

Overview of the chapters in the book:

The visions that John saw were spiritual; they never happened on or to the earth. They are much like a stage play that depicts things happening apart from the stage.

Chapter 1 – The scope of Christ’s ministry and His present glory are revealed.

Chapter 2 and 3 - John stood with Jesus among the seven churches of Asia beholding their conditions, problems, and possibilities of victory through their Lord.

Chapter 4 - a door is opened in heaven giving to John, and through him to Christ’s persecuted saints, a vision of the throne and the majestic court of the Ruler of the universe.

Chapter 5 - within the vision of heaven, God is holding a book in his hand closed with seven seals indicating that the plan of God is unrevealed and unexecuted. If it remains sealed his purposes are not realized and his plan is not carried out. No one is able to open the book except Christ who is defined as a Lamb who was slain.

Chapter 6 - 20 provide two views of God’s plan through the destruction of Satan.

Chapter 6 - 11 outlines the first view of God’s plan.

Chapter 6 - we are introduced to Christ carrying out God’s eternal purpose for man’s redemption. As the seals are broken and the scrolls unrolled, the purpose of god is revealed.

The **FIRST SEAL** is opened and reveals a white horse with Christ as the rider going forth through the gospel to conquer the souls of man according to God’s plan – the preaching of the gospel.

The **SECOND SEAL** is opened and reveals a red horse which symbolizes the persecution that would follow the preaching of the gospel which brought the saints and the world into conflict.

The **THIRD SEAL** is opened and reveals a black horse which symbolizes grief, woe and mourning, the lot of persecuted saints who followed the preaching of the gospel.

The **FOURTH SEAL** is opened and reveals a pale horse which symbolizes the judgment against the world of unregenerate people who reject the divine message.

The **FIFTH SEAL** is opened and reveals the souls of them who had been slain for the word of God. They are asking how long before their blood is avenged. They are told to wait a little time until all should be killed as they were. This is completed in 20:4.

The **SIXTH SEAL** is opened and reveals a great earthquake; the sun becomes black, the moon as blood and the stars falling from heaven. This is judgment language as used in the Old Testament. It is a judgment against a persecuting world power.

Chapter 7 - Four angels stand ready to bring destructive forces upon the unregenerate people of the earth, but are restrained while the 144,000 servants of God on earth are sealed for protection.

Chapter 8 - The SEVENTH SEAL is opened, angels are given seven trumpets and the prayers of the saints. In response to these prayers the angel casts fire upon the earth which sums up the warning of the trumpets.

The opening of the seven seals is now complete.

When the FIRST TRUMPET sounds, hail and fire are cast on the earth and one third of earth, trees and grass are burnt up. This is judgment that affects the vegetation

When the SECOND TRUMPET sounds, one third of sea life and ships are destroyed. This is judgment upon a worldly society when its center of power is cast down and its economy falls with it.

When the THIRD TRUMPET sounds, one third of the waters became bitter, and many men die. This symbolizes calamity, sorrow and bitterness of life for the earth's eminent men.

When the FOURTH TRUMPET sounds, one third of the sun, moon and stars are darkened. This symbolizes the partial darkening of human wisdom and understanding.

Chapter 9 – The FIFTH TRUMPET sounds, Satan falls from heaven and is given the key to the abyss. He is permitted to execute a limited degree of power.

The SIXTH TRUMPET sounds and the four angels that were restrained in chapter seven are loosed that they should kill one third of men using armies of 200 million horsemen which are referred to as plagues

Chapter 10 – John is given a little book and told to eat it He is told that he must prophesy again indicating additional prophecies to those already written in this first section of the book.

Chapter 11 – John is told to measure the temple, the alter and them that worship therein. The holy city, the new spiritual Jerusalem (the church) shall be tread under foot forty-two months.

Two witnesses are introduced. They are protected by God while completing the work God sent them to accomplish which is to establish the church, to preach the truth and to write it down. They are killed, then made alive.

The SEVENTH TRUMPET sounds and signals the completion of God's mystery. The first revealing of God's plan through its implementation against His enemies is complete.

