

The 7 Spirits of Revelation

Today I'm starting a new series on the Book of Revelation (note that is singular and not plural, and that theologians tend to discount people who use the plural). In keeping with this teaching series' focus on the Holy Spirit, I've titled the series "The 7 Spirits of Revelation", because, as we'll see, the Holy Spirit plays a big role in the book and often the book uses the term "7 Spirits". As we'll see, this doesn't mean the Holy Spirit has seven parts or is comprised of seven different "sub-spirits", but that this refers to the divinely complete Indwelling Spirit in all of Christians.

The Book of Revelation is a wild ride! It's chock-full of vivid imagery and symbols depicting dramatic scenes of destruction and carnage. In this series, I want to spend a good portion of time considering whether Revelation gives us clues about the end of time and whether that may be in our lifetimes, but we'll need to work up to that. If we jump straight into the prophecies without a foundational knowledge the various symbols and a plausibly limit the range of what they might mean, there are too many degrees of freedom. Branches of Christianity that have done this and used Revelation as a source of doctrine have created wildly speculative beliefs that their adherents are firmly convinced of, but that are so far removed from orthodox Christians views that two can't even talk to each other.

To that end, I tried to clear my mind of any preexisting beliefs with regards to Revelation. It wasn't that difficult because the churches I've attended in my past have avoided the topic almost entirely—and this is a big problem. The church I most recently attended and went to for three decades produced a couple of books and a couple of teaching series early in the 90's. Their premise was that Revelation is too bizarre for church doctrines and too difficult to interpret for prophecy.

Part 1: History, Structure and Symbolism

God speaks to and through people throughout the Bible, but is there a particular way or "channel" that God uses? In both testaments, we see God speaking to people in dreams and visions. Today, we'll go through several examples of God using dreams and visions to communicate to people through both spiritual *and unspiritual* people. In what circumstances did God not use dreams or visions? Does God still communicate to people this way today?

I. When was Revelation written?

We know that the Apostle John received the revelation and wrote it down while he was on exile on the island of Patmos.

The question then is, when was John on the island of Patmos? There are two generally accepted time frames, the latter of which is much more widely accepted.

When was John on Patmos? A minority of scholars argue for time frame of 64–68 AD during Nero, but the dominant patristic testimony and much modern scholarship favor the late-90s Domitian setting.

Early View – Under Nero from 64 to 68 AD. A minority of theologians believe this.

- Clement of Alexandria says John returned from Patmos “after the tyrant’s death”—he doesn’t name the emperor. Many later writers take the “tyrant” to be Domitian, but early-date writers note the line itself is ambiguous.
- A Syriac prologue/title to Revelation (in later Syriac tradition) explicitly says John was banished by Nero, but these prologues are much later (at least 6th-century transmission).
- The “number of the beast” (666 / 616) points Nero Caesar.
- The *Nero redivivus* legend (the “dead yet lives” tyrant) after Nero’s suicide (AD 68).
- Revelation 11’s measuring of the Temple sounds like it still stands and thus had not yet been destroyed (i.e. pre-70 AD).
- The “seven kings” of Rev 17. Some schemes count Roman emperors and that lines up with **Nero**, placing Revelation’s composition in the 60s. But counting the emperors is notoriously contestable.

Late View – Under Domitian from 95 to 96 AD. The majority of theologians believe this.

- Domitian reigned from 81 to 96 AD. That puts John on Patmos c. AD 95–96.
- The earliest explicit witness (late 2nd century) is Irenaeus, who says the Apocalypse “was seen...towards the end of Domitian’s reign”.
- Victorinus of Pettau (3rd century), is the earliest commentator on Revelation, and likewise places John’s banishment under Domitian and his return after Nerva.
- Eusebius (early 4th century) repeats this, saying John “was condemned to dwell on the island of Patmos” during Domitian’s persecution and that after Domitian’s death the Senate rescinded his sentences and exiles were recalled under the next emperor Nerva in AD 96.
- Imperial-cult pressure as the dominant problem (Rev 13; 14:9–11; 15:2; 19:20). Revelation’s central conflict is worshipping the emperor and his image vs. worship of the Lamb. This fits Domitian. Domitian also fits better with the economic sanctions (Rev 13:17).

- Laodicea’s self-satisfied wealth (Rev 3:17). There was an earthquake in 60 AD that hurt Laodicea, but a strong comeback late in the century (Tacitus).
- A mature, second-generation church network (Rev 2–3). Churches like Pergamum, Thyatira, and Sardis became established much later in the 1st century.

Therefore, I’m going with the late first century writing of Revelation, but we can keep the early writing as a possibility.

II. The Structure of Revelation

The book divides into three parts, exactly as Jesus commands John in Rev 1:19: “Write what you have seen, what is, and what is to take place after this.”

Section	Content	Mystical?	Function
1:9–20	“What you have seen” — the vision of the glorified Christ	Yes – lots of apocalyptic symbols and imagery	The <i>revelatory authority</i>
2–3	“What is” — the present state of the seven churches	No – very practical and pragmatic discourse on the state of each church.	The <i>covenant inspection</i>
4–22	“What will take place after this” — the heavenly/apocalyptic visions	Absolutely! This is what Revelation is known for.	The <i>eschatological revelation</i>

Chapters 2 and 3 therefore serve as the bridge between the earthly condition (“what is”) and the cosmic unveiling (“what will be”).

III. Numeric Symbols of Revelation

Number	Usual meaning(s)	Notes / anchors	Acceptance
3	Divine completeness, solemn emphasis	Triadic formulas; intensification	Common but debated
3½	Broken seven → limited persecution	Dan 7:25; Rev 11–13. Also 42 months, 1260 days, or “a time, times, and a half a time”	Broad consensus
4	Cosmic totality (four corners/winds)	Dan 7; Zech 2; Rev 7:1	Broad consensus
6	Falling short of 7; human/earthly	Pre-7 incompleteness	Common but debated
7	Fullness/completeness; divine order	7 spirits, seals, trumpets, bowls	Broad consensus
10	Totality of power/kingdoms	10 horns/kings (Dan 7; Rev 13, 17)	Broad consensus
12	People of God (Israel; apostolic)	12 tribes/apostles; 24 elders	Broad consensus
24	Priestly completeness (12+12)	Rev 4:4; cf. 1 Chr 24 courses	Common but debated
40	Testing/judgment period	Wilderness motif carried over	Common but debated
70	Nations/completeness of judgment	Dan’s 70; LXX Gen 10 nations	Common but debated
666, 616	Human/imperial counterfeit; gematria (Nero Caesar)	Rev 13:18; textual variant 616	Common but debated
1,000	Great magnitude/“age”	Millennium of Rev 20	Common but debated
144,000	Symbolic fullness of God’s people	Rev 7, 14; 12×12×1,000	Common but debate

Part 2: Symbols and More Symbols

Review: Last week I kicked off the series on the book of Revelation. I took it slowly to start with, talking about the possible dates Revelation was written, its 3-part structure, and we started discussing the many symbols used in Revelation. I am accepting the 95-96 AD date range of Revelation's authorship. The other date, 64-68 date range, while there is evidence for it, the evidence of its later authorship is stronger given its early support by early the Christian writers Irenaeus, Patta, and Eusebius, and its textual support, like Domitian's use of economic sanctions and his desire to be seen as a deity. It is important to choose a date. If Revelation were indeed written before destruction of the Temple in 70 AD, that would have a significant impact on its interpretation.

Identifying, defining, and setting limits on apocalyptic symbols is very important. A symbol is rarely both symbolic and literal. The 7 churches are an example of a literal 7 churches but symbolic of the whole church. What about the number 144,000? This is without a doubt symbolic. If it were also literal, this would mean a literal 144,000 people would occupy the New Jerusalem. I doubt this is the case, but it's a good example of how one's interpretation of Revelation can go askew if they miss symbolism or misinterpret symbolism.

To that end, I'll quickly review the numeric symbols, and then we'll cover the cosmic, priestly, beastly, human, colors, marks, geographic, and time-related symbols. Some of the symbols are general apocalyptic symbols, but we'll also look at some that are specific to Revelation.

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II. Cosmic Symbols

Number	Usual meaning(s)	Notes / anchors	Acceptance
Sun, moon, stars	Theocratic/imperial collapse; cosmic-scale judgment	Isa 13; Joel 2; Matt 24; Acts 2; Rev 6	Broad consensus (cosmic-political symbolism)
Earthquake	Theophany/judgment	Sinai echo; frequent in Rev	Broad consensus
Hail, fire, smoke, sulfur	Exodus-plague echo; judgment	Rev 8–9	Broad consensus
Four winds	Universal scope/judgments	Dan 7; Rev 7:1	Broad consensus
Sea	Chaos, abyss, Gentile world-powers, “sea of humanity”	Dan 7; Rev 13:1; 21:1	Common but debated
Abyss/deep	Prison of demonic powers	Rev 9, 20	Broad consensus
Mountain	Kingdom/temple/theophany	Dan 2; Ezek 40–48; Rev 21	Common but debated

III. Priestly/Temple/Worship Symbols

Number	Usual meaning(s)	Notes / anchors	Acceptance
Altar, incense	Prayer rising; priestly intercession	Rev 5, 8; Ps 141:2	Broad consensus
Ark/temple	God’s presence/covenant	Rev 11:19; <u>Ezek</u>	Broad consensus
Lampstands	Churches as temple-lights	Rev 1:20	Broad consensus
White robes	Vindication/purity; martyr reward	Rev 6, 7, 19	Broad consensus
Crowns	Reward vs. royal authority	Rev 2–3; 12–19	Broad consensus
Seals, trumpets, bowls	Phased judgments; liturgical cadence	Rev 6–16	Broad consensus

IV. Creatures & composite beasts

Number	Usual meaning(s)	Notes / anchors	Acceptance
Beast from the sea	Empire/imperial power (often Rome)	Dan 7 background; Rev 13	Common but debated
Beast from the earth / False Prophet	Cultic/propaganda apparatus; deceptive religion	Rev 13; 19:20	Common but debated
Dragon	Satan/primeval adversary	Rev 12:9	Broad consensus
Horns	Kings/emperors	Dan 7–8; Rev 12–17	Broad consensus
Eyes	Knowledge, omniscience, perception	<u>Ezek</u> 10; Rev 4–5	Broad consensus
Lion, leopard, bear	Features of successive empires	Dan 7; reused in Rev 13	Broad consensus
Locusts (monstrous)	Demonic invasion/judgment	Joel 2 reworked in Rev 9	Broad consensus
Eagle	Swiftness of judgment/woe herald	Rev 8:13; 12:14	Common but debated
Lamb (slain yet standing)	Messiah as sacrificial-victor	Rev 5; Isa 53 echo	Broad consensus

V. Human figures & pregnant women

Number	Usual meaning(s)	Notes / anchors	Acceptance
Son of Man	The divine incarnate; the offspring of a human	Dan 7; Rev 1, 14	Broad consensus
Two witnesses	Prophetic testimony (Moses/Elijah typology)	Rev 11	Common but debated; literal too?
Woman clothed with sun	Israel/Zion/people of God;	Rev 12	Common but debated
Harlot/Babylon	Apostate city/imperial center; often Rome.	Rev 17–18	Common but debated
Bride/New Jerusalem	Redeemed people/city of God	Rev 21–22	Broad consensus
Kings of the earth	Earth's ruling elites	Rev throughout	Broad consensus

VI. Colors & the Four Horsemen

Number	Usual meaning(s)	Notes / anchors	Acceptance
White	Purity/victory	Robes, stones, horses	Broad consensus
Scarlet/purple	Luxury, blood, imperial pomp	Harlot's dress	Broad consensus
White horse	Conquest or gospel advance	Bow/crown	Common but debated
Red horse	War/bloodshed	Great sword	Broad consensus
Black horse	Famine/economic sanctions	Scales; "a day's wage"	Broad consensus
Pale (greenish) horse	Pale = death and decay; Death (and Hades)	Thanatos figure (Greek personification of death)	Broad consensus

VII. Marks, names, scrolls and books

Number	Usual meaning(s)	Notes / anchors	Acceptance
Seal on forehead	Divine ownership/protection	Rev 7; Ezek 9 echo	Broad consensus
Mark of the Beast	Allegiance controlling worship/economy	Rev 13; Deut 6 backdrop	Common but debated; literal too?
Book/scroll of life	Divine registry of the redeemed	Exod 32; Rev 3, 20–21	Broad consensus
Little scroll	Prophetic commission/bittersweet message	Rev 10; Ezek 2–3 echo	Broad consensus
Scroll written on both sides	A complete message/already fulfilled	Rev 5	Common but debated
New name	Transformed identity/ownership	Rev 2–3	Broad consensus

VIII. Geography & objects as code

Number	Usual meaning(s)	Notes / anchors	Acceptance
Babylon	Rome/world-system of idolatrous empire	1 Pet 5:13; Rev 17–18	Common but debated
Jerusalem (below/above; new)	Old covenant city vs eschatological	Gal 4; Rev 21	Broad consensus
Egypt/Sodom	Archetypes of oppression/apostasy	Rev 11:8	Broad consensus
Euphrates	Eastern frontier; invasion symbol	Rev 9; 16	Broad consensus
Sword from mouth	Judicial word of Christ	Isa 11; Rev 1, 19	Broad consensus
Rod of iron	Messianic rule	Ps 2; Rev 12, 19	Broad consensus
Keys	Authority to open/close	Rev 1:18; 3:7	Broad consensus
Measuring reed/rod	Preservation/judgment boundary	Ezek 40–48; Rev 11, 21	Broad consensus
Cup/wine of wrath	Judgment poured out	Isa 51; Rev 14, 16	Broad consensus
Harvest (grain/grapes)	Salvation and judgment	Joel 3; Rev 14	Broad consensus
Fig tree/olives	Imminence; witnesses; power to testify	Matt 24; Rev 11	Common but debated

IX. Time labels & narrative devices

Number	Usual meaning(s)	Notes / anchors	Acceptance
“Day of the Lord”	Climactic judgment/visitation	OT prophets → NT/Rev	Broad consensus
“Soon/near/quickly”	Imminence idiom vs. prophetic vantage	Rev 1:1, 3; 22	Common but debated (preterist vs futurist readings)
Chiasm, recapitulation	Cycles retell the same span with intensification	Many read seals/trumpets/bowls this way	Common but debated (some read strictly sequential)

Summary

Wow, that’s a lot of symbols! If you get the impression that Revelation is mostly composed of symbols, you’ve got it.

Next week, we’ll talk about the letters to the 7 churches.

Part 3: The Seven Churches

Review: Last week we finished going through all the symbols (at least most of them) found in the Apocalyptic writing style and in Revelation. There are over 70 symbols! The goal will be to substitute the symbols for their meanings when we start trying to decipher the mystical chapters.

But first, let's take a second to make sure we're on track and then talk about the less mystical chapters 2 and 3: the letters to the seven churches.

How did we get here?

