



# Revelation

*Living in Hope*



# Revelation 1-3: Review

- Revelation is one of the most vigorously debated books
- However, the first line of this book emphasizes that it's intended to be understood:
  - “The *revelation* of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place.”
  - The purpose of this book is to reveal (lit. to “unveil”) what is going to take place, not to hide it in complex puzzles or obscure riddles
  - This revelation is for all of God’s servants, not merely for a few experts
- Reading this book comes with a Blessing:
  - “Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near”
- This Revelation is given to God’s people **to give us hope** during tribulation and **to lead us to worship** our great, sovereign God.



# Revelation 1:9 Tribulation and Kingdom



- John could have felt discouraged and defeated, banished to this desert island and unable to visit the churches of God's people.
- John considered both the Tribulation and the Kingdom to have already begun.



# The Revelation (Apocalypse) of John

One of the most vigorously debated books in the Bible:

- Authorship: John the Apostle or another John?
- Date of Writing: ~AD 65 or ~AD 95?
- Interpretation
  - Historically, 4 Major Views have been held by Christians holding a \*high view of Scripture:

Historicist	Idealist	Preterist	Futurist
Revelation speaks to the <b>unfolding history</b> of the New Testament Church	Most of Revelation speaks of <b>recurring events</b> , typical of many times & places	Most of Revelation speaks primarily to John's near future, therefore <b>our past</b>	Most of Revelation speaks to our future, and therefore <b>John's far future</b>
The Beast is the Pope & the Papacy	The Beast is any state that persecutes the Church	The Beast is the Roman Emperor & his Empire	The Beast is a future State, a new Roman Empire

\*Christian Believers holding that Scripture is inerrant, authoritative, and understandable



# Some Hermeneutical Principles

## 1. The Analogy of Faith: *Scripture interprets Scripture*

- More than half of Revelation is quotes or references to the Old Testament

## 2. The Historical Principle: Scripture was written *for* us but not *to* us

- The best way to understand this book is to read it from the perspective of the original recipients
- One of the worst mistakes is to read *into* this book our own current events and situations

## 3. The Literal (Literary) Principle: Scripture is real literature and is best understood in the sense in which it was written





# Understanding Revelation

One of the reasons that we find Revelation difficult to understand is that much of it's written in an unfamiliar genre, *Apocalypse*

- Gr. *apokalypsis*, meaning “a revelation” or “an unveiling”
- **Visions** - apocalyptic literature uses visions as a way of revealing secrets from heaven about the present and the future.
- **Powerful Symbolism** - Each of the apocalyptic books is rich in symbolism. The reader's imagination is stretched. - *A book of Pictures not Puzzles*
- *As 21<sup>st</sup> Century westerners, our first inclination is often to study each detail in a vision and attempt to fit them together as with a puzzle.*
- *Revelation is best understood by focusing upon the Big Picture rather than jumping to each detail.*



# Revelation 4 - 7

*The Scroll with Seven Seals*



## Revelation 4:1-6

After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.” **2** At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne. **3** And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald. **4** Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clothed in white garments, with golden crowns on their heads. **5** From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God, **6** and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal.





# Rev 4:1-6 A Vision of the Throne in Heaven

- One Seated on the Throne
  - With the appearance of jasper and carnelian,
  - And around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald
  - Accompanied by Thunder & Lightning
- 24 Thrones with 24 Elders
  - The 12 O.T. Patriarchs and the 12 N.T. Apostles, representing the Church
  - Clad in white, representing righteousness and victory
  - With golden crowns, representing glory and authority

## Rev 4:7- 8 The Four Living Creatures

And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind:

<sup>7</sup> the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with the face of a man, and the fourth living creature like an eagle in flight. <sup>8</sup> And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say,

“Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!”