The temple of God in heaven is opened giving assurance to His people that he remembers them, and that he will keep his covenant with them.

Chapter 12 - 20 outlines the second view of God's plan.

Chapter 12 –John was told in chapter 10 he must prophesy again.

Two signs are seen in heaven. A woman with child waiting to be delivered and a great red dragon, who is Satan, waiting to devour the child as it is born.

There is a war in heaven where Michael and his angels go to war with Satan and his angels. Satan is defeated and attacks the woman then the seed of the woman, which are individual Christians.

Chapter 13 – The dragon rallies two allies. The first is a beast coming up out of the sea. The second is a beast coming up out of the earth which is later referred to as the false prophet. The number of the beast, six-six-six, is the number of the beast.

Chapter 14 - Christ is the Lamb with 144,000 of his followers (those sealed in chapter 7) standing on the Mount. Three angels (1) make known that the gospel is preached to all nations, (2) declare that Babylon is fallen and (3) the beast will receive the wrath of God.

Chapter 15 – Seven angels are seen as a sign in heaven with seven plagues which are the golden bowls full of the wrath of God. No one could enter the temple until the seven plagues were finished.

Chapter 16 – The seven angels are told to pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God into the earth.

The **FIRST ANGEL Poured out his bowl** and it became grievous sores upon those who had the mark of the beast. As in the human body, this is the corruption of the world breaking out.

The **SECOND ANGEL Poured out his bowl** into the sea. It became blood as of a dead man, and everything in and on the sea died. This symbolizes the utter putrefaction of a dead society.

The **THIRD ANGEL Poured out his bowl** into the rivers and fountains and they became blood. Since Caesar worshippers had poured out the blood of the saints and prophets, they are now given blood to drink.

The **FOURTH ANGEL Poured out his bowl** upon the sun which would scorch the same men. This plague turned the sun into a source of blistering heat burning and painful, by which men were scorched. They blasphemed God and would not repent.

The **FIFTH ANGEL Poured out his bowl** upon the throne of the beast and his kingdom was darkened. This indicates the loss of wisdom and understanding by which to guide the empire.

The **SIXTH ANGEL Poured out his bowl** upon the Euphrates River and it was dried up. The Euphrates here is not a physical or geographical location; it symbolizes a barrier or deterrent to invasion, which is now removed.

There is a gathering of the forces of God and Satan for a battle at a place called Har-Magedon (Armageddon) which is fought and won by the Lord in chapter 19.

The **SEVENTH ANGEL Poured out his bowl** upon the air and a voice from the throne said “it is done”. Air would be an appropriate emblem of the prevailing influence or surroundings of the realm in which the wicked live, move, and breathe, being dominated by the devil.

The series of plagues is now complete.

Chapter 17 – In this chapter and chapter 18 is a description of the collapse of the pagan world-city.

John is shown the judgment of the great harlot symbolizing Rome which in turn symbolized the world of lust and seduction. A description of this harlot is given in the rest of this chapter.

Chapter 18 – An angel from heaven cries mightily “Babylon the great is fallen”. God reveals the total collapse of the harlot and she is cast into the lake of fire.

Chapter 19 – The marriage of the lamb and the bride is now ready. A white horse is revealed in heaven, with Christ riding on the horse, to make war against the beast of the sea and the beast of the earth, the false prophet who were gathered in chapter 16. No battle is described. The beast and the false prophet are cast into the lake of fire. The victory is won; the defeat of the beast and the false prophet, is complete.

Chapter 20 – Satan has lost his allies and is bound in the abyss for a thousand years. The souls from the fifth seal in chapter 6 reign with Christ for a thousand years. After the thousand years, Satan is loosed from his prison and gathers his forces but is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. Christ is seen sitting on a great white throne judging the nations. Death and Hades are now cast into the lake of fire which is the second death.

The defeat of Satan and his forces against God and truth is total – complete and final.

Chapter 21 – This chapter portrays the final glory of the church as it comes to rest with God beyond time. An angel shows John the bride, the wife of the Lamb, the holy city Jerusalem coming down from heaven.

