

# The Final Words

(A Study of the Book of Revelation)

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John 16:33

“...In the world you have tribulation, but take courage;

I have overcome the world.”



# REVELATION

Revelation 1:1 - The word "revelation" means an uncovering, a bringing to light of that which had been previously wholly hidden or only obscurely seen. Hebrews 1:1 - The revelation originated with God, then to Christ → His angel → John → to those who read. "Revelation" is the Greek word *apokalupsis*, commonly called the Apocalypse.

The frequent occurrences of "angel" (48 times out of 196 in the entire Bible) points to the uniqueness of the epistle in that it reveals a spiritual, behind the scenes view.

"Things that must shortly come to pass" - The exact expression occurs again in Revelation 22:6 and a similar one in Revelation 2:16; 3:11; 22:7, 12, 20. Possible ways to understand this since thousands of years have already passed follow.

- 1) Some of the prophecy took place in the near future, but like O.T. prophecy it is dual or repeated prophecy with things reoccurring and yet to happen at the end of the age.
- 2) May refer to the certainty of the events in question. God has determined them, and He will speedily bring them to pass according to His time, not ours. Therefore, the emphasis is upon the quality of the time rather than the quantity. With God, one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day (2 Peter 3:8).
- 3) It could also mean suddenly, immediately when the time comes, similar to what Jesus said in Matthew 24:34 - "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place."
- 4) Circumstances changed, so the revelation changed as is seen also in Isaiah.

Every generation needs to live as if the end is near, and every generation has good reason to think their times are the end times. Revelation is not the only place that talks about the time being near.

## THE END IS NEAR

**Romans 13:11 & 12** And this do, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.

**1 Peter 4:7** The end of all things is at hand; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer.

**1 Corinthians 7:29** But this I say, brethren, the time has been shortened, so that from now on those who have wives should be as though they had none;

**Matthew 24:42** "Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.

**Mark 13:35** "Therefore, be on the alert for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, at cockcrowing, or in the morning

**James 5:8** You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

**1 John 2:18** Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen; from this we know that it is the last hour.

Revelation 1:2 - As the last book in the Bible, there are hundreds of quotations or allusions to the rest of the Bible. A remarkable, succinct compilation of descriptive information about Yahweh is set forth similar to the Torah when God first revealed Himself. In addition, a graphic unique description of Jesus the Christ is shown.

Revelation 1:3 - As difficult as this epistle may seem, we can understand because of this verse.

Revelation 1:2:7, 11, 17, 29, 3:6, 13, and 22 - "He who has an ear, let him hear" 13:9

Our history is not good for few have had ears to ear. Isaiah 6:9-11; Jeremiah 5:21; 6:10; Ezekiel 12:2; Matthew 13:9-17; John 12:35-41; Acts 28:23-28; and Romans 11:8

Revelation 1:4 - "Him who is and who was and who is to come" (Revelation 1:8; 4:8; 11:7; 16:5). This is an unusual expression not found elsewhere in the Scriptures; however, the concept of truth is common in the Scriptures. Exodus 3:14 *Hayah* is the root word for God's proper name, Yahweh. Yahweh means existing one, eternal one.

Psalms 90:2; 102:25-27; Hebrews 1:10-12; James 1:17 - In view of the difficult times in which John is writing and the prediction of the difficult times to come, stressing the changelessness and the eternity of God is encouraging.

We should consider this book as we do the epistles that have a single church addressed such as Romans and Ephesians. Galatians, in similar manner to Revelation, was sent to a region, not a specific church.

The salutations in the church epistles are from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. In Revelation, the differences are distinctive with emphasis on defining God and Jesus, plus for the first and only time including the seven spirits.

Seven spirits (Revelation 3:1; 4:5; and 5:6) - Discipline must be maintained not to read into what is stated or spiritualize or assume that similar things are identical (Revelation 1:20, 3:1).

Revelation gives an unparalleled, unveiled look at the spiritual realm and warfare.

Revelation 1:5 and 6 - A detailed description of Jesus

Revelation 1:6 - This concept is oft repeated "to Him *be* the glory and the dominion forever and ever" (Revelation 4:9 & 10; 5:13; 7:12). "Forever and ever" is used 12 times in Revelation.

To God be Glory and Dominion Forever

Romans 16:27 - To the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.

Galatians 1:5 - To Whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Ephesians 3:21 - To Him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

Philippians 4:20 - Now unto God and our Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

1 Timothy 1:17 - Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

2 Timothy 4:18 - And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Hebrews 13:21 - Equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

1 Peter 4:11 - Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

1 Peter 5:11 - To Him *be* dominion forever and ever. Amen.

The faithful will be kings and priests - 5:10; 20:6; Exodus 19:6; 1 Peter 2:5 and 4:11

Revelation 1:7 - Coming in the clouds (Daniel 7:13 & 14; Matthew 26:64; Mark 13:24-27; Luke 21:25 - 28)

Revelation 1:8 - Alpha and the omega (Revelation 21:5-8) This verse gives expression early in the book to the conviction that God is sovereign. God was before all things, and He outlasts all things. He was at the commencement and will be at the close; and it is thus equivalent to saying that He has always existed, and that He will always exist. Isaiah 41:4; 44:6; 48:12

Nine times in this epistle, God is called the Almighty and only once in all the rest of the New Testament (2 Corinthians 6:18), referring to His all-embracing sovereignty.

### ALMIGHTY GOD

Revelation 1:8 - "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

Revelation 4:8 - And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY *is* THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME."

Revelation 11:17 - Saying, "We give you thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who are and who were, because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign.

Revelation 15:3 - And they \*sang the song of Moses, the bond-servant of God, and the song of the lamb, saying, "Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty; righteous and true are your ways, King of the nations!

Revelation 16:7 - And I heard the altar saying, "Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments."

Revelation 16:14 - For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty.

Revelation 19:6 - Then I heard *something* like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns.

