

8. BOOK OF REVELATION : OVERVIEW

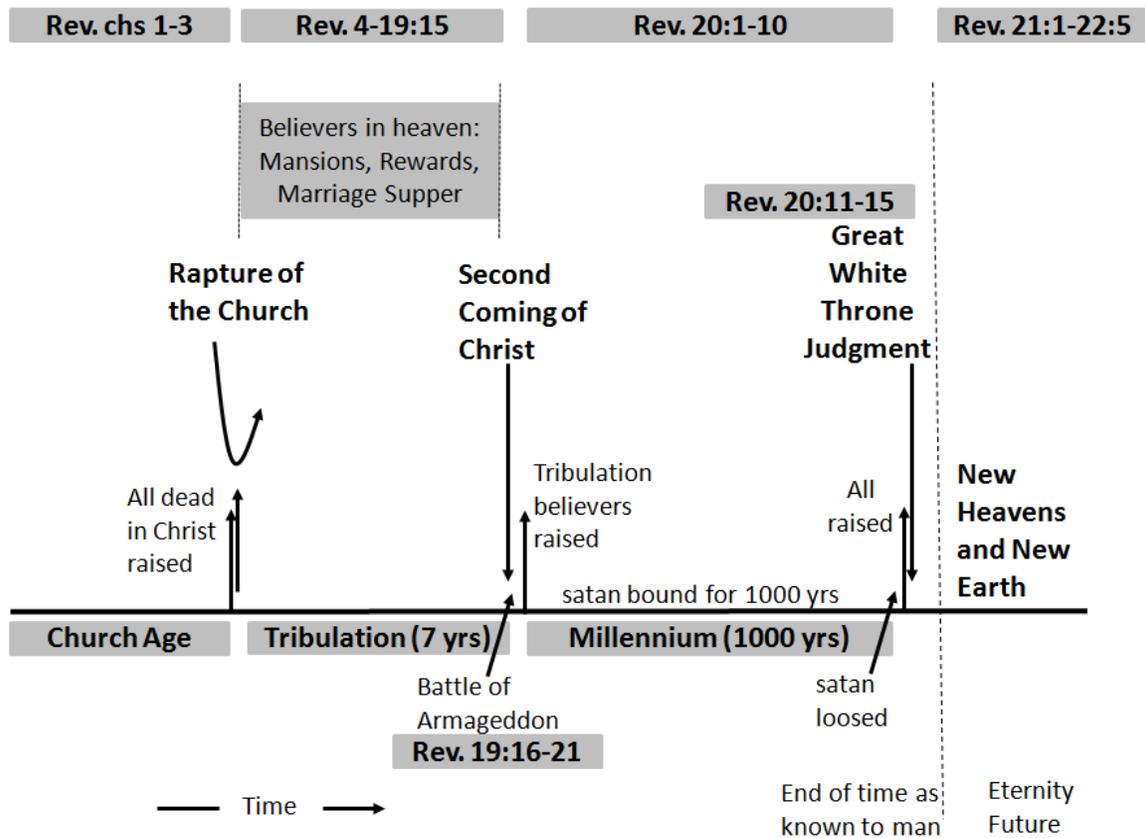
Genesis is a book of beginnings; Revelation is a book of consummation. It is important to understand Old Testament prophecies of the End Times, especially the book of Daniel to understand the events foretold in Revelation. It is often said that the book of Revelation is Daniel expanded and explained.

The apostle John received and wrote the book of Revelation around **95 A.D.** He had been living in Ephesus, after which he was exiled to the tiny island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea, by the Roman Emperor Domitian, who had begun persecuting Christians in 81 A.D.

Revelation 1:19

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

Revelation : An Overview



Revelation 1 is an introduction, and reveals things that have been done "the past".

Revelation chapters 2 to 3 speak about 'the things which are'.

Revelation chapters 4 to 22 speak about 'the things which will take place'.

Revelation 19:16-21 describes the Battle of Armageddon

Revelation 20:1-10 describes the 1000 year reign of Christ

Revelation 20:11-15 describes the Great White Throne judgment

Revelation 21:1-22:5 the new heavens and the new earth

Revelation 22:6-21 closing statements

The precise timing of these events are unsure, but we have a general sense of approximate periods within the seven year Tribulation they are most likely to occur.