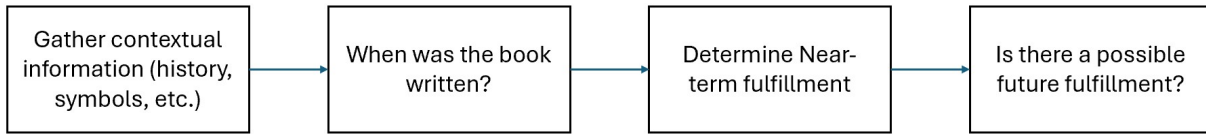
I listened to YouTube series on the prophecies Daniel and Revelation. I'll put a link in the description. I was a bit taken aback by the certainty of the teacher, and it made me doubt whether I have any business talking about Revelation at all. For instance, he mentions a book collection from Edward Bishop Elliott called *Horae Apocalypticae* (the hours of the Apocalypse), a massive four-volume historicist commentary on Revelation (with Daniel) that Elliott worked on through multiple editions, with the 5th (and final, author-revised) edition issued in 1862. The video predicts that fewer than 20 people currently living have read it—yet it's a must-read before anyone can comment on the book of Revelation. I cannot confirm or deny this since I only just learned of the series.

I should define the three views of Revelation:

1. Historicist View: Revelation is a panoramic prophecy of church history — spanning from the apostolic era to the Second Coming, with chapters 4-16 already fulfilled, 17 and 18 being fulfilled, and 19-22 in the future.
2. Preterist View: Revelation primarily refers to events fulfilled in the first century, especially the fall of Jerusalem (AD 70) or persecution under Rome in the late first century.
3. Futurist View: Revelation's prophecies describe end-time events still to come, particularly the Great Tribulation and the Second Coming.

At present I'm a Preterist (no pun intended). I'll see about reading this book series, but in the meantime, my idea in this series is to gather as much contextual information as possible before diving into the mystical parts of the book. *When was the book written turns out to be a very important but difficult to answer question.* As employed in the prior series, "Prophecies of the Spirit", prophecies often have both a near-term and far-off fulfillment, sometimes called a "double horizon". The near-term prophecy must already be fulfilled and every correspondence between the prophecy and the fulfillment must be understood. How does one determine if there is a far-off fulfillment? If one is claiming that it is already fulfilled, then every

correspondance between the far-off prophecy and the fulfillment must be understood. However, if it is not fulfilled, interpreting unfulfilled prophecy is nearly impossible.



Classical dispensationalists, like Darby, Scofield, and Hal Lindsey, are futurists and believe the mystical parts of Revelation (chapters 4-22) are wholly in the future. They state that when John is called up to heaven in 4:1 (“Come up here”), that pictures the Rapture of the Church, after which the prophetic clock for Israel resumes.

I reject this. Next week will argue that the near-term prophecy and fulfillment are undeniable. Since classic dispensationalists don’t have a near-term prophecy and fulfillment to draw from, there are too many future possibilities to consider, including, there isn’t a future prophecy.

Even if a near-term fulfillment can be articulated with some degree of certainty, then I believe it is possible to posit future fulfillments; and then is what I’ll do in the final parts of the series.

The Seven Churches



- Why these 7 churches?
- A “complete” regional microcosm.
- A clockwise postal route that follows a single Roman highway through the province of Asia, starting and ending near the coast opposite Patmos.
- John’s spiritual network?
- Covenantal and spiritual completeness: *not just seven congregations — they are the whole Church represented in seven archetypes.*

Church	Spiritual Condition	Commendation	Condemnation	Command	Promise
Ephesus	Doctrinally sound, love faded	Doctrinally sound	Left first love	Remember, repent, restore	Tree of Life
Smyrna	Pure but persecuted	Spiritually rich in poverty	--	Be faithful unto death	Crown of Life
Pergamum	Compromised with idolatry	Held fast to faith	False teaching, idolatry	Repent	Hidden manna, white stone
Thyatira	Growing love but tolerating sin	Love, faith, works	Tolerated "Jezebel"	Hold fast, repent	Rule nations, morning star
Sardis	Reputed alive, actually dead	Few undefiled	Spiritually dead	Wake up, strengthen	White garments, name kept
Philadelphia	Weak but faithful	Kept my word	--	Hold fast	Pillar, God's name, New Jerusalem
Laodicea	Lukewarm self-sufficiency	--	Lukewarm complacency	Repent, open door	Sit on Christ's throne

1. Ephesus — *The Loveless Church (Rev 2:1–7)*

Christ's Title: "He who holds the seven stars... and walks among the seven golden lampstands."

Commendation: Hard work, perseverance, intolerance of false apostles, doctrinal purity, hatred of Nicolaitan deeds.

Condemnation: "You have left your first love." Zeal and love have cooled.

Command: Remember, repent, and do the works you did at first — or your lampstand will be removed.

Promise: Eat from **the tree of life** in the paradise of God.

2. Smyrna — *The Persecuted Church (Rev 2:8–11)*

Christ's Title: "The First and the Last, who died and came to life again."

Commendation: Endurance in poverty and slander; true spiritual richness.

Condemnation: None — Smyrna and Philadelphia are the only two without rebuke.

Command: "Do not fear... Be faithful unto death."

Promise: **Crown of life**; immunity from **the second death**.

3. Pergamum — *The Compromising Church (Rev 2:12–17)*

Christ's Title: "He who has the sharp two-edged sword."

Commendation: Faithfulness to Christ's name even where "Satan's throne" is; Antipas martyred.

Condemnation: Tolerating false teachers — the **Balaam** and **Nicolaitan** types — who lead to idolatry and immorality.

Command: Repent; otherwise Christ will fight with the sword of His mouth.

Promise: **Hidden manna** and a **white stone** inscribed with a new name.

4. Thyatira — *The Corrupted Church (Rev 2:18–29)*

Christ's Title: "The Son of God, whose eyes are like a flame of fire, and whose feet are burnished bronze."

Commendation: Love, faith, service, perseverance; works increasing.

Condemnation: Tolerating the false prophetess '**Jezebel**' who seduces into immorality and idol-feasts.

Command: Hold fast what you have; those misled must repent or face judgment.

Promise: **Authority over the nations** (rule with an iron scepter) and the **morning star**.

5. Sardis — *The Dead Church* (Rev 3:1–6)

Christ's Title: "He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars."

Commendation: A few have not soiled their garments.

Condemnation: Reputation for being alive, but actually dead; works incomplete.

Command: Wake up, strengthen what remains, remember what you received, repent.

Promise: **White garments**, permanent name in the **Book of Life**, and acknowledgment before the Father and angels.

6. Philadelphia — *The Faithful Church* (Rev 3:7–13)

Christ's Title: "He who has the key of David, who opens and no one shuts."

Commendation: Though little in power, they have kept Christ's word and not denied His name.

Condemnation: None.

Command: Hold fast what you have so no one takes your crown.

Promise: **Pillar in God's temple**, God's name written on them, citizenship in the **New Jerusalem**.

7. Laodicea — *The Lukewarm Church* (Rev 3:14–22)

Christ's Title: "The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of God's creation."

Commendation: None.

Condemnation: Lukewarm — neither hot nor cold; self-deceived by wealth and self-sufficiency. Spiritually poor, blind, and naked.

Command: Buy refined gold, white garments, and eye-salve from Christ; be zealous and repent; open the door to fellowship with Him.

Promise: **Share His throne** — "I will grant to sit with Me on My throne."

But that shift is intentional. It isn't a "jump" — it's an **ascent**. Revelation is structured to move the reader from the **visible realm of the churches** into the **invisible realm of heaven**, showing how the two are united in the same divine drama.

Why the transition from church to prophecy?

The pattern of all biblical theophanies: from the covenant community → to the throne of God

Prophet	Stage 1 – Earthly Reality	Stage 2 – Heavenly Vision	Prophet
Isaiah 6	Sinful people; purification with coal	God’s throne, seraphim crying “Holy”	Isaiah 6
Ezekiel 1–11	Exiled Israel inspected	Heavenly chariot-throne departs	Ezekiel 1–11
John (Rev 1–4)	Churches inspected (lampstands)	Door opened in heaven; throne revealed	John (Rev 1–4)

The letters interpret the visions

Churches (2–3)	Visions (4–22)
Overcomers promised crowns, white garments, new names	Saints later <i>wear</i> them (Rev 7; 19).
Laodicea: “Buy gold refined by fire.”	Fire refines the faithful in tribulation.
Philadelphia: “Pillar in the temple.”	New Jerusalem descends as a temple-city.
Smyrna: “Crown of life.”	The martyrs receive thrones (Rev 20:4).

Next Week: We’ll talk about what I believe is the near-term prophecy and fulfillment of chapters 4-22.

Part 4: The Near Horizon: The Throne, the Lamb, and the first 6 Seals

Review: Last week we talked about chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation, the relatively sane part that are letters to the seven churches. There's not a lot of symbolism here except for the fact that there are seven churches—which is the point—the seven churches are representative of the Church of Christ. As in Isaiah 6 and Ezekiel 11, there exists a pattern in Old Testament prophecy where the current covenant community is examined before prophecy is revealed. We also see the commands and promises given to the seven churches appear in the apocalypse (which is not a coincidence).

I noticed that often when people study and teach Revelation, there's often a lot of jumping around and referencing of key passages. Revelation 1:3 says, "blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy", so I'll be reading some long passages from Revelation 4 through 8:1.

Is there a flashback?

Recall the three views (historicist, preterist, futurist) assign a post-Messiah time frame to the 7 Seals. For the first seal:

- Historicist: early church victory in history.
- Preterist: first wave of the 60s/70s judgment era.
- Futurist: future Antichrist / start of Tribulation.

What if the seven seals are pertain to well before Jesus? I think they could be a covenant-historical presentation of the history of Israel from Exodus to the Messiah?

But how can the Lamb that's already slain reveal events from before the crucifixion? Rev 13:8 speaks of the Lamb "slain from the creation of the world": heaven can apply the crucifixion across time or retroactively. God is not constrained by the sequential nature of time.

In my idea, the scroll itself is the redemptive plan of God carried out from His command center—His the awesome throne room!

The Throne

Chapter 4 sets the stage. It depicts the throne of God in all its glory. In verse 5, the 7 Spirits of God is His divinely complete spirit—The Holy Spirit.

Recall the "sea" is symbolic for a place of creation or destruction. For instance, in Gen 1:2, "God was hovering over the waters", and in Mat 21:21 Jesus tells his disciples they can tell a mountain to go throw itself into the sea.

Amazing creatures surround the throne—but are on the center throne. It appears only God gets to be on this one. The four living creatures and the 24 elders get their own thrones, and thousand upon thousand of the angels surround all the thrones!

The Lamb

Chapter 5 uses this stage to depict the drama of the state of mankind. Only a worth entity and open the plan and begin to implement it. Were it not for Christ, humanity would truly have no hope. All we could do it weep (v3).

Note the golden bowls full of incense—the prayers of God’s people over the course of time enabled, in part, the plan of God (v8).

The “head” creatures of Heaven sing a new song because of Christ (v 9-10). All of the angels declare honor to Christ (v12). All of creation praises and honors God the Father and Christ. This last one has to be symbolic as all creation isn’t in heaven—they’re done on earth.

The First 6 Seals

Seal 1 — White Horse (Rev 6:1–2)

- Historical anchor: Exodus deliverance and commissioning of Israel.
- Bow + crown + “conquering”: Not random aggression, but authorized advance to establish God’s people.
- At the Exodus, God defeats Egypt, “crowns” Israel as *His firstborn nation*, and then sends them toward the land with a clear mission to serve Him and follow His Covenant.
- The rider embodies God’s redeemed people moving out under divine victory.
- **Seal 1 = God’s victorious establishment and sending of Israel after Egypt.**

Seal 2 — Red Horse (6:3-4)

- Historical anchor: The Conquest and early entry into the land.
- “Taking peace from the earth” and “slaying one another” can sound negative, but remember: the taking of Canaan was violent by design: God judging the inhabitants by Israel “taking” the land.
- The taking of the Promised Land is the moment when the divine mission actually displaces other nations.
- The “great sword” is Joshua/Judges-era warfare and the early wars to keep the land.
- **Seal 2 = the violent phase of establishing Israel’s place in the land.**

Seal 3 — Black Horse (6:5–6)

- Historical anchor: Covenant-strain period in the land — Judges to the early monarchy.

- The language about grain measured out carefully and “don’t harm the oil and wine” sounds like covenant-disciplined economy—God limiting judgment but still applying pressure.
- Judges is a cycle of incompleteness, disobedience, then oppression.
- In Samuel/Saul/David there are famine episodes tied to covenant disobedience.
- God kept putting on Israel for the disobediences in order to keep them faithful in the land.
- **Seal 3 = recurring covenant-economic discipline once Israel is in the land.**

Seal 4 — Pale/Green Horse (6:7–8)

- Historical anchor: Major national-level judgment: The exiles by Assyria of Israel 722 BC and by Babylon of Judah in 586 BC.
- Now we get the full cluster: sword, famine, pestilence, beasts—the corporate covenant curses for, “I am really judging you now”.
- That’s what the divided kingdom era leads to—first the northern kingdom wiped out, then Judah and Jerusalem.
- Seal 3 in a way was the warning, seal 4 is the execution.
- Seal 4 = the great exilic catastrophes that overtook Israel.

Seal 5 — Souls under the altar (6:9–11)

- Historical anchor: Faithful Israelites/prophets/righteous sufferers through and after the exilic period
- By this point in the story you’ve had: persecuted prophets (Elijah, Jeremiah) and exilic prophets (Daniel), righteous sufferers under foreign rule.
- Once they return from exile, the question becomes, “How long, Lord, till you judge those who dwell on the earth?”
- That cry makes sense after the national disasters—there’s now a body of the faithful dead asking God to finish the story.
- Seal 5 = Post-exilic/proto-messianic period.

Seal 6 — The Final Struggle before Rome

- Historical anchor: Maccabean period around 164 BC
- A national “earthquake” in covenant history
- The abomination of desolation (167 BC)—Antiochus IV Epiphanes desecrating the Temple—was experienced as a cosmic rupture by faithful Jews.
- The books of 1–2 Maccabees, Daniel 8–11, and later apocalyptic works (Enoch, Jubilees) interpret it as the ultimate crisis before deliverance.
- That felt like the heavens shaking: Temple defiled, sacrifices stopped, Torah outlawed, martyrdom rampant.

- “Kings and mighty men hiding” imagery
- In 1 Maccabees 2–4, Hellenistic rulers and collaborators hide or fall in terror; mountains and caves are actual places of Jewish refuge (e.g., 1 Macc 2:28–31).
- The narrative of people hiding from wrath has a historical echo in that era.

Next week: The 7th seal and an introduction to the trumpets.

