

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

S01 ROADMAP OF REVELATION: OVERVIEW OF PARTS, SECTIONS & SYMBOLS – COREY STARK

I. SEVEN SIMPLE KEYS – MAKING THE BOOK OF REVELATION EASY TO UNDERSTAND

A. **KEY 1:** *The entire book of Revelation is about revealing the glory of Jesus Christ (Rev. 1:1). The Father's primary purpose is to unveil the unsearchable riches of Christ to transform the Church into a fully mature Bride who is made comparable to Him and compatible with Him forever (Eph. 3:8; 4:13-16; 5:27; Rev. 19:7; 21:3; 22:17). We are progressively transformed into the image of God by beholding His glory (2 Cor. 3:18).*

Rev. 1:1 *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God [Father] gave Him [Jesus] to show His servants...*

B. Revelation also gives more insight and specific information into the brilliance of God's master plan of events in the end times than any other book because its' *secondary purpose* is to *prepare the Church* to transition the earth into the Millennium in mature *partnership* with Jesus. The Church releases God's plans through *faith-filled words of agreement* (1 Jn. 5:14) in *prayer* (Rev. 5:8; 8:3-6), *praise* (Ps. 149:6-9), *prophecy* (Mt. 16:19), but only after we've matured in understanding of them by "eating the scroll" (Rev. 10:8-11).

1 Jn. 5:14 *Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if He hears us... we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.*

C. As we grow in the knowledge of Jesus' *person* and *plans* we are strengthened with might, transformed in glory and prepared as partners to *not only* endure, but *prevail* through the unique dynamics and unprecedented events of the end times in great victory (Dan 11:32-33)! If we faithfully respond to Jesus according to the core truths given throughout Revelation, we can be confidently prepared for the glory and crisis of the end times.

Dan 11:32 *the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits. 33 And those of the people who understand [His person and plans] shall instruct many...*

D. **KEY 2:** *The book of Revelation was simply written to be easily understood by everyone. John would never have been commanded to write it twelve times if it was irrelevant or impossible to understand (Rev. 1:11, 19; 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 4, 14; 14:13; 19:9; 21:5)! I believe that anyone can learn the main storyline in less than one hour and be able to explain it in less than one day if they want to! Of course, we will continue to gain greater insight into the book forever, but we don't have to wait until the age-to-come. God's great desire for us to understand Revelation is seen in His unique promise of special blessing for all those who simply read it!*

Rev. 1:3 *Blessed is he who reads and those who hear... and keep those things which are written (Rev. 22:7)*

E. A common misconception is that the book of Revelation is impossible to understand. This deception is meant to keep the Church from receiving greater insight into the *person* of Jesus Christ (Rev. 1:1) and His *end time plan* (2 Cor. 4:3; 11:3). The reason? If we don't *know* the true Jesus of the bible, we can never *mature* to become like Him (2 Cor. 3:18) and if we don't *understand* His end time plans, we can never *partner* with Him to release His plans, thus bringing heaven to earth in the restoration of all things (Acts 3:21)!

F. Therefore, we shouldn't be surprised that a great battle rages around the book of Revelation to *dismiss* it as invalid, *confuse* it with various interpretations or cause the Church to *fear* its contents, imagining that the events in the book happen *to* them, instead of being released *through* them against the kingdom of darkness! The LORD promised His Church would have mature understanding of His end time plan (Jer. 23:20; 30:24).

Jer. 23:20 *The anger of the Lord will not turn back until He has executed and performed the thoughts of His heart [His plans]. In the latter days you will understand it perfectly [in a mature way]. (Jer 30:24)*

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G. **KEY 3:** *The Holy Spirit is our Teacher in understanding the book of Revelation.* We can learn nothing about God by ourselves (Jn. 15:5). It takes God to know God. Therefore, the Holy Spirit was sent as our Helper to teach us *all* things (Jn. 14:16, 19-21, 26; 15:26; 16:12-15; 1 Cor. 2:9-12; 1 Jn. 2:20, 27). Our confidence in understanding is founded upon His ability as a great Teacher and not in our ability as learners.