Outline

Keeping the above sequence of events/time line of events, we do a chapter by chapter summary.

Chapter 1 : The Revelation of Jesus Christ

Chapters 2 & 3 : The Seven Churches

Chapter 4 & 5 : The Throne Room & Worship in Heaven

Chapter 6 : The First Six Seals

Chapter 7 : The 144,000 Jews And The Great Multitude of Martyrs

Chapter 8 : Silence in Heaven And The First Four Trumpets

Chapter 9 : The Fifth And Sixth Trumpets

Chapter 10 : The Mighty Angel And The Little Book

Chapter 11 : Two Witnesses & Seventh Trumpet

Chapter 12 : The Woman, The Man Child And The Dragon

Chapter 13 : The Two Beasts

Chapter 14 : A Great Harvest Time

Chapter 15 : Prelude To The Bowl Judgments

Chapter 16 : The Seven Angels And Seven Bowls of Wrath

Chapter 17 : The Great Harlot Babylon (A Religious System)

Chapter 18 : The Fall of Babylon the Great (An Economic/Political System)

Chapter 19 : The Second Coming of Christ And The Battle of Armageddon

Chapter 20 : The 1000 Year Reign of Christ And Final Judgment

Chapter 21 : The New Jerusalem

Chapter 22 : River of Life & Jesus' Soon Coming

The Number Seven

Seven in the Bible is a number used to denote **perfection and completeness**. There are seven days in a week. God completed His work on six days and rested on the seventh. God instituted seven primary feasts for His people. (In nature we see seven primary colours).

In the book of Revelation, seven is used often and in some cases represents a specific and actual number and in other instances must be understood to represent perfection or completion. Examples when seven represents actual number of a certain thing : seven golden lampstands, seven stars, seven churches, seven seals of judgments, seven trumpets, seven thunders and the seven bowls of plagues, seven kings (or kingdoms), seven crowns

Examples when seven is used as prophetic imagery of perfection and completion : seven Spirits of God, seven lamps, seven eyes.

Chapter 1 : The Revelation of Jesus Christ

1:1, A messenger (angel) was sent to John to bring this message to him. From what we see happen in the rest of Revelation, this messenger was one of the twenty four elders who kept speaking to John (1:1, 5:5-7, 7:13-15, 19:10, 22:8-9). The twenty four elders we see are twenty four redeemed saints who have received their rewards.

1:3, Blessing on those who read and hear the words and keep the prophetic message of this book.

1:7, A picture of the second coming of the Lord Jesus when He comes to set up His throne in Jerusalem

1:20, The seven stars are the messengers (pastors) of the seven churches. Local church pastors are held in His hands. The seven candlesticks in whose midst the Lord Jesus moves are the seven churches. The Lord moves, oversees, examines each local church.

Chapters 2 & 3 : The Seven Churches

These seven churches were in what would be modern day Turkey.

The Lord Jesus has a message for each of the seven churches.

He examines them, affirms their strengths and addresses their weaknesses and faults. To many He calls them to repentance and fix what is wrong. To each He promises a reward for overcoming.

- **Ephesus** : I know your works, labor and endurance. But you have left your first love. Repent and do the first works
- **Smyrna** : I know what you are going through. Fear none of the things you will suffer. Be faithful
- **Pergamos** : I know your works, but you are tolerating those who teach false doctrine that lead God's people astray into immorality (as Balaam and the Nicolaitanes). Repent.

- **Thyatira** : I know that your works are increasing, and your love, service, faith and endurance. But you tolerate a false prophetess who seduces people into immorality and idolatry. Judgment is coming on her and those with her. Hold on to what you have.
- **Sardis** : I know your works. People say you are alive, but in my eyes you are dead. Strengthen what you have. Your works are not perfect before me. Hold fast to what you have. Repent.
- **Philadelphia** : I know your works. I set before you an open door and no one can shut it. I will cause liars to be humbled before you. I am coming quickly. (3:10 *"Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth."*).
- **Laodicea** : you are lukewarm, you think you are doing well, stir up your zeal, repent.

The church in Philadelphia is the one church that goes without any rebuke.



Q: What would the Lord Jesus say to us as a local church?

When a church receives warning and does not repent, its candlestick is removed out of His presence (3:5). If a church has its candlestick removed out of its place before the presence of the Lord, the people on earth may continue "having church" but they do not have a real connect with the Head of the Church, the Lord Himself.

