t happen to us as hapless victims. Beloved, we are not going to be helpless victims of Satan; we are going to be active participants with Jesus. That is where this battle plan is equipping us to participate.

THE LIBERATOR IN THE CAUSE OF LOVE

Now, the judgments of Jesus are severe, but one thing we have confidence in is that His judgments are sent to remove everything that hinders love. His judgments are necessary; they will confront everything that hinders love. His judgments will confront everything in the nations that resists love and justice. Because again, the Antichrist’s kingdom and all the leaders who are a part of it, the multitudes who will be a part of the greatest movement of oppression and injustice in human history, will be confronted by God in love to drive it off the planet so that love will prosper. The book of Revelation is a love story. It’s not an “oh no!” story. It’s a “finally, You broke in” story. It’s not a story where we say, “Oh no, it’s happening.” It’s a story where we say, “Oh, yes God. You have heard our prayers and You have broken in decisively to confront the oppressors.” Jesus in the

book of Revelation is the liberator of the nations from the greatest oppression in history. He is the loving liberator against the great oppressor. The prayer movement is connected to the great liberator, Jesus.

A BATTLE PLAN, A PRAYER MANUAL, A BLUEPRINT

Paragraph G. Number one under G. The book of Revelation is a strategic battle plan. It is the battle plan of Jesus. Number two, it is a canonized prayer manual. Number three, it's the Father's perfect blueprint. That's how we understand the book of Revelation. I'm going to give them to you again. The book of Revelation isn't just a story about the end times; number one, it's Jesus' battle plan. It's a strategic plan laid out in advance. With this battle plan He will confront the Antichrist and drive him off the planet, along with all who are in agreement with him.

Number two. Another view of the book of Revelation is that it's the canonized prayer manual. We've already gone through that. Number three, it's the perfect blueprint of the Father to prepare the Church to rule the nations with Jesus in the Millennium. It's the perfect blueprint, the perfect plan in order to cause the bride to mature so she can reign forever on the earth with Jesus. This book is massively important to the Church.

“THEY OVERCAME HIM BY THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB”

Paragraph H. Now, the main focus of the book of Revelation is God's judgments against the Antichrist. That is by far the main theme. But it's clear that there's a secondary focus in the book. That is Satan's tribulation against the saints, and that tribulation is real. There will be more martyrs than at any time in history, but by no means will all the saints be martyred. It's not like that. It will be the highest percentage ever, but it won't nearly exterminate the Church. It's nothing like that.

Now, notice this in paragraph H: Only twelve of the 400 verses in the book of Revelation are about persecution. Three percent of the book is about persecution; ninety-seven percent of the book is about the victory of the saints over evil. Yet some people, when they read the book of Revelation, say, “Oh, no!” because they think the judgments on the Antichrist are coming on them, or they think, “Oh, no! It's all about persecution.” I say, “Persecution is there, and we don't want to minimize it, but it's three percent of the storyline.”

OK, let's go into more details of the book. Let's go to the symbols.

DISTINGUISHING THE LITERAL FROM THE SYMBOLIC

Paragraph A. There are seven main symbols in the book of Revelation, and we've got them right here in the notes. They're actually quite straightforward; they're not complex and confusing, because the Bible interprets the Bible. Now, in the book of Revelation, the events and numbers are meant to be interpreted in their plain meaning. The events and the numbers aren't symbolic unless the Scripture clearly indicates that they're symbolic. I'll give several examples where it's symbolic, but the Scripture tells you in the context and clearly indicates that it's symbolic. If it doesn't indicate that the verse is symbolic, we read it straightforwardly. The 144,000 means 144,000; the Euphrates River means the Euphrates River; Babylon means Babylon. The two witnesses means two witnesses. It's straightforward. Because some people read the book of Revelation and assume it's all symbolic, and those few verses indicate that it is symbolic, they mix it up with the rest of the book. It's all straightforward unless the text itself indicates that it's symbolic.

