

## 使人蒙福的信息——启示录纵览

### The Message That Blesses—An Overview of *Revelation*

#### *Introduction and Outline*

- Scripture Reading: Revelation 1:1-8 (NASB1995)  
1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John, 2 who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. 3 Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near. 4 John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood— 6 and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. 7 Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen. 8 “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”
- **Revelation 1:3 Blessed** is he who **reads** and those who **hear the words** of the prophecy, and **heed the things** which are written in it; for the time is near.

**Revelation 22:7** “And behold, I am coming quickly. **Blessed** is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book.”

- Outline:  
Title: The Message That Blesses—An Overview of *Revelation*
  1. “The things which you have seen” (Chapter 1)
  2. “The things which are” (Chapters 2-3)
  3. “The things which will take place after these things” (Chapters 4-22)

#### **“The things which you have seen” (Chapter 1)**

- “Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me...” (1:12-20): John saw Jesus walking among seven golden lampstands, symbolizing His close attention to each of His churches. The scene was so glorious, so vivid, and so overwhelming that when John saw it, he fainted on the spot, completely unable to bear the glory of the vision.
- “Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things.” (1:19): This sentence outlines the structure of the Book of Revelation, dividing it into three parts: “the things which you have seen” refers to the vision in Chapter 1; “the things which are” refers to the matters concerning the seven churches of Asia in Chapters 2-3; and “the things which will take place” refers to the events from Chapter 4 to the end, which concern the end times and the return of the Lord Jesus.

#### **“The things which are” (Chapters 2-3)**

- "Holding the seven stars in His right hand and walking among the seven golden lampstands" (Revelation 2:1): This indicates that Jesus is being with, walking alongside, and closely watching over each of his churches.
- "Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22): The seven churches represent all potential situations of all churches throughout history—churches that are doctrinally orthodox but cold and loveless, churches enduring persecution and suffering, churches indulging in worldly desires, churches tolerating false teachers, churches that are spiritually dead, churches that are faithful and endure trials, and churches that are lukewarm. Jesus gives each church specific encouragement, exhortation, correction, and even more severe rebuke and warning, according to the need of its situation.

**【Application】** The overall situation of a church is the sum of the spiritual conditions of all its members. Are you a faithful Christian enduring trials? Or are you a lukewarm Christian, a worldly Christian, or a spiritually dead “Christian”? Some situations are good and need perseverance, others are not good and need repentance, and still others may call for an examination of your salvation—recognizing that you may not be saved yet. What is your spiritual condition?

### **“The things which will take place after these things” (Chapters 4-22)**

- “I will show you what must take place after these things” (4:1): There is a clear transition in time, corresponding to the overall outline in 1:19.

**【Observe and Consider】** After Chapter 3, the church suddenly disappears from the narrative and does not reappear until Chapter 19, where it is presented as the bride of Christ. Where is the church during this intervening time? In Revelation 19:14, it says, "And the armies which are in heaven were on white horses" following Jesus as He returns. Who are these armies? How does this relate to the rapture of the church in 1 Thessalonians 4:17?

- “Come up here... twenty-four elders” (4:1, 4): The 24 elders represent the church and appear in heaven. By this time, they have already been resurrected and raptured. Without a doubt, behind them will be all the raptured members of the church, including us!
- “the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship...” (4:10-11): This is the future heavenly worship we will partake in. Note, this is not yet the final worship in eternity, but the worship during the period of the rapture. Afterward, we will return to earth with Jesus to establish His kingdom.
- “Then I began to weep greatly” (5:4): The worship in heaven is interrupted by John's weeping because no one is worthy to break the seven seals and open the book in God's hand (5:1-4). This book is neither the Book of Life nor that which keeps a record of every sinner's sin (20:12); rather, it is a title deed of the land. (Details like the seals and words being written on both sides are typical of such documents back then). **This book is the title deed of the earth.**

**【Meaning】** Jesus is the sovereign Lord of the whole earth, having created and sustained it, yet the world has long been in rebellion against Him, claiming His inheritance as its own. He has patiently endured all along. Now, the time has come for Him to open His title deed and reclaim the earth that has

always belonged to Him since the beginning! The disasters of the seven seals are the actual steps Jesus takes to reclaim His planet.