Revelation 19:15 - From his mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it he may strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron; and he treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.

Revelation 21:22 - I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

We should have confidence that the things stated in this book will indeed come to pass because Almighty God has said so, and He will bring it to pass.

### FIRST VISION ABOUT JESUS (the only one as high priest)

Revelation 1:10 - In the spirit – Revelation 4:2; 17:3; 21:10 Visions are what he is seeing.

Loud voice - the phrase occurs 19 times in Revelation. God wanted John to hear.

Revelation 1:12 - The seven golden lamp stands represent the seven churches, according to verse 20. The vision reveals Jesus' involvement with the churches. Seven lamp stands - Exodus 25:31; 1 Kings 7:49; Zechariah 4:2

"Son of man" occurs 88 times in the New Testament to describe Jesus. He most often called himself such. He is a human being even in his glorified state at the right hand of God. Jesus is in the midst of the churches. He is the head of the body, and the body is the church. We are comforted and encouraged to know Jesus is in our midst! Daniel 7:13

Revelation 1:13 - Robe and golden sash are priestly dress. In this vision, Jesus is shown working with the churches as their high priest, but elsewhere in the book, he is depicted as the conquering King and not priest. The first vision relates to what he is doing now, and those to follow are about what he will do in the future.

Revelation 1:14 - His appearance was white as snow like the ancient of days in Daniel 7:9; the angel at the tomb when Jesus was raised had clothing as white as snow, Matthew 28:3 and Matthew 17:2; at the mount of transfiguration, Jesus is seen with garments as white as light, and his face shone like the sun. White and light represent purity, cleanness, and holiness.

His eyes were like a flame of fire (Revelation 2:18 and 19:12). "Eyes" figuratively represent the capacity to perceive and comprehend, with "flame of fire" representing purity. Jesus' ability to see things the way they really are is perfect, and he expresses what he sees to each church. He sees it as it really is, which we most often do not.

Revelation 1:15 - A similar revelation is in Daniel 10 but never explained as the Son of man.

Revelation 1:16 - Sharp, two-edged sword – "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword..." (Hebrews 4:12); Ephesians 6:17 & 2:12.

In his right hand he held seven stars – seven angels or messengers

Revelation 2:1 - A general pattern with each communication to the churches is seen.

1. Greeting "to the angel [messenger] of the church in..."
2. An aspect about Christ the high priest, usually taken from chapter one
3. Praise for what is good in the church (not in the case of Laodicea)
4. Criticism of the church (not in the case of Smyrna or Philadelphia)
5. Instruction
6. He who has an ear to hear let him hear
7. A promise beginning with "He who overcomes will..."

The churches at Ephesus and Laodicea are mentioned in the Scriptures; the others are not. Colossae, which is in the same region, is not mentioned at all.

### **CHURCH AT EPHESUS 2:1-7**

Revelation 2:1 - 7 stars – 7 messengers; 7 lamp stands - churches (Revelation 1:20) To each church, Jesus refers to one aspect of himself as told in the original vision to John in chapter one.

Revelation 2:2 - Deeds, toil, perseverance, non-tolerance for evil and had discernment

Revelation 2:5 - The charge - **RETURN TO FIRST LOVE**

Acts 19:1-20 - They experienced the most remarkable outreach ever, reaching all Asia Minor. The churches John is writing to were founded during this time. Their former love was for God, their Lord, each other, and humanity. "First" should be understood as foremost or primary.

Paul wrote the epistle of Ephesians while he was in Rome during the later part of his life and ministry.

Ephesians 1:15 - Heard of your love for all the saints

Ephesians 2:1-5 - God's love for us compels love for others.

Ephesians 3:19-21 - Paul's prayer for them and us is to love.

Ephesians 4:1-3 - The church is cemented together in love.

Ephesians 4:15 & 16 - Church grows in love.

Ephesians 5:1&2 - We are to love like Christ loves.

Ephesians 5:28-33 - Three times, husbands are told to love their wives.

Ephesians 6:23 and 24 - Epistle ends with love.

Acts 20:17-38 - During Paul's last visit, he warns them about the wolves (which they must have heeded according to Revelation). They protected the gospel, but lost the heart of love.

1 Timothy 1:1-5 - Some at Ephesus embraced a strange doctrine, which was contrary to Paul's teaching that had the goal of love.

Revelation 2:4 - They yielded to the temptation to place all their emphasis on sound teaching. In the process, they lost love, without which all else is nothing.

Revelation 2:5 - The consequences for not changing are severe.

Revelation 2:6 - The Nicolaitans were a sect (some associated with Nicolas Act 6:5) that apparently taught that Christians could engage in immoral behavior and idolatry.

Revelation 2:7 - Through the spirit Jesus tells the messenger (leader) who is to tell the church.

The reward for him who overcomes - "I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God." Adam and Eve were allowed to eat of the tree of life while in the Garden of Eden, and once they were expelled, the tree became forbidden. Genesis 2:9, 16; and 3:24 a common

misunderstanding is that something inside of man such as his soul or spirit affords everlasting life. This Platonic philosophy has become a fundamental Christian doctrine; yet, it is without any Scripture support. The Scriptures clearly state that the tree of life, which was outside of man, was the life giver. In Genesis 3:24, the cherubim keep them from the tree of life. Revelation 22:1-19

### **CHURCH IN SMYRNA 2:8-11**

Revelation 2:8 - If the angels are indeed spiritual beings that represent Divine presence and power in the church, then very difficult questions arise. If Jesus is addressing the angels, then the faults and sins of his church, and the punishment which waits due to the sins are also against the angels.

Angels are certainly a part of the activities of the first century church (Acts 5:19; 8:26; 10:3-20; 11:13; 12:7-23; and 27:23). With each incident, the angel helped individuals and not churches. Nothing throughout Acts or in the Epistles matches up with what is recorded in Revelation. The first and only mention that angels are assigned to churches is here, which is plausible since spiritual, "behind the scenes" insight is provided in the epistle.