THE DRAGON, THE BEAST, AND THE FALSE PROPHET

So, of the seven symbols, the dragon is the Devil every time. The first beast, or simply the Beast, is the Antichrist. The only one that can throw you is number three. The false prophet is called another beast, but he's only once called another beast. At first that might throw you off because we've got the Beast and another beast. "Oh no, that's confusing!" Every time with one exception he's called the false prophet. One time in Revelation 13:11 he's called another beast. Don't be thrown off by that; it's talking about the false prophet. The reason he's called another beast is because the false prophet will appear as gentle as a lamb, and John wants us to know he's as much of a beast as the Antichrist is. So, that's why he's called that, that one time. John is saying, "Don't be fooled by his gentle demeanor. He's a beast; he's cruel; he has no ability for mercy in his personality. Don't be tricked by him. He's also a beast just like the Antichrist."

THE HARLOT AND THE SEVEN HEADS

The heart of Babylon is an evil demonic religious and economic system. It overlaps in religion and economics. There are distinctions, but there's overlap. We won't go into detail on that now. The seven heads represent seven empires in history that persecuted Israel. It talks about the dragon with seven heads; that means Satan with seven heads, and it talks about the beast with seven heads, which is the Antichrist. It means that the Devil and the Antichrist are involved in those seven nations that persecuted Israel. It speaks of seven nations clearly.

THE TEN-HORNED CONFEDERATION

The ten horns represent the fact that, in the generation the Lord returns, there will be ten nations that work together in a confederation. There will be ten nations that work in deep unity together, but it's an evil unity. Ten powerful nations will join their military, their economic strength, their political clout, and they will work with the Antichrist. They are called the ten horns.

THE WOMAN AND CHILD

You can read these more and get more familiar with them, but when you read the book of Revelation, if you have these right before you, and of course most of you are familiar with the *Book of Revelation Study Guide* where I took the book of Revelation verse by verse in a little booklet and put all these notes on the left side and the Bible text on the right side. So it's like footnotes on the left side and the Bible, the book of Revelation, on the right side. You can get that in the bookstore if it interests you. All these notes are right there next to the verses, so that when you're reading it, if you forget who the woman is, you can say, "Oh, there you go, the woman." The woman speaks of the faithful remnant of Israel throughout history, and the Man-child is Jesus. Again, it may take you a little while to get familiar with those terms, but they're really straightforward. They're not confusing; it's clear from the text what these are.

"LO, HE COMES WITH CLOUDS DESCENDING"

Now, this is an idea that's very biblical, but it's the idea that's newest to most people who are beginning their study on the end times. However, there are plenty of Bible verses to back up this concept in the Old Testament, in the prophets. It's emphasized a number of times. I call it Jesus' procession, where He travels around the earth in the clouds and every eye of every person sees Him.

People have suggested many times, "No, Jesus will appear on the TV cameras and everyone will see Him there."

I totally reject the suggestion. I say, “I don’t think so. Jesus doesn’t need TV cameras at the second coming for every eye to see Him.” I’ve heard it many times. But it says in Revelation 1:7, “He is coming with clouds.” Every eye of every single human being, every human on the earth will see Him, believers and unbelievers. And, more than seeing Him, they will see Him so clearly. Well, the Church will be raptured at that time. The Church will be happy, but those who are not raptured will mourn.

“AS THE LIGHTNING FLASHES OUT OF THE EAST”

In other words, Jesus said He’s coming like lightning because He’s going from one end of the sky to the other, but they read that verse and they think the second coming is like a flash of lightning. “I think He came; I’m not sure!” And the nations say, “Well, we think that was Him, but we’re not sure.” That’s not what’s going to happen. When He comes, every eye will not only see Him, but they will have a deep emotional response. They will mourn, meaning they will understand what is happening. It won’t be a flash in their peripheral vision; they’ll actually see Him.

JESUS WILL COME WITH CLOUDS OF GLORY

Now, for the people in the Mediterranean and Pacific Islands to see Him, there are two options: Option one, either the world goes flat for one moment and everyone sees Him at the same time and then it becomes round again; or, option two, He comes over every geographic, inhabited place of the earth with clouds of glory, with all the angels and the glory of God. That’s what the Bible teaches. He won’t appear at one time in one place; the earth won’t go flat so we can all see Him; and it won’t be because of TV cameras. Jesus will actually make a royal procession around the globe, and in that royal procession He will announce His kingship over the sound of angels and trumpets. He will assert His kingship over every nation.