- “they sang a new song, saying” (5:9-14): A passionate worship serves as the prelude to the opening of the seven seals, for the main event is about to unfold. The end is finally here. Jesus is going to reclaim this rebellious planet step-by-step and establish a brand new glorious kingdom, starting from this moment.
- "Seven seals, seven trumpets, seven thunders, seven bowls" (6:1; 8:2; 10:3; 16:1): The number seven symbolizes fullness, for the seven-year Tribulation is a total judgment. This is the final seven in Daniel 9:24-27, that is, the last seven years of tribulation right before Jesus establishes His kingdom.
- “a white horse...had a bow... went out conquering and to conquer” (6:2): The first seal depicts the Antichrist ruling the world in a fake appearance of peace. This corresponds to Daniel 9:27, where, at the beginning of the Tribulation, the Antichrist "will make a firm covenant with many." This covenant brings him into a relationship of mutual control with other international powers, and what appears to be worldwide peace is in reality a cold war. By the midpoint of the seven years, the Antichrist will reveal his true nature by breaking the covenant and starting international warfare (Daniel 9:27).
- “And another, a red horse, went out...” (6:4): The second seal depicts an international war similar to the two World Wars in history. The news then would say: "We're in World War III!"
- “a black horse, an ashen horse” (6:5-8): The third and fourth seals bring famine and plague, causing food to become extremely expensive.
- “the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained” (6:9-11): The fifth seal brings severe persecution of faith. Martyrs during the Tribulation cry out to God, and they are told to wait a little longer until the number of all the martyrs is "completed."
- “broke the sixth seal...” (6:12-17): A series of terrifying celestial phenomena occur—the sun turns black, the moon becomes red, stars fall to the earth, triggering massive earthquakes and landslides. Sinners, fully aware that this is God's wrath, do not cry out to Him but instead call for the mountains and rocks to fall on them, “hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.” What hardened hearts!
- “one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed” (7:4): The Jews saved in the Tribulation receive an invisible spiritual mark.
- “the seventh seal...there was silence in heaven for about half an hour” (8:1): This prepares for the judgment of the seven trumpets, which will increase the severity of the Tribulation to a new level.
- “there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth”(8:7): The first trumpet involves a massive wildfire coming down from heaven.
- “something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea” (8:8-9): The "news headline" for the second trumpet might be: Massive Meteor Crashes into the Sea, Triggering Mass Extinction of Marine Life!