Part 5: The Near Horizon: The 144,000 and the Seventh Seal

Review: Last episode we talked about the first 6 seals of the scroll with seven seals. I presented a new idea that the scroll is the historical salvation plan of God spanning from Israel's deliverance from Egypt to the death and resurrection of Christ. Only the Lamb is worthy to execute this plan. Today we'll expand on this idea showing how the 7th seal refers to the death of Christ, the three days He spent in the heart of the earth, his triumphal resurrection, the His sending of the Holy Spirit. If true, this idea would mean the revelation has a backward facing horizon of prophecy—a sort of flashback that sets the stage for the vision to come.

The episode was entitled, “The Near Horizon”, which is a term for a double-horizon prophecy’s near term fulfillment. If it’s true that the seven-sealed scroll points to the past, that would mean the near horizon is still yet to come. The next scene in Revelation uses the seven trumpets. Perhaps they are the near horizon, but before we can talk about them, we must cover the pivotal seventh seal.

A little bit of an update: I listened to another YouTube video on [the Preterist view of Revelation](#), and the YouTuber made a good point about Rev 1:3, “Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.” In the “House church” phase of the church, this letter would have been delivered, copied, and disseminated to the cities of the churches and then read aloud by the home owners to the disciples that met there. This verse then gives credence to the Preterist view, as it would promise blessings to those in the first century, just after the completion of the letter, who would read the letter aloud and to those who would hear it. It wouldn’t just bless them in the traditional sense of “reading God’s Word”, but more explicitly, the warning contained within the prophecy would aid the early Christians.

Review of the First 6 Seals

Seal 1 — White Horse (Rev 6:1–2) - Exodus deliverance and commissioning of Israel

Seal 2 — Red Horse (6:3-4) - The Conquest and early entry into the land.

Seal 3 — Black Horse (6:5–6) - Covenant-strain period in the land — Judges to the early monarchy.

Seal 4 — Pale/Green Horse (6:7–8) - Major national-level judgment: The exiles by Assyria of Israel 722 BC and by Babylon of Judah in 586 BC

Seal 5 — Souls under the altar (6:9–11) - Faithful Israelites/prophets/righteous sufferers through and after the exilic period

Seal 6 — The Final Struggle before Rome - Maccabean period around 164 BC and the desecration of the temple

The 144,000 Sealed

Chapter 7:1-8

- 4 angels at the 4 corners of the earth holding back the 4 winds.
- 4, the cosmic number, symbolic of protecting the land and God's people.
- Perhaps this is the deliverance of the Jews from the Seleucid Empire and Antiochus IV and the peace of the Hasmonean Dynasty.
- Pompey the Great seized Judea and Jerusalem for Rome in 63 BC.
- Nevertheless, the Jews continued such that around half a million Jews lived in Judea during the life of Jesus.
- 144,000 under this view of the scroll symbolize all the Jews saved under the Old Covenant.
- The 12 tribes (Rev order): Judah, Reuben, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, Benjamin.
- The 12 sons of Jacob by birth: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, Benjamin
- The 12 tribes by land: Reuben, Simeon, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Benjamin, Ephraim, Manasseh
 - Levi is not listed because they did not own land,.
 - Joseph is not listed because his inheritance is given to his two sons.
- Starting with the 12 land-owning tribes:
 - John excludes Dan and Ephraim. Gen 49:17 calls Dan "a serpent by the way." Judges 18:30–31 records Dan as the tribe that first set up an idolatrous shrine. Hosea 4:17: "Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone." The golden calves of Jeroboam were in Bethel and Dan — the centers of Ephraim and Dan.
 - Add Levi and Joseph. In Genesis Joseph is the righteous, preserved one. With Levi, Priestly sanctity emphasized.
 - Different order: Judah first because salvation originates from the Messiah.

Chapter 7:9-17

- White Robes: Purified by the blood of the Lamb.
- Those of the "great tribulation".
 - The Futurists: There will be a 7-year tribulation in the future with a "rapture" of those saved in God's church either before or after the tribulation.
 - Preterists: The first wave of the 60s-70s judgment era.
 - My view is that the time of God's people, Israel before the resurrection, is that time.
- How can they be saved by the blood of the Lamb?

- Heb 9:15, Rom 3:25
- All are saved through the blood of the Lamb. His sacrifice is at the center of all salvation across all time.

The 7th Seal: The death, time in the heart of the earth, and resurrection of Christ

Chapter 8:1-5

- Silence of a half an hour.
 - Silence is foreboding and indicative of a tense pivotal moment.
 - This moment is *unlike anything else* in Revelation. It's a sudden, pregnant stillness in a book full of sound, song, thunder, angels, voices, and worship.
 - In apocalyptic contexts, silence can also indicate cosmic grief.
- Half an Hour?
 - ½ is not a standard apocalyptic number, yet is very specific here.
 - “1” is the number of unity. Perhaps ½ is used because part of God is not in Heaven but is in the heart of the earth.
- Only God can be on the Throne:
 - We see the Father, the Lamb, and the 7 blazing lamps.
 - We see lightning and hear thunder when God acts. In Rev 4:2-3, we see the throne of God with God the Father (or maybe just God) seating on the throne. In 4:5, the Seven Spirits of God are blazing lamps (note the fire) are in front of the throne. It also mentions flashes of lightning and rumbles of thunder. In 5:6, we see the lamb in the center of the throne. Then, in 8:1-5, this is where we see seven angels “who stand before God” and then another angel comes and he is the one with the censer “filled with fire from the altar” who hurls the fire to the earth. And then we see thunder and lightning and earthquakes again.
- 7 Angels and then one more?
 - The Holy Spirit (the same as 4:5f, “In front of the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits^[a] of God.”) and the newly risen Christ.
 - The 8th angel has a golden (symbolic of extreme value) censer (device used to scoop up burning incense embers). He scoops up “much” incense from the incense altar which are the prayers of God’s people. He hurls this *fire* to the earth. As we’ve already seen, fire is symbolic and a reality of the Holy Spirit.
 - The hurling of fire can definitely be seen as the judgement of God, but I believe this is the promised Indwelling Holy Spirit—and it is judgment—judgment that mankind is incapable of saving themselves and must have a part of God in them to commune and connect with God.
 - Why would John call the Holy Spirit “7 angels” and the risen Christ “another angel”?

- Various symbols are used for the Holy Spirit: “seven spirits,” “seven lamps,” “seven eyes,” and “seven angels”, depending on their function. What’s common is the number 7—divine completeness.
- Therefore, Seven Spirits = Seven Angels = Sevenfold Spirit acting executively.
- No creature besides the Trinity are allowed on the throne of God, therefore the 8th angel has to be Christ.

Next week: The Seven Trumpets.


Part 6: The First Six Trumpets and the Little Scroll

Review: Last week I reviewed the first six seals and covered the seventh and final seal, completing my idea that the seven-sealed scroll is God's plan to reconcile humans back to him, starting with freeing Israel from slavery in Egypt, taking the Promised Land, struggling and failing to follow the Old Covenant, being exiled to foreign nations, returning to the land but having to wait several more centuries, the final struggle and losses in the 2nd century BC against the Seleucid Empire, and, finally, the death and resurrection of the Messiah. I spoke about how the "half an hour of silence in heaven" was the shock and sadness of the death of the Messiah and the three days He spent in the heart of the earth, the seven angels who were given trumpets were the Holy Spirit, and the eighth angel was the risen, victorious Christ, who fulfilled his mission and sent the promised Holy Spirit, symbolized by the filling his golden censer with fire incense from the altar and throwing it to earth.

Today we'll talk about the first six trumpets and the little scroll, which is part of the interlude between trumpets 6 and 7. This part of the story uses even more symbols than the seals! Even though I covered 80 symbols in parts 1 and 2 of this series, I see that I missed several important symbols used in this part of the story. Therefore, I'll start by covering these important symbols so that as we came across them in the text, we can substitute their meanings to help interpret the vision.

Regarding this new view I'm putting forth: It's fair to say it's a mix of historicist and preterist but is not historicist or preterist. Recall the Historicists believe Revelation unfolds from the destruction of the temple until the second coming of Christ. The Preterists believe Revelation unfolded between the death of Christ and either the destruction of the temple or the Christian persecution under Domitian. My view is historicist insofar as the 7 seals extend across history, but it is the history of the Old Covenant, not the New. And my view is preterist insofar as, at least to this point, I believe the vision has already occurred. However, unlike the preterists who believe the seals represent the time from the Resurrection to before the first Roman/Jewish War and the trumpets are the war itself to the destruction of the temple, as we'll see, *I believe the trumpets* span the time from the Resurrection until the destruction of the Temple.

Some additional Symbols used in Rev 8-11

Number	Usual meaning(s)	Notes / anchors	Acceptance
Trumpets	To herald a message of God	Rev 8-11	Common but debated
Fractions	Partial judgement associated with the denominator. E.g, 1/3 is partial divine judgment.	14 “thirds” in the 1 st – 4 th trumpets, 2 in the 6 th trumpet	Broad consensus
2	Number of strength	Rev 11 – the two witnesses, olive trees and lampstands	Broad consensus
5	Number for humans and their limitations or vulnerabilities	Rev 9:5 and 9:10. Five months of torture and torment.	Broad consensus
earth	Land or the land of Israel.	Rev 8:7, first trumpet; 9:1-4, fifth trumpet	Common but debated
Trees	Righteous people in Jerusalem	Rev 8:7, first trumpet; 9:4, fifth trumpet	Common but debated
Green grass	The diaspora, the righteous in other countries	Rev 8:7, first trumpet; 9:4, fifth trumpet	Common but debated
Creatures in the Sea	Gentiles living in the sea of humanity	Rev 8:9, first trumpet	Common but debated
Ships	Commerce, trade	Rev 8:9, first trumpet	Broad consensus
Water/Rivers	Truth and spiritual life/sustenance	Rev 8:10-11, third trumpet; 11:6, the two witnesses	Broad consensus
Bitterness	Poisonous, false teaching	Rev 8:11 waters turn bitter in the third trumpet	Common but debated
Gigantic Furnace	Hell/Abyss	Rev 9:2 fifth trumpet; the star comes from here	Common but debated
Scorpions	Likened to weapons and pain	Rev 9:3-10 fifth trumpet	Common but debated
Breastplates	Armor, protection	Rev 9:9, 17 fifth and sixth trumpets	Broad consensus
Golden	Heavenly attribute, precious	Rev 8:13 the censer; 9:13 the sixth trumpet altar	Common but debated
Dark blue	Greek: Hyacinth, Associated with plumes of smoke 	Rev 9:17 one of the colors of the rider's breastplate in the sixth trumpet	Common but debated
Yellow	Color of sulfur: condemnation and judgement	Rev 9:17 one of the colors of the rider's breastplate in the sixth trumpet	Broad consensus
Coming out of a mouth	God using something for judgement	Rev 9:17-19 sixth trumpet judgement, 11:5 fire from the witnesses	Broad consensus
Rainbow	Heavenly attribute, forgiveness	Rev 10:1 the mighty angel with the little scroll	Common but debated

Putting It All Together: A Coherent Symbolic Reading of Trumpets 1–6 (Rev 8:6 – 9:21)

Substitute the symbols for their meanings and you get something like the following.

- Trumpet 1 – Judgment on society and its people. Earth, trees, grass = society, leaders, people. The beginning of the New Covenant; hail and fire are associated with the plagues of Egypt but fire mixed with blood are associated with Jesus and the Spirit. The church starts to move and spread in the 30 to 70 AD period.
- Trumpet 2 – Judgment on nations and international commerce. Sea, sea-life, ships = Gentile nations, populations, and trade systems.
- Trumpet 3 – Corruption or destruction of spiritual/moral sources. The lead up to the end of the Old Covenant, climaxing with the 7th trumpet. The Old Covenant becomes bitter

after it ends. There's a hope that as many Jews can become Christians as possible. We know during this time God gave the Jews many omenous signs from 30 to 70 AD (see Part 7 of "Prophecies of the Spirit" and Part 4 of "The Dates and Times of Christianity"). Rivers, springs = truth, teaching, moral-lifelines. Unfortunately, hand-in-hand with the Old Covenant was the inability to let it go and recognize the Messiah.

- Trumpet 4 – Judgment on leadership and guiding institutions like the Levitical priesthood, teachers of the Law, and the Temple. Sun, moon, stars = rulers and governing authorities.
- Trumpet 5 – The seige of Jerusalem in Spring AD 70. "During those days people will seek death but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them".
- Trumpet 6 – the sacking of Jerusalem in the Summer of AD 70. "A third of mankind was killed by the three plagues of fire, smoke and sulfur that came out of their mouths."

Putting It All Together: The Little Scroll (Rev 10)

- The Preterist sees the Little Scroll as specialized, short-term prophecy about the fall of Jerusalem.
- I believe the little scroll is the Old Covenant.
 - It's its own scroll because it is a written part of God's plan (the big scroll), but it's little because it's just one temporary part of it.
 - It's already open (accomplished).
 - A limited period (until Christ), with limited jurisdiction (Israel), with limited purpose (to bring the Messiah), and temporary glory (a ministry of death, as Paul says in 2 Cor 3).
 - When it's is eaten, it is sweet (blessings, the Law is "holy, righteous, and good.") then bitter (because it's impossible to follow and results only in curses). One could also say it became bitter as it was about the end and the New Covenant was already in effect.
- Why does John have to eat it?
 - Internalize the covenant, pronounce its judgments, digest (in the prophetic sense) its curses and blessings
 - Then prophesy "again about many peoples, nations, languages and kings" (Rev 10:11).

Part 7: A Deeper Look at the First Four Trumpets

Review: Last week I spoke about additional symbols we would need to know, the first six trumpets, and the little scroll. Probably most important was the number “one third”. It’s used sixteen times in the trumpets, and it means “a partial divine judgement”. In general, the six trumpets cover the time period between Jesus’ resurrection in 30 AD and the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD. The first four trumpets talk about the end of the Old Covenant and its ramifications on the Jewish and Gentile worlds, the fifth trumpet describes the first part of the First Roman-Jewish war up to the seige, and the sixth trumpet describes the invasion and destruction of the Jerusalem up to but not including the Temple. The little scroll is a part of the 6-7 interlude structure of the vision. The interlude of the seven seals was the sealing of the 144,000 and the multitude in white robes. The interlude of the seven trumpets is the little scroll followed by the two witnesses. I believe the little scroll represents the Old Covenant, and it turned to bitterness once the New Covenant

Why A Deeper Look is Needed

While I was able to cover the six trumpets and the little scroll, throughout this week, more ideas and clarity came to me. Therefore, I decided that, instead of moving on to new territory, it would be better to revisit and take a deeper look at the first four trumpets.

The biggest problem I had was with the first four trumpets, and I’ll spend the most time on those. I explained them as general events that occurred between 30 and 70 AD, but I thought maybe there should be real historical events tied to each of them like I had done with the fifth and sixth trumpets. After much consideration, I concluded that precise historical events are not necessary in this context, nor do they appear to exist. By "precise historical events," I mean occurrences that can be historically confirmed which took place at a particular point in time. Instead, I believe that these events are emblematic of God’s message of warning to the Jews during the transitional period when both the Old and New Covenants were in effect.