Another possibility is the Greek word *aggelos* is translated as messenger (as in Spanish Bibles) - Matthew 11:10; Luke 7:27; 9:52; Mark 1:2; and James 2:25. Jesus' working with the human overseer of the churches is obvious throughout the New Testament. A good minister would be one who is our Lord's messenger.

Smyrna was one of the first cities to worship the Roman emperor, and it won the honor of erecting a temple to him in the reign of Tiberius (BC 14-37).

To Smyrna, he says he is "the first and last" relating to the resurrection in Revelation 1:17 & 18. The blessing in Revelation 2:11 is "He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death." Since he informs them that some will die by persecution, focus on the resurrection and the second death will provide encouragement for them to endure.

He was the first to be dead and raised again and to remain alive for eternity. He is the last because no one will ever do what he now does and will do in the future.

Revelation 2:9 - Persecution, poverty, and slander cause tribulation, mental pressure. They would receive comfort and reassurance knowing that their Lord understood even though he was not able to circumvent their problems. At times, situations and circumstances can be negative and trying without immediate release, but peace, joy, and love – all of which are inside realities – can always be realized.

Perhaps the slander from the Jews leant to the poverty and tribulation they endured. The Christians at Smyrna not only had to endure the pagan worshippers but the Jews who slandered them. Polycarp was martyred in this city. The hostility of the Jews toward the Christians came out in their zeal in setting forward the execution. Though it was the Sabbath, they gathered wood for the fire in which the 86-year-old martyr was burnt.

Synagogue of Satan - According to Romans 2:25-29, to be a Jew means more than to possess outward membership of the race. Their assembly for worship was not to glorify God, but Satan, who is the accuser of the brothers (Revelation 12:10). Satan is the behind the scene cause of what the Jews were doing (Revelation 2:13, 24; 3:9; 12:9; 20:2 and 7).

Revelation 2:10 - The devil is the real cause of their imprisonment.

The charge - **BE FAITHFUL UNTIL DEATH** 1 Corinthians 15:58; Ephesians 6:10-14; Colossians 1:9-12, 23

Revelation 2:11 - "He who has an ear to hear" repeated to each church. One of the other great Apocalypse writers, Isaiah, was told that his audience did not have ears to hear.

### **CHURCH IN PERGAMUM 2:12-17**

Pergamum was the capital of the Roman province of Asia. It was also significant for its great library, containing more than 200,000 parchment scrolls. The English word "parchment" derived from this name "Pergamum." It was an important religious center. People came from all over the world for healing by the god Asclepius, and Pergamum has been described as the Lourdes of the ancient world. Zeus, Dionysos, and Athene also had notable temples in the city. Pergamum was a center of Caesar-worship, and it had a temple dedicated to Rome as early as 29BC. It attained the coveted title *neokoros*, temple-sweeper, and took its devotion to emperor-worship seriously. In due course, it added a second and a third temple in honor of the emperor. It was the principal center of the imperial cult in this part of the world. Behind the city was a great hill, the site of a multitude of heathen temples.

Revelation 2:12 - In a religious environment such as Pergamum, a sharp, two-edged sword would be necessary. To the believer, the sword brought blessings; to the unbeliever, condemnation. 1:16; Hebrews 4:12

Revelation 2:13 - Twice in one verse, Jesus talks of Satan's influence in this city and again reveals behind the scenes. For the believers to maintain their faith in this environment was remarkable.

Revelation 2:14 and 15 - The false teaching was not only prevalent in the city but had crept into the church. Numbers 22-25 and 31 provide the information about Balaam. He tried repeatedly to curse the children of Israel at the request of Balak, but God would not allow it. God had Balaam bless Israel, not curse, and He had him prophesy extraordinary information about the coming Messiah. Finally, Balaam came up with the idea to have the Moabite women entice the men sexually and eventually to worship their false gods. This verse clearly sets forth what happened in Numbers. Jude also has information about Balaam. The record of Balaam and the Moabites continues through the years to provide a benchmark warning for Israel regarding God's unchanging plan about the king and the kingdom and the devastating effects of idolatry.

The doctrine of the Nicolaitans seems connected with the doctrine of Balaam, with perhaps some differences not stated.

**The Charge - REPENT FROM THE ACTS OF IDOLATY AND IMMORALITY (1 Corinthians 5:1-13, 6:9-11; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 5:1-11; Colossians 3:1-5; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; and Revelation 2:14, 21; 9:21; 14:8; 17:2, 4; 18:3, 9; 19:2)**

Revelation 2:16 - God's attitude toward idolatry and the consequences of it has not deviated since the days of Balaam. What must God's stance be today when the "Christian church" continues in emperor worship with regard to God's Son?

The two-edged sword seemed directed at the church and not the city of Satan.

Revelation 2:17 - Hidden manna was placed in the Ark of the Covenant. John wrote about the dialog Jesus had about Moses' manna compared to the bread of life in John 6. Manna provided life for the people in the wilderness; the new manna will provide eternal life in the age to come.

The exact meaning of the white stone is not clear; however, the context suggests that it is something to be prized as a type of reward for those who overcome.

God changed Abram to Abraham (father of many nations), Sarai to Sarah (mother of nations), and Jacob to Israel (with God you prevail). The new names emphasized God's faithfulness to fulfill His promises and a new beginning.

Nebuchadnezzar changed Azariah to Abednego, Hananiah to Shadrach, Mishael to Meshach, and Daniel to Belteshazzar. Their Hebrew names reflected Yahweh, and their changed names reflected the false gods in Babylon. The change was designed to rip them away from their Hebrew roots and transform them to Babylonian life.

Simon's name was changed to Peter, and Saul to Paul. "Peter" means a small stone, and "Paul" means small or humble. Both men needed to depend on God and not self.

Ephesians 3:14 and 15 - Everyone in heaven and earth derives his or her name from God.