# Rev 4:7- 8 The Four Living Creatures

- These creatures seem very strange to us, but they would have been familiar to Jewish believers; cf. Ez 1:4-25
- Their Characteristics are Symbolic:
  - Full of eyes in front and behind, symbolizing Vision and Wisdom
  - One was like a **Lion**, the most powerful of the **wild beasts**, showing Power & Rule
  - One was like an **Ox**, the most powerful of the **domestic beasts**
  - One had the face of a **Man**, the most powerful of **all earthly creatures** & also symbolizing Intellect
  - One was like an **Eagle** in flight, the most powerful **bird**, also symbolizing Swiftness & Nobility
  - With **Six Wings**: symbolizing their Glory, like the Seraphim of Isaiah 6





# Rev 4:7- 8 The Four Living Creatures

- Their Refrain:  
“Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty,  
who was and is and is to come!”
- Three-fold Holy, the ultimate superlative to the Hebrew
- This is the song of the Seraphim that Isaiah heard; Is 6:3

## Revelation 4:9-11

<sup>9</sup> And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, <sup>10</sup> the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

<sup>11</sup> “Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.

# Revelation 4:9-11

- The 24 Elders join the four living creatures in the worship of God.
- The Chorus of the Elders:
  - <sup>11</sup> “Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.
- The praise of God is the chief occupation of the greatest in heaven
- God is praised first for His glory as Creator.



## Revelation 5:1-5

## Who is Worthy?

Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals. <sup>2</sup> And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?” <sup>3</sup> And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, <sup>4</sup> and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. <sup>5</sup> And one of the elders said to me, “Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.”



# Revelation 5:1-5      Who is Worthy?

- The focus of worship shifts from God as the worthy Creator to Christ as the worthy Redeemer.
- The Scroll with Seven Seals represents God's great plan for history.
- Who is worthy? God's foreordained plan of redemption and recreation is set in motion only through the worthy Christ.
- John weeps that no one can open it





# Revelation 5:1-5      Who is Worthy?

Here Jesus is given Two Titles:

- Lion of the tribe of Judah; see Jacob's blessing in Gen 49:9

- The Root of David:

Isaiah 11:1, 10

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,  
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

<sup>10</sup> In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.



# Revelation 5:6-10 The Lamb of God

<sup>6</sup> And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. <sup>7</sup> And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. <sup>8</sup> And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. <sup>9</sup> And they sang a new song, saying,

“Worthy are you to take the scroll  
and to open its seals,

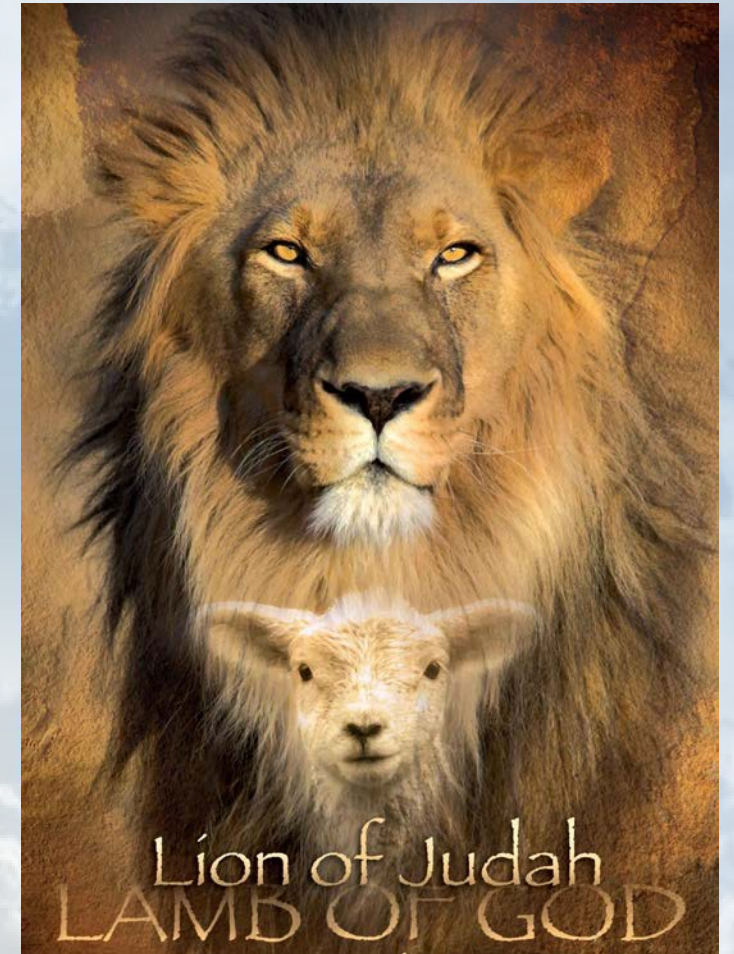
for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God  
from every tribe and language and people and nation,

<sup>10</sup> and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God,  
and they shall reign on the earth.”

