# Revelation

## *The Complete Book*

## *Chapters 1–22, Observation · Interpretation · Application*

*"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."*

**Acts 17:11**

Ed Smith · Smith For Christ Publishing

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# Revelation 1

## *The Revelation of Jesus Christ: Do Not Be Afraid*

**OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION**

*"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."*

**Acts 17:11**

**CHAPTER THEME**

Before Revelation shows me a single seal or trumpet, it shows me Jesus — risen, robed as priest, blazing as judge, walking among His churches. The man on the prison island isn't forgotten; the One who holds the keys of death lays His hand on him and says, "Do not be afraid."

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

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# 00 The Text

REVELATION 1 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

1 ▲ The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants Amber things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:

2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of Sky the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

3 ★ Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and Green keep those things which are written therein : for the time is at hand.

4 John to the Sky seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is , and which was , and which is to come ; and from ▲ the seven Spirits which are before his throne;

5 And from Jesus Christ, who is ▲ the faithful witness, and ▲ the first begotten of the dead, and ▲ the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and ★ washed us from our sins in his own blood,

6 And hath made us ★ kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

7 Behold, Amber he cometh with clouds; and ⚠ every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

8 ▲ I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is , and which was , and which is to come , ▲ the Almighty.

9 I John, who also am your brother, and Amber companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in Amber the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for Sky the testimony of Jesus Christ.

10 I was Amber in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, Green write in a book, and send it unto the Sky seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw Sky seven golden candlesticks;

13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks ▲ one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and ▲ his eyes were as a flame of fire;

15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went ▲ a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Green Fear not; ▲ I am the first and the last:

18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore , Amen; and ★ have the keys of hell and of death.

19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter ;

20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the ⇄ seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the ⇄ seven churches.

### Marked in the text

- **v1** ▲ The Revelation of Jesus Christ
- **v1** ◷ things which must shortly come to pass
- **v2** ⇄ the testimony of Jesus Christ *(every occurrence)*
- **v3** ★ Blessed is he that readeth
- **v3** ▮▮ keep those things which are written
- **v4** ⇄ seven churches *(every occurrence)*
- **v4** ▲ the seven Spirits
- **v5** ▲ the faithful witness
- **v5** ▲ the first begotten of the dead
- **v5** ▲ the prince of the kings of the earth
- **v5** ★ washed us from our sins in his own blood
- **v6** ★ kings and priests unto God
- **v7** ◷ he cometh with clouds
- **v7** ⚠ every eye shall see him
- **v8** ▲ I am Alpha and Omega
- **v8** ▲ the Almighty
- **v9** ◷ companion in tribulation
- **v9** ◷ the isle that is called Patmos
- **v10** ◷ in the Spirit on the Lord's day
- **v11** ▮▮ write in a book
- **v12** ⇄ seven golden candlesticks
- **v13** ▲ one like unto the Son of man
- **v14** ▲ his eyes were as a flame of fire
- **v16** ▲ a sharp twoedged sword
- **v17** ▮▮ Fear not
- **v17** ▲ I am the first and the last
- **v18** ★ have the keys of hell and of death
- **v20** ◷ the angels of the seven churches

*Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.*

# 01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 1:5 (KJV)

5 And from Jesus Christ, who is ▲ the faithful witness, and ▲ the first begotten of the dead, and ▲ the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and ★ washed us from our sins in his own blood,

### Setting

John is an old man, a prisoner on "the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus" (v9). The churches he loves are under pressure. On "the Lord's day" he hears a voice like a trumpet behind him (v10), turns, and sees the risen Christ. The book opens by telling me whose book it is: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" (v1).

## Structure

- vv1–3 — **the title and the blessing:** a revelation God gave to Jesus "to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place," sent by an angel to John (v1), who "testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ" (v2). "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" (v3).
- vv4–8 — **greeting and doxology:** grace and peace "from Him who is and who was and who is to come," from the seven Spirits, and from Jesus Christ, "the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth" (vv4–5). "To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood" (v5); "He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father" (v6). "Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him" (v7). "I am the Alpha and the Omega … the Almighty" (v8).
- vv9–11 — **John on Patmos:** "your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus" (v9). "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day" (v10). "Write in a book what you see," and send it to seven named churches (v11).
- vv12–16 — **the vision of the Son of Man:** among "seven golden lampstands" (v12) stands "one like a son of man" (v13) — robe and golden sash, hair white as wool and snow, "His eyes were like a flame of fire" (v14), feet like burnished bronze, "His voice was like the sound of many waters" (v15). Seven stars in His right hand, "out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength" (v16).
- vv17–20 — **fear removed, task given:** "I fell at His feet like a dead man." He lays His right hand on John: "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades" (vv17–18). "Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things" (v19). The stars are the angels of the churches; the lampstands are the churches (v20).

## Repeated words

seven (vv4, 11, 12, 16, 20); churches (vv4, 11, 20); write / written (vv3, 11, 19); lampstands (vv12, 13, 20); testimony (vv2, 9) with witness (v5); behold (vv7, 18); right hand (vv16, 17, 20).

## Contrasts

John a prisoner on a rock (v9) ⟷ John "in the Spirit" before the King of kings (v10). "The firstborn of the dead" (v5) ⟷ "I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore" (v18). John falls "like a dead man" (v17) ⟷ the living One lifts him with His right hand (vv17–18). Those who pierced Him (v7) ⟷ those He loves and released by His blood (v5). Emperors on earth ⟷ "the ruler of the kings of the earth" (v5).

## Chapter theme (my words)

Before Revelation shows me a single seal or trumpet, it shows me Jesus — risen, robed as priest, blazing as judge, walking among His churches. The man on the prison island isn't forgotten; the One who holds the keys of death lays His hand on him and says, "Do not be afraid."

