

- iii. The Seven Trumpets of Judgment, 8-11.
- b. **THE DEEPER SPIRITUAL BACKGROUND: THE CHRIST (AND HIS CHURCH) PERSECUTED BY THE DRAGON (SATAN) AND HIS HELPERS. CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH ARE VICTORIOUS, Chapters 12-22.**
 - i. The Woman and the Man-Child Persecuted by the Dragon and His Helpers (the Beast and the Harlot), 12-14.
 - ii. The Seven Bowls of Wrath, 15-16.
 - iii. The Fall of the Great Harlot and of the Beasts, 17-19.
 - iv. The Judgment upon the Dragon (Satan) followed by the New Heaven and Earth, New Jerusalem, 20-22.

8. NOTE: Though we have been concentrating our attention on the DIVISION of the book, it is not the *division*, but the *UNITY* of the book that is important.

- a. There is a close relationship between all the parts that should be emphasized. When you get right down to it, if you miss the unity of the Revelation, you miss Revelation.
- b. The two main divisions complement one another. They belong together. The seven sections reveal a most glorious unity. There is an easy transition from one vision to the next. To see this is to understand the book. Not to see it is to deprive yourself of this message from God.

9. What is the meaning of the book taken as a whole?

THE CHURCH IS PERSECUTED BY THE WORLD

- a. **Chapters 1-3 – Christ’s constant and abiding presence in His Church** (Light shining in the darkness). We see Christ in the midst of the Seven Golden Lampstands coming into view. We see the Son of Man with eyes flashing fire, with a sharp, two-edged sword proceeding from his mouth, coming to judge those who are fiercely persecuting the church and those who are trying to lead true believers astray.
 - i. 1:13 We find the Son of Man, who was dead, yet lives forevermore, comforting the church by his presence.
 - ii. 2:2,3 Approving whatever is commendable.
 - iii. 2:4 Reproving error.
 - iv. 2:7 Promising reward.
 - v. 2:16 Threatening punishment upon those who oppose truth and righteousness and who try to lead others astray.
 - vi. 3:1 Revealing hidden things.
 - vii. 3:18-19 Earnestly entreating his erring disciples to repent.
 - viii. We see the church in the world – conflict is unavoidable, yet, we can almost hear Christ say, “Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,” (Matthew 8:20).
 - ix. Do not fail to see the very close connection between chapter 1 and the next two chapters. In chapter 1 we see the vision of the Christ. The next two chapters reveal that same Christ describing him in terms almost identical with those found in Chapter 1.

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DESCRIPTION OF CHRIST IN CHAPTER ONE	DESCRIPTION OF CHRIST IN CHAPTERS 2 AND 3
Rev 1:13 (KJV) "And in the midst of the seven candlesticks <i>one</i> like unto the Son of man . . . Rev 1:16 (KJV) "And he had in his right hand seven stars. "	Rev 2:1 (KJV) " he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand , who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; "
Rev 1:17-18 (KJV) "I am the first and the last : <i>18 I am</i> he that liveth, and was dead ; and, behold, I am alive for evermore."	Rev 2:8 (KJV) ". . . the first and the last , which was dead , and is alive ;"
Rev 1:16 (KJV) ". . . and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword. "	Rev 2:12 (KJV) "These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges. "
Rev 1:14-15 (KJV) ". . . his eyes were as a flame of fire ; <i>15</i> And his feet like unto fine brass. "	Rev 2:18 (KJV) ". . . his eyes like unto a flame of fire , and his feet are like fine brass. "
Rev 1:4 (KJV) ". . and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne. . . Rev 1:16 (KJV) And he had in his right hand seven stars. "	Rev 3:1 (KJV) ". . . he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars. "
Rev 1:5 (KJV) ". . . <i>who is</i> the faithful witness . . . and have the keys of hell and of death."	Rev 3:7 (KJV) ". . . he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;"
Rev 1:5 (KJV) ". . .Jesus Christ, <i>who is</i> the faithful witness , and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth."	Rev 3:14 (KJV) ". . . the Amen, the faithful and true witness , the beginning of the creation of God;"

- x. The first section, **chapters 1-3**, reveals the church represented by the symbolism of the **seven golden lampstands**, and among them walking the Son of Man. The church reveals the light of heaven to a world that lies in darkness.
- xi. The church on one hand and the world on the other necessitates an unavoidable conflict. The darkness hates the light! Hence, persecution is in store for the church. Accordingly, in the vision of **The Seals – chapters 4-7** – we see the church oppressed by the world. The light shining in darkness (chapters 1-3) and

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the darkness hating the light (chapters 4-7), these ever follow one another in exactly that order.