“EVERY EYE SHALL SEE HIM”

When that royal procession around the globe has happened, when every eye has seen Him, when the saints are raptured, those who are not raptured mourn. They know trouble is coming now. They’re not happy with what they just saw because many of them have the mark of the Beast. They will be very sad because this isn’t a quick appearance and a leaving. He’s announcing and asserting His rightful kingship over every nation of the earth, which means every leader is going to be replaced who doesn’t love Him. And the ones who loved Him just got raptured. The ones who are still there, they know trouble is coming next for them and their nation.

Every eye will see Him. That’s number one; that’s the beginning of the royal procession. He goes across the earth in the sky in clouds, and everyone sees Him. But the royal procession doesn’t end with being on clouds of glory. The Scripture is clear: We don’t know where He touches the ground, but we know He ends up at the Mount of Olives. That’s not where He touches ground. He ends up at the Mount of Olives at the end of the procession, not at the beginning of it. So He does go to Jerusalem at the Mount of Olives, but that’s His last stop, not His first stop. It says in quite a few places, actually, that Jesus is marching up through the land. I’ll just leave it there.

MARCHING IN THE GREATNESS OF HIS STRENGTH

We know He marches up through the land of Edom, which is modern-day Jordan. There’s no question about that. Isaiah the prophet saw the Messiah marching up through the land of Edom, which is Jordan, on His way to enter into Jerusalem to confront the Antichrist. He doesn’t confront the Antichrist from the sky, but He lands on the ground and marches up through the land and kills His enemies and goes to Jerusalem and there’s a major global battle with global implications. He confronts the armies of the earth in the city of Jerusalem, defeats

them, captures the city, or wins it back rather, and the nation of Israel says to Him, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.” He touches the Mount of Olives and a lot of things happen.

THE DAY OF THE VENGEANCE OF ALMIGHTY GOD

Now, this is a new idea for some. Again, I want to say it respectfully. It’s a new idea because they only study ten or twelve Bible verses about the end times. Beloved, there are 150 chapters in the Bible of which the end times are the major focus—150 chapters! We have them on the Internet. Actually, it’s about 180, but a few of them are debatable, so we gave a conservative number of 150. When you read all 150 chapters, there are lots of details besides just trumpets and a rapture. There are a lot more details in the storyline.

In Isaiah 63, Isaiah asks a question related to the second coming. He asks in Isaiah 63:1, “Who is this coming from Edom?” Now, in the ancient days of history, it was called Edom; today we call it Jordan. There’s this man traveling in great strength, and the question is asked of this man, “Why are Your garments red?” (Is. 63:2).

The Man, who is Jesus, answers, “I have trodden” —or *stomped*, or *trampled*—“them in My anger, and trampled them” —the nations—“in My fury” (Is. 63:3). If you read the whole passage, He says, “I am coming through the nations, trampling them.” Then He gives us the strangest answer, but it’s quite straightforward. There are several places in the Bible where this answer is clear. He says, “When I trampled through the land” — He’s marching up through Jordan on His way to Jerusalem—“their blood got on My garments” (Is. 63:3b, paraphrased). He confronted them and their blood actually got on His garments.

TRAMPLING OUT THE VINTAGE WHERE THE GRAPES OF WRATH ARE STORED

Jesus isn’t in the sky; He’s on the ground with His armies on a white horse, killing the armies gathering around Jerusalem. Now, there are millions and millions and millions, so they’re over a few-hundred-thousand mile radius, and He’s killing them marching up to Jerusalem. He tells them in verse 1, “I am traveling in the greatness of My strength. The blood of My enemies gets on My garments” (Is. 63:1-3, paraphrased).

Habakkuk 3:12 is describing the same scene. It’s talking about the Messiah at the second coming. He’s marching through the land in indignation or anger. Jesus is on the ground. He’s traveled across the earth and the sky, but now He’s on the ground and He’s marching in anger, trampling the nations to bring salvation for the nation of Israel. He’s on His way to Jerusalem; that’s where He’s going.

