



# Part 40: In the end...

Word ALIVE



The revelation given to John



## Background Notes -

**PURPOSE:** To present the last and most mysterious book of the Bible – Revelation. The book discusses the spiritual battle which has taken place, is taking place, and will take place at the end of time, with Christ’s return and ultimate triumph over evil, which in fact is already underway. Contrary to popular opinion, the book does not intend to predict when the world will end (which would contradict Jesus’ own insistence that the time would not be known anyway!)

**AUTHOR:** Arguably, John the Evangelist, or one of his followers.

**DATE:** The end of the first century (mid 90s).

**STYLE:** The trademark of apocalyptic literature is the use of vivid imagery to represent events past, present, and future. As in parts of Ezekiel and Daniel, Revelation uses historical figures and events surrounding them to draw a parallel to current events, or prophesy events, including the end of the world.



## Opening Quotes

“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the One who is and who was and who is to come.” Rv 1:8

“To the One seated on the throne, and to the Lamb, be praise and honor forever.” Rv 5:13

“Do no harm to the land of the sea until we imprint this seal on the foreheads of the servants of God, 144,000 from every tribe of Israel.” Rv 7:3

“These are the ones who have survived the great trial; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” Rv 7:14

“A great sign appeared – a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet...” Rv 12:1

“I saw a new heavens and a new earth. The former had passed away. I saw a new Jerusalem, beautiful as a bride prepared to meet her husband.” Rv 21:1

“He shall wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, crying out or pain, for the former world has passed away. The One who sat on the throne said to me, ‘See, I make all things new!’” Rv 21:4

“I saw no temple in the city. The Lord, God Almighty, is its temple – He and the Lamb.” Rv 21:22

“Remember, I am coming soon. I bring with me the reward that will be given to each man as his conduct deserves.” Rv 22:12

“I am the Root and Offspring of David. The Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come!’ Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!” Rv 22:20

| the BIG PICTURE |                       | → : LAW, History, Writings, Prophets |  | → : key covenants in our Father’s plan  |  |
|-----------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| 12 Periods ▼    | Plot ▼                | Other books related to period ▼      |  | stories in each period ▼  |  |
| BC              | 🌐 THE BEGINNINGS      | GN 1-11                              | Ps 8, 104  | Creation, Adam & Eve, Cain & Abel, Noah’s ark, Tower of Babel   |  |
| 1850            | 👤 THE PATRIARCHS      | GN 12-50                             |  | Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Israel), Joseph, Melchizedek   |  |
| 1250            | ⚠️ EXODUS FROM EGYPT  | EX                                   |  | Moses, the burning bush, the plagues, passover, exodus  |  |
| 1200            | ♣️ JOURNEY TO CANAAN  | NM, Jos                              | LV, DT   | Sinai desert, 10 commandments, Levites, Law, Joshua   |  |
| 1100            | 👤 THE JUDGE CYCLE     | Jg                                   | Ruth   | 12 tribes, Gideon, Samson, Ruth, Samuel   |  |
| 1030            | 👤 KINGS & PROPHETS    | 1 & 2 S                              | 1 Ch, Ps, Prov   | Saul, David, Solomon, Jerusalem, the Temple   |  |
| 1000            | 👤 THE DIVIDED KINGDOM | 1 Kg                                 | 2 Ch, Prov,  | Israel (N), Judah (S), Elijah & Elisha, Isaiah, Assyrian exile  |  |
| 721<br>587      | 👤 BABYLONIAN EXILE    | 2 Kg                                 | 2 Ch, Tob, Hos, Am, Hab, Is, Jer, Lam, Jl, Mic, Zp, Jon, Nah, Ob, Ez, Dan, Bar       | Babylonians, “major” prophets, Isaiah (to Israel), Jeremiah (to Jerusalem), Ezekiel (to the Exiles)       |  |
| 538             | ⚙️ THE RESTORATION    | Ezr, Neh                             | Est, Judith, Hag, Zech, Mal, Job, Ecc, Songs   | Cyrus, 2 <sup>nd</sup> temple, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Law, “minor” prophets, new writings                        |  |
| 163<br>63       | 👤 THE REPURIFICATION  | 1 Mac                                | Dn, 2Mac, Sirach, Wisdom   | Greeks, Maccabean revolt, Hasmonean Dynasty, Romans, Jewish sects (Pharisees, Saducees, Zealots, Essenes) |  |
| AD              | 👤 JESUS CHRIST        | LK                                   | MT, MK, JN   | Incarnation, Good News, New Law, Cross & Resurrection   |  |
| 33<br>70        | 👤 APOSTOLIC CHURCH    | Acts                                 | Rm, 1&2Co, Ga, Ep, Phil, Col, 1&2Th, 1&2 Tm, Ti, Phm, Hb, Ja, 1P, 2P, 1,2&3J, Jd, Rv | Pentecost, council, journeys, epistles, Body/Bride of Christ  |  |