# 02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 1:1 (KJV)

1 ▲ The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants ◷ things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:

### Whose book is this? (vv1–3)

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ" works both ways: it comes *from* Jesus and it is *about* Jesus. Guzik: "If we catch everything else, but miss Jesus in the book, we miss the Book of Revelation." The word *apokalypsis* means an unveiling — God is pulling back the curtain, not hiding things in code. "Soon" (*en tachei*) troubles some readers after two thousand years; Walvoord, in Guzik: "The idea is not that the event may occur soon, but that when it does, it will be sudden." Verse 3 is the first of the book's seven beatitudes (1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14). The blessing is not on the one who decodes it but on the one who reads, hears and *heeds* it.

### How to read Revelation

Guzik lays out four approaches. **Preterist** — the book was about John's own day and the Roman persecution. **Historicist** — it traces church history from the first century to the end (many Reformers saw the papacy in the beast). **Poetic/symbolic** (often called idealist) — pictures of the timeless battle between Christ and evil, given to comfort persecuted believers. **Futurist** — from chapter 4 on, it describes events just before Christ returns. Guzik grants each has some truth but holds the futurist view, since the book "must mean something" and plainly claims to predict. I'll keep all four in front of me as I study, and stay humble where godly people differ.

### The Triune greeting (vv4–6)

Grace comes from the Father ("who is and who was and who is to come," echoing the divine name of Exod 3:14), from "the seven Spirits" — Guzik takes this as the one Holy Spirit in His fullness (Isa 11:2), not seven spirits — and from Jesus. Jesus is given three titles that answer the three things the churches feared: He is the *faithful witness* (He stayed true under trial), the *firstborn of the dead* (death couldn't keep Him — "firstborn" means first in rank, not first created), and *ruler of the kings of the earth* (Domitian is not in charge). Then the praise turns to what He did: He loves us, released us from our sins by His own blood, and made us a kingdom and priests (Exod 19:6; 1 Pet 2:9). The KJV reads "washed"; the Greek words differ by one letter, and Guzik notes both are true.

### He is coming (vv7–8)

Verse 7 joins Daniel 7:13 (coming with the clouds) and Zechariah 12:10 (they will look on Him whom they pierced). His first coming was hidden in Bethlehem; His second will be seen by every eye (Acts 1:9–11; Matt 24:30). Guzik reads "those who pierced Him" especially of Israel coming to faith, though in a sense all of us pierced Him. In v8 the speaker is "the Lord God"; Guzik suspects it is Jesus, since the

same titles are His in 22:13. He is "the Almighty" — *pantokratōr*, the One with His hand on everything; nine of its ten New Testament uses are in Revelation.

### Patmos and the Lord's day (vv9–11)

John never pulls rank as an apostle; he is "your brother." Patmos was a Roman penal island — Guzik calls it an Alcatraz — and tradition (Eusebius) places John there under Domitian. "In the Spirit" means he was caught up by the Spirit to receive revelation; "the Lord's day" is Sunday, the day of resurrection, not the Old Testament "day of the Lord." The seven churches lay on a circuit in the Roman province of Asia (western Turkey). Seiss, in Guzik: "The churches of all time are comprehended in seven."

### The Son of Man among the lampstands (vv12–16)

John turns to see a voice and sees a Person. The lampstands recall the tabernacle menorah, but now there are seven separate stands — one for each local church. Clarke, in Guzik: "A lamp is not light in itself, it is only the instrument of dispensing light." "One like a son of man" is Daniel 7:13; the white hair is Daniel 7:9's Ancient of Days — Jesus bears the marks of deity. The long robe and sash are priestly: He is the High Priest trimming His lamps. Eyes of fire see through everything; bronze feet speak of judgment and strength; His voice drowns every other sound. The sword is the *rhomphaia*, the large broadsword — His word (Heb 4:12; Eph 6:17). Spurgeon: "The Word of Christ, somehow or other, is all edge." His face shines as at the Transfiguration (Matt 17:2). Guzik notes this is the only physical description of Jesus given in the Bible — no soft, pale figure here.

### "Do not be afraid" (vv17–20)

John had leaned on this same Jesus at the Last Supper (John 13:23); now he falls like a dead man. Spurgeon: "We are never so much alive as when we are dead at his feet." But the same right hand that holds the stars rests on John. Jesus holds "the keys of death and of Hades" — the devil does not hold them, and never did. Verse 19 gives the book's own outline, which Guzik follows: what John has seen (ch. 1), the things which are (chs. 2–3, the churches), and what will take place after these things (chs. 4–22). The "angels" of the churches may be pastors (*angelos* means messenger), guardian angels, or the spirit of each congregation; Guzik concludes they in some way represent each church. Either way, even the struggling churches of chapters 2–3 are held in His right hand.

### Word study (Greek)

- **revelation — *apokalypsis* (G602):** an uncovering, unveiling.
- **soon — *tachos* (G5034):** speed, quickness; *en tachei*, "with speed."
- **blessed — *makarios* (G3107):** happy, favored by God — the first of seven beatitudes.
- **testimony — *martyria* (G3141):** witness given; John's whole charge (vv2, 9).
- **witness — *martys* (G3144):** one who testifies; became our word "martyr."
- **firstborn — *prōtotokos* (G4416):** first-born; first in rank and privilege.
- **released — *lyō* (G3089):** to loose, set free; KJV follows *louō* (G3068), "to wash."
- **Almighty — *pantokratōr* (G3841):** ruler of all, the all-powerful.
- **tribulation — *thlipsis* (G2347):** pressure, affliction, crushing trouble.
- **perseverance — *hypomonē* (G5281):** steadfast endurance; staying under the load.