THE GREATER MOSES AND THE GREATER DAVID

Then, eventually, He enters the city of Jerusalem and liberates it in a military contest. It’s a big, phenomenal story from the Scriptures. The second coming is in context to a military conflict of which Jesus is the greater David. He’s not only the greater Moses releasing plagues, He’s the greater David. He’s the greater Joshua fighting the enemies around Jerusalem. He liberates them, sets up His throne in Jerusalem, and all the good things follow. The book of Revelation is the storyline of this entire set of events.

THE THIRTY-DAY MARCH ACROSS THE EARTH

Paragraph B. Again, this is new to some, and I’m not going to prove it right now, this is just an overview, but it’s clear from the Scriptures, from Daniel 12, that there’s a thirty-day period after the seventh trumpet where Jesus travels across the sky, every eye sees Him, He marches up through the land, the blood of His enemies gets on Him, He enters Jerusalem, He kills the armies of the Antichrist, the Antichrist Himself is defeated, and all of this takes thirty days, according to the angel who told Daniel. It would go thirty days past the normal 1,260

days. Again, that's a little too detailed if this is your first time studying it, but we've got articles on it on the Internet, and others have taught this. This isn't a private revelation; an angel who visited John gave this kind of detail.

Now, all of this begins at the seventh trumpet. At the sound of the trumpet, the saints are raptured, Jesus begins His royal procession, every eye sees Him, He touches down somewhere, we don't know where, and He marches up through the land of Jordan. He enters into the city of Jerusalem and all the events take place that are recorded in Revelation 19 and 20.

REVELATION: A GENERAL OVERVIEW

OK, let's look now really briefly, because the storyline is easy to follow once you have some of these fundamental ideas. Without these fundamental ideas in place, the storyline gets confusing because many people are thinking, "Now, doesn't it happen that He appears like a flash of lightning in our peripheral vision, and we're all gone, and no one knows what happened, and everything is just confusing after that?" No. He does everything in a dramatic way on a global scale, where everyone sees the whole thing unfold. He's coming back to announce and to assert His kingship over every nation. It's not done in secret; it's done openly. He says, "I am taking over your nation, and I am the worthy One who has the right to take it over. That nation is Mine"—not just Israel, but every nation of the earth.

UNDERSTANDING THE STRUCTURE OF REVELATION

Now, one of the main reasons, paragraph A, that people don't read the book of Revelation is because they get confused about the book of Revelation. They think the Great Tribulation is going to happen to the Church instead of being released by the Church under Jesus' leadership. Now, of course it's Jesus releasing it, but not in separation from the praying Church. Jesus is the One, God is the One, who released the plagues of Egypt, but not without Moses praying about releasing them. Technically He didn't need Moses; they were His own judgments, but God determines to use the praying people on the earth to release His judgments against the wicked.

Now, one of the main reasons people don't read the book of Revelation is because they don't understand the structure. The structure confuses them. There are four parts in the main structure of the book of Revelation. My goal is that you will learn these four parts really quickly and simply. But the fourth part has five sections. So, there are four parts and the fourth one has five sections. If you know the four parts and the five sections of the fourth part, if you know these nine pieces of information, you know the structure of the book of Revelation. If you have nine pieces of information, you have the general structure. That means you can follow the storyline when you read it. If you don't know these nine pieces of information when you read the storyline, you'll always be confused about where you are in the story; therefore, you'll get confused by what's happening in the chapter.

PART 1 (REVELATION 1): JOHN'S CALLING TO PROPHECY

Part 1 is Revelation 1. It's John's calling to prophesy. In part 1, John is called to prophesy about the end times. Why do we care about John's calling to prophesy? Here's why: because the way that John is called to prophesy is going to form the way we prophesy about the end times. The reason we have the insight in Revelation 1 about how John was called and what he saw that formed the way he prophesied about the end times is because it's a model of how we will be formed and about how we will prophesy about the end times. In other words, part 1 is not irrelevant. It matters to us to study what John saw because it will change the way we prophesy about the end

times in the way that it changed how John prophesied about the end times. So, part 1 is John's calling to prophesy about the end times.