Imagine Trumpets being like a person describing the end of their time with the church they had attended for decades. They might start with gradual things they noticed:

- *It started with people not reading their Bibles and losing their curiosity of God’s Word.*
- *Then there was a crisis in the church organization itself.*
- *Then came Covid and that exposed a lot cracks.*
- *Then there was a lot of infighting amongst the leadership of the local church and it seemed no one was listening to each other.*

But then they might switch to actual events that happened at the end:

- *Things really started to become visible when the leader when on sabbatical and the church body knew something was up.*
- *The leaders returned and refused to accept the changes of the local lay leadership and parted ways with the church.*

Then perhaps there is an interlude of sorts:

- *There was this interim period while the church looked for new leadership and tried to get help from another church.*

Finally, the last event is definitive and memorable:

- *But when the new leaders announced they would not be dealing with past issues, we had no choice but to leave the church.*

A Deeper Look at Trumpets 1-4

- Trumpet 1 – Judgment on Jewish society and its people.
 - Hail and fire = Judgement like the seventh plague of Exodus: “The LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down to the earth... there was hail, and fire flashing continually in the midst of the hail...” (Exod 9:23–24).
 - Fire mixed with blood echo Spirit and atoning blood. Joel 2:30/Acts 2:19: “I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke.”
 - I see this as an intentional merging of Exodus 9 (hail + fire) and Joel 2 (blood + fire) to depict Spirit-era, cross-founded, Exodus-style judgment beginning with Christ’s death and resurrection and the Spirit’s outpouring.
 - A third = partial judgement. Judgement on whom? Earth = Israel, trees = spiritual leaders of Israel, green grass = Jews outside of Israel (the diaspora).
- Trumpet 2 – The end of the Old Covenant Sea represents the sea of humanity or the sea of God’s creation and destruction.
 - The mountain (I believe) represents the Old Covenant. This is parallel to Mat 21:18-22.
 - The withering of the fig tree represents God’s judgement on Adam and Eve’s decision to relate to him through obedience to good and evil (in ancient Jewish culture the fig tree represented the Tree of the Knowledge of God and Evil) instead of His indwelling Spirit.

- This necessitated the creation of the Abrahamic covenant/promise and then the Law of God with the nation created from him (the Old Covenant).
 - Throwing the mountain into the sea represents ending and doing away with the Old Covenant which served its purpose.
- Then there's partial divine judgement on the whole world.
 - The Sea represents the sea of humanity and the living creatures Jews and Gentiles in the world. The ships represent trade, commerce, economic systems, merchant power.
- But why would the Old Covenant ending affect the Gentile world too? Because biblically, the Old Covenant order was never isolated and Israel wasn't "just another nation." It was:
 - The priesthood of the world and the mediator of God's revelation.
 - The channel through which God restrained judgment (Rom 3:21-26) from the nations.
 - The anchor of monotheism, Scripture, and moral and ethical order.
- When that Old Covenant structure is thrown down, three things happen simultaneously:
 - The Gentile world loses its stabilizing spiritual "mountain". Israel was the light of the nations (Isa 42:6) and their obedience preserved blessings for the nations (Gen 12:3). It functioned as a spiritual mountain planted among the nations. Mat 5:14 – "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden."
 - The Gentile world becomes the new center of God's activity. The Gospel flows outward like never before and the Gentiles become recipients of the full Abrahamic covenant. The nations are suddenly in direct contact with God's redemptive work –and- are exposed to judgment if they reject it.
 - Rome (the Gentile "sea") gets violently pulled into a series wars against the Jews.
 - God uses Rome as He used Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece to bring judgement on the Jews.
 - Hundreds of thousands of people are killed.
 - Trade routes were disrupted affecting the economy and shipping.
 - Directly related is the the chaos of Nero's insanity and "Year of Four Emperors" (68–69 AD), which rocked the entire Mediterranean and Rome has a civil war.

- The second trumpet imagery involves the Gentile/national world, not Israel alone.
- The collapse of the Old Covenant destabilizes the *entire* world order, not just Judea.
- It isn't just about Israel's fall, but about *the shockwave* that its fall unleashed on the Gentile world.
- It isn't judgment *on* the Gentiles but judgment *through* the Gentiles.
 - Pilate's wife's dream in Matthew 27:19 is a microcosm of this. It is one of those often-ignored moments where Gentile distress is triggered by Israel's rejection of the Messiah.
- Trumpet 3 – Corruption or destruction of spiritual/moral sources.
 - Rivers, springs = truth, teaching, moral-lifelines. In John 4:14 Jesus says, "but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."
 - Wormwood is an Old Testament theme:
 - Deut 29:18 Lest there should be among you whose heart turns away from the Lord our God to go and worship the gods of those nations; make sure there is no a root that bears gall and wormwood." Hebrews 12:15 quotes this concept as "a root of bitterness".
 - Jer 9:15 "I will feed this people with wormwood, and give them poisoned water to drink." and Jer 23:15.
 - Amos 5:7 "O you who turn justice to wormwood and cast down righteousness to the earth!"
 - Lamentations 3:15, 19: Wormwood and bitterness describe the experience of judgment on Jerusalem after the Babylonian destruction—again, covenant curse territory.
 - The Old Covenant "waters" (its blessings, teachings, and life system) become bitter and deadly because of Israel's rejection of God's will—culminating in the rejection of the Messiah.
 - The Old Covenant is glorious—but impossible to keep so it ends in bitterness and curse.
 - By John's day, with the NC already in effect, clinging to the OC apart from Christ turns its waters into death, not life.
- Trumpet 4 – Judgment on leadership and guiding institutions.
 - Sun, moon, stars = rulers and governing authorities.
 - The trumpet harkens back to the prophet Joel's "Day of the Lord" prophecy in 2:28-32, especially "I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood

and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.”

- Naturally, this might only be because both Joel and Revelation use the apocalyptic style; however, I think God is using the same terminology here to create an equivocal relationship.

Next week, I'll add more detail for Trumpets 5 and 6 and the little scroll.

Part 8: A Deeper Look at Trumpets 5 and 6 and the Little Scroll

Review: Last week I went into detail about the general nature of the first four trumpets and how they represent judgment on Jewish society and its people between the resurrection of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem.

Today: Unlike Trumpets 1-4, whose description takes just 4 verses, Trumpets 5 and 6 consume a whole chapter of 21 verses. The Little Scroll, the first part of the interlude, takes another chapter of 11 verses. Why is so much detail given to these 3 symbols?

By the way, I'm calling this new view of Revelation "the Covenantal view", since it relates the seals and trumpets to the Old Covenant transitioning to the New Covenant and how the Old Covenant ends.

Today was a battle. I thought initially the battle was about the meaning of the 5th and 6th trumpets, but I realized the battle went much deeper—down to how a person is saved. Wow, how can this be? The problem stems from what happens to Jews in the "Covenantal overlap" period. This is the period between Christ's resurrection (likely in 30 AD) and the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD. If the sins of the Jews is atoned for under the Old Covenant through blood sacrifices starting with the tent-temple, then Solomon's temple, and then Zorobabel and Herod's temple, how did they receive the Spirit? When Jesus went to deliver them from the heart of the earth, right? Then what happens from 30-70 AD? Are their sins atoned for? I don't think so because the curtain was torn and the scarf never turned white. But the temple still operated, so maybe it did...but just barely. But then what happened to Jews when they died during this period? It's a mystery that perhaps the rest of the book of Revelation will help us with.

The Seven Trumpets: Overview

- Trumpets 1–4: overlapping covenantal judgments weakening Israel from 30–66 AD (Rev 8:6-12).
- Small interlude: Eagle flying in midair (Rev 8:13).
- Trumpet 5 – The siege of Jerusalem in Spring AD 70 (Rev 9:1-11).
- Small interlude: End of first woe (Rev 9:12).
- Trumpet 6 – the sacking of Jerusalem in the Summer of AD 70 but not including the destruction of the Temple (Rev 9:13-19).
- Small interlude: End of the second woe (Rev 9:20-21).
- First big interlude: the Little Scroll (Rev 10:1-11).

The Fifth Trumpet

Who is the star? (Rev 9:1-3)

- Determining the right emperor/general requires knowing the correct time period.
- What if it's not the start of the war (66 AD) but just the siege (Spring 70 AD)?
- Recap of the war before the siege:
 - 66 AD – Revolt and Cestius' failed campaign: Jewish revolt breaks out under procurator Gessius Florus; violence in Caesarea, tax issues, and sacrilege incidents spiral into open rebellion. The Syrian legate Cestius Gallus marches down with Legio XII and auxiliaries, burns and sacks towns in Galilee and coastal areas, then advances toward Jerusalem, briefly assaults the city, then mysteriously withdraws and is ambushed and badly defeated at Beth Horon. This is more like a failed Roman swipe than the main "locust invasion."
 - 67–68 AD – Vespasian's big invasion: After Cestius' disaster, Nero appoints Vespasian to take charge. Vespasian gathers three legions (V Macedonica, X Fretensis, XV Apollinaris) plus auxiliaries and client-king troops, bases at Ptolemais, and launches a full campaign in Galilee in early 67. Cities fall, populations slaughtered or enslaved; Galilee and much of Judea are crushed, refugees pour into Jerusalem, and factions there grow increasingly violent.
 - 68–69 AD – Pause because of the Roman civil war. Nero commits suicide in 68; the Year of the Four Emperors follows (Galba, Otho, Vitellius, and finally Vespasian). Vespasian waits to see how the imperial succession plays out. Eastern legions eventually proclaim him emperor; he goes to Rome, leaving Titus to finish the war.
 - This phase could verse 3, "out of the smoke locusts came down on the earth".
- If the 5th trumpet deals mostly with the siege, then the star would be Vespasian and the king (general) would be Titus.
 - The Abyss isn't necessarily hell. It's just a terrible, bottomless pit that pours out doom and destruction.
 - Smoke and sun and moon darkened: Joel 2:1-11 (esp. v2), Amos 5:18-27 (esp. v18)

The Siege vividly described (Rev 9:4-6)

- Symbols:
 - Green grass = ordinary Israelites, Plants = possibly priests (less prominent than "trees", Trees = Israelite leaders / ruling classes.
 - Those with the seal of God: Perhaps a reference to phylacteries (boxes containing scripture strapped to the forehead)." Sealed" here is bad: it means you're going to survive and be a part of the siege.

- Roman armies did harm the literal trees and plants.
 - During the siege, Titus' forces cut down every tree around Jerusalem for siege works, ramp-building, and the circumvallation (the act of surrounding with a wall or rampart). Josephus describes it as ecological stripping.
- The Locusts (Rev 9:7-11): Titus and the siege of Jerusalem
 - Winter 69/70: Titus arrives with a huge force (four legions + auxiliaries) and bases again at Caesarea.
 - Early Nisan (March/April) 70: he moves to Gibeah, then establishes camps on Mount Scopus and the Mount of Olives and begins formal siege operations.
 - Vivid symbols of the Roman army:
 - When apocalyptic writing says of a symbol, "it was like..." it is actually being literal.
 - The locusts are horses and their riders. The horses are prepared with armor as well as the soldiers. Crowns of gold = the impressive helmets and crests worn by Roman cavalry. They symbolize they operate with God-permitted authority to render judgement.
 - "Faces like human faces" = They are intelligent, not instinct-driven insects who act with purpose and strategy.
 - "Hair like a woman" = the manes and tails of the horses.
 - "teeth like a lion" = animal ferocity, swords and spears.
 - "sound of their wings" = the collective rush, movement, and noise of the locust-army in the vision.
 - King/angel of the Abyss = Titus; he's given the name destroyer because that is the mandate God gave him.

The Sixth Trumpet

The Blockade to the Assault

- The sixth trumpet likely starts shortly after the siege and end just before the destruction of the temple.
- Up until this point: The temple remained untouched, the priesthood remained intact, leadership structures remained in Jerusalem, everyday Israelites (grass) were displaced, frightened, or pressured — but the entire structure of Israel had not yet collapsed.
 - Shortly after the siege walls completed: Things escalate rapidly into massive crucifixions, starvation deaths, street massacres, and the final breach and slaughter.
 - They used battering rams, siege engines (catapults), and artillery to assault the walls, aiming to breach them rather than rely solely on starvation or surrender.

- Over time, sections of the outer walls fell, the defenders were worn down, and starvation, disease, and internal chaos increased inside the city.
- Breach of the city walls: After heavy use of siege machines and persistent assault, Roman forces broke through the outer city walls and then the inner defenses. Josephus records that they penetrated into the city after initial breaches.
- Once inside, the fighting reportedly became brutal “house-to-house,” with little mercy. The Romans systematically cleared the city, looting and killing as they went.

An allusion to the Garden?

- Rev 9:13-16: “a voice coming from the four horns of the golden altar that is before God.” ... “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.”
- Why is the sixth trumpet associated with the golden altar and the four angels of the great river Euphrates?
- Remember the number 4 is the cosmic number refer to the whole land, or the whole creation, or universal scope.
- The Golden Altar in question is the golden altar of incense on throne of God.
 - Therefore, the voice is God’s, and the altar represents Christ’s sacrifice for all mankind.
 - The four horns of the altar: Horns consistently symbolize strength, authority, and efficacy.
 - The Golden altar of incense differs from the bronze alter of sacrifice. Both had four horns that were
- The Euphrates symbol
 - It runs through the middle of modernday Iraq, sourced in the mountains of Turkey and flowing south east into the Persian Gulf.
 - It is northeast and east of Israel, the direction from which the Assyrians and the Babylonians came when they brought judgement from God, conquering and exiling the northern and then southern kingdoms of Israel.
 - Therefore it is symbolic of the judgement of God.
- The Euphrates is also one of the four cosmic rivers of Eden, and it later becomes the covenant boundary in God’s promise to Abraham.
- The imagery in Revelation may be reminding us that God’s redemptive plan—His management of human history—beginning right at the Fall and has been unfolding ever since.
 - As such, this would be put into the vision to dramatically show God has been refraining and delaying judgement ever since the fall of man.

- The physical advance of both the Greeks and the Romans came from the west, so the Euphrates could only harken back to the exilic wars of the Assyrians and the Babylonians.
- Therefore I believe the vision mentions the Euphrates to symbolize events that occurred well before the exile.

Who are the “rest of mankind”?

- The rest of mankind = “the rest of the covenant people” who remain unsealed
In this reading: Mankind = Israel viewed generically as “humankind”
- The sealed = faithful remnant (144k)
- The unsealed = apostate Israel
- “The rest” = those Israelites who survive the judgments but remain unfaithful
- This is probably the cleanest reading inside the covenantal frame.
- Because throughout the trumpets, Revelation is dealing with:
- A sealed group (the faithful Israelites) An unsealed group (apostate Israelites) So “the rest” = those Israelites who were: Not sealed, Not killed, Not repentant

Part 9: The Two Witnesses and the Seventh Trumpet

Review: Last week I went into more detail on the 5th and 6th Trumpets. The 5th trumpet represented the siege of Jerusalem in Spring AD 70, and the 6th Trumpet the sacking of Jerusalem in the Summer of AD 70 but not including the destruction of the Temple. I also reviewed the Little Scroll, which I believe symbolized the Old Covenant.