- **Lord's — *kyriakos* (G2960):** belonging to the Lord; used elsewhere only of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:20).
- **lampstand — *lychnia* (G3087):** a stand that holds a lamp.
- **sword — *rhomphaia* (G4501):** a large, broad sword.
- **keys — *kleis* (G2807):** a key; authority to open and shut.
- **Hades — *hadēs* (G86):** the realm of the dead.
- **angel — *angelos* (G32):** messenger, whether human or heavenly.

### Cross-references

Exod 3:14; Exod 19:6; Isa 11:2; Isa 44:6; Isa 48:12; Dan 7:9–14; Dan 10:5–9; Zech 12:10; Matt 17:2; Matt 24:30; John 13:23; Acts 1:9–11; Rom 6:9; Col 1:18; Heb 4:12; 1 Pet 2:9; Rev 22:7, 12–13.

## 03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 1:3 (KJV)

3 ★ Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein : for the time is at hand.

### Command to obey — "heed the things which are written in it."

The blessing of v3 is not for the man with the best end-times chart; it's for the one who hears and obeys. I can build Bible-study tools and write books about Revelation and still miss the blessing if I don't do what it says. Today I'll read it out loud and ask one question: what does Jesus want me to keep?

### Sin to confess — a small, safe Jesus

I tend to carry around a Jesus I'm comfortable with — gentle, quiet, a little distant. John's Jesus has eyes like fire and a voice like a waterfall. I confess I've made Him smaller than He is, and treated His word as something I can handle rather than a sword that handles me.

### Warning to heed — every eye will see Him

He is coming, and no one will miss it — not the scoffer, not the man who pierced Him, not me (v7). The warning is not to fear the timetable but to be found ready, washed and released by His blood, when He comes.

### Promise to trust — "I have the keys of death and of Hades."

The men I sit with in recovery and behind prison walls know what it is to be locked in. The jailer has keys; the addiction seems to have keys. But Jesus holds the keys that matter most, and He has never handed them to the devil. He was dead and is alive forevermore — and He lays His hand on the man who has fallen flat and says, "Do not be afraid."

### Example to follow — John on Patmos

John was a prisoner, cut off from his churches, and that is exactly where he saw Jesus most clearly. He called himself "your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation." For a man in a cell, or a man who feels his life has become an island, Patmos is not the end of usefulness. I want to be that kind of brother to the men I disciple — not above them, but beside them in the tribulation and the perseverance.

### Worship

He loves us. He released us from our sins by His own blood. He made us a kingdom and priests. "To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen" (v6). I bow, as John did, before the First and the Last.

### Prayer

Lord Jesus, Faithful Witness and Firstborn of the dead, open my eyes to see You as You are. Forgive me for shrinking You down to my size. Thank You for releasing me from my sins by Your blood. When I fall at Your feet, lay Your right hand on me and speak Your "Do not be afraid." Use me to carry that word to the men who feel locked in and forgotten. Amen.

# Revelation 2

## *Letters to Four Churches: Return to Your First Love*

**OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION**

*"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."*
**Acts 17:11**

CHAPTER THEME

Jesus knows His churches — every deed, every tear, every compromise. He praises what is real, names what is wrong without flinching, calls for repentance, and holds out a promise to anyone who overcomes. His eyes are on Ephesus's cold heart, Smyrna's prison cells, Pergamum's compromises and Thyatira's tolerance, and His word to each is meant for me: "He who has an ear, let him hear."

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

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# 00 The Text

REVELATION 2 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

1 Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that ▲ holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

2 ⇄ I know thy works, and thy labour, and ★ thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because ⚠ thou hast left thy first love.

5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and ⇄ repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and ⚠ will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou ⇄ repent.

6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of ⚠ the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

7 ⇄ He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that ⇄ overcometh will I give to eat of ★ the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, ▲ which was dead, and is alive;

9 ⇄ I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are ⚠ the synagogue of Satan.

10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, ⚠ the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee ★ a crown of life.

11 ⇄ He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that ⇄ overcometh shall not be hurt of ★ the second death.

12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

13 ⇄ I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein ★ Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold ⚠ the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of ⚠ the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

16 ⇄ Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;

19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.

25 But that which ye have already hold fast till I come .

26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

28 And I will give him the morning star.

29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

## Marked in the text

- **v1** holdeth the seven stars in his right hand
- **v2** I know thy works *(every occurrence)*
- **v2** thy patience
- **v4** thou hast left thy first love
- **v5** Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen
- **v5** repent *(every occurrence)*
- **v5** do the first works
- **v5** will remove thy candlestick
- **v6** the Nicolaitans *(every occurrence)*
- **v7** He that hath an ear *(every occurrence)*
- **v7** overcometh *(every occurrence)*
- **v7** the tree of life
- **v8** which was dead, and is alive
- **v9** (but thou art rich)
- **v9** the synagogue of Satan
- **v10** the devil shall cast some of you into prison
- **v10** be thou faithful unto death
- **v10** a crown of life
- **v11** the second death
- **v13** where Satan's seat is
- **v13** Antipas was my faithful martyr
- **v14** the doctrine of Balaam
- **v17** the hidden manna
- **v17** a white stone
- **v18** the Son of God
- **v20** that woman Jezebel
- **v23** searcheth the reins and hearts
- **v28** the morning star

*Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.*

# 01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 2:5 (KJV)

5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

## Setting

John has just seen the risen Christ walking among the seven lampstands (1:12–20). Now that same Jesus dictates letters to the first four churches on the circuit — Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum and Thyatira. Each letter follows the same pattern: an address, a title of Christ drawn from chapter 1, "I know," praise, rebuke, command, "He who has an ear," and a promise "to him who overcomes."