# Revelation 5:6-10 The Lamb of God

His appearance:

- A Lamb, a contrast and complement to the Lion of Judah
- Wounded, as though slain
- Seven Horns: Complete Power
- Seven Eyes: Perfect Vision & Knowledge
  - Some see the seven eyes as again representing the Holy Spirit. Christ not only has the Spirit in fullness and sends His Spirit to His people.





# Revelation 5:6-10 The Lamb

- The Golden Bowls are the Prayers of the Saints
- The Chorus of the Elders:

“Worthy are you to take the scroll  
and to open its seals,  
for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God  
from every tribe and language and people and nation,  
<sup>10</sup> and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God,  
and they shall reign on the earth.”
- Jesus is worshipped for His great work of redemption:
  - Offering Himself as the sacrificial Lamb of God
  - This is the New Song; that is, the song of the New Creation



# Revelation 5:11-14 The Worship of the Multitude

<sup>11</sup> Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, <sup>12</sup> saying with a loud voice,

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain,  
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might  
and honor and glory and blessing!”

<sup>13</sup> And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying,

“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb  
be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!”

<sup>14</sup> And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshiped.



## Revelation 5:11-14 The Worship of the Multitude

- The worship of the lamb expands from the four living creatures and twenty-four elders to myriads of angels
- Then every creature in the cosmos joins the worship!  
<sup>13</sup> And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying,  
“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb  
be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!”

# Revelation 6:1-17 The Seven Seals

Now I watched when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, “Come!” <sup>2</sup> And I looked, and behold, a white horse! And its rider had a bow, and a crown was given to him, and he came out conquering, and to conquer.

<sup>3</sup> When he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, “Come!” <sup>4</sup> And out came another horse, bright red. Its rider was permitted to take peace from the earth, so that people should slay one another, and he was given a great sword.

<sup>5</sup> When he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, “Come!” And I looked, and behold, a black horse! And its rider had a pair of scales in his hand. <sup>6</sup> And I heard what seemed to be a voice in the midst of the four living creatures, saying, “A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius, and do not harm the oil and wine!”

# Revelation 6:1-17 The Seven Seals

<sup>7</sup> When he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, “Come!” <sup>8</sup> And I looked, and behold, a pale horse! And its rider's name was Death, and Hades followed him. And they were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by wild beasts of the earth.



# Revelation 6:1-17 The Seven Seals

- Seals were used to secure and to authenticate a document.
- Opening each Seal Releases a Judgment, either sequentially, repeatedly, or concurrently

Historicist	Idealist	Preterist	Futurist
Revelation speaks to the unfolding history of the New Testament Church	Most of Revelation speaks of recurring events, typical of many times & places	Most of Revelation speaks primarily to John's near future, therefore our past	Most of Revelation speaks to our future, and therefore John's far future
The Seals release <b>sequential</b> judgments.	The Seals release <b>repeated / ongoing</b> events.	The Seals release roughly <b>concurrent</b> judgments.	The Seals release <b>sequential, future</b> judgments.



# Revelation 6:1-8 The Four Horsemen

- One of the most well-known and most referenced images of Revelation



***Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*** an 1887 painting by Viktor Vasnetsov



# *A Few Movie References to The Four Horsemen*



*The 4 Horsemen of the Apocalypse, 1962*



*Pale Rider 1985*

*Now You See Me, 2013*  
*Now You See Me 2, 2016*  
*Now You See Me 3, 2020*





# Revelation 6:1-2 The White Horseman

- “And its rider had a **bow**, and a **crown** was given to him, and he came out conquering, and to conquer”
- The bow and crown symbolize the power and authority of empire
- The White Horseman probably raises the most striking differences in interpretations

Historicist	Idealist	Preterist	Futurist
The White Horseman is the <b>Roman Empire</b> , expanding under 5 good emperors from 96–180 AD	The White Horseman is <b>Jesus Christ</b> , expanding His kingdom church, <i>or</i> various human conquerors	The White Horseman represents <b>Vespasian</b> , coming 3 years before the destruction of Jerusalem.	The White Horseman is <b>Anti-Christ</b> , building his kingdom before the coming plagues.



