

New Testament Survey
“The Book of Revelation”

I. Introduction

A. The Book to be avoided???

1. Most feel it is not understandable.
2. Other works of literature are difficult, too, but have great value.

B. Basic guidelines for interpretation.

1. The book’s contents

- a. A long and complex series of visions.
 1. There are over s_____ of them.
 2. They also blend and overlap.

2. John’s imagery was common to his day.

- a. Reference to the Old Testament.
 1. How many? _____

3. John’s writing style was familiar to his readers.

- a. Called a_____.
- b. Similar to other Old Testament books like:

4. Basic Christian theology is woven throughout the book.

- a. Cohesiveness
- b. What to do and not do when interpreting.

C. Author and date

1. The Apostle John on Patmos.
 - a. The Island.

 - b. Historical support for John as author.

2. The date.
 - a. Majority view: 81-96

 - b. Minority view: 68

II. Theories of Interpretation

A. There are many theories that have been put forth.

1. Donald Guthrie:

2. Our focus will be on the major f_____.

 - a. They are:

The H_____ P_____ View

The D_____ P_____ View

The P_____-M_____ View

The A_____ View

B. The Historic Premillennial View.

1. Dates back to historical church figures such as:

2. Book is about Life of the Church.

3. Persecutions will continue to the end.
4. Yes on Resurrection of believers.
5. Yes on Millennium – literal 1000 years.
6. Yes on final judgment.
7. Yes on New Heaven and New Earth.

C. The Dispensational Premillennial View

1. Popularized by:
2. Historically – relatively recent.
 - a. Dispensationalism traces its roots
3. The first three chapters -- the church age and its r_____.
4. The middle section of the book, Chapters 4-19 concern I_____ on Earth.
 - a. Key points:
5. Chapters 20-22
6. Alternate name for this view: the P____-T_____ R_____ T_____

D. Progressive Dispensationalism

1. Recent Development

2. Tenets of Progressive Dispensationalism

E. The Post-Millennial View.

1. Dates back to the 18th Century.

2. Due to the church's preaching of the Gospel, the world will gradually be won to Christ.

a. Fulfillment of millennium.

3. Jesus returns after the world has been made worthy.

4. Maintains a general resurrection, general judgment, and I_____ of the Eternal State.

5. Preterist view point.

E. The Amillennial View.

1. Dates back to early days of the church.
 - a. Theologians of note who held this view.

2. Majority view.

3. It rejects a literal 1000 year.
 - a. Hence, Amillennial.

4. The millennium of Chapter 20 is spiritual in nature and refers to the ministry of the church.

5. The entire Book of Revelation is a description of the historical course of the persecuted church and ends with Christ's second coming.

6. Yes, there is a judgment.

7. Yes, there is a restoration of Heaven and Earth.

III. A closer look at the Amillennial View.

A. Key themes and chapter descriptions.

- 1 – Christ in the midst of the Seven Golden Lampstands, 1-3.
- 2 – The Book with Seven Seals, 4-7.
- 3 – The Seven Trumpets of Judgment, 8-11.
- 4 – The Woman and the Man-Child persecuted by the Dragon and his Helpers (the Beast and the Harlot), 12-14.

5 – The Seven Bowls of Wrath, 15-16.

6 – The Fall of the Great Harlot and of the Beasts, 17-19.

7 – The Judgment upon the Dragon (Satan) followed by the New Heaven and Earth, New Jerusalem, 20-22.

We are now ready to formulate the first proposition:

Proposition I: The Book of Revelation consists of seven sections. They are parallel: each spans the entire new dispensation, from the first to the second coming of Christ.

B. The victory of Christ and His church over Satan and his helpers.

1. The struggle on earth: The church persecuted by the world. The church is avenged, protected, and victorious, Chapter 1-11:

a. Christ in the midst of the Seven Golden Lampstands, 1-3.

b. The Book with Seven Seals, 4-7.

c. The Seven Trumpets of Judgment, 8-11.

Three Sections

2. The deeper spiritual background: The Christ (and the Church) persecuted by the Dragon (Satan) and his helpers. Christ and His church are victorious, Chapter 12-22:

a. The Woman and the Man-Child persecuted by the Dragon and his Helpers (the Beast and the Harlot), 12-14.

b. The Seven Bowls of Wrath, 15-16.