Revelation 3:12; 19:12 - Jesus will have a new name that no one knows except him.

Our new name will correspond with our new beginning, our new life. Today, a name is no more than a distinguishing mark, a label. In antiquity, the name was widely held to sum up whatever the man stood for. It represented his character. It stood for the whole man. Here, then, the new name represents a new character.

People get your attention and influence your behavior by using your name. Our new name will be hidden so that only our Lord and our God can call and influence us.

The Jews had one name such as Jesus of Nazareth, James the brother of John, Simon the tanner, etc. The Roman emperors had many names, and often name changes took place with their rise to power as Caesar. Augustus Caesar was born with the given name Gaius Octavius, and he took the name Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus (Octavian) in 44 B.C. after the murder of his great uncle, Julius Caesar. Perhaps, our new name relates to our reigning with Jesus as kings and priests (Revelation 2:26 and 27).

### **CHURCH IN THYATIRA 2:18-29**

The city was a commercial center. Sir William Ramsay says more trade guilds were in Thyatira than any other Asian city. The inscriptions mention the following: wool-workers, linen-workers, makers of outer garments, dyers, leather-workers, tanners, potters, bakers, slave-dealers, and bronze smiths.

Acts 16:14 - Lydia, the first believer in Europe, was from here and sold purple cloth.

Revelation 2:18 - Only place "Son of God" occurs in Revelation.

"His eyes" indicate he sees all with correct discernment (1:14; 19:12; and 5:6). Jesus sees the truth – that which is really going on – while humanity lives in constant deception. The living creatures before the throne of God have eyes to see (Revelation 4:6-8). Jesus helps churches to "see" what is really going on. "He who has ears to hear..." - God wants us to see, and Jesus works with us see.

Ephesians 1:18 - "I pray that the eyes of your heart be enlightened;" Revelation 3:18 – eye salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see. Isaiah 6; Matthew 13:15 and 16; John 12:40

The burnished bronze feet indicate the strength and power to crush underfoot (1:15). Jesus is presented as the enforcer against those who promote wrong doctrine. Galatians 1:7-10; 2 Corinthians 11:12-15; 1 Timothy 4:1-3; Jude; 1 John 4:1-6

Revelation 2:19 - Great accomplishments

Revelation 2:20 - "Jezebel" became a symbolic name for wickedness. The woman was active in the church influencing the believers to participate in immoral conduct and eating of idol meats similar to the problems in the church at Pergamum. She called herself a prophetess, but her teaching was false. (1 Corinthians 8)

We must have the courage to see the Christian worldview and ourselves the way they really are and not be blind just to fit in. The right doctrine and many warnings set forth in the epistles regarding immorality and idolatry are as meaningful today if not more so.

The common faith in the seven cities was emperor worship – they worshipped a man as god. The church today holds the same exact belief – Jesus, a man, is God!

Revelation 2:21 - The Lord gives time for repentance, but she is not willing to change.

Revelation 2:22 - How has our world today done with our sexual freedom? How many people have sickness and disease – the consequence of immorality and idolatry?

Repentance seems to be an option presented often to these churches, along with the warning of consequences (Revelation 2:5, 16, 21, 22; 3:3, 19).

Revelation 2:23 - “Her children” mean her followers.

“I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.” God knows the heart and has given Jesus the ability to know also (Jeremiah 17:10; 11:20; Romans 8:27; Psalm 7:9; 1 Samuel 16:7; 1 Kings 8:39; 1 Chronicles 28:9; Psalm 139:1; and Acts 1:24).

Recompense according to our deeds (Matthew 16:27; Psalm 62:12; Revelation 20:12; 1 Kings 8:39; Romans 2:4-12; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Colossians 3:3-6; 1 Peter 1:17; Jeremiah 32:19; Ezekiel 18:30).

Revelation 2:25 - Hold fast - Revelation 3:11; Colossians 1:21-23; 1 Thessalonians 5:21; Hebrews 3:6; 4:14; and 10:23

**THE CHARGE – DO NOT TOLERATE SOMEONE WHO PROMOTES IDOLATRY OR IMMORALITY.**

1 Corinthians 5:1-FF; 6:9-11; 10:1-14; Ephesians 5:3-16

Revelation 2:26 - The great reward is to rule with him as kings in the new Kingdom (Psalm 2; Revelation 1:5, 6; 5:10; 20:6).

Revelation 2:28 - Jesus is the morning star (Revelation 22:16; 2 Peter 1:19); Balaam prophesied about the star (Numbers 24:17); the magi saw his star (Matthew 2:2). Isaiah 14:3-20 - the king of Babylon is called the morning star.

### **CHURCH IN SARDIS 3:1-6**

Sardis was an active commercial city and very wealthy. The city’s easy wealth seems to have made for slackness, which may have attributed to its capture by Cyrus the Persian (549BC) and by Antiochus (218BC). The city was built on a hill so steep that its defenses seemed impregnable. On both occasions, enemy troops scaled the precipice by night and found that the over-confident Sardians had set no guard. A great earthquake in AD 17 made a profound impression, but the city was soon rebuilt, partly owing to generous aid from the emperor Tiberius.

The most important religion at Sardis was the worship of Cybele. John does not mention anything like the persecutions at Smyrna and Pergamum or the heresies of the Nicolaitans. It may be that this church had not suffered disturbance from without and that its troubles stemmed from its comparatively sheltered existence. The temptation for the sheltered is always to take things easy, and they readily become slack. Only a few people have not soiled their clothes.

Revelation 3:1 - They had a good reputation that of being alive, but the truth was they were dead. Some churches today seem to flourish but have little to do with the truth.

Seven spirits (Revelation 1:4; 4:5; 5:6) The seven stars are the seven messengers according to 1:20. Jesus has authority in heaven and earth. Jesus is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to him (1 Peter 3:22).

Revelation 3:2 - The charge - **WAKE UP** - Romans 13:10-14; Mark 13:33-37; and Ephesians 5:11-21; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

The church may have pleased men, but it did not please God. They were content with mediocrity, too innocuous to be worth persecuting.