Chapter 4 & 5 : The Throne Room & Worship in Heaven

4:1, With chapter 3, ends the "things which are" and from chapter 4 begins the "things which will take place".

4:2, John was in the spirit, in heaven and in the Throne Room.

4:4, Most scholars believe that chapters 4-5 depicts heaven after the rapture of the believers. One reason is that we see 24 elders seated on thrones, in white raiment (robes of righteousness) with their crowns (rewards) all of which are promised to believers (3:5, 11, 21) and one of these elders who speaks with John identifies himself as being a fellow servant and of the prophets (1:1, 5:5-7, 7:13-15, 19:10, 22:8-9).

4:5, The Holy Spirit is referred to as the "seven Spirits of God" (1:4, 4:5). He is represented by seven lamps (4:5), seven horns and seven eyes (5:6). Seven Spirits indicating Perfect Spirit. The seven lamps denoting His omnipresence (all knowing, lamps representing light that fills everything everywhere), seven horns denoting His omnipotence (horns represent power, dominion, rule), and the seven eyes denoting His omniscience (eyes that sees and knows everything everywhere).

4:6, There are four beasts or living creatures connected with the throne room of heaven with eyes before and behind to see all things clearly and accurately. These seem to be the same as the living creatures in Isaiah 6:1-3, the seraphim, angels of God created to praise and exalt the Lord.

4:8-11, The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures engage in worship of the Lord.

5:1, The scroll with seven seals. The scroll is most likely the mysteries (prophecies) of the events that are to unfold, as we see in (10:1-11). The Lord Jesus is the only one who is qualified to open the seven seals and unlock the mysteries written in the scroll in the Father's hand. Hence, the Lord Jesus Himself is the One who unveils the events that are to come through prophecy.

5:8-14, The four living creatures, the twenty-four elders, a host of angels, and the redeemed saints, all worship before the throne.

Chapter 6 : The First Six Seals

First half of 7 year Tribulation is "beginning of sorrows," Matt 24:8; second half is "great Tribulation," Matt 24:21

The Seal of Judgments occur after the rapture of the Church. This is the beginning of the program of God to pour out judgment upon the earth.

The six seals opened (the seventh seal is opened in chapter 8:1):

6:1-2, First seal : (the white horse) the Antichrist, a dictator arrives on the world scene, counterfeits the return of Christ and produces a fraudulent peace pact (Revelation 19:11). [Matthew 24:4-5]

6:3-4, Second seal : (the red horse) war and destruction [Matthew 24:6-7a]

6:5-6, Third seal : (the black horse) great famine and scarcity of food [Matthew 24:7b-8]

6:7-8, Fourth seal : (the pale horse) great death and destruction due to war, famines, disease and plagues

6:9-10, Fifth seal : great persecution with many martyred for their faith in Jesus [Matthew 24:9-12]

6:11-12, Sixth seal : ecological disasters earthquakes, and other phenomena [Matthew 24:29; Isaiah 13:6-13; Joel 2:10-11]

We also see the Four Horsemen in Revelation 6 are symbolic, and the horses indicate the arrival of something that comes with strength and speed.

Similarly we see many horses being used in Revelation, example the armies of Armageddon come on horses, as the blood rises to their bridles (Revelation 14:20), and Christ himself will return, mounted on a white horse, followed by His armies also riding white horses (Revelation 19:11-14). While the horses, could well be literal, we also recognize their prophetic symbolism of speed and strength.

Chapter 7 : The 144,000 Jewish Evangelists And The Great Multitude of Martyrs

7:1-3, a short time of calm

7:4, 144,000 Jews were sealed, with the Father's name on their foreheads (14:1, see also Ezekiel 9). These would be Jews who are saved by faith in Christ after the rapture, possibly by a great outpouring of the Spirit as in Acts 2:16-21/Joel 2:28-32. Joel's prophecy was fulfilled in the Church in Acts 2, and must also be literally fulfilled with Israel. For New Testament believers, we know we are sealed with the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:22, Ephesians 1:13, Ephesians 4:30). The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Father (Matthew 10:20) and proceeds from the Father (John 15:26) and *could be* the seal of the Father's name on the foreheads of these 144,000 Jews.