- xii. But before the trials of chapters 4-7 are described, we receive the bracing assurance that Christ is with us and that if we are faithful unto death, we will receive a crown of life (2:10).
- b. **Chapters 4-7 – Seals – Church oppressed by the world** (Darkness hating the light).
 - i. This section begins with the assurance that the trials are part of God’s plan and that Christ, exalted in glory, governs the world in the interest of the church. Let the trials come, for we are more than conquerors!
 - ii. This assurance is seen by the glorious vision of the throne.
 - iii. Chapter 5 has the seals (trials) in Christ’s hand.
 - iv. Because of this, we can face them with confidence.
 - v. The trials are in evidence during this entire era, from the first to the second coming of Christ.
 - vi. Chapter 6 describes the trials – persecution and tribulation of every variety.
 - vii. Remember this happens from the first to the second coming.
 - viii. Observe the close connection between Revelation 6:1-4 and Matthew 10:34ff.

Rev 6:1-4 (KJV) “. . . a white horse: and he that sat on him . . . went forth conquering, and to conquer. . . 4 And there went out another horse <i>that was</i> red: and <i>power</i> was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.”	Mat 10:34 (KJV) “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.” Mat 10:38 (KJV) “And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.”
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- ix. Chapter 6:1-3 peace is taken from the earth.
- x. This section on the seals describes not only persecutions, it is far more comprehensive. All the woes and trials of the church are included in the vision, also those which the church suffers along with the world. The main question, however, is this: “How do these trials affect the church?”
 - (1) Persecution.
 - (2) Economic.
 - (3) Famines.
- xi. The fifth seal reveals the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held, 6:9. The preceding seals symbolized trial and persecution affecting the church. Among other things, believers were persecuted and slain. What is more natural than this, that the souls of those who had been slain should now be seen underneath the altar? With the opening of the sixth seal, we have reached the end, the day of the final judgment.
- xii. 7:1-8 - The saints need have no fear - they will prevail.
- xiii. 7:9-17 - Great celebration. In heaven the Church Triumphant, out of every nation and of all tribes and all peoples and tongues, will celebrate its victory in the great day.

c. **Chapters 8-11 – Trumpets of Judgment.**

- i. But what about the persecutors? Do they go free? Will not the Church be avenged? Our Lord sees the tears of his persecuted children. Their prayers, incensed by the intercession of Christ, ascend to heaven. The Lord answers. The censer is filled with the altar fire which is cast upon the earth (8:5). Rev 8:5 (KJV) “And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast *it* into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.” In other words, God is constantly sending his judgments upon the world in answer to the prayers of his persecuted children.
- ii. The seventh seal immediately introduces the trumpets of judgment. The seals of *trials* and *persecution* render necessary the trumpets of *judgment*.
- iii. Wrong must be avenged.
- iv. By means of plagues upon the . . .
 - (1) Land - 8:7.
 - (2) Sea - 8:8.
 - (3) Rivers - 8:10.
 - (4) Sun, moon, and stars - 8:12.
 - (5) Evil influences of demons - 9:3,11.
 - (6) Battlefield - 9:16.
 - (7) Dreadful expectation of final judgment - 11:15.
- v. By all these things, our risen and exalted redeemer is constantly avenging the church and sending judgments upon the persecutors. Yet, these judgments, though severe, are charged with warning. They are not *FINAL*. They destroy a third part. “A third part” is not ALL. **TRUMPETS WARN**. Still calling for repentance.
- vi. **9:21** - Though they call for repentance, the question is, “Do they repent?” For the most part they repented not. Rev 9:21 (KJV) “Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.” And, what was true in John’s day is true today. Many do not repent when God warns.
- vii. **10-11** - While these judgments are falling upon the world, what is happening to the church? Its safety, cross-bearing, and final victory are described in chapters 10 and 11.
- viii. **11:15-18** - Ends with triumph. This section ends with a song of triumph. Rev 11:15 (KJV) “And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.” Rev 11:18 (KJV) “And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.”

Revelation could end here, after the first eleven chapters, but it does not end here. If it did end here, the questions which beg to be answered are: What is the underlying cause of the persecution of the church by the world? In other words, why do unbelievers hate believers so vehemently? It just does not make sense, “Why would anyone hate good people doing good things?” Also, what is going to happen to these impenitent individuals who do not heed God’s warning voice revealed in the Trumpets of Judgment? What is the nature of their destruction? These are exactly the questions which are answered in the second division, chapters 12-22. There is more to the events of this life than meets the physical eye.