PART 2 (REVELATION 2-3): THE SEVEN LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

In part 2, Jesus gave seven letters to seven churches which existed back in John's day in the first century. These were seven real churches, strategically chosen by Jesus. There are many reasons I don't know, but one of the reasons He picked those churches is because they had challenges, challenges that were strategic to the end-time Church. Jesus in His insight as fully God and fully Man picked seven churches, and what those churches were challenged by together would be a clear statement of what will challenge the end-time Church. So, when we study the seven churches to see what they had to overcome, that is a prophecy about what we have to overcome in the generation that the battle plan unfolds. We really care about these seven churches because it's the same challenges that we're going to face. It's not random. They were strategically selected with the knowledge of what we would need to know in the generation the Lord returns.

Again, I believe we're in the beginning days of that generation, maybe two, three, four, five decades away. I don't know; it may be longer, and it may be shorter. I think it's longer, actually. I think it's four or five decades out, but as soon as I say that, I could be totally off. It may be in the next decade or two; who knows? But it's clear to me from the Bible signs that things are unfolding so rapidly that this battle plan is going to happen soon. The issues of these seven churches will be the number one issues that will challenge the Church in that generation. We have to know those issues and we have to overcome those issues.

PART 3 (REVELATION 4-5): THE SCROLL

OK, part three. The scroll in Revelation 4-5. Jesus goes to the Father's throne and there's a scroll in the Father's hand. All the angels are around it, and the question is asked, "Who can take the scroll? What human being, what man, has the right to take that scroll?" and not just, "Who has the right to take it?" but, "Who has the ability to take it?" Because the scroll speaks of the title deed of the whole earth.

Now, it's one thing to own the whole earth. That's pretty cool. You know how a guy says, "I own a lot of property in New York City..." Well, Jesus owns the entire earth, all of it, as a man, as the Jewish Messiah. I mean, He owns it as God, but I'm talking about as a Jewish king, He owns all the earth. It's His by right. So the title deed of the earth is given to Him. It's one thing to own it, it's another thing to be able to rule it successfully. A lot of guys have taken over governments throughout history only to find that they've created a civil war. They don't have the ability to lead their nation well; no man does.

So, Jesus takes the scroll. That's the title deed. It's more than a title deed, it's the action plan, the battle plan, to drive evil off the planet. The battle plan in the book of Revelation is written inside that scroll. So when the Father gave Jesus the scroll, Jesus took it. When Jesus took it, He was saying this: "I am willing to engage in the plan, to cleanse the whole earth of evil. I will engage in this battle plan to drive evil off the planet." The battle plan is inside that scroll which is the rest of the book of Revelation. So Jesus takes the scroll and opens the scroll and inside the scroll is the battle plan that the Church will be involved in, praying to release it.

PART 4 (REVELATION 6-22): THE BATTLE PLAN OF GOD AND THE CHURCH

Part four. The battle plan itself. The battle plan is inside the scroll. So, those are the four parts of the book of Revelation: John's calling (Rev 1); the seven churches, the main issues that will challenge the end-time Church

(Rev. 2-3); the title deed, and the action plan which is in that scroll, which Jesus takes (Rev. 4-5); and then part four is the plan itself, that the praying Church will be involved with on the earth, with Jesus.

Now, the battle plan is the main theme of the book of Revelation. It is the plan. Sometimes I say the phrase “action plan,” but it’s more than an action plan. He’s confronting the kings of the earth and He’s going to drive them off the planet at His coming. But the judgments that precede His appearing at the seventh trumpet, when the seventh and last trumpet sounds, when the Church is raptured, when Jesus appears in the sky, when He makes His global procession, the beginning of His royal procession into Jerusalem, the judgments are weakening the nations, breaking and destroying the resources of the Antichrist empire.

