



# Revelation

*Living in Hope*



# 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 <b>Pagan Rome</b> , continued with the <b>Pope &amp; the Papacy</b>	The Beast is <b>any state</b> that persecutes the Church	The Beast is the <b>Roman Emperor &amp; his Empire</b>	The Beast is a future State, a <b>new Roman Empire</b>

\*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 14 - 16

## *The Seven Last Plagues*





# Babylon and The Seven Last Plagues

- **Summary Interpretations according to the 4 Major Views:**

Historicist	Idealist	Preterist	Futurist
Babylon is the <b>Roman Papacy</b>	Babylon is <b>False Religions</b> , in many times & places	Babylon is oppressive false religion, the <b>Jewish Leaders (&amp;/or Roman)</b>	Babylon is a <b>future false church</b>
The Seven Bowls of Wrath are fulfilled in judgments upon the Papacy, beginning with the <b>French Revolution</b> & Napoleonic Wars	The Seven Trumpets were partial judgments meant for warning; the Seven Bowls are greater outpourings of final judgment.	The Seven Bowls of Wrath are fulfilled in judgments upon <b>Jerusalem</b> and then the <b>Roman Empire</b>	The Seven Bowls of Wrath are <b>future, global judgments</b> that occur at the end of the Tribulation, culminating in the Battle of Armageddon

## Rev 14:6-11 The First Three Angels

<sup>6</sup> Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. <sup>7</sup> And he said with a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water.”

<sup>8</sup> Another angel, a second, followed, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality.”



# Rev 14:6-11 The First Three Angels

- The First Angel proclaims the eternal Gospel to the entire earth.
  - Matt 24 <sup>14</sup> And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.
  - A call to repent and worship God before the coming judgment of the One, “Who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water”
  - The Good News of the Gospel comes with dire warnings
- The Second Angel: “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality.”
  - Sexual immorality is a metaphor for idolatry, which is spiritual adultery. “Your lewdness and your whoring <sup>30</sup> have brought this upon you, because you played the whore with the nations and defiled yourself with their idols.” Ez 23:29b-30



# Rev 14:6-11 The First Three Angels

## The Significance of Babylon

- Babylon was the first great, human empire seen by Daniel in his vision
- Long before this, it was Babylon that began the practice of idolatry
- *Babil* (Sumerian) = “The Gate of God” (Gen 11)
- I believe the Tower of Babil was Nimrod’s attempt to build his own, counterfeit Eden, where his priests could meet with a counterfeit god and so rid the people of their relationship to the God of Adam and Seth.
- Babylon was the first to deify its former king, Nimrod, who became Marduk
  - (Roman emperor worship was particularly strong in Asia Minor)
- Secular historians also recognize that it was the Chaldeans (Babylonians) who were the originators of Astrology and the Zodiac. Also, the pagan pantheons of Greece, Rome, India, Egypt, and others have been traced back to the Babylonian pantheon.<sup>[1]</sup>

<sup>[1]</sup> Morris. [The Genesis Record](#), p. 264.

# Ziggurats: Copies of Babel

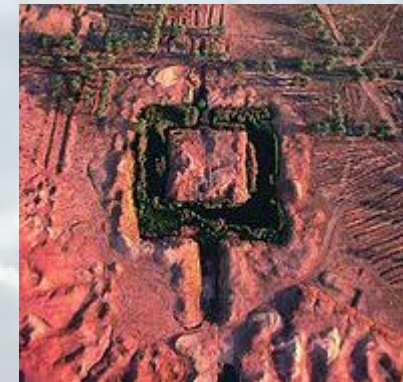
- Herodotus confirms that there was a temple atop each ziggurat
- The first tower was called the “Etemenanki,”  
“temple of the foundation of heaven & earth”



Ziggurat of Ur, (Abraham's birthplace), dedicated to the Moon god, Sin



Ziggurat of Babylon



Ruins of Etemenanki



# Babylon, The Great Harlot



The Harlot, Babylon, Riding the First Beast



## Rev 14:6-11 The First Three Angels

<sup>9</sup> And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, <sup>10</sup> he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. <sup>11</sup> And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name.”

- The Third Angel brings another warning to those who worship the Beast
- The wine of God's wrath will be undiluted with grace
- Fire and Brimstone (Sulphur) are commonly recognized images of eternal punishment in hell
- Some today assert that the unrepentant will be annihilated, but this text clearly speaks of torment that “goes on forever and ever”

## Rev 14:12-13 An Interlude with A Call for Endurance

<sup>12</sup> Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.

<sup>13</sup> And I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Blessed indeed,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!”

- The Second Beatitude in Revelation: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; i.e. who die trusting in Christ, for they will receive rest
  - The First Beatitude was, “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.”