Revelation 3:3 - Over and over, he provides opportunity for repentance but also states there is an end if they do not.

“Come like a thief” is a proverbial expression for unexpectedness (Matthew 24:43; 1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10). His coming is not necessarily talking about the second return; it could be in judgment of that church.

Revelation 3:4&5 - “White” symbolizes purity, goodness, openness, truth, justification, and victory. The head and hair of Jesus are white in the first vision in Revelation 1:14. Those who walk with Jesus have white garments, Revelation 3:4 & 18, implying that our behavior has an influence on our holiness or cleanness. The 24 elders before the throne are dressed in white garments (Revelation 4:4).

“White” also symbolizes new beginnings. Those waiting in the grave are given white robes (Revelation 6:11). The blood of the lamb makes the robes white (Revelation 7:9, 13). Those who come out of the great tribulation have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Revelation 7:14

Book of life - Those who have their names written in the book of life will receive eternal life (Psalm 69:28; Daniel 7:9-14; 12:1 & 2; Luke 10:20; Philippians 4:3; Revelations 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27; Malachi 3:16; Exodus 32:32 & 33). Those whose names are not written in the book of life or have been erased from the book will forfeit eternity and be thrown into the lake of fire - Revelation 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; and 20:12-15.

Confess his name – Matthew 10:32; Luke 12:8

### **CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA 3:7-13**

The city was founded in 140 BC by Attalus II Philadelphus of Pergamum, located some twenty-eight miles southeast of Sardis, subject to earthquakes, rebuilt by Tiberius after the great

earthquake of A.D. 17. It is in the wine-growing district with Bacchus (Dionysos) as the chief deity. The city had fine Roman roads and commercial importance, though not a large city, Ramsay called it "the Missionary City" to promote the spread of the Greco-Roman civilization.

The church was evidently small (verse 8), but of good quality. Its enemies came from outside, not inside, for there is no mention of heresy or factiousness. It had a good deal in common with that at Smyrna. Both receive no blame, only praise. Both suffered from those who called themselves Jews and were not; both were persecuted. It would seem by the Romans both are assured that the opposition is satanic, and both are promised a crown.

Revelation 3:7 - The key of David – (Isaiah 22:15, 20-25) Christ, the heir of the throne of David, shall supplant all the less worthy stewards who have abused their trust in God's spiritual house (Luke 1:32 and 33). It rests with Christ to open or shut the doors of the New Jerusalem, deciding who is and who is not admitted (Revelation 1:18).

#### JESUS, SON OF DAVID

**Luke 1:32 and 33** - He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

**Psalms 89:3** - "I have made a covenant with My chosen; I have sworn to David My servant,

**Psalms 132:11** - The LORD has sworn to David, a truth from which He will not turn back; "Of the fruit of your body I will set upon your throne."

**Isaiah 9:7** - There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

**Jeremiah 23:5** - "Behold, the days are coming," declares the LORD, "When I shall raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as king and act wisely And do justice and righteousness in the land.

**Jeremiah 30:9** - But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up for them.

**Jeremiah 33:17** - "For thus says the LORD, 'David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel;'"

**Ezekiel 37:24** - "And My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd; and they will walk in My ordinances, and keep My statutes, and observe them.

**Ezekiel 37:25** - "And they shall live on the land that I gave to Jacob My servant, in which your fathers lived; and they will live on it, they, and their sons, and their sons' sons, forever; and David My servant shall be their prince forever.

**Hosea 3:5** - Afterward the sons of Israel will return and seek the LORD their God and David their king; and they will come trembling to the LORD and to His goodness in the last days.

Revelation 3:8 - Because they remained faithful, a door into the Kingdom was open to them.

Revelation 3:9 - Synagogue of Satan, same as 2:9, because they think they are true Jews, but in fact, they completely miss the mark. Christians are the true Jews (Romans 2:28 and 29). In contrast to a Jewish expectation that the Gentiles would eventually submit to them (derived from Isaiah 60:14), Christ says that these Jews will be made to fall down at your feet.

It seems the Jews thought themselves better than the Christians and therefore forbid them entrance into the synagogue and persecuted them. Jesus, having the keys of David and the promise of a pillar in the temple, are direct opposite of what the Christians experienced with the Jews in that city. In the end, these Jews will realize that they are not better but lower than the true believers.

Revelation 3:10 - "Word of My perseverance" - a repeated concept to the churches – 2:2, 3, 10, 13, 19, 25; 3:3, 8, 10, and 11.

The promise is to keep us from the great trial or temptation that will come upon the whole earth. The greatest trial will come immediately before the return, but history is filled with ages of trials and temptations. Every generation has them.

Revelation 3:11 - Crown, wreath - An adornment worn around the head, given as an award in athletic contests

The Charge - **HOLD FAST WHAT YOU HAVE SO THAT NO ONE WILL TAKE YOUR CROWN.**  
1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Matthew 16:27; Romans 2:6-11; Galatians 6:7-9; 2 Timothy 3:14; 4:8; Hebrews 3:6; 4:14; 10:23; 12:1-3; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:13; 5:1-4

Revelation 3:12 - "My God" is repeated four times in this verse. To be a pillar is symbolical, and there is no contradiction with Revelation 21:22, which tells us that there will be no Temple in the age to come. The details of one vision are not always consistent with those of another. In each, John is making a point with emphasis, and we should not try to dovetail one vision into the details of another. Here the point is that the believer who overcomes will be permanently in the presence of God.

The name of my God indicates the overcomer belongs to God.

The name of city indicates the overcomer will have access to New Jerusalem. Galatians 4:26; Hebrews 11:10; 12:22; and 13:14

Christ's new name indicates the overcomer belongs to Christ and will be with him in glory when he has new way of life.