7:4-8, The tribe of both Dan and Ephraim are missing and do not get to preach the Gospel during the tribulation, *possibly* because they were guilty of going into idolatry (Judges 18; 1 Kings 11:26; Hosea 4). The tribes of Levi and Manasseh here take their place. Notwithstanding, both tribes are listed in Ezekiel's millennial temple (Ezekiel 48).

7:9-17, We see a great multitude of people "of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues" (7:9) implying things are happening on a global scale, who have been martyred for the faith during the great tribulation (7:14), worshipping before the throne of God in the temple of God. While death is not specifically mentioned in this passage, this multitude is similar to what we see in 6:9-11, and hence *infer* that they too were martyred.

Chapter 8 : Silence in Heaven And The First Four Trumpets

8:1, Seventh seal : silence in heaven. Time to transition into the next set of judgments.

8:3-6, *possible* that a great prayer movement is happening on earth from the start of the tribulation (5:8) and here again (8:3-6) as the prayers of the saints ascend up before God.

8:7, First Trumpet : hail, fire, mingled with blood. 1/3rd of vegetation destroyed

8:8, Second Trumpet : mountain of fire thrown into the sea, 1/3rd of sea becomes blood, destroying 1/3rd of sea creatures and ships at sail.

8:10, Third Trumpet : Wormwood cast on water bodies, making a 1/3rd of all water bodies bitter and many lives lost

8:12, Fourth Trumpet : 1/3rd of the light from sun, moon and stars cut off, darkening 1/3rd of day and night, total of 8 additional hours of darkness each day.

Chapter 9 : The Fifth And Sixth Trumpets

9:1-11, Fifth Trumpet : release of a host (like locusts) of demonic beings (fallen angels) that have been held in the bottomless pit (in Genesis 6, 2 Peter 2:4) that trouble humans (excluding the 144,000 Jews) for five months.

9:13-19, Sixth Trumpet : 200 million troops cross Euphrates and with fire, smoke, brimstone (*possibly* nuclear weapons) kill 1/3 of humans.

9:20-21, in spite of all that is happening people continue unrepentant and worship devils, idols, and continue in wickedness.

Chapter 10 : The Mighty Angel And The Little Book

10:1-4, What the mighty angel and the seven thunders announced remains hidden.

10:5-7, announces that there will be no more delays and when the seventh angel sounds, the mysteries that God has spoken through the prophets will be fulfilled.

10:8-11, the little book (scroll) are the prophetic utterances that John was going to release, both sweet (rewards, mercies) and bitter (judgment) "*about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings*" (10:11).

Chapter 11 : Two Witnesses & Seventh Trumpet

11:1-2, This chapter signifies the middle of the Tribulation period, the end of the first 3 1/2 years and the start of the second 3 1/2 years. The Tribulation Temple is taken over by the Gentiles for the next 42 months (3 1/2 years) as in Daniel 9:27 and Daniel 12:7.

11:3, The two witness now appear in the middle of the Tribulation period, Elijah (Malachi 4:5-6) and *possibly* Enoch (or Moses, because Moses and Elijah appeared at the mount of Transfiguration) and will minister for 1260 days (42 months, 3 1/2 years).

11:4, Olive trees and candlesticks used as prophetic images of servants/prophets of God (see also Zechariah 4:11-14)

11:5-6, The two witnesses have power and demonstrations similar to what Moses and Elijah demonstrated

11:7-8, Towards the end of the Tribulation, the beast from the bottomless pit (the antichrist) kills them and their bodies lie in Jerusalem. Spiritually there is sexual perversion (Sodom) and religious perversion (Egypt) in Jerusalem at this time.

11:9-12, After 3 1/2 days of lying dead in Jerusalem, while the world looks on, their bodies are raised up, and they ascend into heaven.

11:15-19, The Seventh Trumpet : the triumphant announcement *"The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"* which will be fulfilled at the end of the Tribulation period when Christ comes to set up His Kingdom and government on the earth. This is once again repeated in what occurs in Chapter 19:11-16.

11:18, We see a lot stated in one verse Revelation 11:18

The nations are angry (same as in 19:19)

The day of God's wrath has come with the King's return (same as in 19:15)

The time of the dead to be judged, which will take place at the conclusion of His 1,000 year reign, the wicked are to be

judged at the Great White Throne Judgment (20:11-15).