# Revelation 6:3-4 The Red Horseman

- “Its rider was permitted to take peace from the earth, so that people should slay one another, and he was given a great **sword**.”

Historicist	Idealist	Preterist	Futurist
The Red Horseman is the <b>Roman Empire</b> , undergoing wars & civil wars from 180 – 284 AD	The Red Horseman is repeated <b>warfare</b> or the repeated <b>persecution</b> of the church.	The Red Horseman represents <b>3 years of warfare</b> before the destruction of Jerusalem.	The Red Horseman is <b>warfare</b> during the future Great Tribulation.





# Revelation 6:5-6 The Black Horseman

- And its rider had a pair of **scales** in his hand. <sup>6</sup> And I heard what seemed to be a voice in the midst of the four living creatures, saying, “A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius, and do not harm the oil and wine!”
- A denarius was a day’s wage, while a quart of wheat was a person’s daily consumption: a worker would need to spend his entire wage just to feed himself or maybe two others.
- Oil and wine represent luxury goods.

Historicist	Idealist	Preterist	Futurist
The Black Horseman is economic deprivation due to excessive <b>taxation</b> .	The Black Horseman is repeated <b>famine</b> , one of God’s four great judgments.	The Black Horseman is <b>famine</b> during the Jewish war with Rome.	The Black Horseman is <b>famine</b> during the future Great Tribulation.

# Revelation 6:7-8 The Pale Horseman

- “<sup>7</sup> When he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, “Come!” <sup>8</sup> And I looked, and behold, a pale horse! And its rider's name was Death, and Hades followed him. And they were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by wild beasts of the earth.”
- “Pale” Grk *Chloros*, a sickly yellow-green (chlorine)



- This horseman needs no identifying emblem like a bow, a sword or scales; his destructive nature is evident from his appearance alone.



# Revelation 6:7-8 The Pale Horseman

“For thus says the Lord GOD: How much more when I send up on Jerusalem my four disastrous acts of judgment, sword, famine, wild beasts, and pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast! Ezekiel 4:21

Historicist	Idealist	Preterist	Futurist
The Pale Horseman is <b>The Crisis of the Third Century</b> when Rome was struck by invasions, strife, economic depression and plague.	The Pale Horseman is <b>repeating periods of Death</b> , with Hades following closely behind to receive the victims.	The Pale Horseman brings the deaths of many Jews during the <b>siege &amp; destruction of Jerusalem</b> , (1.1 million per Josephus)	The Pale Horseman is a devastation during the <b>future</b> Great Tribulation.

## Revelation 6:9-11 The Cry of the Martyrs

<sup>9</sup> When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne. <sup>10</sup> They cried out with a loud voice, “O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” <sup>11</sup> Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.





# Revelation 6:9-11 The Cry of the Martyrs

- The position of the martyrs under the altar probably emphasizes that they've given their lives in sacrifice to God.
  - Being under the altar also conveys a place of privilege and safety for the martyrs.
- They cry "How long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"
- God's people are often brought to ask, "How long?"
  - In the Psalms alone, God is asked 14 times, "How long?"
  - When we face adversity, time seems to slow down and hours become days, and days become weeks.
- God hears our prayers.



# Revelation 6:9-11 The Cry of the Martyrs

- God hears the prayers of the martyrs
- White is the color of purity. Each Christian martyr is *given* a white robe; not even their sacrifice is sufficient to merit their place in heaven
- White is also the color of victory
- God hears our prayers as well, but God will not bring final judgment upon the earth until His plan is complete and all of His saints have been gathered in.