Jn. 14:26 The Helper, the Holy Spirit... will teach you all things... Jn. 16:13 He will guide you into all truth... 14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine [thoughts, emotions] and declare it to you.

H. The Holy Spirit is our divine escort into the deepest things of God's heart, mind and abilities.

1 Cor. 2:9 "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." 10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God... 12 We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

I. **KEY 4:** *The book of Revelation is meant to be understood literally.* Since Revelation was written for the majority of people throughout history and not just educated scholars, it is meant to be understood using an everyday, common sense approach. We call this the "literal" method of interpretation, wherein we seek to understand the plain meaning of the text that the author originally intended for his readers to have (Rev. 1:11, 19; 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14; 14:13; 19:9; 21:5). Revelation simply *says what it means and means what it says*.

Rev. 1:19 Write the things you have seen, the things which are, and the things which will take place after this...

J. Although Revelation uses multiple symbols throughout the book *nothing* is meant to be taken symbolically unless the text specifically indicates it as such. For example: the "mystery" of the seven stars (Rev. 1:20), the "mystery" of the seven lampstands (Rev. 1:20), the "sign" of the woman clothed with the sun (Rev. 12:1), the "sign" of the great fiery red dragon (Rev. 12:3) or the "mystery" of the woman and of the beast that carries her (Rev. 17:5, 7). Simply interpreting all *personalities, numbers and events* of the book in their plain, common sense meaning makes learning the main storyline of Revelation much easier to understand.

Rev. 12:1 A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and... a garland of twelve stars... ³And another sign... a fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns...

K. **KEY 5:** *The main symbols of Revelation are interpreted within the book itself.* Many are surprised that there are only a few main symbols in Revelation that are sufficient to understand the main storyline of the book. The LORD has made it so simple that not only are the main symbols *indicated* within the book, but they are also *interpreted* within the book as well (Rev. 1:20; 5:6; 11:8; 12:1, 3, 9; 16:13-14; 17:7, 9, 12, 15-18)!

Rev. 1:20 The mystery of the seven stars . . . and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.

L. Remember, God doesn't hide things *from us*, but rather *for us* to discover (Pr. 25:2)! Therefore, if something is indicated as symbolic within the book, but the interpretation isn't given in the immediate text, you can be confident of finding its interpretation somewhere else in Scripture, because *the bible interprets the bible*. For example, the "sword" proceeding from Jesus' mouth (Rev. 1:16; 2:12, 16; 19:15, 21) is symbolic of the "Word of God," which is interpreted in the books of Ephesians and Hebrews (Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12).

Eph. 6:13 Take up the whole armor of God... ¹⁷ and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God...

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M. The Seven Primary Symbols in the Book of Revelation:

1. *Dragon*: always symbolic of *Satan* (Rev. 12:3, 4, 7, 9, 13, 16, 17; 13:2, 4; 16:13; 20:2).
2. *Beast*: symbolic of the *Antichrist*, who is called the “Beast” 36 times in the book of Revelation (Rev. 13; 14:9-11; 17:3-17; 19:19-21; 20:4, 10).
3. *Another Beast*: symbolic of the *False Prophet*, who is called “another Beast” just once (Rev. 13:11). Every other time he is called the False Prophet (Rev. 13:11-17; 16:13; 19:20; 20:10).
4. *Seven Heads*: 7 historical empires that persecuted Israel and controlled Jerusalem – Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome and future Antichrist Empire (Dan. 2:41-42; 7:7; Rev. 12:3; 13:1; 17:3-16).
5. *Ten Horns*: a future 10-nation alliance that receives authority to serve the purposes of the Antichrist at the same time (Dan. 2:41-42; 7:7, 20, 24; 11:36-45; Rev. 12:3; 13:1; 17:3, 7, 12, 16).
6. *Harlot Babylon*: a global religious and economic system that is satanically inspired and empowered to seduce the nations from the rebuilt city of Babylon (Isa. 13-14; Jer. 50-51; Rev. 17-18).
7. *Woman with Male-Child*: symbolic of the faithful remnant of ethnic Israel throughout history that gave birth to Jesus, the Male-Child who will “rule all nations with a rod of iron” (Mt. 1:1-17; Rev. 12:1-5). Satan wars with the “rest of her offspring” who are Gentile believers (Rev. 12:17).