By way of review and clarification, I want to cover quickly two things upfront: 1) While covering the 6th Trumpet, I brought up an interesting idea about the symbolism of the river Euphrates. Rev 9:13-16 kicks off the 6th Trumpet saying a voice came from the golden altar and commanded the 6th angel to release the 4 angels who “are bound at the great river Euphrates” and who “had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year”. 2) The Little Scroll deals with prophecies from Ezekiel.

Rev 9:13-16 “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.”

- Why is the sixth trumpet associated with the golden altar and the four angels of the great river Euphrates?
- Remember the number 4 is the cosmic number refer to the whole land, or the whole creation, or universal scope.
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 - Therefore, it is symbolic of the judgement of God.
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 - I believe the imagery in Revelation may be reminding us that God’s redemptive plan—His management of human history—beginning right at the Fall and has been unfolding ever since.

- As such, this would be put into the vision to dramatically show God has been refraining and delaying judgement ever since the fall of man.
- The physical advance of both the Greeks and the Romans came from the west, so the Euphrates could only harken back to the exilic wars of the Assyrians and the Babylonians.
- Rev 22:1-5 talks about Eden being restored; therefore, the vision encompasses/harkens back to the Garden.

Rev 10 uses the same language as Ezekiel 2 and 3

- Same setup: Prophet is handed a scroll/book by a heavenly messenger (Eze 2:9–10 ↔ Rev 10:8–9).
- Same command: “Take and eat it” (Eze 3:1–2 ↔ Rev 10:9).
- Same taste: In the mouth it is sweet like honey (Eze 3:3 ↔ Rev 10:9–10).
- Same mission result: Eating = internalizing God’s message, then being sent to speak/prophecy (Eze 3:10–11 ↔ Rev 10:11).
- Same tension: The message is sweet (God’s word/commission) yet leads to bitterness (hard judgment, resistance, grief) (Eze 3:14 ↔ Rev 10:10).
- Ezekiel is the OT prophet of temple judgment—the impending judgment on Jerusalem; the departure of God’s presence; the end of an old covenantal order; a later restoration by God’s Spirit.
- Revelation is not just borrowing imagery, it is saying Ezekiel is being fulfilled.

The Two Witnesses (Rev 11:1-14)

Rev 11:1-6

- The “Two” could be symbolized by Peter and the witnessing to the Jews and Paul witnessing to the diaspora outside of Jerusalem (and to the Gentiles, naturally).
- “Two olive trees / two lampstands” — The Gospel is the Spirit-supplied salvation the new covenant, borne by the apostolic witness as God’s authorized testimony during the transition period. Olive tree = tree of life or salvation. Lampstands = God’s church.
- Standing before the Lord of the earth — The message carries divine authority, not temple authority; the church speaks for God while the old system is being weighed and measured.
- Fire from their mouths — The proclaimed Gospel truth: it exposes unbelief, condemns rejection, and announces consequences for covenant unfaithfulness.
- Shutting the sky (no rain) — A symbolic declaration of withheld blessing from those who reject the Gospel. It echos OT covenant-curse language (Deut 28) applied through

proclamation (i.e. not weather control). Israel is no longer the source of connection to God.

- Water turned to blood — The Gospel message reframes Israel’s sacred symbols (law, temple, sacrifices) as testifying against the old order. Also, the blood of Christ.
- Striking the land with plagues
 - Apostolic preaching functions as a covenant lawsuit, announcing that the judgments foretold by the prophets are now being fulfilled.
 - “As often as they desire” — The effect flows from ongoing testimony, not isolated acts; judgment advances in step with persistent proclamation.

Rev 11:7-12

- “When they have finished their testimony” (v.7)
 - The witness ends only after the Gospel mission has run its course and reached the diaspora in the OC–NC transition period, not at the start of the siege.
- The Beast kills the witnesses
 - The covenant system allied with imperial power appears to silence the Gospel, even as judgment is imminent.
 - Bodies left unburied — Public rejection and humiliation of the Gospel message, signaling societal and religious repudiation, not literal corpses.
 - “The great city... where their Lord was crucified” — Jerusalem is the focus, confirming covenantal judgment, not a global end-time event.
 - Rejoicing over their death — Those opposed to the Gospel believe the prophetic voice has been eliminated, reinforcing the apparent victory of the old order.
 - “After three and a half days” — A short, symbolic interval emphasizing apparent defeat, not finality.
 - Breath of life from God — Divine vindication of the Gospel witness; God confirms the truth of the testimony rather than restoring an old system.
 - Fear falls on observers — Recognition that the witnesses’ message was true and authoritative.
 - “Come up here” — Public exaltation of the Gospel mission, not escape from history.
 - Ascension in a cloud — Covenant vindication before judgment, paralleling OT prophetic imagery of divine approval (not a physical rapture).
- God’s new church/kingdom cannot be killed because it is driven by Spirit-filled disciples and not simply its leadership—it goes on under His protection and will.

Rev 11:13-14

- “In that hour there was a great earthquake”

- Symbolic language for a decisive covenantal upheaval, not a geological event.
- A tenth of the city falls — A measured, judicial judgment on Jerusalem, consistent with prophetic symbolism rather than total annihilation.
- Seven thousand killed — A complete and divinely reckoned loss, echoing OT judgment language to stress theological finality, not body counts.
- The rest were terrified — The judgment produces recognition, not repentance, matching the Gospel-rejection pattern already described.
- “They gave glory to the God of heaven” — An acknowledgment of God’s justice and authority (not a conversion narrative).
- “The second woe has passed” — Confirms this whole witness-vindication-judgment sequence belongs to the 6th trumpet complex, not the 7th. “The third woe is coming quickly” — Signals that final covenantal resolution is imminent, immediately leading into the 7th trumpet.

The Seventh Trumpet (Rev 11:15-19)

- The Seventh Trumpet is not another plague
 - Unlike trumpets 1–6, no new disaster is described.
 - Instead, we hear proclamation, worship, and theological interpretation.
 - This signals a culmination, not another step in the same pattern.
- “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ”
 - This is not saying Christ just began to reign.
 - It announces that His reign is now publicly manifested and uncontested.
 - In a preterist / covenantal reading:
 - The rival system (the Old Covenant centered on the Temple) is being removed.
 - The New Covenant reality is now the sole covenantal authority.
- The timing language points to fulfillment, not delay
 - “The time has come...”, “The time to judge the dead...”, and “The time to reward your servants...”
- “Destroying those who destroy the land”
 - Land – Israel (the promised land).
 - The Temple’s fall is the culmination of judgment.

Next week: Rev 11:19 (the last verse of the 7th Trumpet) and then the Woman and the Dragon (Rev 12) and the Beasts out of the Sea the Earth (Rev 13).

Part 10: The Woman, the Dragon, and the Beast out of the Sea

Review: Last week I went into more detail on the four angels of the Euphrates (Rev 9:13-16) and the little scroll (Rev 10). I then covered the enigmatic Two Witnesses and the Seventh Trumpet. The Preterist view of the Two Witnesses is that they were two real people who lived in the city during the siege and spoke warnings to the Jews. I explained how “2” is a symbol for strength and partnership and therefore there need not be two actual things. Nevertheless, in keeping with other Revelation elements whose symbolic number literal being match, I interpreted the Two Witnesses symbolically as the early Christian church witnessing 1) to the Jews in Judea, and 2) to the Jews in the diaspora. You could symbolically think of #1 as Peter or the Apostles in Jerusalem, and #2 as Paul. Either way the period ran from 30 AD to mid to late 60 AD. The Seventh Trumpet marks the end of the Old Covenant. It’s possible the destruction of the Temple was included in the Sixth Trumpet or here in the Seventh Trumpet. Either way, what’s important is the Christ’s new kingdom which started at his resurrection is now uncontested and is the sole mechanism of salvation. My conclusion is summarized by verse 18: At the surface level, ‘destroying those who destroy the land’ naturally points to the Roman destroyers, but Revelation’s deeper covenant logic can include the internal destroyers too—those who corrupted the land spiritually and triggered the judgment.

I intentionally did not cover verse 19, so I will cover that so start with today, which will conclude the Trumpets section. Then we’ll cover Rev 12 and 13.

The End of the Messianic Nation Covenant (Rev 11:19)

The end of the law-based covenant which I will call the “Messianic Nation Covenant”. We call it the “Old Covenant”, but this is clearly from a Christian perspective. The Abrahamic Covenant is wrong, and “Mosaic Covenant” and “Law Covenant” are accurate but purely descriptive. The term “Messianic Nation” is both descriptive and functional. Would modern Judaism agree with this? Probably not as they do not generally define their covenant with God as primarily as ‘birthing the Messiah’ and the messianic expectation becomes less and less foregrounded as time goes on. What I’m doing here is a Christian giving the Covenant View of Revelation is saying, from the New Testament’s perspective, the Law shaped Israel into the nation through whom the Messiah would come. We’ll see this even more in Revelation 12 as the ‘woman’ who gives birth to the child.

- Would modern Jews agree with this? No. For the most part, they’ve given up on the idea of a strong, godly messianic figure.
- Davidic king and royal Messiah
 - Isa 9:6–7 — A child is born who rules on David’s throne, with an everlasting kingdom.

- Isa 11:1–10 — A “shoot from the stump of Jesse” (David’s father) brings righteousness and worldwide hope.
- Jer 23:5–6 — “A righteous Branch” from David will reign as king and save.
- Jer 33:14–17 — God will fulfill the promise: a “Branch” for David; David will never lack a man to sit on the throne (messianic trajectory).
- Ezek 34:23–24 — God will set up “one shepherd, my servant David” to feed them (future Davidic ruler).
- Ezek 37:24–28 — “My servant David shall be king over them,” tied to covenant renewal and God dwelling with His people.
- Israel/Zion as the “birthplace” of the ruler
 - Mic 5:2–4 — A ruler comes from Bethlehem, whose “goings forth are from of old,” who shepherds Israel.
 - Isa 49:5–6 — The Servant arises from Israel to restore Israel and become a light to the nations (Israel → world salvation vector).
 - Isa 52:7–10 — Zion’s good news of God’s reign goes out to the nations; God bares His arm “before all nations.”
- The Servant and redemptive suffering
 - Isa 42:1–7 — The Servant brings justice and is a covenant/light to the nations.
 - Isa 50:4–7 — The Servant suffers rejection yet remains obedient.
 - Isa 52:13–53:12 — The Servant bears sins, is crushed, and yet is vindicated—central to the idea that Israel’s story produces a redemptive figure.
- “Anointed one” and timeline emphasis
 - Dan 9:25–26 — An “anointed one” (messiah) appears and is “cut off,” within a prophetic timeline tied to Jerusalem’s fate.
- Temple/Zion climax and the “arrival” theme
 - Mal 3:1 — “The Lord... will suddenly come to His temple,” preceded by a messenger (heavily used in NT).
 - Zech 6:12–13 — “The Branch” will build the temple of the LORD and rule as priest-king.

Why end with God’s temple and the Ark of the Covenant in Heaven?

- Last Biblical reference: 2 Chronicles 35:3 – Josiah says (~622 BC), “Put the holy ark in the house...which Solomon built”.
- Last OT prophetic reference: Jer 3:16 (~615 BC) – “The Ark...will not come to mind...nor will another one be made.”
- This is well before the Babylonian destruction of the First Temple (586 BC).
 - Scripture never records its destruction, capture, or return.

- The Babylonians do not list it in the items they take but did meticulously mention other items from the Jews and others.
- Unlike other lost artifacts, no biblical text promises its restoration in the Second Temple era.
- The Second Temple's Holy of Holies Was Known to Be Empty
 - Mishnah Yoma 5:2: "After the Ark had been taken away, there was a stone from the days of the earlier prophets, called 'shtiyah'."
 - The Holy of Holies contained no Ark, only a foundation stone.
- Shouldn't there have been theological shock?
 - The Ark symbolized: God's throne, covenant testimony, atonement (via the mercy seat)
 - Yom Kippur law cannot be followed: Leviticus 16:14, "He shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger on the front of the mercy seat on the east side, and in front of the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times."
- Operating without the Ark sets a precedence about how Judaism can persist without major components.

The Woman and the Dragon (Rev 12)

- The woman = Israel, not the Christian church and not Mary individually.
 - She represents covenant Israel as the historical vehicle through which the Messiah is brought into the world (Gen 12; Isa 66:7–8; Mic 5:2–3).
 - The imagery fits national, covenantal Israel, not a post-resurrection entity.
- The child = the Messiah
 - His birth, ascension, and authority are stated without dwelling on his earthly ministry.
 - The vision is not retelling the Gospel but explaining why the redemptive conflict exists and why judgment must follow.
- The dragon = Satan operating behind earthly powers.
 - This is made explicit in the text: "that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan".
 - The symbolism also matters: Satan is shown as a cosmic, primordial source of opposition, not merely a political manifestation.
 - The choice of "dragon" is deliberate and important.
 - Not "beast" here because beasts in Revelation represent earthly empires or political systems.

- The dragon is something older, cosmic, and pre-imperial—an Edenic adversary, not just Rome in another costume.
 - Dragon language signals primordial rebellion, reaching back to the serpent of Genesis 3
 - This tells the reader the conflict is not merely first-century politics, *but the culmination of a long-running spiritual war.*
- The vision rewinds the story on purpose.
 - Revelation 12 steps back before the seals and trumpets to explain the theological cause of all this: Satan’s rebellion against God.
 - Satan’s failed attempt to stop the Messiah and his subsequent war against the covenant people during the waning years of the Old Covenant.
 - Israel remains central even after the child is taken up.
 - The woman’s continued existence and persecution (30–70 AD context) reinforces that this is about the end of Israel’s covenant role, not the destruction of the church or God’s plan for humanity.
- The rewind strengthens the ideas:
 - That the Seals are about Israel’s covenant history, not the church or the modern world.
 - That Revelation can and does reach all the way back to Edenic times to show causes.
- “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Messiah”
 - This is not announcing the start of the Gospel, but its uncontested continuance.
 - It marks the moment when every rival covenantal authority has been decisively nullified, leaving the Messiah’s kingdom as the only remaining framework through which God relates to humanity.

The Beast from the Sea (Rev 13:1-10)

- The Beast out of the Sea is not Satan, but an earthly power animated by him. Revelation 12 already established Satan as the dragon; Revelation 13 shows how that dragon expresses his authority through history—specifically through empire.
- “Sea” language signals the Gentile world, not chaos for chaos’ sake. The Beast rises from the nations outside Israel, contrasting with Israel’s land-based covenant identity.
- This immediately frames the Beast as a foreign imperial force pressing in on covenant Israel.
- The Beast is Rome as a system, not a single emperor necessarily.