Chapter 22 – John is told not to seal the words of the prophecy of this book, “for the time is at hand”. The book was to be sent to the churches at that time, its content made applicable to all churches, its message was to be made known, its warnings were to be heeded and its hearers encouraged by the divine assurance of victory.

One commentator (Hailey’s book page 324) has well observed that the seven seals *reveal*, the seven trumpets *announce* and *warn*, and the seven bowls *execute*.

Another overview of the book:

The visions that John saw were spiritual; they never happened on or to the earth. They are much like a stage play that depicts things happening apart from the stage.

Chapter 1 – The scope of Christ’s ministry and His present glory are revealed.

Chapter 2 and 3 - John stood with Jesus among the seven churches of Asia beholding their conditions, problems, and possibilities of victory through their Lord.

Chapter 4 through 20 - this section of Revelation is where the triumph of truth and righteousness for the saints who hold the truth, and the defeat and ultimate destruction of Satan along with his followers and helpers is described. The key to this section is the sealed book that God is holding in his hand. The closed seals signify that it was originally purposed in the mind of God. Its contents have been neither made known nor altered. This book symbolizes God’s eternal purpose for man’s salvation, the grand scheme of redemption. This plan was formulated in the mind of God and was a mystery – something unknown or hidden – until revealed. God purposed or planned that this salvation which existed as a mystery should be brought forth and made known in the fullness of time (Eph. 1:9-10).

Chapter 4 - a door is opened in heaven giving to John a vision of the throne and the majestic court of the Ruler of the universe.

Chapter 5 - God is holding a book in his hand closed with seven seals indicating that the plan of God is unrevealed and unexecuted.

Chapters 6 – 11 the revealing of God’s plan through the destruction of Satan and his helpers.

Chapter 6 - we are introduced to Christ carrying out God’s eternal purpose for man’s redemption.

FIRST SEAL Christ on a white horse, symbolizes conquering souls by preaching of the gospel.

SECOND SEAL red horse, symbolizes the persecution following the preaching of the gospel.

THIRD SEAL black horse, symbolizes grief, woe and mourning for those persecuted saints who followed the preaching of the gospel.

FOURTH SEAL pale horse, symbolizes judgment against those who reject the divine message.

FIFTH SEAL souls of them who were slain for the word of God ask when they will be avenged.

SIXTH SEAL earthquake, sun black, moon as blood and stars falling from heaven. This symbolizes judgment against a persecuting world power.

Chapter 7 - four angels ready to bring destruction on the unregenerate people but are restrained.

Chapter 8

SEVENTH SEAL there is a silence in heaven about a half hour. An angel casts from the altar fire upon the earth which is the heavenly response to the prayers of the saints. The seven trumpets symbolize partial judgments upon the wicked, a warning of greater judgments to come.

The opening of the seven seals is now complete.

FIRST TRUMPET hail and fire cast on the earth. This is judgment that affects the vegetation.

SECOND TRUMPET sea life and ships are destroyed. This is judgment upon a worldly society.

THIRD TRUMPET waters became bitter, and many men die. This symbolizes calamity, sorrow and bitterness of life for the earth's eminent men.

FOURTH TRUMPET sun, moon and stars are darkened. This symbolizes the partial darkening of human wisdom and understanding.

Chapter 9

FIFTH TRUMPET Satan falls from heaven and is given the key to the abyss.

SIXTH TRUMPET restrained angels (chap7) loosed to kill men, armies referred to as plagues.

Chapter 10

Before the seventh trumpet sounds, John is given a little book and told to eat it

Chapter 11

John is told to measure the temple (the church), the altar and them that worship therein.

Two witnesses - protected by God - establish the church, preach the truth and write it down.

After the church is established, they are killed, then made alive.

SEVENTH TRUMPET sounds and signals the completion of God's mystery

The temple of God in heaven is opened giving assurance to His people that he remembers them.

The first revealing of God's plan through its implementation against His enemies is complete.

Chapters 12 – 20 a second view of God's plan through the destruction of Satan and his helpers.