## Structure

- vv1–7 — **Ephesus, the busy church that left its love:** from "the One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands" (v1). They have toil, perseverance, and sound judgment about false apostles (vv2–3). "But I have this against you, that you have left your first love" (v4). "Remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first" — or lose the lampstand (v5). They hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans (v6). Promise: "the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God" (v7).
- vv8–11 — **Smyrna, the poor rich church:** from "The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life" (v8). "I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich)," and the slander of "a synagogue of Satan" (v9). "Do not fear what you are about to suffer"; some will be thrown into prison, "and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life" (v10). Promise: "will not be hurt by the second death" (v11). No rebuke.
- vv12–17 — **Pergamum, faithful where Satan lives but tolerant of compromise:** from "The One who has the sharp two-edged sword" (v12). "I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is"; they held fast His name even when Antipas, "My witness, My faithful one," was killed (v13). But some hold "the teaching of Balaam" and of the Nicolaitans (vv14–15). "Therefore repent" (v16). Promise: "hidden manna," "a white stone, and a new name written on the stone" (v17).
- vv18–29 — **Thyatira, growing in love but tolerating Jezebel:** from "The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze" (v18). Love, faith, service, perseverance — "your deeds of late are greater than at first" (v19). "But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess" (v20). "I gave her time to repent" (v21); judgment is coming, so "all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts" (v23). To the rest: "what you have, hold fast until I come" (v25). Promise: "authority over the nations" (v26) and "the morning star" (v28).

### Repeated words

I know (vv2, 9, 13, 19); repent (vv5, 16, 21, 22); overcomes (vv7, 11, 17, 26); "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (vv7, 11, 17, 29); I have this against you (vv4, 20); hold fast (vv13, 25); Satan (vv9, 13, 24); tribulation (vv9, 10, 22).

### Contrasts

Ephesus has sound doctrine without first love ⟷ Thyatira has growing love without sound doctrine. Smyrna's poverty ⟷ "but you are rich" (v9). "Satan's throne" (v13) ⟷ "a white stone, and a new name" from Christ (v17). Jezebel's "deep things of Satan" (v24) ⟷ the One who "searches the minds and hearts" (v23). Faithful "until death" (v10) ⟷ "not be hurt by the second death" (v11).

### Chapter theme (my words)

Jesus knows His churches — every deed, every tear, every compromise. He praises what is real, names what is wrong without flinching, calls for repentance, and holds out a promise to anyone who overcomes. His eyes are on Ephesus's cold heart, Smyrna's prison cells, Pergamum's compromises and Thyatira's tolerance, and His word to each is meant for me: "He who has an ear, let him hear."

## 02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 2:1 (KJV)

[1]Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

### How to read the seven letters

These were real churches in real cities, and the details fit their history closely. But each letter ends with what the Spirit says "to the churches" — plural — so every letter is for every church and every believer. Guzik applies them to all churches in all centuries. Some Bible teachers also see the seven as a preview of church history (Ephesus the apostolic age through Laodicea the last days); Guzik does not press that view, and I hold it loosely if at all.

### Ephesus — left, not lost (vv1–7)

Ephesus was the great city of Asia, home of the temple of Diana, and the church had the best teachers in the New Testament — Paul, Priscilla and Aquila, Apollos, Timothy and, by tradition, John himself. They worked hard, endured, and could spot a fake apostle. Guzik notes they had *hypomonē*, steadfast endurance. But they *left* their first love — Guzik stresses that leaving is a deliberate act, even if it happens slowly. First love is love for God and for His people together. Spurgeon: "Lose love, lose all," and "When love dies orthodox doctrine becomes a corpse, a powerless formalism." The cure is three steps: remember, repent, do the first works. Guzik names those first works as the basics — the Word, prayer, fellowship, sharing Christ. The Nicolaitans are uncertain; early writers (Irenaeus) tied them to

license and idol feasts, and some see in the name (*nikaō* + *laos*, "conquer the people") a lordly clergy over the laity. Jesus hates their deeds — and He commends the Ephesians for hating them too.

### Smyrna — the rich poor church (vv8–11)

Smyrna was devoted to emperor worship; refusing to say "Caesar is Lord" cost jobs, property and sometimes life. Its name comes from myrrh, a spice of burial — and Jesus introduces Himself as the One "who was dead, and has come to life." Their poverty was the word for abject, beggarly poverty (Walvoord, in Guzik). Guzik: "Better to be a rich poor church than a poor rich church." Those who said they were Jews but slandered believers were "a synagogue of Satan" — Guzik notes a true Jew is one who trusts God (Rom 2:28–29). "Ten days" has been read as ten years, ten persecuting emperors, or a short time; Guzik takes it as a limited period of severe persecution. The crown is the *stephanos*, the victor's wreath, not the king's diadem. Smyrna's bishop Polycarp later died there at the stake, refusing to revile the Christ he had served for eighty-six years.

### Pergamum — Satan's throne and Balaam's teaching (vv12–17)

Pergamum was the provincial capital, with temples to the emperor, a huge altar to Zeus, and the healing cult of Asclepios with its serpent symbol. Any of these could be "Satan's throne"; Guzik surveys them all. Antipas — known only from this verse — died rather than deny Christ, and Jesus calls him "My faithful one." Yet the church tolerated people who held "the teaching of Balaam." Balaam couldn't curse Israel, so he taught Balak to seduce them with idol feasts and immorality (Num 25:1–3; 31:16). The danger wasn't persecution from outside but compromise from inside. Jesus warns He will make war against them "with the sword of My mouth." The promise: hidden manna, Christ Himself as the true bread (John 6:32–35); and a white stone — perhaps a token of acquittal, admission to a feast, or a victor's badge — with a new name known only to the one who receives it, a picture of personal intimacy with Christ.