- “The third...the fourth...” (8:10-12): Freshwater turns bitter due to toxic pollution caused by the burning rock; one-third of the stars in heaven fail to shine. Man's sin is now causing stars to suffer that are billions of light-years away!
- “Woe, woe, woe” (8:13): This is a summary of the last three trumpets.
- “a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth...He opened the bottomless pit, and smoke went up out of the pit...” (9:1-12): In the fifth trumpet, Satan releases the unclean spirits from the bottomless pit, which swarm out like locusts and sting people like scorpions, causing unbearable pain. In some way, God will prevent them from being able to even commit suicide (9:6), tormenting them for a full five months.
- “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates” (9:13-21): In the sixth trumpet, four fallen angels arise, unleashing an army of two hundred million horsemen to torment people. The mouths of the horses spew fire, smoke, and sulfur, and their tails resemble snakes that can bite. Clearly, these are not ordinary horses; they are likely a metaphor for a type of warfare we have not yet seen.
- “Seal up the things which the seven peals of thunder have spoken and do not write them” (10:4): What do the seven peals of thunder say? Well, that’s not for us to know.
- “two witnesses” (11:1-14): They entered the Tribulation as unbelievers (otherwise, they would have already been raptured with the church); but during the Tribulation, God graciously saved them and they even became powerful preachers. They “will prophesy for 1,260 days” (11:3), which is the second half of the seven years—while God is harshly judging the world, He is still sending faithful preachers to proclaim the Gospel and save souls. Afterwards, these two will be killed, resurrected, and taken up to heaven by God.
- “the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God” (11:15-19): The seventh trumpet begins once again with worship in heaven, for the entire human history is about to come to an end! Can you imagine the excitement of that moment?
- “A great sign appeared in heaven” (12:1-17): A vision that summarizes the entire human history! From the “ancient serpent” in Eden (Revelation 12:9), to the birth of Jesus (Revelation 12:5), His resurrection and ascension (Revelation 12:5), and God's special protection over Israel during the Tribulation (Revelation 12:6, 14)... Now, God is bringing it all to an end! This vision presents a rapid flashback of history, recapturing a few key scenes from the past so as to prepare us for the ultimate climax.
- “a beast coming up out of the sea” (13:1): This is the Antichrist's final declaration of war. He imitates Jesus' resurrection from the dead (13:3).
- “Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints” (13:10): This is the final endurance. It fulfills what Jesus said: “the one who endures to the end, he will be saved” (Mark 13:13).
- “another beast coming up out of the earth” (13:11-18): Revelation 16:13 says this is the false prophet. Together, they mimic the divine Trinity—Satan, the dragon, mimics the Father; the Antichrist, the beast, mimics Jesus; the false prophet, another beast, mimics the Holy Spirit.
- “his number is six hundred and sixty-six” (13:18): Must be some kind of digital technology, just like how every credit card has a number. The Antichrist will use digital technology to control the marketplace, where one cannot do any business without his number.

- “Then I looked, and behold...” (14:1-20): Several more heavenly visions, including the gathering of sinners for judgment.
- “sang the song of Moses, the bond-servant of God, and the song of the Lamb...” (15:2-4): The worship that ushers in the final seven bowl judgments.
- “Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God...” (16:1-21): The rapid-fire pace indicates that these events occur in quick succession within a short period. With the sixth bowl, the satanic trinity gathers the armies of the great nations to the plain of Armageddon to wage war against God's people. With the seventh bowl, before the war begins, God first destroys the capital city of the Antichrist with a great earthquake and massive hail.
- “the great harlot...fallen is Babylon the great” (17:1-18:24): This city, like a harlot, has seduced the entire world to worship Satan, committing spiritual adultery. Once prosperous, it is now destroyed in an instant.
- “...And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses...” (19:1-21): Jesus leads the church to the earth, defeating the armies of the Antichrist and establishing the Millennium Kingdom. The Antichrist and the false prophet are now thrown into the lake of fire, leaving one final member: Satan.
- “a thousand years” (20:1-6): Quite obviously, we need not assign any spiritual meaning to this number.
- When the thousand years are completed...” (20:7-10): Satan leads sinners in one final rebellion against God. Though all who entered the Millennium directly from the earth without resurrection are believers, some of their babies born in the Millennium will grow up to rebel, shockingly, against God! Moreover, “the number of them is like the sand of the seashore” (20:8)!
- “Then I saw a great white throne...” (20:11-15): Here’s the great-white-throne judgment. All sinners from all generations are all resurrected here to receive God’s condemnation for all their sins and be all cast into the lake of fire.
- “new heaven and new earth” (21-22): No more tears, no more death, no more sin—only the eternal glory of God's presence.

## **Summary**

Don't forget God's purpose in having John write all of this is for us to listen, obey, and be blessed (Revelation 1:3; 22:7). You might ask, "Obey what?"

**Revelation 22:17** The Spirit and the bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty **come**; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.

**Come to Jesus, to trust in Him; come to His Word, to seek Him; come to His throne of grace, to pray to Him; come to His people, to worship and serve Him.**

**Jesus says, "Come!"**