The prophets and saints are rewarded, small and great at the end of the 1,000 year reign

Those who destroyed the earth will be destroyed, again at the end of the 1,000 year reign (20:10)

Chapter 12 : The Woman, The Man Child And The Dragon

12:1, The woman depicts the nation of Israel, similar to Jacob's dream of the sun, moon and the eleven stars (Genesis 37:9-11). In Jacob's (Israel) dream, the sun represented his father, the moon his mother and the eleven stars his brothers.

12:2, The Man Child represents the Lord Jesus, who was Jewish, born of the nation of Israel and the One who will rule all nations with a rod of iron (12:5, 19:15, Romans 9:4-5, Psalm 2:8-9)

12:3, The red dragon represents the devil, satan as explained in 12:9. The seven heads with their seven crowns and the ten horns possibly represent the seven kingdoms and the ten leaders through whom satan extends his influence (see 13:1 the beast, the antichrist).

heads represent kingdoms or empires

horns represent leaders or rulers

crowns represent rule or authority (influence)

12:4-5, a little background of the dragon who had taken 1/3rd of "the stars of heaven", angels who rebelled with the devil (even sinful men are pictured as "wandering stars" in Jude 1:13). The dragon had attempted to kill the Man Child, who had been taken up into heaven.

12:6, The dragon persecutes the woman, but Israel is preserved by God for 1260 days (3 1/2 years), (see Jeremiah 30:7, Daniel 12:1, Matthew 24:22).

12:7-14, A great conflict takes place in the heavenlies (some scholars feel that this is in the aerial heaven or "heavenlies" where satan and his demons operate and not in the third heaven where God resides), similar to what we see in Daniel 10. Satan is cast out onto the earth knowing his time is very short.

12:13-17, satan persecutes the Jewish people (Israel), but God protects them supernaturally for 3 1/2 years (12:14). What the "two wings of a great eagle" (12:14) is not very clear but clearly denotes a powerful means of escape. The "flood" that the serpent spews out of his mouth against Israel, could be a wave of anti-Semitic propaganda, opposition from many people/nations. Yet, somehow even this wave of persecution is divinely nullified (earth swallows this up 12:16). The testimony of Jesus Christ (12:15) is also used to refer to the work of the Holy Spirit (19:10).

Chapter 13 : The Two Beasts

13:1-2, the beast rising out of the sea (multitudes of people) is the **antichrist**, who emerges as a political leader, empowered by satan. The antichrist seems to have origin in the Grecian (leopard), Medo-Persian (bear) and Babylonian (lion) region. The beast's empire (kingdom) will contain characteristics of these preceding empires, as foretold by Daniel (Daniel 2, 7). The antichrist's kingdom possibly consists of these seven heads (kingdoms), ten horns (leaders) who have their own kingdoms (crowns).

13:3, a fatal wound is healed and gets the world to marvel. Another attempt to imitate our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

13:4-10, has great influence. The worship of the beast is actually worship of satan.

13:11-18, the second beast is a **false prophet**, who will be in charge of a global religious system, and through his power and signs deceives many to worship the antichrist and embrace his mark. The beast (antichrist), the false prophet, and satan, himself make up an unholy trinity.

13:16-18, the antichrist will require that people take the "mark of the beast" or his number, 666. Midway through the Tribulation period begins the usage of his "666" identification system, that is required for commercial transactions.

Chapter 14 : A Great Harvest Time

Chapter 14 seems to be parenthetical in nature, with a quick summary of the key events of the Tribulation, seven specific visions of events:

14:1-5, The 144,000 with the Lamb of God on Mount Zion

14:6-7, An angel proclaiming the everlasting Gospel

14:8, the fall of Babylon (the ungodly world system prevailing on the earth during the 7 year tribulation period) further elaborated in Revelation 18 (see also Isaiah 13-14)

14:9-11, Warning not to ever take the mark of the beast

14:12-13, Rewards for those who endure

14:14-16, The final ingathering of believers from the Tribulation (Matthew 24:31)

14:17-20, The final events of God's ultimate wrath leading to the battle of Armageddon, blood flowing at the height of a horse's bridle for 184 miles (14:20, Zechariah 14:2)

Chapter 15 : Prelude To The Bowl Judgments

The events of Chapters 15 and 16 are the last things to happen on earth prior to the second return of Christ in Revelation 19:11. Chapters 17 and 18 are simply a detailed explanation of the fall of Babylon that happens during the Tribulation.