### **CHURCH IN LAODICEA, 3:14-22**

Laodicea, at the junction of the valley of the Lycus and the Maeander and at the intersection of three important roads, commanded the approaches to Phrygia. It was one of the richest commercial centers in the world, so that we have here a picture of the church in an affluent society. Laodicea was noted for its banking, manufacture of clothing from the local black wool, and boasted a famous medical school.

An Interesting feature of the city's religious life was a colony of over 7,000 adult male Jews who had the right to preserve their own customs. Epaphras apparently established the church (Colossians 1:7; 4:12 and 13). Paul wrote them a letter (Colossians 4:16) which has been lost. The church deteriorated and thus received severe condemnation.

Revelation 3:14 - Jesus calls himself the "Amen" because his words are true. The remainder of the verse relates to 1:5. The epistle sent to the Colossians was sent also to Laodicea, which indicates their needs were similar. Colossians 1:15-18 talks about Christ as the origin of the new creation, as the first one risen from the dead. The main emphasis in Colossians was keeping Christ at the center of their faith and not allowing other things to take preeminence. In like manner, the Laodiceans did not hold Christ in his rightful position and were deceived into thinking they were doing well because they enjoyed physical prosperity.

Revelation 3:15 & 16 - The city was built at a location which was chosen only because of its position at an important road junction and lacked natural water supply. It obtained its water from some source lying to the south, perhaps the hot springs at Hierapolis a few miles away or some other of the many hot springs common in the area. The water traveled in stone pipes and, even after flowing several miles, it would probably still be warm when it reached the city. This forms a contrast with the hot springs at nearby Hierapolis and the cold refreshing water at Colossi. Hot water heals; cold-water refreshes; but lukewarm water is useless for either purpose, nauseous in taste, and fit only to be spewed out of the mouth.

The church was providing neither refreshment for the spiritually weary nor healing for the spiritually sick; it was very ineffective and hence distasteful to its Lord.

Revelation 3:17 - Laodicea was a self-reliant city; it did indeed receive help from the government in AD 17 when destroyed by earthquake. However, in AD 60, Tacitus could say of the city after a second earthquake – "Without any relief from us, recovered itself by its own resources." This commendable attitude in material things can be a disaster if carried over into the spiritual realm.

"Poor, blind and naked" refer to Laodicea's banking, medical school, and clothing manufactures.

Revelation 3:18 - White garments instead of the black to cover their unaware nakedness. Nakedness in the ancient world was the ultimate humiliation according to 2 Samuel 10:4; Isaiah 20:4; Ezekiel 16:37-39; Nahum 3:5. Contrariwise, to be clothed in fine clothing was to receive honor (Genesis 41:42; Esther 6:6-11; Daniel 5:29).

Eye salve may apply to the fact that there was a world famous remedy for sore eyes, especially associated with Laodicea. Christ alone gives real sight. John 9:39

Revelation 3:19 - The Charge - **BE ZEALOUS AND REPENT** (Hebrews 12:4-11; Proverbs 3:11; Romans 12:11; 2 Corinthians 7:10 and 11; and Titus 2:14)

Revelation 3:20 - What a fitting way to end this section of the epistle. 21 – The great reward is to sit with Christ on his throne, to be with Christ and to sit on his throne.

### REVELATION 4, GOD'S THRONE ROOM

Revelation 4:1 - "After these things I looked" - a method which, with slight variants, always introduces a new vision (Revelation 7:1, 9; 15:5; 18:1; and 19:1).

"Heaven" occurs 48 times in Revelation, and "heavens" (12:12) only one time. Many times, "heaven" figuratively refers to a place of God's abode. He does not live in the physical heaven or heavens. "Heaven" in this context refers to the spiritual realm.

The things John saw in the first vision were upon the earth; this vision is in heaven. God uses pictures to communicate truth. The important understanding is gained in understanding what the pictures represent. Almighty God is not a man, sitting on a majestic throne with a crown on His head. God is spirit and lives in a spiritual realm. The pictures communicate truth. God is sovereign over all, surrounded with spiritual beings that worship and help Him to exercise His authority.

The first voice he heard was in chapter 1:10ff – "the voice of Jesus which was loud like a trumpet."

"I will show you what must take place after these things" – the revelation had been about current things; this is now about future things.

"Must"- What is written is not a matter of chance, but about events which will certainly occur, for they are part of the God's divine plan. The Greek word expresses compulsion, necessity, or inevitability. See Revelation 1:1.

Revelation 4:2 - "John was in the spirit" implies a state of spiritual exaltation best described as a trance or vision similar to what Peter experienced with the vision of the blanket and animals in Acts 10 and to Paul being caught up into the third heaven and earth.

"Throne" or "thrones" occurs 48 times in Revelation from a total of 64 times in the New Testament. John is viewing the place of the absolute authority, dominion, rule, and sovereignty of

Almighty God who was and is and is to come. The supreme authority overall belongs only to Yahweh (Matthew 19:28; 25:31). The son of man has a throne, the throne of David here on earth (Luke 1:32). Today, Jesus sits on God's throne with Him (Revelation 12:5), and he promises that the over comers will sit with Jesus on his throne (Revelation 3:21). Satan also has a throne right now (Revelation 2:13). The 24 elders in the throne room of Yahweh also have thrones.

Revelation 4:3 - Exodus 28:17-21

Revelation 4:4 - Elders in the church - Acts 11:29, 30; 14:23; 15:1-35; 16:4, 5; 20:17, 28-32; 21:18; 1 Timothy 4:14; 5:17-19; Titus 1:5-9; Hebrews 11:2; James 5:14, 15; 1 Peter 5:1-5; 2 John 1:1; 3 John 1:1

Elders in heaven around the throne of God – Revelation 4:4, 10; 5:5, 6, 8, 11, 14; 7:11, 13; 11:16; 14:3; 19:4 – are spiritual beings who are in reverential subjection to God but also with ruling authority. Isaiah 24:23; Colossians 1:16

“White” - Symbolizes purity, goodness, openness, truth, and justification (3:4).