N. **KEY 6**: *The main theme of the book of Revelation isn't persecution but victory!* The book of Revelation is the “good news” of Jesus’ victory over all the enemies of God when He returns on the Day of the LORD to establish His Father’s Kingdom over all the nations of the earth forever (Dan. 7:13-14, 18, 22, 27; Jude 14-15; Rev. 1:7; 11:15-19; 19)! Out of 404 verses, only 12 (less than 3%) speak directly about the persecution of Israel and the Church (Rev. 6:9-11; 11:7; 12:17; 13:7, 15; 16:6; 17:6; 18:24; 19:2; 20:4). The other 392 (97%) describe our victory over Satan (Rev. 20:1-15). Therefore, Revelation is the *fifth Gospel* when Jesus returns on the Day of the LORD to physically enforce the spiritual victory that He legally obtained at the cross!

Rev. 11:15 *Then the 7th angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!”*

O. The Day of the LORD is a “day of justice” when Jesus makes all of the wrong things right (Pr. 6:34; Isa. 34; 61:2; 63:4; Jer. 46:10). In one sweeping series of events, Jesus will deliver His people and the planet from the power of sin, sickness and Satan forever! Jesus will use the least severe means to take the greatest number of people to the deepest level of love without violating anyone’s freewill.

Isa. 42:1 *Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him... 4 He will not fail nor be discouraged, till He has established justice in the earth...*

P. The emphasis on the Day of the LORD throughout Revelation (Rev. 6:17) refers to the unique dynamics and unprecedented events, both *great* and *terrible*, surrounding Jesus’ victorious return (Joel 2:11, 31; Mal. 4:5; Acts 2:20). It’s a “great day” for the *responsive* who experience the *greatest revival* in human history (Acts 2:17-19; Rev. 12:10), while being a “very terrible day” for the *rebellious* who are the recipients of twenty-one of God’s *most severe judgments* in history, during the Great Tribulation (Mt. 24:21; Rev. 6-19).

Joel 2:11 *For the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; who can endure it?*

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Q. **KEY 7:** *The key judgment events of the book of Revelation are yet future.* Jesus has *not yet* opened the scroll of God’s master plan (Rev. 6:1). It wasn’t opened at the time of His ascension in approximately 30 AD, but only sometime *after* His appearance and command to John to write in approximately 90 AD (Rev. 2-3).

Rev. 4:1 *“Come up here, and I [Jesus] will show you things which must take place after this.”*

R. Jesus takes the scroll and breaks the seals, releasing judgment *only after* the bowls of prayer are *completely full* (Rev. 5:8). In other words, the seals aren’t broken until the end time Church has fully matured in love and is prepared in wisdom to partner with Jesus in ruling the nations of the earth during the Millennium.

Rev. 5:8 *Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.*

S. We need not fear God’s judgments *happen to us as helpless victims* of Satan, but are *released through us as active participants* under Jesus’ leadership. As Moses released 10 plagues upon Pharaoh through prayer (Ex. 7-12), so the end time Church will release 21 of God’s judgments upon the end time Pharaoh (Antichrist), through faith-filled words of agreement (1 Jn. 5:14). There is only one time in human history when *all the saints* have the honor of releasing God’s *written judgment* upon the nations in league with the Antichrist and that’s the final generation, as seen in the book of Revelation (Ps. 149:6-9; Isa. 24:14-16; 42:10-13; Joel 2:28-32; Mt. 16:18-19; Lk. 18:7-8; Acts 2:17-21; Rev. 5:8; 6:9-11; 8:3-5; 9:13; 10:6; 14:18; 16:7; 19:2; 22:17)!