Chapter 12 - Two signs in heaven. A woman with child, Christ, and a great red dragon, Satan.

There is a war in heaven where Michael and his angels go to war with Satan and his angels

Chapter 13 - The dragon rallies two allies. The a beast from the sea and a beast the earth.

Chapter 14 - Christ is the Lamb with 144,000 followers, The messages of three angels (1) the gospel is preached to all nations, (2) Babylon is fallen (3) the beast will receive the wrath of God.

Chapter 15 – Seven angels with seven plagues - the golden bowls full of the wrath of God.

Chapter 16 – The seven angels told to pour out the seven bowls into the earth.

FIRST BOWL - sores upon those who had the mark of the beast - symbolizes the corruption of the world breaking out.

SECOND - the sea becomes became blood - symbolizes the utter putrefaction of a dead society.

THIRD BOWL - rivers and fountains become blood. Caesar worshippers given blood to drink.

FOURTH BOWL - sun becomes a blistering heat, men would not repent.

FIFTH BOWL - throne of the beast darkened, symbolizes loss of wisdom and understanding by which to guide the empire.

SIXTH BOWL - Euphrates River dried up, symbolizes a barrier to invasion now removed..

There is a gathering of the forces of God and Satan for a battle at a place called Har-Magedon (Armageddon) which is fought and won by the Lord in chapter 19.

SEVENTH BOWL upon the air and a voice from the throne said “it is done”.

The series of plagues from the bowls is now complete.

The cities of the nations fell and Babylon, the Roman Empire, was remembered in the sight of God, to give unto her the hot burning anger of His wrath. A collapse of the pagan world-city and its daughters is described in chapters 17 and 18.

Chapter 17 – The fall of Babylon, Rome the world power, has been introduced in the previous chapters (12 – 16), and now the nature of the city, described as a harlot, and its complete fall are enlarged upon. In the following visions, the apostle shows us by means of symbolic pictures, what befalls Babylon, the beast of the sea, and the false prophet.

John is shown the judgment of the great harlot symbolizing Rome which in turn symbolized the world of lust and seduction. A description of this harlot is given in the rest of this chapter.

Chapter 18 – angel cries “Babylon the great fallen”. God has judged the harlot, and her smoke rises up forever and ever. She is cast into the lake of fire where the beast of the sea, the beast of the earth and Satan will be cast shortly.

Chapter 19 – The marriage of the lamb and the bride is now ready. Christ riding a white horse, to make war against the beast of the sea and the beast of the earth. No battle is described. The beast and the false prophet are cast into the lake of fire. The victory is won; the defeat of the beast and the false prophet, is complete.

Chapter 20 – Satan has lost his allies and is bound in the abyss for a thousand years. The souls from the fifth seal in chapter 6 reign with Christ for a thousand years. After the thousand years, Satan is loosed from his prison and gathers his forces but is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. Christ is seen sitting on a great white throne judging the nations. Death and Hades are now cast into the lake of fire which is the second death.

The defeat of Satan and his forces against God and truth is total – complete and final.

Chapter 21 – This chapter portrays the final glory of the church as it comes to rest with God beyond time. An angel shows John the bride, the wife of the Lamb, the holy city Jerusalem coming down from heaven.

Chapter 22 – John is told not to seal the words of the prophecy of this book, “for the time is at hand”. The book was to be sent to the churches at that time, its content made applicable to all churches, its message was to be made known, its warnings were to be heeded and its hearers encouraged by the divine assurance of victory.

One commentator (Hailey’s book page 324) has well observed that the seven seals *reveal*, the seven trumpets *announce* and *warn*, and the seven bowls *execute*.

Condensed Overview of the book:

As King and Priest Christ holds the destiny of the churches in His hand as He walks among the congregations. John stands with Jesus among the churches beholding their conditions, problems, and possibilities of victory through their Lord

A door is opened in heaven giving to John, and through him to Christ's persecuted saints, a vision of the throne and the majestic court of the Ruler of the universe.

The first revealing of God's plan - chapters 6 - 11:

God holds a book in his hand closed with seven seals. No one is able to open the book except Jesus. As the seals are broken and the scrolls unrolled, the purpose of God is revealed.