## *The Story of Part 40: In the end...*



An angel appeared to John on the island of Patmos and revealed to him a series of visions. First were 7 lampstands surrounding the Son of Man (the seven churches of Asia, representing all the churches, serving Christ). The Son of Man was brilliantly adorned, wielding stars and a sword, announcing himself as the Alpha and Omega (first and last), with messages to the churches. Some of them had been faithful to the gospel, while others had become lax. Those who were good, or who “conquered”, would be rewarded, while those who grew lax, or “were conquered”, were warned that their place would be taken by someone else. Some of the rewards were: conquering the nations with an iron rod, avoiding the second death (damnation), a white stone with a secret name, the morning star, not having your name blotted out from the book of life, access to the tree of life, and sitting with Christ on his throne.

In another vision, 24 elders in white robes (the 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 apostles), and 4 living creatures (the evangelists), surrounded “One seated on a throne” (God the Father). Before the One was a slaughtered Lamb (God’s Son) with 7 horns and spirits of God. The 4 living creatures (an angel, a lion, an ox, and an eagle) covered with eyes, hailed the One on the throne, the Creator. He held 7 scrolls in his hand and asked, “Who is worthy of opening these?” John responded “The Son of David!” (referring to the Lamb). The living creatures and the elders fell and worshipped the One and the Lamb, offering incense mixed with the prayers of the saints. They and a throng of angels sang in praise, “You are worthy, and your blood has redeemed all the saints!”

The opening of the first 4 of the 7 scrolls summoned four horsemen. The first rode a white horse and conquered with a bow. The second rode a red horse and took peace from the earth with a great sword. The third rode a black horse and came to measure a day’s pay in wheat and barley, warning not to damage the oil and wine. The fourth rider was Death, or Hades, on a green horse, with authority to kill a quarter of the earth with sword, famine, pestilence, and wild animals. The opening of the 5<sup>th</sup> scroll revealed under an altar all the souls who were slaughtered for God, crying out, “Lord, how long before you avenge our blood?” They were given white robes and told to rest until the allotted number of fellow servants slain in God’s name would join them. With the opening of the 6<sup>th</sup> scroll, the earth quaked, the sun blackened, the moon became blood red, and stars fell from the sky. The sky was scrolled up, mountains were removed, and everyone, rich or poor, hid in fear, shouting, “Hide us from the Lamb!”

Four angels then held back “the 4 winds from the corners of the earth,” for they were not to harm the earth until the 144,000 servants of God were gathered, representing the tribes of Israel, with a seal on their

foreheads. These were joined by a countless multitude. All wore white robes, waved palms and sang, “Salvation belongs to God, seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!” They stood around the elders and living creatures. All fell and worshipped. All of these dressed in white were the ones who had washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. Now they worship day and night, free from suffering, for the Lamb is their shepherd who gives them the water of life and wipes away every tear. It was time to open the 7<sup>th</sup> scroll.

There was silence. After another angel offered incense with the prayers of the saints to God, 7 angels were given trumpets. The first 4 of the 7 trumpet blasts brought hail, fire and blood, mountains into the sea, and a star called “Wormwood” falling from heaven. A third of the earth and its seas were destroyed. A third of the sun, moon, and stars were darkened. When the 5<sup>th</sup> trumpet was blown, a star fell from heaven and was given the keys to a bottomless, burning pit. Locusts like warriors found whoever did not have the mark of the servants of God and inflicted on them the pain of a scorpion’s sting for five months. When the 6<sup>th</sup> trumpet was blown, angels of destruction were loosed and 200 million troops riding dragonlike horses killed a third of the world, and yet people were found unrepentant of idol worship, fornication, murder, and theft! A mighty angel came down, put one leg on earth and the other in the sea. Roaring like thunder, he gave John a little scroll to eat. It was sweet as honey but bitter in the stomach. He was then given a measuring rod to measure the temple, while the courtyard just outside was trampled for 42 months by the nations.

Before the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet was blown, this message was given. Two witnesses had once stood before the Lord with the power to prophesy, turn water to blood, block the rains, and bring plagues. When their testimony was finished, the beast from the bottomless pit killed them. (These could represent any number of biblical figures persecuted by secular rulers.) Their bodies would lie in the city prophetically called Sodom and Egypt (probably Jerusalem in her unfaithfulness). Those who killed them would gloat until the witnesses rose three days later and terrified them! They then ascended into heaven. 1/10 of the city fell, 7000 were killed, and the rest glorified God. The time had come for the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet to be blown.