“Thrones” and “crowns” imply ruling authority. These elders are obviously subordinate to and in harmony with God. Apparently, some hierarchy is in place in the spiritual realm.

Revelation 4:5 - ASV - “And out of the throne proceed lightning and voices and thunders.” The same description is in Revelation 11:19 and 16:18. Lightning and thunder are awe-inspiring, and in this context, “voices” is understood in the same way. At Mount Sinai, God presented Himself in a similar fashion according to Exodus 19. Isaiah 29 has comparable wording as it speaks of the destruction of Jerusalem, which comes up later in Revelation.

Seven spirits (Revelation 1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6) only place in the Bible the living creatures and the elders speak to John. The seven spirits do not seem to have an independent personality; rather, they work similarly to our holy spirit.

Revelation 4:6 - Ezekiel 1:4-28 Ezekiel sees the four living creatures from all sides, and notes that each has all four images as part of them. John sees only one side.

They are the closest living beings near God – lion, calf, man, & eagle.

“Eyes before and eyes behind” means they can always keep their eyes upon God while also seeing what is in front of them. “Eyes” can be understood as spiritual perception.

Revelation 4:7 - The four living creatures stand for everything that is noblest, strongest, wisest, and swiftest in nature. Each of them has the pre-eminence in its own particular sphere and world. The lion is supreme among beasts; the ox is supreme among cattle; the eagle is supreme among birds; and man is supreme among all creatures. The lion is the king of beasts, the

noblest of them all. The laboring ox is the strongest of beasts. The eagle is the swiftest of all birds. Man is the wisest in all creation.

Revelation 4:8 - Isaiah 6:1-7 The seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings. With two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. The wings make them mobile and are used for covering. The seraphim are positioned in a different location than the living creatures; so although they seem similar, they are likely not identical.

A second time their eyes are mentioned; the all-seeing function is clearly important. The seraphim and the living creatures do have this identical – they praise God continually saying “Holy, holy, holy is Yahweh God.”

“Rest not day and night saying” implies that most spiritual beings in existence, those ever in the presence of God, continually praise God. Whenever we are in His presence, we cannot help but praise (as when you see a rainbow, Grand Canyon, ocean...).

Three outstanding characteristics of God:

- 1) He is completely holy. Holy, Holy, Holy - no darkness, uncleanness, unrighteousness  
His holiness triumphs over evil.
- 2) He is the Almighty (Genesis 17:1; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Revelation 1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7, 14; 19:6, 15; 21:22).
- 3) Who was and who is and who is to come (1:4, 8; 11:17; and 16:5)

Revelation 4:9-11 - In heaven, God is worshipped unceasingly. God is referred to in terms of majesty (the throne) and eternity (lives forever and ever). The elders join in. They prostrate themselves before him . . . on the throne, worship the Eternal, and throw down their crowns before Him. All these are ways of giving Him the chief place. They themselves worship; they take the lowliest place. The throwing down of their crowns expresses the truth that He alone reigns. All other sovereignty must yield to His.

Glory - magnificence, excellence, preeminence, dignity, grace

Honor - esteem, reverence, respect given based upon value or position

Power - moral power and excellence of soul

The bottom line - Almighty God, Yahweh, created all things, and because of His will, they exist.  
Revelation 10:6; 14:7; Exodus 20:11; Proverbs 16:4; Acts 14:15; Romans 11:36

## REVELATION 5

Chapter 4 focused upon God and ended with worship of Him in verse 11; and in chapter 5, the focus was upon Jesus Christ and ended with worship of Yahweh and His Son (Revelation 5:13 and 14). These two chapters are very important for an understanding of the message of the book of Revelation. Life has many difficulties and challenges. We feel ourselves caught up in the

world's evil and misery, and we cannot break free. We all at times feel a sense of hopelessness and helplessness in the grip of forces stronger than we are. The world's agony is real, and humanity's inability to break free is also very real. Chapter five (with the seals no one can open) stresses our inability to resolve problems. However, much more importantly, we see that through the Lamb, the victory is won.

A series with seven starts in this chapter and continues on – seven seals; during the seven seals, seven trumpets begin; and later seven bowls with the seven last plagues are given.

Revelation covers the end times. John does not take in the whole in any one vision or series of visions. He deals with different aspects. Sometimes, he covers the same ground from different points of view, and sometimes, he takes in different features of the landscape. Thus, we may legitimately expect some things to recur in the visions, but also new details will make their appearance.

We can compare with Jesus' apocalyptic discourse in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21.

Revelation 5:2 - The angel's voice is loud, penetrating heaven, earth, and the dead under the earth.

Revelation 5:3 - No one in heaven, earth, or who has ever lived is qualified.

Revelation 5:6 - The first of 28 times "lamb" occurs in Revelation are the same Greek word, "*arnion*." It occurs one other time in NT, in John 21:15. Another Greek word translated "lamb" is used only four times (in John 1:29, 36; Acts 8:32; 1 Peter 1:19).

Jesus as the lamb was the sacrifice necessary for the redemption of everything in heaven and earth. In Revelation, the fulfillment of the purpose of the age is recorded by victory of the slain lamb. The lamb is the most unlikely creature to represent the greatest accomplishment.

## REVELATION 6

Revelation 6:1 - Seven seals are opened by the lamb between Revelation 6:1-8:1, with an interlude between the sixth and the seventh, in Revelation 7:1-17.

<u>Revelation 6</u>	<u>Zechariah 6</u>
2 - First seal, white horse	2 - First chariot, red horses
3 - Second seal, red horse	2 - Second chariot, black horses
5 - Third seal, black horse	3 - Third chariot, white horses
7 - Fourth seal, ashen horse	3 - Fourth chariot, dappled horses

Revelation 6:2 - "Come" is not addressed to John as AV translates "come and see;" rather, it is to the horsemen. It is a call to action.