- The imagery (seven heads, ten horns, composite beast traits) points to accumulated imperial authority—Rome as the inheritor and culmination of prior pagan empires, not a one-man end-times villain.
- Ten horns could be:
 1. Augustus (27 BC – AD 14)
 2. Tiberius (AD 14 – 37)
 3. Caligula (AD 37 – 41)
 4. Claudius (AD 41 – 54)
 5. Nero (AD 54 – 68)
 6. Galba (AD 68 – 69)
 7. Otho (AD 69)
 8. Vitellius (AD 69)
 9. Vespasian (AD 69 – 79)
 10. Titus (AD 79 – 81)
- The Beast receives authority because the Dragon has lost direct access.
 - Satan cannot stop the Messiah, cannot accuse in heaven anymore, and cannot attack Christ—so he delegates power to Rome to persecute the remaining covenant people.
- The timing fits the 30–70 AD overlap period exactly.
 - Rome’s authority is “given” for a limited time, corresponding to the final generation of Old Covenant Israel before the Temple’s destruction—not an open-ended church age.
 - This is not random persecution—it is targeted. The Beast makes war on the saints because the covenant framework is collapsing, and Satan’s remaining strategy is to destroy Israel before her covenant role fully expires.

Next week: The Beast out of the Earth and the Lamb and 144,000 (again).

Part 11: The Beast out of the Earth and the Lamb and the 144,000 (again)

Review: Last week we talked about the Woman and Dragon, who was Israel and Satan. Israel was a platform for the birth of the Messiah. The Messiah completed his mission and was then snatched back to Heaven—but then the Beast was free to engage the Woman after her “protection in the wilderness” (the 40 years after the Jesus’ death) ended. The first part of Chapter 13 shows the behind the scenes spiritual battle: the Beast rising up from the sea of humanity.

Review and some additional information:

The Woman and the Dragon (Rev 12)

- There is a change in vantage point that occurs in Rev 12.
- Revelation never stops being about Israel, but it stops speaking to Israel as covenant-holder.
- Up through the Seals and Trumpets, Israel is the primary covenantal subject. Beginning in Rev 12, Israel becomes the object of explanation rather than the addressee.
- Rev 12 marks the transition from covenant subject to covenant context.
- The woman (Israel) is no longer being warned, corrected, or called to repent. She is being explained—her role, her history, and why judgment is now inevitable.
- At the same time, the vision begins to speak directly to those who have already crossed into the New Covenant.
- When the Book of the Lamb, endurance, testimony, patience, and faithfulness appear, the text is clearly addressing those who belong to the Lamb, not those still defined by the Mosaic system.
- If Rev 12 were still “talking to Jews,” calls to patience and endurance would make no sense. Jews who rejected the Messiah are not being instructed on how to endure Rome faithfully; they are being judged by it.

The Beast out of the Sea (Rev 13:8-10)

- Rev 13:8 is not redefining who God’s people are; it’s clarifying who Rome can’t finally claim. Those written in the Book of Life of the Lamb are the Messiah’s people under the New Covenant, in contrast to those whose allegiance is absorbed into the imperial system.
- They’re not filler — they’re covenant courtroom language:
- “Whoever has ears, let them hear” is not informational; it’s juridical.
- It signals that what follows is not new data but a binding interpretive verdict on what is happening.

- Verse 10 restates reality to remove false expectations.
- John is cutting off the idea that the church will win this conflict by force or escape it altogether.
- The repetition functions like a legal maxim: this is how the world now works, this is how judgment unfolds.
- Verse 10: What exactly “calls for patience”?
- Patience is required because the Beast’s authority is temporary — but it still hurts while it lasts.
- Patience is required by the Christians.

The Beast out of the Earth (Rev 13:11-18)

- The Beast out of the earth is not a second empire but a covenant enforcer. It does not replace Rome; it serves Rome by shaping belief, loyalty, and behavior from within the land.
- “Earth” points to Israel, not the Gentile world. In contrast to the Sea Beast (Gentile imperial power), the Land Beast arises from the covenant land and operates in Israel’s religious and social space.
- This Beast looks lamb-like but speaks like the dragon. Its appearance mimics legitimacy, tradition, and piety, but its voice aligns with Satanic purposes—making deception its primary weapon.
- The Land Beast’s job is not to rule but to persuade. It pressures people to interpret Rome correctly, obey Rome religiously, and treat imperial authority as divinely sanctioned.

Who is the Beast?

- The basic idea: name-as-number (gematria)
- If you transliterate “Nero Caesar” into Hebrew letters as נרון קסר (NRON QSR — “Neron Caesar”), and then add the letter-values:
 - נ (nun) = 50
 - ר (resh) = 200
 - ו (vav) = 6
 - ן (nun-final) = 50
 - ק (qoph) = 100
 - ס (samekh) = 60
 - ר (resh) = 200
- Total: 50 + 200 + 6 + 50 + 100 + 60 + 200 = 666.

The Lamb and the 144,000 (again) (Rev 14:1-5)

- God has not forgotten those sealed under the Old Covenant.
- Here they are, victorious and protected.
- Their presence affirms that sealing meant something real. What God marked as His during the Old Covenant is not casually abandoned when judgment comes; faithfulness is honored even as the covenantal framework expires.
- This answers the implied fear raised by Jerusalem’s destruction.
- As the Temple falls and Israel’s institutions collapse, Rev 14 insists that God still knows exactly who belonged to Him.
- The Lamb standing with them shows continuity of allegiance across covenants.
- Explanation of the phrases used to describe the 144,000:
 - “Did not defile themselves with women” is covenant language, not sexual commentary. John is not introducing a sudden ethic about celibacy; he’s using well-established biblical imagery where unfaithfulness to God is described as sexual defilement.
 - “Women” here represent rival religious systems, not individuals. Throughout the OT, Israel’s participation in idolatry or pagan worship is framed as adultery or prostitution (Hos, Jer, Ezek). John is drawing from that same prophetic vocabulary.
 - Virginitv signifies exclusive covenant loyalty. The point is not abstinence, but undivided allegiance—they did not mix devotion to God with devotion to idols, empire, or false worship.
 - “They were purchased from among mankind and offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb.”
 - “No lie” is about testimony, not moral perfection. This is courtroom language. Their mouths are clean because their witness is true, not because they never sinned or misspoke.

Next week: The story continues in Rev 14:6-16:21 with the New Covenant and Christ’s reign strongly established as the one and only way to commune with God.

Part 12: The Uncontested Reign of the Lamb

Review: Last week we spoke Beast out of the earth and the Lamb and the 144,000. The week before that I spoke about the Woman and the Dragon and the Beast out of the Sea. Some clarification about the “change of perspective” I spoke about in Rev 12. Before Rev 12: The vision presents covenantal events as they unfold in history—seals, trumpets, which are warnings and consequences—yet without explaining why the conflict exists. Beginning in Rev 12, the vision shifts to a post-Messianic, post-ascension vantage, explaining: 1) The origin of the conflict (dragon going all the way back to Satan’s fall), the instrument of persecution (beasts), 2) The covenantal reason judgment must now fall (only one Covenant can remain and the OC prepared the way for the NC), 3) Israel remains the subject, but no longer the addressee. Everything that follows — beasts, harvests, bowls, and final judgment—is narrated from the standpoint that: the Messiah reigns and the old covenant has lost authority.

We saw the the Beast out of the Sea was Rome, emerging as the dominant empire and becoming God’s instrument (but not his ally) to usher in the NC (for example, the Jews could not just kill Jesus) and end the OC. Yet Rome was *operated* by Satan (the Dragon). It can be difficult for humans to understand how God’s divine sovereignty and Satan’s agency operate on different levels. Rome acts freely, violently, and arrogantly under Satan’s influence, yet its actions still fall within God’s larger covenant purposes. Rome = Beast (historical power), Satan = Dragon (spiritual instigator), God = the unseen sovereign who limits, times, and ends both. Rome thought it was ruling history; Satan thought he was winning a war; God was closing a covenant and opening the only one that remains. The New Covenant is not born from Rome’s righteousness but from God’s restraint and timing. Rome clears away what must end; Christ establishes what will never end.

Today: I keep thinking, “now would be a good time for Revelation either to end or move on”, but I think what we’ll see is the vision stays where it is in time (at the destruction of the temple) and keeps on hammering the spiritual reality.

The Three Angels (Rev 14:6-13)

Rev 14:5 ends by returning to the 144k—those saved under the OC—to show they are safe with God and the Lamb, but what about the unfaithful Israelites?

Three angels appear to proclaim three messages to humanity. The first angel proclaims the Gospel of the New Covenant. The second angel declares Israel and the Old Covenant are done. The third angel warns humanity not to transfer allegiance to the Rome by treating its authority above God’s.

In v13, a “voice from heaven” (aka God) says something amazing: from now on, those who die in the Lord will find rest. My question is, “is this physical death or spiritual death becoming a Christian”? I think it can be both. Another question is (sticking with the physical death aspect), “is the verse making the claim that something new has happened with the destruction of the temple versus the resurrection of Christ? That is, is there a new spiritual reality for those who die in the Lord after the destruction of the temple that is different from those who died in the Lord as a Christian after the resurrection of Christ?” I think the answer is no. No — Rev 14:13 is not introducing a second post-mortem change after the Temple’s destruction.

The decisive spiritual change occurs at Christ’s resurrection, not at 70 AD. What 70 AD does is remove the last competing covenant structure, making that reality *uncontested and visible*, not newly created.

Harvesting the Earth and Trampling the Winepress (Rev 14:14-20)

In the next “harvesting section”, the literal feel is like the end of the world where God collects all of the saved. But this is symbolic, and points to the ongoing gathering of souls until the Second Coming. John uses end-of-the-world language to say: *the authority to gather souls now belongs entirely to the Son of Man*. Another way of putting it is covenant-final language, not cosmic-final language. The Old Covenant world has ended; the New Covenant order is fully operative. That transition *is* world-ending in biblical terms.

The second angel gathers “grapes from the earth’s vine”. In a way this sounds like the gathering of saved souls, but the key is “earth’s vine” and “wine press of God’s wrath. I think the fact that the grapes come from “the earth’s vine” also gives it away. I think confusion can come from Jesus’ parable of the vine and the branches.

1600 stadia (180 miles) roughly matches the north–south length of Israel. But why would Israel be in play? Shouldn’t it say “to the ends of the earth”? The lens however is “covenantal”. Therefore this is a judgement of the Old Covenant, represented by Israel. Are the grapes OC Israelites or general non-Christians? The grapes are not “all non-Christians.” They are covenant-breaking Israel, judged as a vine that no longer belongs to God. The principle is universal; the application here is local and covenantal. Revelation knows how to say “the nations” when it means everyone. It does so elsewhere. It doesn’t do that here, and we’ll see the Pagans are judged later.

Seven Angels With Seven Plagues (Rev 15)

Chapter 15 comes before the bowls of judgements. It is a heavenly liturgical pause, a courtroom transition, and a theological justification scene. Notice the flow:

- The scene is the Heavenly Temple.

- The victors stand beside the sea of glass (15:2). More “seas” here. It reminds me of Dan 7:2, Daniel said: “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea.
- They sing the Song of Moses and the Lamb (15:3–4)
- The heavenly temple opens (15:5)
- Seven angels receive bowls of wrath (15:7)
- The temple fills with smoke (15:8)

Why “no one could enter the temple” (Revelation 15:8)? It symbolizes the priestly intercession of the temple being suspended.

I think what we’ll see is the 7 Seals are warnings, the 7 Trumpets are partial judgments, and the 7 Bowls are completion.

The First Six of the Seven Bowls of God’s Wrath (Rev 16:1-12)

- Bowls 1–6 show God withdrawing covenantal support and restraint, allowing the Beast’s world to collapse under the weight of its own exposed corruption.
- Each bowl removes something that once sustained the Beast’s system.
- Suffering produces no repentance which confirms people’s allegiance.
- Bowl 1:
 - Symbol: Painful sores on those with the mark of the Beast.
 - Meaning: Internal corruption and guilt fully exposed in those aligned with the Beast system.
- Bowl 2:
 - Symbol: Sea turned to blood; all life in it dies
 - Meaning: Total spiritual death of the Gentile/world system that supported the Beast.
- Bowl 3:
 - Symbol: Rivers and springs turned to blood.
 - Meaning: Judgment reaches the sources of authority and influence as just retribution for shed blood.
- Bowl 4:
 - Symbol: Sun scorches people with fire.
 - Meaning: Exposed ruling authority becomes oppressive, revealing hardened refusal to repent.
- Bowl 5:
 - Symbol: Darkness on the throne of the Beast.

- Meaning: Collapse of legitimacy, coherence, and moral authority at the center of Beast's power.
- Bowl 6:
 - Symbol: Euphrates dried up to prepare the way.
 - Meaning: Removal of covenantal restraint, allowing external forces to complete the already-determined outcome.

The Seven Bowls of God's Wrath Interlude: The Three Frogs (Rev 16:13-16)

- Out of the Mouths:
 - Symbol: Three frog-like spirits out of the mouths of the Dragon, Beast, and false prophet.
 - Meaning: Unclean, deceptive propaganda arising from the entire anti-God power structure.
- The frogs themselves:
 - Symbol: Frogs (unclean creatures) from the Egyptian plagues.
 - Meaning: Corrupt imitation of divine testimony, parodying prophetic truth.
- Going to the Kings:
 - Symbol: Going out to the kings of the whole world.
 - Meaning: Ideological deception mobilizing resistance, not creating new power.
- The Gathering of Armageddon:
 - Symbol: Gathering for battle.
 - Meaning: Exposure and consolidation of opposition already under judgment.
- In summary: The frogs set up the vision for the final bowl of God's wrath

Part 13: The Recap Before the Recap

Review: Last week we covered the Rev 14:6 through 16:16, which encompass the stories of the three angels, the harvesting of the earth, the Seven Angels With Seven Plagues, the first six of the seven bowls of wrath, and the 3 frogs of Armageddon. I also mentioned at the beginning how I kept thinking, “now would be a good time for Revelation either to end or move on”, but instead the book keeps on hammering out the story.

I still felt that way today as I was preparing for this, so I decided to review all I’ve covered thus far looking for “anchor verses”, which are verses that are a bit more transparent than others and anchor the interpretation to certain times, time ranges, and events. In doing so I realized that this was what Revelation itself was doing in chapters 15-18 (and parts of 19). This was a good thing to realize as I believe it shows God was trying to make the story as clear as possible to the audience who would invest the time to dive deep into the symbolism and imagery of this apocalyptic tale in order to be blessed with the meaning. Obviously God could have written this in plain language and points, but it seems that God always gives future prophecies and “behind the scenes” explanations enigmatically, requiring the readers to dig deep and really work hard to understand these precious gems of God.