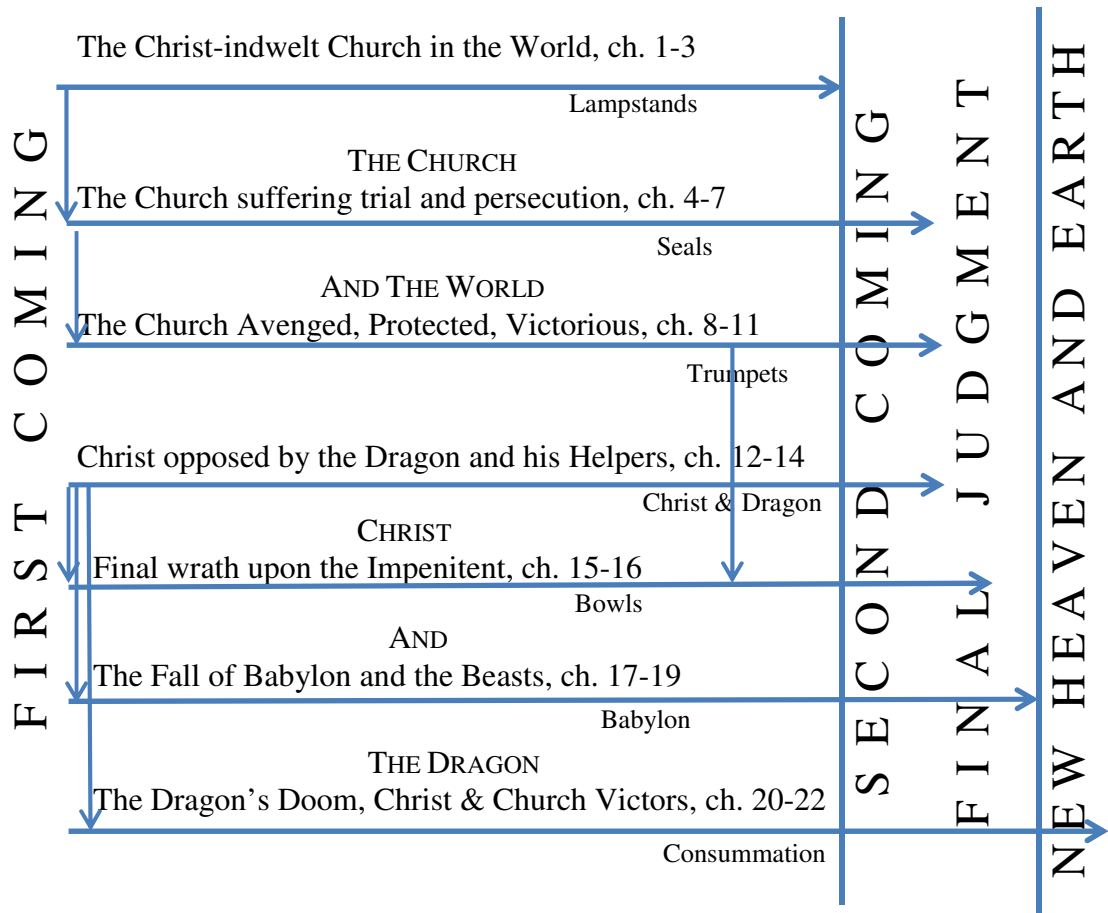
c. The Fall of the Great Harlot and of the Beasts, 17-19.

d. The Judgment upon the Dragon (Satan) followed by the New Heaven and Earth, New Jerusalem, 20-22.

Four Sections

Proposition II: The seven sections may be grouped into two major divisions. The first major division, Chapters 1-11, consists of three sections. The second major division, Chapters 12-22, consists of four sections. These two major division reveal a progress in depth or intensity of spiritual conflict. The first major division, Chapters 1-11, reveals the church – indwelt by Christ – persecuted by the world. The church is avenged, protected, and victorious. The second major division, Chapters 12-22, reveals the deeper spiritual background of this struggle. It is a conflict between the Christ and the dragon, in which the Christ – hence, his church – is victorious.

C. Progressive Parallelism (Chart & Explanation from William Hendriksen, *More than Conquerors*, p. 48)



1. Explanation:

- a. Parallelism. The horizontal parallel lines indicate the seven parallel sections.
- b. Progress in intensity of spiritual conflict.
- c. Progress in the revelation of the principles of human conduct and of divine, moral government; inner, organic unity. Seals of persecution bring about trumpets of judgment, etc. (Note vertical arrows.)
- d. Progress in eschatological emphasis. (Note horizontal arrows.)

D. As an example of Revelation's interface with the Old Testament, note the parallels between Revelation 4-5 and Daniel 7.

1. Introductory vision phraseology (Rev. 4:1; Dan. 7:9).
2. A throne(s) set in heaven (Rev. 4:2,4; Dan. 7:9).
3. God sitting on a throne (Rev. 4:2; Dan. 7:9).
4. God's appearance on the throne (Rev. 4:3; Dan. 7:9).
5. Fire before the throne (Rev. 4:5; Dan. 7:9-10).
6. Heavenly servants surrounding the throne (Rev. 4:4; Dan. 7:10).
7. Book(s) before the throne (Rev. 5:1-5; Dan. 7:10).
8. The seer's emotional distress (Rev. 5:4; Dan. 7:15).
9. Messianic figure approaching the throne (Rev. 5:6-7; Dan. 7:13-14).
10. The book(s) opened (Rev. 5:9; Dan. 7:10).
11. The kingdom's scope is all peoples, nations, and tongues (Rev. 5:9; Dan. 7:14).
12. The saints given divine authority to reign (Rev. 5:10; Dan. 7:18, 22).
13. Concluding mention of God's eternal reign (Rev. 5:13-14; Dan. 7:27).

-- From Keith Mathison, *From Age to Age*, p. 662.

E. For More Study see:

1. More Than Conquerors, William Hendriksen.
2. Amillennialism Today, William E. Cox
3. Behold He Cometh, Herman Hoeksema
4. Let's Study Revelation, Derek Thomas

5. Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth, a Critique of Dispensationalism, John H. Gerstner.
6. Coming of the Kingdom, Herman Ridderbos
7. The Book of Revelation, a Commentary, Philip E. Hughes
8. The Last Days According to Jesus, R. C. Sproul.
9. The Bible and the Future, Anthony A. Hoekema
10. The Blessed Hope, George Eldon Ladd
11. The Triumph of the Lamb, Dennis E. Johnson
12. Backgrounds to Dispensationalism, Clarence B. Bass
13. Revelation (New Testament Commentary), Simon Kistemaker