### Thyatira — love growing, discernment missing (vv18–29)

The smallest city of the seven, but a city of trade guilds, each with its patron god and feasts. Barclay, in Guzik: no merchant or trader could hope to prosper outside the guilds. Here the only use of "the Son of God" in Revelation, with eyes of fire that see through every cover. Thyatira's love and service were increasing — the opposite of Ephesus. But they tolerated a self-appointed prophetess Jesus calls "Jezebel," after Ahab's queen who brought Baal worship into Israel (1 Kgs 16:31). She taught believers that sexual immorality and idol feasts were fine. Jesus gave her time to repent, "and she does not want to repent" (v21). The "deep things of Satan" (v24) sound like the boast of a hidden, higher knowledge. To the faithful He lays no other burden — just "hold fast until I come." The overcomer will share His rule (Ps 2:8–9), and Walvoord, in Guzik, notes the word for "rule" means to shepherd. And He gives "the morning star" — Guzik: Christ Himself (22:16).

### Word study (Greek)

- **deeds — *ergon* (G2041):** works, what a person actually does.
- **perseverance — *hypomonē* (G5281):** steadfast endurance under pressure.
- **left — *aphiēmi* (G863):** to send away, let go, forsake.
- **first — *prōtos* (G4413):** first in time or in rank.
- **repent — *metanoeō* (G3340):** to change the mind, turn around.

- **overcomes — *nikaō* (G3528):** to conquer, win the victory.
- **Paradise — *paradeisos* (G3857):** a park or garden; the dwelling of God.
- **tribulation — *thlipsis* (G2347):** pressure, crushing affliction.
- **poverty — *ptōcheia* (G4432):** beggarly, destitute poverty.
- **faithful — *pistos* (G4103):** trustworthy, reliable.
- **crown — *stephanos* (G4735):** the victor's wreath.
- **witness — *martys* (G3144):** one who testifies — and here, dies for it.
- **manna — *manna* (G3131):** the bread from heaven.
- **white stone — *psēphos* (G5586):** a small smooth stone used for votes, verdicts and tokens.
- **searches — *eraunaō* (G2045):** to search out, examine closely.
- **rule — *poimainō* (G4165):** to shepherd, tend, rule.

### Cross-references

Gen 2:9; 3:22–24; Num 22–25; Num 31:16; 1 Kgs 16:31; 2 Kgs 9:22; Ps 2:8–9; Ps 7:9; Jer 17:10; Matt 24:12; John 6:32–35; Acts 19–20; Acts 20:29–31; Rom 2:28–29; 1 Cor 13:1–3; Eph 6:24; 2 Tim 4:7–8; Jas 1:12; Rev 1:5, 13–18; Rev 20:6, 14; Rev 22:2, 14, 16.

## 03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 2:7 (KJV)

7 ⇄ He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that ⇄ overcometh will I give to eat of ★ the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

### Command to obey — "Remember … and repent and do the deeds you did at first."

Jesus doesn't tell Ephesus to feel more; He tells them to go back and do again what they did when love was new. When my heart has gone cold toward Him, I'll do the first works on purpose — open the Word, pray out loud, sit with His people, tell someone about Him — and trust feelings to follow obedience.

### Sin to confess — busy without love

I can write the books, build the tools and teach the studies and still have left my first love. Ephesus could spot a false teacher a mile away and still lose its lampstand. I confess the times my service has been about getting things done instead of loving Jesus and the men in front of me.

### Warning to heed — what I tolerate

Pergamum and Thyatira weren't rebuked for what they believed but for what they put up with — Balaam's teaching and Jezebel's. Compromise rarely kicks the door in; it gets invited to dinner. A man

in recovery knows this: the relapse usually begins with a "small" thing he decided to tolerate. Jesus is patient — "I gave her time to repent" — but that time runs out.

### Promise to trust — "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."

Jesus told Smyrna ahead of time that some would be thrown into prison. He didn't promise to keep them out; He promised a crown and that the second death couldn't touch them. For the man behind bars, prison is not the end of his story or proof that God forgot him. Jesus knows his tribulation and his poverty — and calls him rich.

### Example to follow — Antipas

One verse, one name, and Jesus calls him "My witness, My faithful one." He lived where Satan's throne was and held fast. I want that to be the summary of my life — and I want the men I disciple to know that faithfulness in a hard place, unseen by the world, is exactly what Jesus sees and names.

### Worship

He walks among the lampstands. His eyes are a flame of fire. He was dead and has come to life. He searches minds and hearts and still offers hidden manna, a white stone and a new name. I worship the Son of God who knows me fully and still calls me to Himself.

### Prayer

Lord Jesus, You know my deeds. Where I have left my first love, bring me back to the first works. Where I have tolerated what You hate, give me courage to repent and to deal with it. Strengthen the men in prison and in recovery to be faithful until death, and let them hear You say, "but you are rich." Give me ears to hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Amen.

# Revelation 3

## *Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea: I Stand at the Door*

**OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION**

*"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."*

**Acts 17:11**

CHAPTER THEME

A good reputation can hide a dead heart, and a church that has everything can be missing Jesus Himself. But a weak church that keeps His word gets an open door no one can shut. To the dead He says wake up; to the faithful He says hold fast; to the comfortable He says open the door — I'm standing right here.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

# 00 The Text

REVELATION 3 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

1 And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that ⚠ thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, ⚠ I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and ★ they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and ★ I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but ★ I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith ▲ he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath ▲ the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee ★ an open door, and no man can shut it: for Amber thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that ▲ I have loved thee.