15:2-4, Those who had "victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name," sing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb.

15:5-8, Seven angels prepare to release the seven bowls of wrath, which are seven plagues.

Chapter 16 : The Seven Angels with Seven Bowls of Wrath

16:1-2, First bowl : loathsome sores

16:3, Second bowl : sea turns to blood

16:4, Third bowl : rivers and springs turn to blood

16:5-7, Declaring the vengeance of God for the blood of His saints and prophets

16:8-9, Fourth bowl : men scorched with intense heat

16:10-11, Fifth bowl : darkness and pain on the antichrist's kingdom

16:12, Sixth bowl : river Euphrates dried up, in preparation for the battle of Armageddon.

16:13-16, Satan through the antichrist and the false prophet issue a call to the nations to gather them to the battle of Armageddon. This call is demonically empowered and the nations respond.

16:17-21, Seventh bowl ; great earthquakes and hailstones, cities fall apart. Could very well be a description of what happens in the battle of Armageddon itself. A great earthquake will divide Jerusalem into three parts (16:18-19). The earthquake will occur when Jesus touches His foot on the Mount of Olives. Water will flow out from the city after the great earthquake. (Zechariah 14:4-8). The millennial temple will stand over this river (Ezekiel 47:1-12).

Chapter 17 : The Great Harlot Babylon

Babylon is used in the Bible at least in 3 different ways: the literal city of Babylon (Genesis 11), a worldwide religious system (Revelation 17) and a world political-economic system (Revelation 18). The false prophet is the leader of the worldwide religious system described in Rev 17.

17:1-6, describes the great harlot, or "Mystery Babylon" which is a worldwide religious system that has great influence "sits on many waters" (multitudes of people 17:15), blasphemous,

embraced by world leaders, dispensed by the seven kingdoms and ten leaders and oppressive to those who believe in Jesus, killing many of the saints.

17:7-9, John marvels at this great harlot and her influence and the angel helps him understand.

17:10-11, The 5 kings who have fallen are Assyria, Egypt, Babylonia, Medo-Persia, and Greece. The sixth one is Rome (present during John's time), and the seventh one not yet come is the antichrist of end times. The eighth king of 17:11 is the resurrected antichrist.

17:12-15, the 10 leaders derive their power from the antichrist for a short time and support the antichrist.

17:16-18, Antichrist and the ten leaders then betray the religious followers since they now do not want to share the glory with the religious leaders, even though they have directed worship to him. They will forcibly replace the diversity of false religions with one that ultimately worships antichrist.

Chapter 18 : The Fall of Babylon the Great

Rev 18 describes "Babylon the Great," which is a political-economic system that nations were engaged in to make great wealth. This entire system collapses.

Some common features of "Mystery Babylon" (Rev 17) and "Babylon the great" (Rev 18):

- both responsible for many prophets and saints being martyred (17:6, 18:24)
- both referred to as city (17:18, 18:21) indicating a place where many will come to reside in

Chapter 19 : The Second Coming of Christ And The Battle of Armageddon

19:1-6, Rejoicing in heaven at the fall of the great harlot

19:7-9, The Marriage Supper of the Lamb

19:10, All prophecy to glorify and testify to Jesus

19:11-21, Antichrist, the false prophet and rulers destroyed at Armageddon and cast into lake of fire Rev 19:20. Armies of the world are gathered to destroy Israel. Battle is fought in valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:2), just in front of Jerusalem. Armageddon is gathering place. Armies come to attack Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:2).

Chapter 20 : The 1000 Year Reign of Christ And Final Judgment

20:1-3, Satan bound for 1000 years

20:4-6, Resurrection of the Tribulation saints and 1000 year reign of Christ

20:7-10, Satan's temporary release and final destruction.

20:11-15, The Great White Throne judgment

Chapter 21 : The New Jerusalem

Revelation 3:12

He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.

Revelation 21 describes the New Jerusalem, the names of the twelve tribes inscribed on the gates, and the names of the twelve apostles found upon the twelve foundations (see verses 12-14).

Chapter 22 : River of Life & Jesus' Soon Coming