I believe this is why Revelation has recapitulations (when a story is retold and which is where we get the word "recap"), and Chapters 15-18 are the final recap. Last week I talked about Rev 14-16 without realizing this. Now that I have, I want to recap my interpretive claims from chapters 1 through 16. This may seem like beating a dead horse to death, but Revelation is highly mysterious and, since God himself is repetitive in the vision to explain history and how he's intervened to help humanity, it only makes sense that we as humans have to do this, too.

Timeframe start/end anchors of Revelation

- Rev 1:1 “what soon must take place” and 1:3 “the time is near” - the prophecies of the vision occur soon after the recording of the vision (i.e. relative to the writing date).
- Rev 1:9 - he’s on the isle of Patmos.
- Rev 1:19 - write what you have seen, what is now, and what will soon take place.
- Rev 22:6: repeats 1:1, “These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God who inspires the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place”.
- Rev 22:10: “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this scroll, because the time is near.”
 - Note: Very similar to Dan 12:4, “But you, Daniel, roll up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge.”

The 7 churches: present-tense historical footing

- Rev 1:11: the vision is addressed to real churches in Asia
- Regarding the 7 churches in chapters 2 and 3: 2:2, 2:9, 2:13, 2:19, 3:1, 3:8, and 3:15 - “I know your deeds”, and near past to present state of the 7 churches.
- Localized threats + nearness
 - Rev 2:10: “you will suffer... ten days” (bounded/near trial language)
 - Rev 2:16: “I am coming to you soon” (disciplinary coming)
 - Rev 3:3: “If you do not wake up, I will come like a thief” (Mat 24 tone with local application)
 - Rev 3:11: “I am coming soon”
- Anchor idea: Revelation isn’t entirely abstract; the book expects immediate relevance to churches.

Heaven “now,” then the Scroll: why judgment unfolds in stages

- Chapter 4 has a lot present-time language—“this is what is happening in heaven right now”.
 - Rev 4:1–2: immediate shift to “what must take place after these things” + throne-room “now” feel.
 - Rev 4:8–11: continuous worship (“day and night”) = heavenly present-tense backdrop.
- Chapter 5 is pretty timeless. It speaks of the Lamb taking the scroll, God’s plan to save humanity, because of things that will happen as if they’ve happened.
 - Rev 5:5–10: the Lamb is worthy because of what He has done/will do (cross/resurrection as hinge).
 - Rev 5:9–10: redeemed “from every tribe...” is a global scope introduced early (prepares for “nations”).
- Anchor idea: the scroll = God’s redemptive-judicial program; seals/trumpets/bowls are unfolding of that program, not random disasters.

Seals & Trumpets: “Covenant Transition (30–70)” anchors

- Label for the period 30–70 AD: The “Covenant Transition” Period.
- Chapters 6 and 7 starts with vaguely-timed events of covenant transitions.
 - Rev 6:9–11: martyrs told to “rest a little longer” until the number is complete (time-bounded expectation).
 - Rev 7:3–4: sealing before judgment; “servants of God” marked out (identity anchor).

- Chapter 8:1 I believe still strongly points to the exact 3 days starting with the crucifixion and ending with the resurrection, with outside evidence pointing to this being in April of 30 AD. The rest of chapter 8 seems to have vaguely timed events occurring between 30 and 70 AD.
 - **This is a big anchor for my Covenant View**
- Chapter 9 becomes more specifically timed:
 - Rev 9:5: “five months” bounded period mapped to the siege.
 - Rev 9:13-19: Depicting the war after the siege ended.
 - Rev 9:20-21: Bring up another repeated theme: people don’t repent even when they see things happen right in front of them. Nevertheless, it seems to stop just before the official declaration of the end of the OC.
 - Anchor idea: seals/trumpets feel like progressive warnings culminating toward the covenant-breaking center.

Interludes & recaps: measuring, witnessing, woman/dragon, beasts

- Chapter 10 seems to be a less tightly timed interlude but talking about the end of the OC which is the little scroll.
 - **Rev 10:7**: “in the days of the trumpet call... the mystery of God would be fulfilled” (strong “we’re nearing completion” anchor)
- Chapter 11 rewinds a bit and seems to address the Covenant Transition period where the Gospel spread and gave the Jews an opportunity to become Christians.
 - Rev 11:1–2: measuring the temple + 42 months trampling (this is a key repeating numeric anchor).
 - Verses 11-14 seem to discuss the siege and battle, right before the end of the OC. The end of the chapter seems to clearly point to the destruction of the Temple on Aug 4th or 30th of 70 AD.
 - Rev 11:15: “The kingdom of the world has become...” (declaration of regime change).
 - **Rev 11:18–19**: judgment + temple imagery = covenant climax language (“end of Old Covenant” anchor).
- Shift in Chapters 12–16: *Christian-centered* in perspective, but *Jerusalem-centered* in judgment.
 - Verses 1-5 definitely points to the course of Israel up to the birth and death of Jesus.
 - Verses 7-12 are timeless, pointing back to the pre-earth fall of Satan.
 - Rev 12:6,14: wilderness period restated (“1,260 days” / “time, times, half a time”) (two ways of anchoring the same interval).

- Verses 13-17 seems to point to the 30-70 AD period again. It's also possible these verses specifically point to the plight of the Christians in the period.
- Chapter 13 rewinds again.
 - The first half, verses 1-10, taking about Satan's association with Rome behind the scenes. Again I see a more direct connection to Christians in the 30 to 70 AD period.
 - Rev 13:5–7: beast given authority for 42 months + war on saints (ties beast activity to the same bounded era).
 - Verses 11-18 talk about Rome and its emperors focusing on Nero, Vespasian and Titus.
- Chapter 14:
 - Verses 1-5 remind us of the 144k saved souls from the OC and how they got to be part of the 144k.
 - Verses 6-13 seems to have a Christian focus, talking about the Gospel, the end of the OC, and a warning to not follow Rome. This continues in the second half of the chapter.
 - Verses 14-20, depicting the harvesting of those saved under the NC and those lost under the NC. The lost seem to be the lost OC Jews, but maybe it's Gentiles too.
- Anchor idea: chapters 10–14 keep “rewinding” to show why the conflict exists (dragon/Satan), how it manifests historically (beast), and who is protected (woman/saints).

Bowls (Rev 15–16): why they feel like “back in time” and who “the people” are

- Chapter 15 goes back to Heaven and seems to bring us back to the time just before the destruction of the temple.
 - Rev 15:1: bowls = “with them God's wrath is finished” (explicit completion cue).
 - Rev 15:5–8: heavenly temple imagery (priestly/temple lawsuit frame).
- Bowl identity anchors (to reduce “who are the people?” confusion): **“The people” are primarily covenant-Israel in her apostate.**
- Chapter 16 is where confusion arose. The bowls go back in time it seems, but I'm not sure if “the people” are Jews or Christians or people in general.
 - **Rev 16:2:** targets those with the mark of the beast / who worship its image (not “everyone”).
 - Rev 16:5–6: “they shed the blood of saints and prophets” (points to covenant persecutor identity).
 - Rev 16:9 / 16:11: “they did not repent” (echo of 9:20–21; same moral profile).

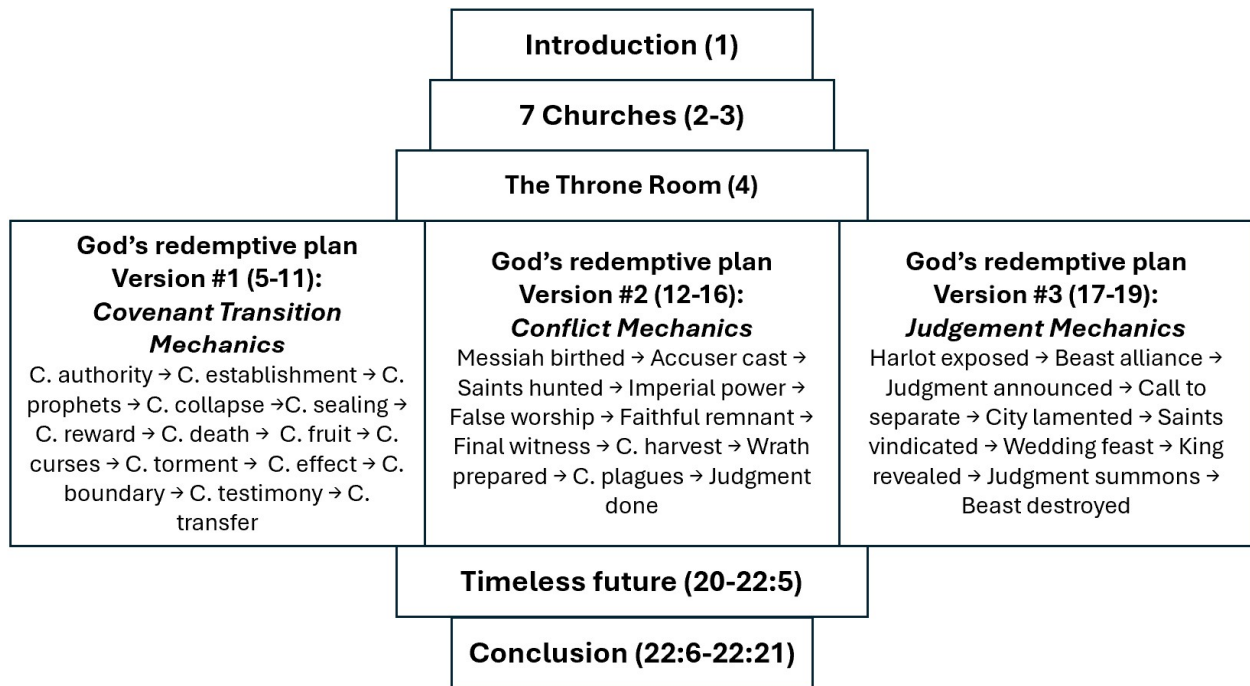
- Rev 16:15 points directly at Mat 24, which would mean the bowls are again talking about the end of the OC. If that were true, the Kings gathering for battle would be the battle of Jerusalem, which verse 17 seems to confirm.
- **Rev 16:17: “It is done”** (declaration of completion).
- Rev 16:19–21: final covenant-world collapse imagery (Jerusalem/Babylon remembered; islands/mountains; hail).
- Anchor idea: bowls read like final verdict recapitulation—not “new timeline after trumpets,” but the same crisis shown as terminal, complete wrath.

Part 14: The Final the Recapitulation

Review: Last week I felt it important to review what we've covered thus far before going over chapters 17 through 19. Hopefully that was helpful, as there are a lot of details that have to be put together.

This episode will cover Rev 17-19, and I will put forth the idea that this is the third and final recapitulation of God's redemptive plan of salvation. Each recap is from a different angle, with some details are emphasized and some skipped over. Nevertheless, I believe God gave the story 3 perspectives to give Christians the best shot at understanding it. Rather than going to chapters 17-19 independently, I will show how it contrasts with the other two renditions.

Map of Revelation



God's redemptive plan
Version #1 (5-11):
Covenant Transition Mechanics

Covenant Authority (5) – The Lamb authorized to enact the plan through death
Covenant Establishment (6:1-8) – The nation of Israel established in the Promised Land
Covenant Prophets (6:9-11) – The martyred prophets wait to be avenged
Covenant Collapse (6:12-17) – Israel goes through collapse from the Greeks and Romans
Covenant Sealing (7:1-8) – The 144,000, the saved under the first covenant, are sealed (identified)
Covenant Reward (7:9-17) – The saved under the first covenant are given white robes and worship God
Covenant Death (8:1) – Silence in heaven as the Lamb is slain and spends 3 days in the heart of the earth
Covenant Fruit (8:2-5) – The promised Holy Spirit is sent to the earth
Covenant Curses (8:6-13) – Israel judgement is set up through sequences of events
Covenant Torment (9) – Intensified torment and the siege of Jerusalem
Covenant Effect (10) – The first covenant tastes good at first but then becomes bitter
Covenant Boundary (11:1-2) – the inner Temple is measured for final judgement but not the outer court
Covenant Testimony (11:3-13) – The two witnesses proclaim the New Covenant to Judea and the Diaspora
Covenant transfer (11:14-19) – Jerusalem and the Temple are destroyed and with them, the first covenant

God's redemptive plan
Version #2 (12-16):

Conflict Mechanics (why the covenant transition is violently resisted)

Messiah Birthed (12:1-6) - Israel gives birth to the Messiah; the dragon (Satan) opposes
Accuser Cast (12:7-12) – The original source of the problem: Lucifer and his followers rebel against God
Saints Hunted (12:13-17) – The Dragon persecutes the Messiah's people
Imperial Power (13:1-10) – The Dragon pulls the strings of Roman power
False Worship (13:11-18) – Rome deceives the earth by its power and might and Nero is identified
Faithful Remnant (14:1-5) – Those saved under the first covenant are remembered and preserved
Final Witness (14:6-13) – The Gospel is proclaimed; apostates are identified by allegiance to Rome
Covenant Harvest (14:14-20) – New Covenant harvest imagery; apostates are condemned
Wrath Prepared (15) – First covenant judgements are prepared
Covenant Plagues (16:1-16) – Judgements are poured out on Jerusalem as the city is destroyed
Judgment Done (16:17-21) – The temple is destroyed and judgement is complete

God's redemptive plan
Version #3 (17-19):

Judgement Mechanics (who the city is and how it falls)

Harlot Exposed (17:1-6) – The covenant city revealed as spiritually unfaithful
Beast Alliance (17:7-18) – Political/religious alliance to the Beast (Rome) is explained
Judgement Announced (18:1-3)
Call to Separate (18:4-8)
City Lamented (18:9-19) – The world mourns the loss of the city
Saints Vindicated (18:20-24) – Heaven vindicates the saints
Wedding Feast (19:1-10) – Imagery of the covenant marriage and celebration
King Revealed (19:11-16) – The Messiah, Christ, is revealed as the conquering King
Judgement Summons (19:17-18) – Enemies of God are summoned for judgement
Beast Destroyed (19:19-21) – The Beast and the enemies of God are destroyed.

The Symbols of Revelation 17

Big Picture First: Revelation 17 is not introducing a new storyline. It is zooming in on:

- The covenant-apostate city that aligned with the beastly power and is about to be judged.
 - This is the same city already called: Egypt and Sodom, Babylon, The Great City, the prostitute.

Rev 17 is basically saying : “Let me show you who Babylon really is, how she relates to the beast, and why she must fall.”

The Woman (Prostitute / Babylon)

- She is:
 - Dressed like a priestly/royal figure (purple, scarlet, gold)
 - Holding a cup of abominations
 - “Drunk with the blood of the saints” (she kills the prophets)
 - Called “the great city that reigns over the kings of the earth”
 - Jerusalem in covenant apostasy, not pagan Rome.
- Why?
 - Only Jerusalem is repeatedly accused in Scripture of: Killing prophets, adultery with foreign powers, being God’s unfaithful wife (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea).
 - Jesus explicitly says Jerusalem killed the prophets and would bear the blood of all righteous men (Matt 23).
- Rome was never married to God but the Jewish people were.