## Rev 14:14-20 The Fourth, Fifth & Sixth Angels

<sup>14</sup> Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud one like a son of man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand. <sup>15</sup> And another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud, "Put in your sickle, and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe." <sup>16</sup> So he who sat on the cloud swung his sickle across the earth, and the earth was reaped.

<sup>17</sup> Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. <sup>18</sup> And another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has authority over the fire, and he called with a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle, "Put in your sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe." <sup>19</sup> So the angel swung his sickle across the earth and gathered the grape harvest of the earth and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. <sup>20</sup> And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress, as high as a horse's bridle, for 1,600 stadia.



## Rev 14:14-20 The Fourth, Fifth & Sixth Angels

- The Son of Man, with a golden crown and a sickle in His hand, commands the angels
- The Fourth Angel: “Put in your sickle, and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe.”
  - Some think that this first reaping is the harvest of the faithful (as in the parable of the Wheat and the Tares in Matthew 13)
- The Fifth & Sixth Angels: Reaping and Treading the Grapes of Wrath
  - Blood 4 or 5 feet high for 200 Roman miles (184 English miles)
- The Vine is a symbol for Israel:

Hosea 10:1 “Israel is a luxuriant vine that yields its fruit.  
The more his fruit increased, the more altars he built;  
as his country improved, he improved his pillars.
- Israel being trodden in a winepress was foretold in Lamentations:

Lam 1:15 “the Lord has trodden as in a winepress  
the virgin daughter of Judah.”

## Rev 15:1-4 The Last Song

**15** Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and amazing, seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last, for with them the wrath of God is finished.

<sup>2</sup> And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire—and also those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands. <sup>3</sup> And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying,

“Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty!  
Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations!

<sup>4</sup> Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name?  
For you alone are holy.

All nations will come and worship you,  
for your righteous acts have been revealed.”

# Rev 15:1-4 The Last Song

- “seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last, for with them the wrath of God is finished.”
- A Sea of glass, as in Ch 4, but now mixed with fire
- The believers gathered there sing the Song of Moses and the Song of the Lamb.

Song of Moses, Ex 15	Song of the Lamb
Sung at the Red Sea	Sung at a sea of glass and fire
Celebrates deliverance from Egypt	Celebrates deliverance from spiritual Babylon
The First Song recorded in Scripture	The Last Song recorded in Scripture
<i>They Sing of a great Foe defeated, God's people delivered, and God exalted</i>	





## Rev 15:5-8 Seven Angels with Seven Plagues

<sup>5</sup> After this I looked, and the sanctuary of the tent of witness in heaven was opened, <sup>6</sup> and out of the sanctuary came the seven angels with the seven plagues, clothed in pure, bright linen, with golden sashes around their chests. <sup>7</sup> And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever, <sup>8</sup> and the sanctuary was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.



## Rev 16:1-6 The Seven Bowls of Wrath

**6** Then I heard a loud voice from the temple telling the seven angels, “Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God.”

**2** So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth, and harmful and painful sores came upon the people who bore the mark of the beast and worshiped its image.

**3** The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became like the blood of a corpse, and every living thing died that was in the sea.

**4** The third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of water, and they became blood. **5** And I heard the angel in charge of the waters say,

“Just are you, O Holy One, who is and who was,  
for you brought these judgments.

**6** For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets,  
and you have given them blood to drink.

It is what they deserve!”

## Rev 16:7-11 The Seven Bowls of Wrath

<sup>7</sup> And I heard the altar saying,

“Yes, Lord God the Almighty,  
true and just are your judgments!”

<sup>8</sup> The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was allowed to scorch people with fire. <sup>9</sup> They were scorched by the fierce heat, and they cursed the name of God who had power over these plagues. They did not repent and give him glory.

<sup>10</sup> The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness. People gnawed their tongues in anguish <sup>11</sup> and cursed the God of heaven for their pain and sores. They did not repent of their deeds.

## Rev 16:12-16 The Seven Bowls of Wrath

<sup>12</sup> The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, to prepare the way for the kings from the east. <sup>13</sup> And I saw, coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs. <sup>14</sup> For they are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty. <sup>15</sup> (“Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!”) <sup>16</sup> And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.