THE FIVE SECTIONS OF THE SCROLL

Number two. This battle plan has five sections. There are five sections inside the scroll. It’s the battle plan written inside the scroll. When Jesus gets it, He opens the scroll and the five sections of the battle plan are written out. Now, I call these the five chronological sections, although many other commentators call them chronological sections as well. That’s not a term that’s unique with me. The plan has five parts, five sections to it. These chronological sections describe what unfolds. They describe the twenty-one judgment events one after the other in sequential order. The plan tells us what happens one event after the other.

ANGELIC (PARENTHETICAL) EXPLANATIONS

Number four. Now, here’s what happens. This is the key part to understanding the structure of the book of Revelation. It’s what I call the angelic explanations. Many commentators agree with this structure, and they call it parenthetical, meaning it’s a parenthesis. What’s happening is that Jesus opens the scroll and the five chronological sections that tell the events that happen in order on the earth, the judgment events. For example, the first section is the seal judgments against the Antichrist. Every time a section happens, like the seal judgments, John is overwhelmed. John is looking at the fourth seal, for instance, and one-fourth of the earth dies and John is thinking, “This is intense.”

And the angel—this is my version—looks at John and says, “John, you’re losing it.”

John says, “One-fourth of the earth? Oh my gosh, I’m so overwhelmed, I can’t even listen to you.”

Now, again, I’m adding my own story into this. So what happens is that the angel tells John, “John, sit down. Let’s have a pastoral talk, you and me.” So the angel puts the storyline on pause, pushes the pause button on the chronological section and says, “Let’s take a break. John, let’s talk heart to heart. How do you feel about these seals?”

John says, “They’re mind-blowing. I have questions. Why is this so severe? What’s going to happen to the saints? What’s going on?”

And the angel says, “Let’s talk.” He describes the behind-the-scenes reasons as to why these judgments are so severe, and he tells John what’s going to happen with the saints. He says, “John, do you understand?”

And, again, I’m making this part up, but John says, “Yes, I get it. OK... I am OK.”

The angel says, “You want to go back to the storyline? Are you ready?”

John says, “Yes.” So the angel takes the pause button off and tells him the second chronological section. In the second chronological section, the trumpets are unfolding one after the other in order. John is absolutely mind-blown. He says, “I am losing it again.”

The angel pushes the pause button. “Sit down, John. Let me tell you why the trumpets are so severe.” And John says, “Yes, but what about the Church? What’s going to happen to us?”

And the angel says, “A lot of good things are going to happen to the Church. There’s going to be an outpouring of the prophetic anointing and God is going to help you and da-da-da-da-da-da-da...”

And John says, “OK... I’m ready.”

The angel says, “John, are you with me? Are you ready to hear the rest of the story?”

John says, “Yes.”

THE REASONS FOR THE CHAOS

The angel takes the pause button off and it goes into the third chronological section. There’s the seventh trumpet blasting in the sky, all the saints are raised, every eye sees Him, all the governments of the earth are replaced. John says, “Every government is replaced?” It happens in a short amount of time; I don’t mean like in a minute, but it happens very rapidly, over days and weeks. Every government of the earth will be replaced in a short period of time. John says, “Wait a second, this is chaotic! The whole earth is going to change government. Wait!”

So the angel pauses. “Sit down, John; let me tell you why this is necessary.” And he explains to John the reason why God has to take over every government, and why we have to replace every single one, because the governments have been violently oppressing the saints of God. The governments have been violently confronting the saints and everything that’s good from God’s point of view. They have to be replaced.

John says, “OK, that makes sense. OK.”

The angel says, “Are you with me, John?”

“OK, I’m with you. OK, take the pause button off now.”

So now the fourth section takes place. “Oh no, it’s the bowls of wrath! They’re worse than the trumpets!” John says, “I’m losing it again. Why does it have to be so severe?” Because when the bowls take place, not only are the governments now replaced, the infrastructure of all the nations is substantially destroyed. The seven bowls of wrath come down and break up the infrastructure of society. John says, “It’s one thing to replace all the kings; it’s another thing to change all the policies of all the governments and libraries and tax systems and banking systems and media and education systems.” They all have to be replaced. And John is losing it again. He’s overwhelmed.