The 144,000 servants of God, the saints on earth at any given time, are sealed for protection.

An angel is given the prayers of the saints which go up before God out of the angels' hand. In response to the prayers of the saints, seven angels are given seven trumpets serving as warnings of greater judgments to come. The first trumpets sound with various judgments against those on the earth. The remaining three trumpets are called Woe, woe, woe for them that dwell on the earth and result in more serious judgments.

John is given a little book and told to eat it. It shall be sweet as honey in his mouth, but it shall make his belly bitter. It is sweet to learn that God's cause would be victorious in His saints, but it was bitter to prophesy of their suffering and of the destructive judgments which would befall the wicked world as John would again prophesy.

John is told to measure the church. Christians who had been numbered are now are measured. He is told not to measure the court outside the church as it has been cast out of God's protecting care.

Two witnesses are introduced which represent the apostles and prophets of the apostolic age. They are protected by God while completing the work God sent them to accomplish. After the church is established and the preaching completed, the beast from the abyss will kill the two witnesses.

The second revealing of God's plan - chapters 12 - 16:

Two signs are seen in heaven. The first is that of a woman, the spiritual remnant of God's people, with child waiting to be delivered. The second is Satan waiting to devour the child as it is born. But he is not allowed to defeat the purpose of God by destroying the Christ.

Satan is cast down from his high-handed control over mankind and his angels with him. With Satan's defeat, God's purpose in providing salvation is now fulfilled.

Satan then persecutes the church. He is defeated in this attempt because a way has been provided for her deliverance, the protection of God.

Failing in his effort to destroy Christ and the church, the dragon was cast down to earth where he rallies two allies through which he seeks to defeat and destroy God's purpose, people and rule.

The first ally is a beast coming up out of the sea, symbolizing the Roman Empire in its power and opposition to the kingdom of God.

The second ally is a beast coming up out of the earth symbolizing the pagan priesthood or emperor worship, backed by the sea-beast, the political power of the empire. He declared that

“as many as should not worship the Roman emperors, should be killed”. He required that a mark be given to those who worshiped him.

Christ with 144,000 of his followers is seen standing on Mount Sinai. These are the redeemed on earth with Christ in the church.

Three angels make known their messages; (1) the gospel is preached to all nations, (2) Rome which does not heed the warning of the first angel is doomed, and (3) those who worship the beast receive the wrath of God. Christ then “reaps” the redeemed and the condemned from the earth for judgment.

Seven angels are seen as a sign in heaven with seven plagues which are public calamities or heavy afflictions sent by God as punishment on men. In these judgments, God reaches His goal for in the plagues the wrath of God is finished.

Those who were victorious from the beast are seen standing on a sea of glass, mingled with fire, singing with their harps. Having passed through the fiery trials on earth, they are closer to God.

The seven angels are given golden bowls full of the wrath of God and are told to pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God into the earth where different earthly things are affected.

The seventh angel poured out his bowl and a voice from the throne said “it is done”. The series of plagues is now complete. The Roman Empire has been destroyed.

The nature of the city that has now fallen - chapters 17 - 19:

John sees the great harlot which represents the world of lust, all that appeals to the flesh or mind, which symbolized Rome. She was drunk with the blood of the saints. Future kingdoms will hate and destroy her.

The ten horns are future kingdoms which will hate the harlot, burn her with fire, and destroy her.

God prepares to reveal the total collapse of the harlot, spiritual Babylon, the great world-city of pride, lust and corruption.

God’s people are told to come out from the influence of worldly lust so that there is no partaking of the sins of the world and the flesh.

She has glorified herself and lived luxuriously. Because of her boasting, the end comes to the great city for “she shall be utterly burned with fire” – totally destroyed (17:16).

The kings of the earth who have committed fornication with her, and the merchants who have become rich by her, watch the smoke of her burning.

Heaven and the saints are exhorted to rejoice over the harlot’s fall.

An angel threw a great millstone into the sea representing the complete and final judgment against the harlot city.