The Beast She Rides

- The beast represents Rome as a satanically empowered empire.
- Jerusalem is using Roman power to maintain her covenant system and persecute the saints.
 - John 15:19: But they shouted, “Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!” “Shall I crucify your king?” Pilate asked. “We have no king but Caesar,” the chief priests answered.
- And Rome is using Jerusalem for legitimacy and stability. It’s a mutual exploitation relationship.

The Seven Heads = Seven Mountains + Seven Kings

- Mountains - Rome is famously known as the city of seven hills.
- Kings
 - Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come.
 - Five emperors before Nero (Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius,

- One is = Nero
- One to come = Galba (short reign)
- This places the vision squarely pre-70 AD, exactly where your framework already anchors Revelation.

The Eighth King

- The beast “is an eighth, yet belongs to the seven.”
- The same Roman power, but in a new phase of expression.
- Not a new empire — the same beastly system continuing.

The Ten Horns

- These are client kings / provincial rulers under Rome.
 - Receive authority for a short time
 - Unite with the beast
 - Eventually turn against the prostitute
- Rome eventually destroys Jerusalem.
- The beast devours the prostitute.
- This is one of the clearest covenant-historical markers in the whole book.

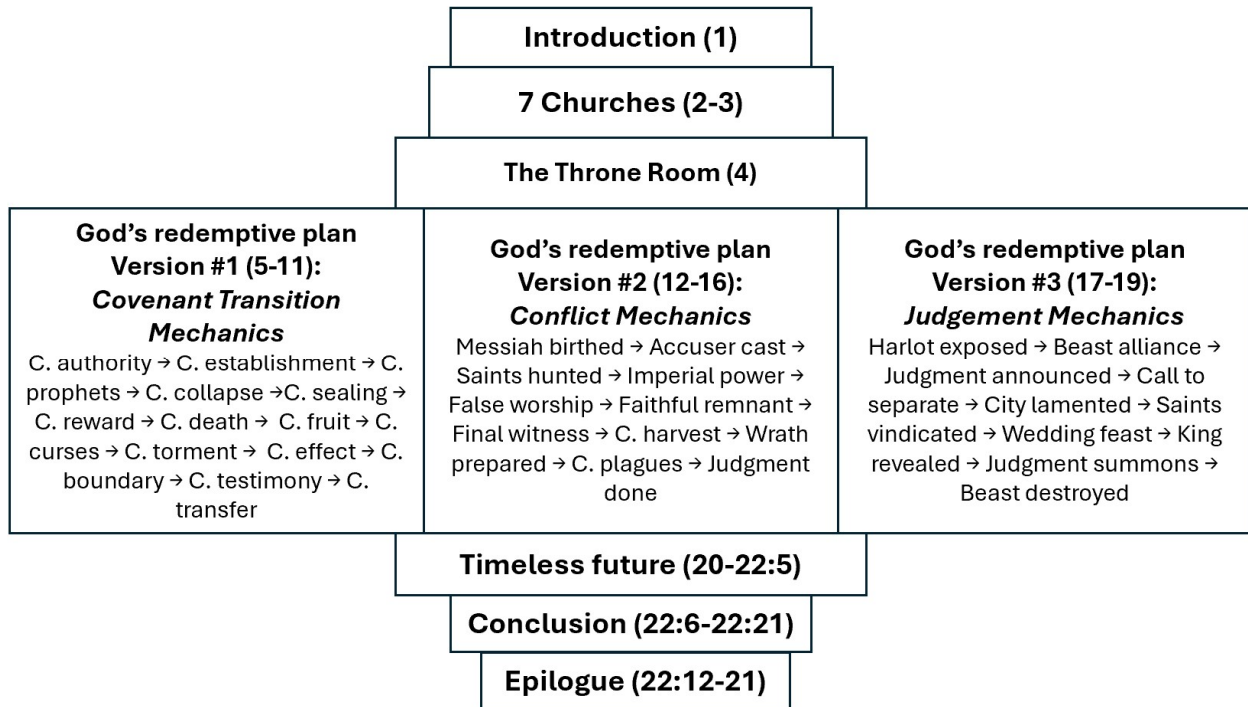
Theological Shock of the Chapter 17

- God uses Rome to destroy Jerusalem.
- The prostitute is judged by the beast she trusted.
- This fits perfectly with:
 - Jesus’ warnings
 - OT covenant curse patterns
 - Josephus’ record of the siege

The chapter requires familiarity with Daniel 7 and apocalyptic symbolism. Without that background, it sounds like riddles stacked on riddles.

Part 15: The End of the Apocalypse

Review: Last week included a slide that was I good review of the book, so that will be the review for today.



This shows how the book has a three-part introduction, three recapitulations of the narrative in the vision, and a conclusion of three parts. One could easily come up with a different number of introductions and conclusions, but I like the idea of this 3-3-3 pattern. The number of recapitulations and their boundaries can also vary. In my Covenantal View, there are three (and only three) covenant-story cycles. In most Preterist views, there are four sections: three recapitulations of the destruction of Jerusalem (4-11, 15-16, and 17-19) and one major interlude (12-14).

Before we get to the final three chapters, we need to rethink the writing date of the book, and that will require a focused look at the beastly imagery and symbolism found in the vision.

Evidence for Revelation early authorship

- An early writing date during Nero (54–68 AD) works best of the Preterist and Covenant Views.
 - It fits the “what must soon happen” verses (Rev 1:1, 1:3, 22:6, and 22:10).
 - The book would contain near-term prophecies.

- Rev 3:17 was a problem for me: “You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.”
 - There was an earthquake in Laodicea in Nero’s reign is 60 or 61 AD.
 - The idea was this would have made them poor and not qualify for “I am rich”.
 - However, Tacitus explicitly says Laodicea recovered by its own resources without Roman aid.
 - That means the city’s “we’re rich; we need nothing” vibe actually fits well after the quake too, because the famous detail is their self-funded rebuild.
 - In other words, the quake doesn’t force a late date; it can just as easily explain why Laodicea would sound proudly wealthy and independent in the following decades.
- What about Ante Nicene statements?
 - Irenaeus (late 2nd century) is the most-cited: he says the Apocalypse/vision “was seen... toward the end of Domitian’s reign.” Eusebius (3rd century) uses Irenaeus.
 - It was “seen”, so this could refer to the full proliferation of the book or when Christians started reading and referencing it.

The 10 Horns and 7 Heads of Daniel and Revelation

Dan 7:7-8,20-25; Rev 12:3,13:1-3,17:3-16

- There are many ways to count the “kings” and “heads” of Rome.
- All symbolism: 10 horns = human complete leadership and 7 = divine inspiration behind leaders
- Part symbolism/part literal: 10 horns symbolic, little horn and “one is” literal; 7 heads symbolic, the beast literal.
- All literal: 10 horns and 7 heads are real leaders of Rome. The little horn is real as is “one is, the other has not yet come; but when he does come, he must remain for only a little while.”
- Some treat Daniel separate from Revelation. i.e. not referring to the same kings.

Dan 7:7-8: A fourth terrifying and frightening, very powerful beast with large iron teeth. It crushes and defeats its victims and is different from the other beasts. It starts with 10 horns and then a little and separate horn appears and uproots 3 of the 10 horns. It has “eyes like a human” and “a mouth that speaks boldly”.

Dan 7:20-25: Daniel wants to know about the 10 horns and the little horn with eyes and a boastful mouth that uproots 3. He adds the little horn “looked more imposing than the others” and “this horn was waging war against the holy people and defeating them”. The angel gives this explanation: 1) The fourth beast is a fourth earthly kingdom that will be different from all the other kingdoms in that “it will devour the whole earth”. 2) “The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. 3) “He will speak against the Most High and oppress his holy people and try to change the set times and the laws. The holy people will be delivered into his hands for a time, times and half a time.”

Rev 12:3 – The Red Dragon is enormous and has 7 heads and 10 horns and “seven crowns on its heads”.

Rev 13:1-3 – The Beast out of the sea has 10 horns and 7 heads with “ten crowns on its horns” each with a blasphemous name on it. The beast resembles a leopard, has feet of a bear, and a “mouth like a lion”. Verse 3: “One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed”.

Rev 17:3-16

- Verse 3: A woman is sitting on a scarlet beast covered with blasphemous names that has 7 heads and 10 horns.
- Verse 7: The angel will explain the mystery of the woman and the 7-headed, 10-horned beast.
- Verse 8: “The beast, which you saw, once was, now is not, and yet will come up out of the Abyss and go to its destruction”. Rewritten: The beast once was in the Abyss, now is not in the Abyss, and will come up out of the Abyss again.
- Verse 9: “The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits”. Rome is well known to be a city with 7 hills. Jerusalem is not. Rome started the trope, “a city on seven hills”.
- Verse 10: “They are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; but when he does come, he must remain for only a little while.” “A little while” is subjective but is typically interpreted as “in power much shorter than typical emperors”.
- Verse 11: “The beast who once was, and now is not, is an eighth king” and belongs to the seven.

Rev 17:3-16

- Verse 12-14: “The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have *not yet received a kingdom*, but who *for one hour* will receive authority as kings *along with the beast*. They have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the beast. They will wage war against the Lamb...”
 - This does not sound like typical Roman emperors. This sounds like generals or provincial leaders who help the beast destroy Jerusalem and the Temple **and** persecute Christians.
 - That would mean the ten horns are not leaders of Rome. This is reinforced by the fact that the beast itself is “an eighth king who belongs to the seven [heads]”.
 - This would simplify things, since now we can focus on the seven heads (7 kings) and the beast (the 8th king).
- Verses 15-16: Not much here. Just that “the beast and the ten horns you saw will hate the prostitute.”
- Recall “five who have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; but when he does come, he must remain for only a little while”.

Emperors of Rome (Take your pick)

Sulla (dictator 82-80 BC)	#1	#2	#3	#4
Julius (dictator 47-42 BC)	1) Sulla	1) Julius	1) Augustus	1) Sulla
Augustus (27 BC–14 AD)	2) Julius	2) Augustus	2) Tiberius	2) Julius
Tiberius (14–37 AD)	3) Augustus	3) Tiberius	3) Caligula	3) Augustus
Caligula (37–41 AD)	4) Tiberius	4) Caligula	4) Claudius	4) Tiberius
Claudius (41–54 AD)	5) Caligula	5) Claudius	5) Nero	5) Caligula
Nero (54–68 AD)	6) Claudius	6) Nero	6) Galba	6) Claudius
Galba (June 68–Jan 69 AD)	7) Nero	7) Galba	7) <u>Otho</u>	7) Nero
Otho (Jan–Apr 69 AD)	8) Galba	8) <u>Otho</u>	8) Vitellius	8) Galba/Otho/Vitellius
Vitellius (July–Dec 69 AD)	9) <u>Otho</u>	9) Vitellius	9) <u>Vespasian</u>	9) <u>Vespasian</u>
<u>Vespasian</u> (69–79 AD)	10) Vitellius	10) <u>Vespasian</u>	10) Titus	10) Titus
Titus (79–81 AD)	11) <u>Vespasian</u>			
Domitian (81–96 AD)				
Nerva (96 – 98 AD)	#5	#6	#7	#8
	1) Julius	1) Augustus	1) Sulla	1) Julius
	2) Augustus	2) Tiberius	2) Julius	2) Augustus
	3) Tiberius	3) Caligula	3) Augustus	3) Tiberius
	4) Caligula	4) Claudius	4) Tiberius	4) Caligula
	5) Claudius	5) Nero	5) Caligula	5) Claudius
	6) Nero	6) Galba/Otho/Vitel.	6) Claudius	6) Nero
	7) Galba/Otho/Vitel.	7) <u>Vespasian</u>	7) Nero	7) <u>Vespasian</u>
	8) <u>Vespasian</u>	8) Titus	8) <u>Vespasian</u>	8) Titus
	9) Titus	9) <u>Domitian</u>	9) Titus	9) <u>Domitian</u>
	10) <u>Domitian</u>	10) Nerva	10) <u>Domitian</u>	10) Nerva

- I definitely think Daniel is referring to Rome. The iron teeth and the iron of Dan 2’s statue are a give away.
- I think the detail Daniel’s vision and the angel’s interpretation point to real kings.
- Revelation, on the other hand, reuses apocalyptic symbolism, and clearly is talking about Rome as it is the empire John lives under.
 - This means the beasts are/can be different aspects of Rome and don’t have to align directly with Daniel.
- #1 is the only list that works for Dan 7 and makes Vespasian the 11th “little horn” who subdues three horns (GOV).
 - But what about, “try to change the set times and the laws”?
 - Antiochus IV would fit but that’s the wrong empire.
 - Domitian could fit but he’s too late (for an early writing date).
- #2 - #8 work with Rev 13:1-3, “beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed” with Nero being the “near fatal wound” and Vespasian being the healed one.
- #2 and #5 work for Rev 17:10 with Julius-Claudius being the 5 fallen, Nero being one who is, and Galba or Galba/Otho/Vitellius serving for “a little while”.
- #7 works for Rev 17:11, “The beast who once was, and now is not, is an eighth king and belongs to the seven.” with Vespasian being the beast.
 - But doesn’t fit “he must remain for only a little while”.
 - Vespasian could work here because Vespasian originally started attacking Jerusalem as a general and “returned” as an emperor.

Rev 20 – The Thousand Years

- Starting with chapter 20, introduce three features that feel future-oriented:
 - A long-bounded period: “a thousand years” Satan restrained from deceiving the nations and released after that long period.

- A lack of “Jerusalem being sacked” or “the Temple being destroyed” language.
- The 1000 years are symbolic:
 - 10 = human completeness multiplied by itself 3 times over (10 x 10 x 10) = A fully complete, divinely-bounded human period.
- There is one event, the Great schism of 1054
 - Happens to be about 1000 years after, but I don’t see that as a time where Satan was let loose to deceive nations.
- 2030 would be 2000 years after Christ’s death.
 - Not that God has to work on even 2000-year boundaries, but I could envision that.
 - There is a well known Jewish rabbinic belief that God works in 2000-year cycles.
 - Abraham is roughly in the early 2nd millennium BC
- Humans seem to be evil enough without Satan as to make it difficult to detect when he’s been released.
 - I could see someone arguing the New World Order (aka WEF) or AI or alien disclosure being a signal.
 - The advent of atomic weapons or thermonuclear weapons.
 - WWII.

Rev 21-22 Old things gone, New things eternal

- Some try to put a definite date, but the timeless/occurring case works the best.
- Once Satan is finally removed, John leaves covenant-historical language entirely and moves into creation-restoration language:
 - New heaven and earth
 - No temple
 - No death
 - No curse
- God dwelling directly with humanity
- This is no longer about Israel, Rome, or covenant transitions.
- It is ontological: the nature of reality itself; the way things are meant to be.