“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of the Lord and his Messiah for ever!” It was time to judge the dead and reward the servants of the Lord. And it was time to destroy the earth. The temple was opened, and the ark could be seen. Then came a wondrous sign. A woman, clothed with the sun, crowned with 12 stars, with the moon under her feet (symbolizing both Mary and Israel) was pregnant and about to give birth.

A great dragon with 7 heads and 10 horns swept with its tail 1/3 of the stars from heaven down to earth. He stood ready to devour the child when it was born, but the child was snatched away too soon, taken to God and his throne. A great war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels battled the dragon (Satan) and his fallen angels. Satan was cast down to earth, for there was no place in heaven for this Accuser of God's children. The devil then ravaged the earth, for he knew his time was short. He pursued the mother of the child, but she was taken up on a great pair of eagle's wings to a place in the wilderness prepared by God where he nourished her for "a time, another time, and a half of a time". The devil (or serpent) vomited water from his mouth to try and drown the woman, but the ground helped the woman by opening up and swallowing the water. Enraged, the devil made war on the woman's children, "those who keep the commands of God and hold the testimony of Jesus" (the children of the new Israel, the children of Mary).

As the dragon stood on a shore, a beast empowered by the dragon rose from the sea. It had 10 horns with diadems, and heads with blasphemous names written on it (false gods). One of its heads looked like it had recovered from a mortal blow (reminiscent of the serpent biting the heel of the child of the woman in Genesis). Amazingly, the world was fooled into following the beast. Another beast then arose and convinced the people to worship the first beast (sounding like the Caesar worship of the time). In contrast to the mark of the servants of God, the beasts branded the people with their own mark: 666 (which turns out to be a numeric equivalent of Caesar Nero's name).

Meanwhile, the "firstfruits of God", with the mark of God and his Lamb on their foreheads, who had conquered the beast in their lives, gathered with the Lamb and the 144,000 on Mt. Zion and sang a great song of Moses. An angel proclaimed, "Fear God, for it's judgment time!" Another cried, "Babylon the great has fallen!" (referring to either Jerusalem or Rome in their abandonment of God). A third angel announced that those with the mark of the beast would face an endless torment of fire. As the Son of Man appeared, with sickle in hand, another angel urged him, "Reap! The harvest is ripe!" His angels joined him in swinging their sickles, and "the vintage was thrown into the wine press of God's wrath" from which blood would flow.


7 angels emerged from a tent to finish up God's wrath. The 4 living creatures gave the angels 7 bowls of wrath: painful sores, death of all creatures, rivers of blood, scouring sun, darkness, droughts, frogs, and evil spirits gathering around Armageddon for a final battle. The previous eschatological battle mentioned shows us that the kingdom of God has already been established on earth (the Church) in spite of the devil's reign. We are already in the last times, for Christ *is* the final revelation of God, and all that remains is for us to persevere in faith until he returns. The 7<sup>th</sup> bowl of wrath was thrown into the air. Lightning, thunder, hail and an earthquake accompanied a shout from the temple, "It is done!" (Jesus' own cry from the cross).

The "Great Babylon" was split into three. A scarlet beast full of blasphemous names with 7 heads and 10 horns appeared, with a sign on its forehead: "Babylon the great, mother of whores and of earth's abominations." Kings and peoples (Jewish and Gentile alike) had "fornicated" by betraying God, their spouse. In this, the people played the whore, following their rulers, the mother of whores who drank the blood of the prophets and saints who witnessed to Jesus. The beast's horns and heads stood for mountains and kings (empires of old who ruled God's people, or perhaps the 7 hills of Rome, which worshipped the Caesars who persecuted the Church). Eventually the horns and the beast themselves would hate the mother of whores! Another voice called God's people from amongst the fornicators (the saints were mixed in with the sinners), for the kings and their kingdoms would be laid waste. Before the battle ended came a heavenly nuptial.

A voice of multitudes sang in the marriage of the Lamb and his Bride, adorned in white linen, the righteous deeds of the saints. A white horse was ridden by "Faithful and True", or "Word of God", whose robe was dipped in blood. The armies of heaven followed this King of Kings, who would rule the earth with a rod of iron. Now back to the battle!

The angel with the keys to the bottomless pit had locked up Satan (a.k.a the dragon, serpent, or devil) for 1000 years (again, possibly the present age, between the establishment of the Church and the second coming of Christ). Those who were killed for refusing to worship the beast reigned with Christ during the 1000 years. This was a "first resurrection," for the "second death" no longer had power over them (echoing the promise to Peter and the keys of heaven). The priests of Christ would reign these 1000 years. At the end of the 1000 years Satan was released.