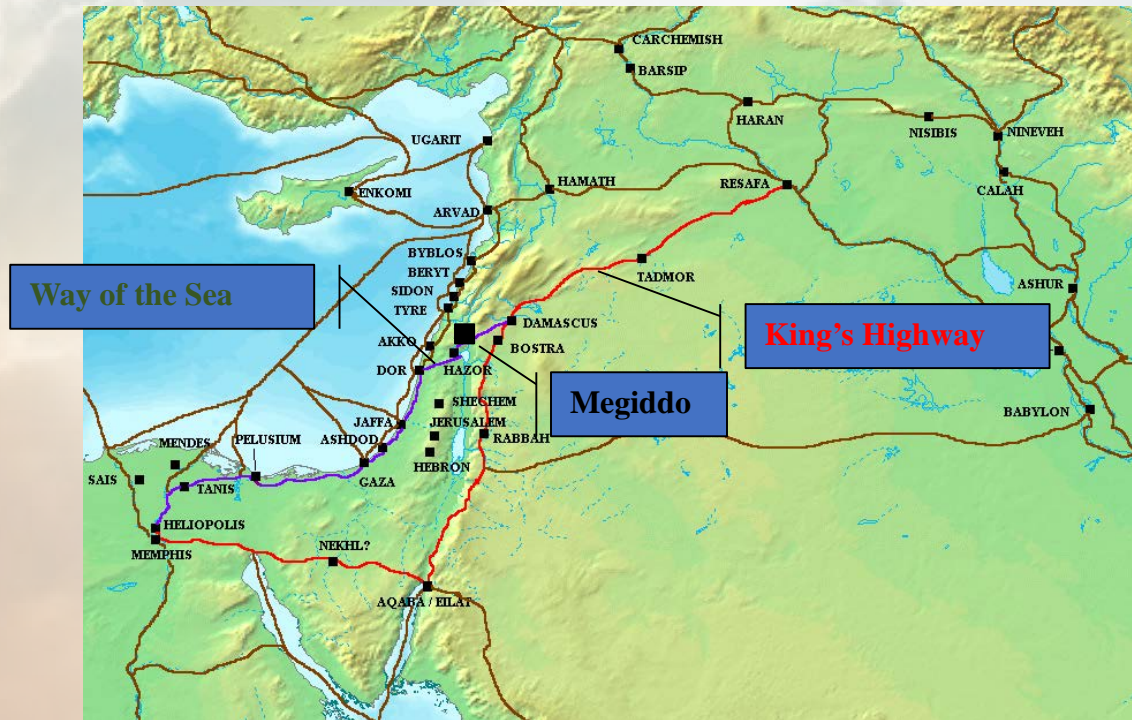
# The Trumpets, the Bowls and the Plagues

<u>The Focus</u>	<u>The 7 Trumpets</u>	<u>The 7 Bowls</u>	<u>Plagues of Moses</u>
1. The Earth	Hail & Fire	Sores	Boils (Ex 9:8-12)
2. The Sea	Blood	Sea turned to blood	
3. The Fresh Waters	Bitter water	Rivers and Springs turned to blood	Nile turned to blood, (Ex 7:14-24)
4. The Heavens	Darkness	Scorching Heat	
5. The Opponents	Demons like Locusts	Darkness	Darkness (Ex 10:21-23)
6. The Battle	A Conquering Army	River Euphrates dried up; Hell rises up to fight “unclean spirits like frogs”	Nile Frogs (Ex 8:1-15)
7. The Coming of the Son	Lightning, Thunder, Storm	Lightning, Thunder, Earthquake, Hail	Hail (Ex 9:18-35)



# Rev 16:12-16 The Sixth Bowl: Armageddon

- <sup>16</sup> And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon
- Armageddon was known as a place of battles, due to its strategic location:



The strategic importance of Megiddo



Ar Megiddo & The Valley of Jezreel



## Rev 16:17-21 The Seventh Bowl of Wrath

<sup>17</sup> The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" <sup>18</sup> And there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and a great earthquake such as there had never been since man was on the earth, so great was that earthquake. <sup>19</sup> The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and God remembered Babylon the great, to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath. <sup>20</sup> And every island fled away, and no mountains were to be found. <sup>21</sup> And great hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, fell from heaven on people; and they cursed God for the plague of the hail, because the plague was so severe.



## Rev 16:12-16 The Seven Bowls of Wrath

- Note that despite these horrific plagues, rather than repenting, the people of the earth blaspheme God, v 9, 11, 21
- Pouring out the Seventh Bowl results the final destruction of the cities of mankind. Even the mountains and islands (underwater mountains) are brought down.
- Promised in **Heb 12:** <sup>26</sup> At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.” <sup>27</sup> This phrase, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. <sup>28</sup> Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, <sup>29</sup> for our God is a consuming fire.



# Rev 14-16 Some Applications

- We sometimes suffer “natural disasters” *aka* “acts of God:”
- In what ways are these similar to the plagues of Revelation 16?
- In what ways are they different from the plagues of Revelation 16?
  - The common suffering on earth is shared by believer and unbeliever alike; the last plagues are suffered by unbelievers
  - The last plagues in Revelation 16 are off the scale compared to the disasters that have gone before.
- What should be our response to natural disasters?
  - “Repent, or you shall likewise perish” Luke 13
  - Trust in God, that whether He chooses to calm our particular storm or not, we are always safe with Him



# Revelation 14 - 16

## *The Seven Last Plagues*