# Revelation 6:12-17 The Sixth Seal

<sup>12</sup> When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, <sup>13</sup> and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. <sup>14</sup> The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. <sup>15</sup> Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, <sup>16</sup> calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, <sup>17</sup> for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”



# Revelation 6:12-17 The Sixth Seal

- The turmoil on the earth is echoed in the cosmos.
- Christ had given a very similar picture in the Olivet Discourse:  
<sup>10</sup> Then he said to them, “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. <sup>11</sup> There will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.
- Also anticipated by Joel 2:10-11, 31; Zeph 1:14, 2:2
- Note that these are apocalyptic visions, and are not intended to be understood literally.
- On Pentecost Peter preached that Joel 2 was being fulfilled on that day.





## Revelation 7:1 - 17 An Interlude

After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, that no wind might blow on earth or sea or against any tree. <sup>2</sup> Then I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm earth and sea, <sup>3</sup> saying, “Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.” <sup>4</sup> And I heard the number of the sealed, 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel:



# Revelation 7:1 - 4 God Protects & Seals

- God sends the angels to hold back the four winds.
  - Winds are symbols of destruction
  - God is protecting His people until they've been sealed
- The sealing of believers
  - The Sealing of believers on their foreheads
  - Recall that both at Sinai and at Mt Zion, on Pentecost believers were sealed into the covenant with an anointing on their foreheads.
  - Baptism is our visible sign & seal : As Protestants perhaps we value our baptisms too little, in reaction to the error of Roman Catholics.



# Revelation 7:1 - 17 The 144,000

- 12 and 1,000 are both numbers of completeness;
- 144,000 then is a number of penultimate completeness
- These are from every tribe.



# Revelation 7:5 - 8 The Twelve Tribes

<sup>5</sup> 12,000 from the tribe of Judah were sealed,  
12,000 from the tribe of Reuben,  
12,000 from the tribe of Gad,  
<sup>6</sup> 12,000 from the tribe of Asher,  
12,000 from the tribe of Naphtali,  
12,000 from the tribe of Manasseh,  
<sup>7</sup> 12,000 from the tribe of Simeon,  
12,000 from the tribe of Levi,  
12,000 from the tribe of Issachar,  
<sup>8</sup> 12,000 from the tribe of Zebulun,  
12,000 from the tribe of Joseph,  
12,000 from the tribe of Benjamin were sealed

- Note that Dan is omitted from this list, possibly as a reminder that not everyone in the visible church is actually redeemed,
- Or because Dan was the first tribe to create a counterfeit Temple







# Revelation 8:1 The Seventh Seal

8 When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

- After the great choruses of worship, and the great tumult upon the earth and in the cosmos, there is now a shocking and protracted silence.
- It reminds me of Habakkuk: “But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him.” Habakkuk 2:20
  - Let all mortal flesh keep silence,  
And with fear and trembling stand;  
Ponder nothing earthly-minded,  
For with blessing in his hand,  
Christ our God to earth descendeth,  
Our full homage to demand.      - Liturgy of St. James, before 400

# Some Applications

Revelation does not sugar-coat the reality of suffering on the earth. What hope does its visions offer to us?

- The Lamb of God has redeemed us by His blood; all earthly trials become our glory and our victory in Christ.
- God sovereign power guarantees His final victory
- God's righteousness guarantees justice
- God's goodness guarantees our blessing and comfort



# Revelation

*Living in Hope*



# A Simple Outline of Revelation

<b>Part I: The Opening &amp; The Letters</b>	<b>Rev 1-3</b>
<b>Part II: The Seven-Sealed Scroll</b>	<b>Rev 4-8:1</b>
<b>Part III: The Seven Trumpets</b>	<b>Rev 8:2-10</b>
<b>Part IV: The 1,260 Days</b>	<b>Rev 11-13</b>
<b>Part V: The Seven Last Plagues</b>	<b>Rev 14-16</b>
<b>Part VI: The Great Babylon</b>	<b>Rev 17-19</b>
<b>Part VII: The Millennium</b>	<b>Rev 20</b>
<b>Part VIII: The New Creation</b>	<b>Rev 21-22</b>