Ps. 149:6 *Let the high praises of God be in their mouth... 7 To execute vengeance on the nations [in league w/Antichrist]... 9 To execute on them the written judgment – this honor have all His saints. (Rev. 19:2)*

II. BASIC STRUCTURE: THREE PARTS AND FIVE SECTIONS

A. Two reasons that many do not read the book of Revelation is because they are confused by the *basic structure* and few *main symbols* found within the book. However, once understood we possess a clear “*roadmap*” to know where we are in the unfolding storyline, giving us confidence to read, understand and begin partnering with the LORD, as we “keep those things” written within the book (Rev. 1:3; 22:7).

B. According to Jesus’ command for John to write there are only *THREE PARTS* in the basic structure of the book of Revelation (Rev. 1:19). They are “*things which you have seen*” (Rev. 1), “*things which are*” (Rev. 2-3), and “*things which will take place after this*” (Rev. 4-22). The *third part* contains *five sections*.

Rev. 1:19 *Write the things you have seen... things which are... things which will take place after this.*

PART ONE: *The REVELATION of Jesus Christ, which John saw (Rev. 1)*

Rev. 1:12 *I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw... the Son of Man...*

PART TWO: *The EVALUATION of the seven churches, which are (Rev. 2-3)*

Rev. 1:11 *What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are... (Rev. 1:4, 20)*

PART THREE: *The RESTORATION of all things, which must take place (Rev. 4-22)*

Rev. 4:1 *Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.*

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III. THE THIRD PART HAS FIVE SECTIONS – GENERAL OUTLINE

A. In *part three* of Revelation, “*Restoration*” (Rev. 4-22), there are *five chronological sections* that describe events unfolding on the earth in a sequential order, beginning with the Tribulation period, continuing into the Millennium and culminating with the New Heavens and New Earth. Each *chronological section* is followed by a *parenthetical explanation* to help us understand the “*why’s*” behind the “*what’s*” of each section.

B. The *five chronological sections* primarily focus on *what happens to the Antichrist’s empire and his follower’s* in twenty-one judgment events (7 seals, 7 trumpets, 7 bowls) that intensify in severity, as they unfold on the earth in a sequential order. They are the *main storyline* of judgment released against the kingdom of darkness through the praying Church in the order that they occur (Rev. 5:8-10; 8:2-6; 15:1-8).

C. The *five parenthetical explanations* that follow each chronological section, function as a parenthesis, putting the storyline on “*pause*”, as John is given a pastoral, heart-to-heart, behind the scene’s explanation answering, “*Why is God’s judgment so severe?*” and “*What will happen to God’s people?*” They explain:

1. What *Satan will do to oppose us* using the interference of demons, the persecution of the Antichrist empire, the deception of the False Prophet and the seduction of the Harlot Babylon system.
2. What *Jesus will do to support us* using the intervention of angels, the prophetic ministry of the Two Witnesses and the power of the Kingdom releasing provision, protection, direction and reward.