The angel pushes the pause button and says, “John, you think that’s too severe, don’t you?”

John says, “Well, I trust God. I know His leadership is perfect, but I mean, everything is going to be destroyed, all the infrastructure of the nations.”

The angel says, “Yes, but John, they are infiltrated with the values of Babylon. We have to remove all of everything in society that has those values in it; that’s the reason for the bowl judgments. It’s better to reduce many things to nothing and start from scratch and build society again from the ground up.”

So John says, “OK, that makes sense.”

The angel says, “Now are you with me, John?”

“I’m with you.”

So he takes the pause button off again and now John sees the fifth section, and Jesus is marching into Jerusalem on a white horse. Of course, all the kings of the earth are gathered there and there’s a big confrontation, and Jesus kills every one of the kings and enters into Jerusalem. It’s a great victory for the righteous; it’s a terrible defeat for the wicked. The millennial kingdom comes, the Devil is thrown into prison, and then, eventually, after the millennial kingdom, there’s a new heaven and a new earth, and the throne of God comes down to the earth.

John is really excited now. He said, “Wow, that fifth section!” That’s the one we really like, is the fifth section.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE FIVE SECTIONS

OK, so we’re going to go through these again really quickly. Look at Revelation 6, the middle of page four. Now, I realize we went through that a little fast, but once you get the general idea, there are four parts in the book of Revelation. The fourth part has five sections. Those five sections are mostly the judgment events that happen against the Antichrist. After each one of those sections, because John is a little overwhelmed, the angel puts the storyline on pause. He tells John the behind-the-scenes reasons for why the judgment is so severe, and then he tells John what is going to happen to the saints, because John has two basic questions: “Why are things so severe?” and “What about us?” Those are the two questions always being answered in the angelic explanation, and most commentators that agree with this structure (and many do) call them parenthetical sections, or parentheses.

I used to call them that, but too many people go, “What’s a parenthetical section?”

Now I just say, “An angel is explaining it behind the scenes.”

So one young person said, “Why don’t you just call it an angel explaining things and then throw that word *parenthesis* away?”

I said, “OK.” So when you read other commentaries, you’ll see it called a parenthetical section or something like that. Different ones use different words.

OK, let's review this really quickly. Then I'm going to let you ask questions for a few minutes. Then we're voluntarily going to get into groups of four and I'm going to ask you the four parts and the five sections. I'll ask you those questions and see if you can get this storyline, and you'll be able to use your little cheat sheet which you've got in your right hand. It's an open book test. But if you've really got it, you can put that cheat sheet in your back pocket and say, "Watch this, I can just do it." Have some fun.

SECTION 1 (REVELATION 6): THE SEAL JUDGMENTS

OK. Revelation 6. After the seal judgments, the angel comes and says, "Don't worry about the seal judgments." God is going to protect the saints from the judgments of God, and God is going to protect the saints from falling away under persecution. I mean, the saints will still be persecuted, but they will not lose their faith. They will not give in to compromise. They won't fall away under pressure. God has a plan to protect the Church. The judgments of God won't hit the Church, and, if you want it, there will be grace to where you won't compromise in that season.

So the angel tells John, "When the seal judgments come, have no fear; God has a plan to protect the Church."

So John says, "Good!"

The pause button goes off. We go now to continue the storyline.

SECTION 2 (REVELATION 8-9): THE TRUMPET JUDGMENTS

Revelation 8 and 9. The trumpet judgments are the second section in the battle plan. They are destroying the Antichrist empire.

John says, "Wait a second... they are so severe!"

The angel pushes the pause button and says, "OK, what's the problem, John?"

John says, "Well, there's so much demonic activity, so much death and carnage, the Antichrist kingdom is being decimated, demons are lying, false prophets are everywhere, what about us? Who's going to know what the truth is?"

The angel says, "I'm glad you asked, because God is going to pour out supernatural direction on His Church. His Church won't be confused in that hour. There's going to be an outpouring of the spirit of prophecy beyond any time in history. God is going to give prophetic direction in an hour of great confusion."