10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will ★ keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

11 Amber Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, ⚠ that no man take thy crown.

12 Him that overcometh will I make ★ a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, ▲ the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

16 So then because thou art ⚠ lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and ⚠ have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art ⚠ wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

### Marked in the text

- **v1** I know thy works *(every occurrence)*
- **v1** thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead
- **v2** Be watchful
- **v2** strengthen the things which remain
- **v3** hold fast, and repent
- **v3** I will come on thee as a thief
- **v4** they shall walk with me in white
- **v5** overcometh *(every occurrence)*
- **v5** I will not blot out his name out of the book of life
- **v5** I will confess his name before my Father
- **v6** He that hath an ear *(every occurrence)*
- **v7** he that is holy, he that is true
- **v7** the key of David
- **v8** an open door
- **v8** thou hast a little strength
- **v9** I have loved thee
- **v10** keep thee from the hour of temptation
- **v11** Behold, I come quickly
- **v11** that no man take thy crown
- **v12** a pillar in the temple of my God
- **v14** the faithful and true witness
- **v16** lukewarm
- **v17** have need of nothing
- **v17** wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked
- **v18** buy of me gold tried in the fire
- **v19** As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten
- **v20** I stand at the door, and knock
- **v21** to sit with me in my throne

*Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.*

# 01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 3:5 (KJV)

5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

### Setting

The last three letters from the risen Christ, to Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. Same pattern as chapter 2: a title of Jesus, "I know your deeds," a verdict, a command, "He who has an ear," and a

promise "to him who overcomes." Two churches get almost nothing but rebuke (Sardis and Laodicea); one gets nothing but praise (Philadelphia).

### Structure

- vv1–6 — **Sardis, the church with a reputation:** from "He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars" (v1). "I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead" (v1). "Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain" (v2). "So remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent" — or "I will come like a thief" (v3). A few "have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy" (v4). Promise: white garments, "I will not erase his name from the book of life," and "I will confess his name before My Father" (v5).
- vv7–13 — **Philadelphia, little power and an open door:** from "He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens" (v7). "I have put before you an open door which no one can shut, because you have a little power, and have kept My word, and have not denied My name" (v8). Their enemies will "know that I have loved you" (v9). "I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world" (v10). "I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your crown" (v11). Promise: "a pillar in the temple of My God" and three names written on him (v12). No rebuke.
- vv14–22 — **Laodicea, lukewarm and self-satisfied:** from "the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God" (v14). "You are neither cold nor hot" (v15) — "because you are lukewarm … I will spit you out of My mouth" (v16). They say "I am rich … and have need of nothing," not knowing they are "wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked" (v17). "I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire," white garments, and eye salve (v18). "Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent" (v19). "Behold, I stand at the door and knock" (v20). Promise: "to sit down with Me on My throne" (v21). No praise.

### Repeated words

I know your deeds (vv1, 8, 15); overcomes (vv5, 12, 21); "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (vv6, 13, 22); white (vv4, 5, 18); name (vv1, 5, 8, 12); repent (vv3, 19); door (vv8, 20); throne (v21, twice).

### Contrasts

Sardis has "a name that you are alive" ⟷ "but you are dead" (v1). Philadelphia has "a little power" (v8) ⟷ an open door "which no one can shut" (v8). Laodicea says "I am rich" ⟷ Jesus says "poor and blind and naked" (v17). Cold or hot ⟷ lukewarm (vv15–16). Jesus shuts the door against no faithful church (v8) ⟷ Jesus stands outside the door of His own church (v20). Spit out of His mouth (v16) ⟷ seated on His throne (v21).

### Chapter theme (my words)

A good reputation can hide a dead heart, and a church that has everything can be missing Jesus Himself. But a weak church that keeps His word gets an open door no one can shut. To the dead He says wake up; to the faithful He says hold fast; to the comfortable He says open the door — I'm standing right here.

# 02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 3:7 (KJV)

7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith ▲ he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath ▲ the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

### Sardis — asleep on the cliff (vv1–6)

Sardis was a wealthy old capital built on a high, steep hill that its people thought could not be taken. Twice it fell because no one was watching — Cyrus's soldiers climbed a hidden path, and later Antiochus did the same. Walvoord, in Guzik: "Sardis had twice before fallen because of overconfidence and failure to watch." So Jesus' first command is "Wake up." Guzik observes that Sardis faced no real struggle and drew no attack — dead churches don't draw the enemy's fire. Caird, in Guzik: "A perfect model of inoffensive Christianity." Coming "like a thief" means coming unannounced (Matt 24:42–44; 1 Thess 5:2–6). Yet even in Sardis Jesus counts "a few people" who are faithful — He never loses track of His own.

### The book of life (v5)

Does "I will not erase his name" mean a believer's name can be erased? Christians differ. Many in the Reformed tradition read it as a promise stated in the negative — the overcomer is never erased. Arminian readers take the warning as a real possibility for one who finally turns away. Guzik stresses that the focus is assurance, not a book constantly being erased and rewritten, but he insists the warning must still be taken seriously, and points to men who appeared to be believers and later renounced the faith. Either way, the promise to the overcomer is sure, and Jesus Himself will confess his name before the Father (Matt 10:32).

### Philadelphia — little power, open door (vv7–13)

Philadelphia sat on a gateway road and was shaken by frequent earthquakes; people fled the city and came back again and again. Jesus is "true" — *alēthinos*, genuine, the real thing. He has "the key of David," a picture drawn from Isaiah 22:22 of the steward who alone can open and shut the king's house. The open door is likely a door of opportunity for the gospel (1 Cor 16:9; Col 4:3), and perhaps also access to the kingdom for believers shut out of the local synagogue. Their strength was small, and Jesus doesn't scold them for it — they kept His word and didn't deny His name. Havner, in Guzik: "Samson had great ability but poor dependability."