The victorious warrior rode on a white horse. The crown is Greek "*stephanos*" and could be translated "wreath." It is an adornment worn around the head and given as an award (Matthew 27:29; Mark 15:17; John 19:2, 5; 1 Corinthians 9:25; Revelation 2:10; 4:4, 10; 6:2; 9:7; 12:1). Greek "*diadema*" is a royal crown (Revelation 12:3; 13:1; and 19:12).

The rider is a victorious warrior bent on conquest. If this is referring to events that have happened throughout history, it is the spiritual influence behind the conquering men. Men carry out the influences of the spiritual horsemen. The four horsemen taken together indicate destruction, horror, terror. This one stands for war, the triumphant war of conquest.

The bow - Isaiah 41:2; Jeremiah 49:35; 51:3, 56; Psalm 46:9; Ezekiel 39:3; Hosea 1:5

Revelation 6:3 and 4 - While the rider was given a large sword, he is not said to have killed anyone. Men kill one another. He takes peace away, and men proceed to do all the damage. The word rendered "slay" is not the usual one. It has a meaning like to slaughter or butcher.

Revelation 6:5 - The black horse symbolizes famine. Ezekiel 4:9 and 10; Leviticus 26:26

Revelation 6:6 - The measurement indicates great lack. A denarius is equivalent to a day's wage. Barley is a low-grade subsistence for a family. Some think the oil and wine may mean the necessities of life for the poor will be in short supply, while the luxuries of the rich will not cease. The picture is famine that is not yet a disaster. Things are difficult, but the end is not yet.

The first three seals seem to have occurred simultaneously and repeatedly in history.

Revelation 6:8 - "Ashen" is the same as "pale" that connects with death. Over and over throughout history, major portions of the population have been eliminated by sword, famine, pestilence, and wild beasts (and still is today).

"Over a fourth of the earth" - The Greek word used for "earth" refers to the surface of the earth and not the people.  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the land is covered by water, and so  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the earth is land (which means death has authority over all the land and, indeed, it has since the seal was broken). How many people die from old age?

The first four seals with the four horses is the beginning of sorrows our Lord Jesus spoke about, recorded in the Gospels (Matthew 24:4-14; Mark 13:5-13; and Luke 21:8-19).

Revelation 6:9 - The fifth seal reminds us that the images that John sees are not to be taken literally; rather, we are to glean the truth that the images communicate. Horses did not literally ride out of heaven, nor did the dead people talk. The point is they will remain in the grave until the appointed time. God has them in mind. They are clean and will be revenged.

Throughout history, there has been a persistent hostility toward deeply-committed Christians on the part of those wielding power. It is manifest today, and it will be so till the end of the age.

Romans 12:19 - Christians should not pursue personal vengeance. Retribution is a divine prerogative.

White robes are victory robes. The martyrs appeared to have been defeated by their enemies, but actually, they had been given the victory by God.

The end will not come until the full number of the martyrs is complete. This does not mean that God wants a specific number of martyrs and that He waits until somehow that number is reached. He is working out His plan, in which there is a place for other martyrs. Some had and some still have a problem in the fact that God does not punish sin here and now. A proper understanding of the cross is helpful. Because of the cross, believers will be judged by Jesus' sacrificial blood. However, the cross also assures that unrepentant sinners will be judged by their sins. God waits, and the number of martyrs grows to its completion, but the final destruction of evil is certain. It is not a question of whether but of when.

Revelation 6:12-17 - The sixth seal is future, for nothing like this has happened before.

#### OVERVIEW OF THE SEVEN SEALS

The way Yahweh dealt with Egypt stands as a type for what will happen in the end. The plagues are progressive as are the beginning of sorrows and the great tribulation. Egypt provides a type but is in no way identical.

- 1- Water is turned to blood, Exodus 7:14-25
- 2- Frogs over the land, Revelation 8:1-32
- 3- Lice, Revelation 8:16-32
- 4- Cattle die, Revelation 9:1-7
- 5- Boils on man and beast, Revelation 9:8-17
- 6- Thunder, hail, and fire, Revelation 9:18-35
- 7- Locusts, Revelation 10:1-29
- 8- Darkness over the land three days, Revelation 10:21-29
- 9- Angel of death, first born die

The Egyptians' destruction is completed in the Red Sea.

Beginning of sorrows or beginning of birth pangs - Seals 1-5

- 1- White horse conquering and to conquer
- 2- Red horse takes peace from the earth; men slay one another
- 3- Black horse, pair of scales, famine

- 4- Ashen [pale] horse death and Hades; ¼ of the earth killed by sword, famine, pestilence and wild beasts.
- 5- Slain souls must wait until the right time

Great tribulation and return of Christ, seals 6 and 7

- 6- Great earthquake - Revelation 8:5, 11:13, 16:18; Isaiah 29:6; Ezekiel 38:19-23; Joel 2:10; Zechariah 14:5 & 6
- Sun becomes black, moon like blood - Isaiah 13:10; 50:3; Ezekiel 32:6-8; Joel 2:10 & 11; Zephaniah 1:14-18
- Stars of the sky fell - Revelation 8:10; 9:1; Daniel 8:10
- Sky split apart - Revelation 20:11; Isaiah 34:4; 2Peter 3:10
- Every mountain and Island moved out of their places - Revelation 16:20; Isaiah 54:10; Jeremiah 4:24; Nah. 1:5
- People hid in caves - Isaiah 2:19-21
- Hid from the wrath of the Lamb - Revelation 19:15

Matthew 24:4-14 - Beginning of sorrows

Matthew 24:15 - Abomination of Desolation [trigger for great tribulation]

Matthew 24:16-31 – Great tribulation and return of Christ

Mark 13:5-13 - Beginning of birth pangs

Mark 13:14 - Abomination of desolation

Mark 13:14-27 – Great tribulation and return of Christ

Luke 21:8-19 - Beginning of sorrows

Luke 21:20-28 – Great tribulation and return of Christ