This was the final chapter. After surrounding the saints and the beloved city (no longer a whore, but the Bride), the beast and his false prophets were cast down into the fire where they would torment day and night. Then John saw a great One seated on a white throne. The heavens and the earth fled! All the dead appeared before the throne, and the books were opened, as was the Book of Life. The dead were judged according to their works recorded in the books. Even death and Hades themselves were thrown into the lake of fire (the "second death" – eternal damnation).

John closes the Bible: "I saw a new heaven and a new earth, and a New Jerusalem, beautiful and pure, the home of God among us who will be his children and he our God and Father. There was no more death, and no more suffering. There was no temple, for here the Lord himself *is* the temple, God Almighty and the Lamb!" The angel told John to worship God. "Behold, I make all things new! Let the sinner go on sinning and the righteous go on being righteous, for the time is near. It is I, Jesus, the root *and* the descendant of David! I am the morning star! Let the Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come!' I am coming soon!" 



## Defending the Faith: The Bible Alone?

*"Revelation warns us not to add to God's word. The Church has added the traditions of men to the Word of God. The Bible is all you need to know God's teaching."*

First, John is referring to the last book, not the whole Bible. As for "sola scriptura" ("Bible alone"), the problem can be summed up, "which Bible?" A perusal of any bookstore will reveal an endless number of translations, and more importantly, with several passages whose meanings contradict each other, depending on which translation you're talking about!

When Martin Luther began the Protestant Reformation, one of his goals was to return the Church to its biblical foundations. But in attempting to do so, he and the other Reformers rejected the ordained hierarchy, the teaching authority, and questioned the biblical canon, of the Church. The practical problem with "Bible only" Christianity is that the Bible cannot tell you which translation of itself is the most accurate! The scriptural problem with *sola scriptura* is that it is, in a word, unscriptural! Nowhere does the Bible refer to itself as the *sole* source of God's revelation. On the contrary, it points beyond itself to a Sacred Tradition (1 Th 2:13) and an authoritative Church (Mt 18:17, 1 Tim 3:15)! How, then, can we know which Church has the authority to interpret the difficult passages of Scripture, not to mention its canon?

A popular answer is that the Holy Spirit will guide the individual to discern the truth written therein. But the Bible itself teaches that interpretation is *not* up to the individual, but a matter of men (plural) guided by the Holy Spirit (2 P 1:20). But of the 30,000 (and counting) denominations, each claiming to be guided by the Holy Spirit, which is true?

The answer must be historically sound. While the Protestant Reformation began in the 1500s, and the Greek Orthodox Churches formally divided from the Catholic Church in 1054, there was only one, universal,

apostolic Church for the first thousand years of Christianity's existence. And since Christ promised to be with his Church to the end of time (Mt 28:20), it is impossible to imagine that the Holy Spirit was simply absent during the first thousand years. The only Church with a historically credible claim to be the original Church founded by Christ is the Catholic Church. Now, whether that Church has become corrupt through the ages, growing further and further from the biblical Church is another matter. Hopefully, the other "Defending the Faith" articles have addressed these issues, referring profusely to the Scriptures to show that such corruption has never taken place in the Church's teaching authority ("Magisterium") and sacramental ministry, even though history has made it clear that the Church has always been made of saints and sinners, as Christ himself said it would be (Mt 13:29).

And though the Catholic Church maintains her teaching authority, she does not place herself above the Word of God, but is its servant (CCC 86). Any accusation of the Church suppressing the Bible in the past can be shown to be resulting from biased *anti-clerical* versions of the Bible. And if Catholics are criticized for being biblically ignorant (a generalization that can be made of any denomination), the Church itself cannot be blamed for this. Individuals who pride themselves on memorizing the Bible while rejecting the Church have yet to provide a satisfactory explanation on their acceptance of both a shortened canon and a re-interpretation of key doctrines which have been held by the Christian community from the earliest times to the present day.



## Expressing the Faith: On Eagle's Wings

An inspirational song based on one of the images of God's protection found in the Book of Revelation.

*You who dwell in the shelter of the Lord,  
Who abide in his shadow for life,  
Say to the Lord, "My refuge,  
My rock in whom I trust!"*

***And he will raise you up on eagle's wings,  
Bear you on the breath of dawn,  
Make you to shine like the sun,  
And hold you in the palm of his hand.***

*The snare of the fowler will never capture you,  
And famine will bring you no fear.  
Under his wings, your refuge,  
his faithfulness, your shield  
(chorus)*

*You need not fear the terror of the night,  
Nor the arrow that flies by day;  
Though thousands fall about you,  
Near you it shall not come.  
(chorus)*

*For to his angels he's given a command  
To guard you in all of your ways;  
Upon their hands they will bear you up,  
Lest you dash your foot against a stone.  
(chorus)*