John says, "OK, good. I'm ready to go. Take the pause button off."

SECTION 3: THE SEVENTH TRUMPET

Now the third chronological section, the seventh trumpet, is the announcement that all the governments of the earth are going to be replaced. Again, I already went through this. John says, "Every government? All 232 kings?" All the saints are raptured, the trumpet sounds, and there's an announcement: "Every king of the earth be warned, Jesus is coming in the sky in glory. He's replacing every one of you, and killing every one of you that He replaces." I tell you, the kings are very mad at this announcement; the kingdoms of the earth belong to Jesus as of now.

You know, we hear that seventh trumpet, the saints are raptured, we get rewards, the announcement goes forth, and we say, “Yay, yay.” But, if you’re a king with the mark of the Beast, that’s a really bad announcement. There will be many kings, not all the kings, but many kings on the Antichrist side. But, every king has to submit his nation to Jesus’ leadership, and that is what happens. Again, John says, “Wow, isn’t that awfully intense? I mean, isn’t there a softer way to take over the earth? Maybe Jesus could have an election and see if they vote for Him?” You know, John didn’t really say that.

Then, in Revelation 12 and 14, the third angelic explanation, the angel tells John, “John, you don’t get it. Satan is raging and confronting the Church. The Antichrist has raised up a whole army against the saints. This army will not accept Jesus’ terms. They have resisted Him; they have to be overthrown. They have to be replaced. All the governments have to be replaced that aren’t built on righteousness. They all have to be replaced.” That is so extreme. I mean, it’s a neat thing to us, but think about it in detail: Every single senior leader of every nation will be replaced in a short amount of time. That sounds chaotic; why is that so necessary?

The third angelic explanation tells us that the Antichrist has been violently confronting all the people of God, and not just the people of God, but whatever God calls good—morality. God’s definition of morality is being violently confronted by the Antichrist. Everyone that’s related to the Antichrist, who’s associated with him, must be replaced against their will because they don’t want to be replaced. They’re mad and they’re declaring war on Jesus.

SECTION FOUR (REVELATION 15-16): THE BOWL JUDGMENTS

Now, the rapture took place at the seventh and last trumpet. Jesus is now making His procession across the sky, but He’s marching up through the land. In the same way that Moses went to Egypt and loosed the ten plagues, Jesus is marching up into Israel loosing the seven bowls of wrath in concert with the Holy Spirit, the Father, and all the saints. These bowls are destroying the infrastructure of all the national governments of the earth. I mean, they are pummeling them; they are destroying them.

In Revelation 17 and 18, the angel sees that John is overwhelmed. He puts the storyline on pause and says, “John, do you get it?”

John says, “Why?” It’s one thing to replace the leaders, but we’re talking about 100-pound hailstones destroying every library, every media center. We’re talking about destroying all the governmental centers, the school systems. These 100-pound hailstones decimate the nations. That’s what David talked about in Psalm 2:8. He said, “When Jesus comes back and the nations are His inheritance, He will break them and dash them to pieces like the potter’s vessel” (Ps. 2:8, paraphrased). He will take all the national infrastructures and, like a pot of clay with an iron rod, He will shatter all of them. Those are the seven bowls of wrath. They’re shattering the nations, and it seems so extreme.

It seems too extreme, but then the angel comes and tells John, “You don’t understand. The harlot Babylon’s values have infiltrated the media, education, the tax codes, the libraries, the sporting events; they are all infiltrated with darkness in their values systems. It’s actually more effective to reduce them to nothing and raise them up from scratch, except for those that are built on righteousness.” There will be some places where righteousness will have gained a stronghold in different regions of the earth. Wherever righteousness has gained a stronghold, it will remain.

SECTION 5 (REVELATION 19 AND 20): THE RIDER ON A WHITE HORSE

Then, in the fifth chronological section, Jesus marches into Jerusalem on a white horse and confronts all the kings that are gathered around Jerusalem. The angel tells him that God is going to restore everything that was in His mind originally when the garden of Eden began. He's going to restore it all, and the garden of Eden will be restored to the earth. That is the behind-the-scenes explanation.



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