God has judged the harlot, and her smoke rises up forever and ever.

The marriage of the lamb has come and the bride is now ready.

Though the harlot has been destroyed, the two great enemies of God and man remain: the beast of the sea and false prophet along with their leader, Satan. Christ conducts the war against these two enemies, engaging them in a decisive battle.

The beast and the false prophet are taken and cast into the lake of fire. The rest of the kings who aligned themselves with the beast are killed by the sword that came out of the mouth of him that sat upon the white horse.

The destruction of Satan and the final judgment - chapters 20 - 21:

With the defeat of the beast and the false prophet, and the destruction of the harlot, Satan has lost his allies.

An angel binds Satan with the chain for a thousand years and casts him into the abyss. The thousand years symbolizes that period of victory beginning with Constantine, when Roman persecution ended, and continuing until sometime before the Lord's return.

John sees thrones with the souls – not bodies – of two groups of martyrs who are part of the first resurrection

After the thousand years, Satan is loosed from his prison and gathers a horde a final furious effort to destroy the church.

Satan and his new allies surround the camp of the saints and the beloved city: and fire came down out of heaven, and devoured them. They were cast into the lake of fire.

Christ is now seen sitting on a great white throne as the present order passes away. All of the dead are judged according to their works written in the book of life.

The sea, death and Hades gave the up dead that were in them.

Death and Hades have been brought to their end in the lake of fire, and all those whose names were not found in the book of life were cast into the lake of fire.

The defeat of Satan and his forces against God and truth is total – complete and final.

John sees a new heaven and a new earth, and the sea is no more. Nothing will be lacking in the complete fullness and realization of all spiritual desires of the glorified soul in heaven.

Sinners shall have their part in the lake of fire.

Jesus states that he is coming quickly; He states three times in this chapter that he is coming quickly.

John is told not to seal the words of the prophecy of this book, “for the time is at hand.

The book was to be sent to the churches at that time.

Jesus affirms that this book is to be accepted as Scripture. It has the stamp of God and of Jesus, with the added testimony of John that he had heard and seen these things which he had written. Now is added a warning from the Lord Himself that the prophecy of this book is not to be tampered with, either by deleting from, adding to, or changing it.

Very Condensed Overview of the book:

John stands with Jesus among the churches beholding their conditions, problems, and possibilities of victory through their Lord.

Two visions in the book reveal the eternal plan of God for the salvation of man and destruction of evil.

1. God holds a sealed book in his hand which is his eternal plan. The seals are opened revealing the conquest of Christ and various judgments against those on the earth, with trumpets sounding other judgments. God's eternal plan, through the destruction of Satan and his helpers, is brought to its conclusion.
2. Satan is defeated by the life and resurrection of Christ and tries various ways to destroy the church on earth. After his unsuccessful attempts, he and his allies are cast into the lake of fire. The defeat of Satan and his forces against God and truth is total – complete and final. God's eternal plan, through the destruction of Satan and his helpers, is brought to its conclusion

The final judgment and life in heaven for the faithful is the final scene of the book.

My overall overview of the book:

The book is written to encourage the saints of John's day because of the persecution from the Roman Empire. The main message to the saints was assurance that they would be rewarded in heaven if they kept the word of God and not the dictates of the Roman Empire.

The statements "I am coming quickly" and "the time is at hand" indicated to the saints that the things described in the book will begin soon. These statements provide strong motivation for obedience in keeping the things to be revealed in the book which, for the most part, were in the near future and not in the distant future down to our time. The Roman Empire, which is in conflict with the laws of God, will soon be at an end even though the total end did not come until about 313 AD.

The various visions of the seals, the trumpets, the bowls, the beasts and the harlot all show in different ways how God deals with disobedient nations and specifically the Roman Empire. These judgments against the Roman Empire are not the final judgment. The final judgment is described at the end of the book after Satan and all his helpers have been destroyed.

While it is true that the concern for the Christians of John's day was the persecution from the Roman Empire with its emperor worship and lust for physical things, the same judgments and wrath is meted out to nations throughout history including nations in our time.