UNDERLYING CAUSE OF THE PERSECUTION

- d. **Chapters 12-14 – The struggle between the church and the world is an outward manifestation of the conflict between Christ and Satan!**
- i. The man-child is Christ.
 - ii. Satan is called the dragon.
 - iii. 12:4 - The Dragons purpose is to devour the child.
 - iv. 12:13 - Failing in this, he persecutes the woman, that is, the church.
 - v. 13:1-10 - As his helpers he employs:
 - (1) The beast out of the sea - anti-Christian persecution.
 - (2) The beast out of the earth - Anti-Christian propaganda.
 - (3) The great harlot. Babylon - Anti-Christian seduction - lust of flesh.
 - vi. Their purpose is to destroy the church.
 - vii. Do these forces of evil succeed? Who is victorious: the Dragon or the Lamb?
 - viii. Chapter 14 - Shows us that these forces are not victorious. In chapter 14 we find the Lamb standing as victor upon Mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand!
 - ix. We are glad to read about this victory of the Christ and of his church, but we naturally ask: what happens to the foe?
 - x. Chapters 12-14 introduce five enemies of the Church.
 - (1) The dragon himself.
 - (2) The beast out of the sea.
 - (3) The beast out of the earth, also called the false prophet.
 - (4) The great harlot, Babylon.
 - (5) “The men that have the mark of the beast” 13:16; 16:2.
 - xi. All five go down together! When Satan is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, his allies also are cast into it. This is on the day of final judgment.
- e. **Chapters 15-16 - Seven Bowls of Wrath.**
- i. This victory fills us with comfort, but what happens to our foe? You will recall that the first division of the book leaves this question unanswered. We now receive an answer to that question.

- ii. That which persecuted the church in Chapters 8-11 now falls.
- iii. Let us also remember the very close connection between chapters 15-16 and chapters 8-11. Remember the parallel nature of the two sections.
- iv. The Lord will not let the impenitent go unpunished (See chapters 8-11).
- v. Whenever, in the history of the world, Christ's trumpets of judgment (Chapters 8-11), that is, his initial plagues, do not result in penitence and conversion, what then? Does the Ruler of all creation permit such impenitence, such hardness of heart, to remain unpunished?
- vi. The answer, according to chapters 15-16, the Bowls of Wrath, is as follows:
 - (1) Whenever, in the entire history of the world, any individual remains impenitent and hardens himself in answer to the initial manifestation of God's displeasure in judgments, the final outpouring of divine wrath will follow sooner or later.
 - (2) When the ten plagues do not bring about Pharaoh's willing and cheerful obedience, but reveal a hardened heart, the entire host of Egypt is drowned in the Red Sea.
 - (3) Inasmuch as those of the Christian dispensation harden themselves in spite of greater privileges and opportunities, this principle of divine moral government is evident today even more than ever before. Heb 10:28-29 (KJV) "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: 29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"
 - (4) This, briefly, is the meaning of the Bowls of Wrath.
- vii. The trumpets warned, the bowls pour out.
- f. **Chapters 17-19 – Actual fall of the harlot and the beasts.**
 - i. This divine wrath is now specifically seen in the fall of the harlot and the beasts.
 - ii. We are shown the inevitable, complete, and terrible character of Babylon's fall in compliance and harmony with the righteous judgment of God.
 - iii. Following their overthrow we see the rejoicing in heaven which results.
 - iv. We are more than conquerors through Christ. The Christ has conquered 19:11ff.
- g. **Chapters 20-22 – Through chapter 19 we have seen the overthrow of every enemy but the Dragon. The Dragon himself is now utterly destroyed.**
 - i. And the saints? What happens to the saints?
 - ii. After the final judgment they live and reign with Christ, 20:11-15.
 - iii. These saints will reign for ever and ever, 22:5.
 - iv. They will be in the new heaven and earth, 21:5.
 - v. The Lamb occupies the Throne, 22:1,3! He is victorious. Hence, so are we.

10. **We have seen that this book is one, single, beautiful, gradually-developing whole.** Every section of the book is exactly where it should be. The book, moreover, describes principles of human conduct and of divine moral government which are always operative. The church always functions as a light-bearer, shining in the midst of the darkness of this world, chapters 1-3. Shining

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