### "Keep you from the hour of testing" (v10)

This is the most debated verse in the chapter. "Those who dwell on the earth" is Revelation's phrase for unbelievers (6:10; 13:8; 17:8). Guzik, a pre-tribulation futurist, reads "keep you from" as protection *from* the hour itself — the rapture of the church before the tribulation (1 Thess 4:16–17; 5:9). Walvoord, in Guzik: the rapture "was presented to them as an imminent hope." Other believers read it as protection *through* the trial, kept from its spiritual harm (John 17:15 uses the same words, "keep them

from the evil one"). Those holding mid-, pre-wrath, or post-tribulation views, as well as amillennial and preterist readers, see it differently again. I'll hold my view with conviction and charity. The crown in v11 can't be stolen, but it can be forfeited — Havner: "the man most likely to steal your crown is yourself." And in an earthquake city, where often only pillars were left standing in the rubble, Jesus promises to make the overcomer "a pillar in the temple of My God," never to go out again.

### Laodicea — lukewarm and blind (vv14–22)

Laodicea was rich and proud of it. After the earthquake of AD 60 it refused Rome's help — Tacitus, through Barclay in Guzik: it "arose from the ruins by the strength of her own resources." It was famous for black wool and an eye salve, and its water came by aqueduct and arrived lukewarm. Jesus uses all three against them: buy white garments, buy real eye salve, and stop being lukewarm. The picture isn't that cold (hostile) is good; it is that hot water heals and cold water refreshes, but lukewarm water is useless and makes you gag. Guzik notes Jesus preferred cold to lukewarm; Barnhouse, in Guzik, explains that the very feeling of need might drive them to the true warmth. "The Beginning of the creation of God" uses *archē* — the source and ruler of creation (Col 1:15–18), not the first thing created. Their real problem was blindness: they didn't know they were poor. "Buy from Me" (Isa 55:1) means getting from Him what can't be earned. And "those whom I love" uses *phileō*, warm affection — the rebuke itself is love (Heb 12:6).

### "I stand at the door and knock" (vv20–21)

These words were spoken to a church, not first to an unbeliever: Jesus is outside His own congregation, knocking. Guzik calls Laodicea "the church of the excluded Jesus." But the invitation is to individuals — "if anyone hears My voice." "Dine" is *deipneō*, the long evening meal of fellowship. To a lukewarm, self-satisfied church He offers the highest promise of all seven letters: to sit with Him on His throne. Clarke, in Guzik: "the worst may repent, finally conquer, and attain even to the highest state of glory." On the seven churches as stages of church history, Guzik grants the parallels but treats them as broad and overlapping; the letters belong first to real first-century churches, and every age has all seven kinds.

### Word study (Greek)

- **wake up — *grēgoreō* (G1127):** to keep awake, be watchful.
- **soiled — *molynō* (G3435):** to stain, defile.
- **erase — *exaleiphō* (G1813):** to wipe out, blot out.
- **confess — *homologeō* (G3670):** to say the same thing, acknowledge openly.
- **true — *alēthinos* (G228):** genuine, real, the real thing.
- **key — *kleis* (G2807):** a key; authority to open and shut.
- **door — *thyra* (G2374):** a door, opening, opportunity.
- **testing — *peirasmos* (G3986):** trial, testing, temptation.
- **pillar — *stylos* (G4769):** a column, a support.
- **beginning — *archē* (G746):** origin, source, ruler.
- **lukewarm — *chliaros* (G5513):** tepid.
- **spit — *emeō* (G1692):** to vomit.

- **eye salve — *kollourion* (G2854):** a medicinal paste for the eyes.
- **love — *phileō* (G5368):** to love as a friend, with warm affection.
- **discipline — *paideuō* (G3811):** to train a child, correct.
- **be zealous — *zēloō* (G2206):** to burn with zeal; related to *zestos*, "hot" (v15).

### Cross-references

Exod 32:32–33; Ps 69:28; Isa 22:22; Isa 55:1; Isa 60:14; Hos 12:8; Matt 10:32; Matt 24:42–44; Luke 12:35–37; John 10:27–29; John 14:3; John 17:15; 1 Cor 16:9; Col 1:15–18; Col 4:3; 1 Thess 4:16–17; 1 Thess 5:2–9; Heb 12:5–11; Rev 16:15; Rev 20:12, 15; Rev 21:2.

# 03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 3:2 (KJV)

2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

### Command to obey — "Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain."

Sardis didn't need a new program; it needed to wake up and guard what was still alive before it died too. I'll take honest stock today: what in my walk with Jesus is still breathing but weak — prayer, a friendship, a habit of the Word — and I'll strengthen it before it slips away.

### Sin to confess — "I am rich … and have need of nothing."

Laodicea's sin was self-sufficiency, and it was blind to it. I'm good at building things and solving problems, and that can quietly become "I've got this." I confess the places I've stopped needing Jesus, and I ask Him for eye salve to see myself as He sees me.

### Warning to heed — a name that you are alive

A reputation is not a pulse. People may think I'm doing well, and churches may look busy, while the life has gone out. And Jesus can be standing outside the door of a church that still uses His name. The warning is to stop managing appearances and let Him in.

### Promise to trust — "an open door which no one can shut."

Philadelphia had only "a little power." That is good news for every man I disciple who feels he has nothing left — the man fresh out of prison with a record, the man in his first ninety days sober. Jesus holds the key of David. When He opens a door, no parole board, no past and no enemy can shut it. He doesn't ask for great strength; He asks us to keep His word and not deny His name.

### Example to follow — the few in Sardis

In a dead church, "a few people … have not soiled their garments." They didn't need the whole church to be right in order to walk with Jesus in white. A man in a hard place — a cell block, a house where no

one else follows Christ — can be one of the few. I want to be one, and to stand beside the men who are.

### Worship

He is holy and true. He is the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the source of all creation. He holds the key of David and opens doors no one can shut. And He knocks, and waits, and promises a seat on His throne to anyone who opens. I worship the King who knocks.