SECTION ONE

Rev. 6 *Chronological section #1*: the SEAL JUDGMENTS prepare the nations for God’s glory
Rev. 7 *Parenthetical explanation #1*: God gives PROTECTION from judgments and falling away

SECTION TWO

Rev. 8-9 *Chronological section #2*: the TRUMPET JUDGMENTS against the Antichrist empire
Rev. 10-11 *Parenthetical explanation #2*: God gives DIRECTION by increased prophetic ministry

SECTION THREE

Rev. 11:15-19 *Chronological section #3*: Jesus’ SECOND COMING & RAPTURE of the Church
Rev. 12-14 *Parenthetical explanation #3*: God reveals the CONFRONTATION against Israel & saints

SECTION FOUR

Rev. 15-16 *Chronological section #4*: the BOWL JUDGMENTS destroy evil infrastructures
Rev. 17-18 *Parenthetical explanation #4*: God reveals the SEDUCTION of Harlot Babylon

SECTION FIVE

Rev. 19-20 *Chronological section #5*: Jesus’ TRIUMPHAL ENTRY into Jerusalem unto the New Earth
Rev. 21-22 *Parenthetical explanation #5*: God reveals the RESTORATION of all things (Acts 3:21)

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IV. HAVING THE CORRECT PERSPECTIVE – TWELVE WAYS TO VIEW THE BOOK

The *primary purpose* of Revelation is to unveil the unsearchable riches of Christ to *transform* the Church, giving us the correct perspective to interpret, pray and prophesy its contents with the right heart and for the right reasons.

A. *End Time Book of Acts*: Just as the book of Acts describes the power of the Holy Spirit through the early Church, so the book of Revelation describes the power of the Holy Spirit through the end time Church.

B. *Greatest Story Ever Told*: All the epic love stories find inspiration from within the grand storyline of Revelation, including original paradise, innocent love, captivity, deliverance, restoration and ultimate victory!

C. *Divine Navigation*: When all of the natural light of this world has failed, Revelation is our infallible “compass” giving us the divine wisdom to navigate through the coming storm of the end times (Lk. 17:26).

D. *Bridal Preparation Handbook*: Even as Esther was prepared prior to meeting her king, so also the Holy Spirit is preparing the Bride of Christ in unprecedented unity, maturity and purity for her King (Rev. 19:7).

E. *Catalytic Scroll*: As we “eat the scroll” that is sweet and bitter, our lives become a message that is catalytic in provoking a response of truth below the surface, exposing the heart of all (Ezek. 2:8-3:3; Rev. 10:8-11).

F. *Canonized Prayer Manual*: As Moses stretched forth his rod to release 10 plagues upon Pharaoh through prayer (Ex. 7-12), so the end time Church will stretch forth the “rod of agreement” to release 21 of God’s judgments upon the end time Pharaoh (Antichrist) during the Great Tribulation (Ps. 149:6-9; Mic. 7:15).

G. *Divine Warning*: Jesus likened His return to the “days of Noah” (Lk. 17:26) when a divine warning of an unprecedented, future and imminent global shaking was meant to inspire preparation (Hag. 2:6-9; Heb. 11:7).

Heb. 11:7 Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark...

H. *Second Exodus*: As God delivered the Jewish people from Pharaoh in Egypt with a mighty right hand, so He will deliver them again on a global scale (Isa. 10:24-27; 11:11-16; Jer. 16:14-15; 23:7-8; Mic. 7:15).

Isa. 11:11 The Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people who are left, from Assyria and Egypt... 12 from the four corners of the earth...

I. *Antitypical Fulfillment*: Jesus is unveiled as the original antitype and total fulfillment of all those who went before Him as prophetic types, merely foreshadowing His ultimate role *in part* (Rom. 5:14; 1 Cor. 15:45-49).

Rom. 5:14 Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

J. *The Fifth Gospel*: Revelation is the second half of the unfolding Gospel storyline when Jesus returns to physically enforce the spiritual victory that He legally obtained at the cross. It’s the “good news” of victory!

K. *Fulfillment of Fall Feasts*: As Jesus, the Lamb of God perfectly fulfilled the Spring Feast of Passover, so He will fulfill the Fall Feast of Tabernacles when God comes to “tabernacle” among men forever (Rev. 21:3)!

L. *Book of Prophecy*: Tomorrow’s news today for all w/ears to hear (Rev. 1:3; 10:11; 19:10; 22:7, 10, 18, 19).