### Prayer

Lord Jesus, wake me up where I've been coasting on a name. Strip away my "I have need of nothing" and anoint my eyes to see. Thank You that a little power is enough when You open the door. Keep me holding fast what I have, so that no one takes my crown. I hear You knocking — come in and eat with me. And bring the men I love, who feel shut out and forgotten, through the door You have opened. Amen.

# Revelation 4

## *The Throne Room: Holy, Holy, Holy*

**OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION**

*"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."*
**Acts 17:11**

CHAPTER THEME

Before John sees one judgment, he sees who is in charge. Heaven's center is an occupied throne, and everything around it worships. God is holy, He is Creator, and every crown we wear belongs at His feet.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

# 00 The Text

REVELATION 4 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

[1] After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter .

[2] And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

[3] And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

[4] And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

[5] And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

[6] And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

[7] And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.

[8] And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was , and is , and is to come .

[9] And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,

[10] The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

[11] Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

## Marked in the text

- **v1** a door was opened in heaven
- **v1** Come up hither
- **v1** things which must be hereafter
- **v2** I was in the spirit
- **v2** throne *(every occurrence)*
- **v3** like a jasper and a sardine stone
- **v3** a rainbow round about
- **v4** four and twenty elders *(every occurrence)*
- **v4** clothed in white raiment
- **v4** crowns of gold
- **v5** lightnings and thunderings and voices
- **v5** the seven Spirits of God
- **v6** a sea of glass like unto crystal
- **v6** four beasts *(every occurrence)*
- **v6** full of eyes *(every occurrence)*
- **v8** six wings

- **v8** they rest not day and night
- **v8** Holy, holy, holy
- **v8** Lord God Almighty
- **v9** glory and honour *(every occurrence)*
- **v9** liveth for ever and ever *(every occurrence)*
- **v10** fall down before him
- **v10** cast their crowns
- **v11** Thou art worthy, O Lord
- **v11** thou hast created all things
- **v11** for thy pleasure they are and were created

*Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.*

# 01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 4:8 (KJV)

8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was , and is , and is to come .

## Setting

The letters to the seven churches are finished (chs. 2–3). Now the scene shifts from earth to heaven. "After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven" (v1). Jesus had told John to write "the things which will take place after these things" (1:19), and the same phrase returns here: "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things" (v1). Before any seal is broken or any judgment falls, John is shown the throne.

## Structure

- vv1–2 — **the open door:** the same voice John heard in chapter 1, "like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me," calls him up (v1). "Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne" (v2).
- v3 — **the One on the throne:** no face, no form — only light and color. He was "like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance" (v3).
- vv4–6a — **around and before the throne:** twenty-four thrones, and on them "twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads" (v4). From the throne "come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder," and "seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God" (v5). Before it, "something like a sea of glass, like crystal" (v6).
- vv6b–8 — **the four living creatures:** "full of eyes in front and behind" (v6) — one like a lion, one like a calf, one with "a face like that of a man," one "like a flying eagle" (v7). Each has six wings, "and day and night they do not cease to say, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come'" (v8).

- vv9–11 — **the elders answer:** whenever the creatures give "glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne," the elders "fall down before Him," worship "Him who lives forever and ever," and "cast their crowns before the throne" (vv9–10). Their song: "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created" (v11).

### Repeated words

throne (vv2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10 — the word is everywhere in this chapter); sitting / sits (vv2, 3, 4, 9, 10); twenty-four elders (vv4, 10); living creatures (vv6, 8, 9); full of eyes (vv6, 8); glory and honor (vv9, 11); lives forever and ever (vv9, 10); like / in appearance (vv1, 3, 6, 7).

### Contrasts

the churches on earth with their failures (chs. 2–3) ⟷ the throne in heaven, steady and occupied (v2). Lightning and thunder from the throne (v5) ⟷ a rainbow of covenant mercy around it (v3). Creatures who never stop saying "holy" (v8) ⟷ elders who fall silent and bow (v10). Crowns on their heads (v4) ⟷ crowns cast before the throne (v10). Creatures made (v11) ⟷ the One who made them and "lives forever and ever" (v9).

### Chapter theme (my words)

Before John sees one judgment, he sees who is in charge. Heaven's center is an occupied throne, and everything around it worships. God is holy, He is Creator, and every crown we wear belongs at His feet.

## 02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 4:11 (KJV)

11 ▲ Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive ⇄ glory and honour and power: for ▲ thou hast created all things, and ★ for thy pleasure they are and were created.

### Where Revelation turns (v1)

Guzik uses 1:19 as the outline of the book: what John saw (ch. 1), the things which are (chs. 2–3), and the things which will take place after these things (chs. 4–22). The Greek *meta tauta*, "after these things," appears in 1:19 and twice in 4:1, marking the turn. Guzik reads chapters 4–19 as future — God's judgment on the world before Christ's earthly reign — and sets aside preterist and historicist readings. Other Christians read these chapters differently: preterists see much of it fulfilled in the first century, idealists see timeless pictures of the church's struggle in every age. Whatever view I hold, this chapter does the same thing for all of us: it shows the throne before the storm.

### A picture of the rapture?

Guzik notes that many see John's call — a door, a trumpet, "Come up here" — as a picture of the church caught up (1 Thess 4:16–17), and that the word "church" does not appear again in chapters 4–19.

That fits his pre-tribulation view. Others answer that John's call is his own visionary experience, not a doctrine of the church's timing. It is wise to hold the picture loosely and the Person firmly.

### "In the Spirit" (v2)

John was already "in the Spirit" in 1:10; this is a new depth of the same experience. Whether his body went with him, Guzik says, we cannot know — Paul had the same uncertainty (2 Cor 12:2–4).

### The occupied throne (vv2–3)

The throne is the center of the chapter and of the whole book. Morgan, in Guzik: "At the center of everything is an occupied throne." Atheism has no throne; humanism puts man on it. John describes no figure — only light. Clarke, in Guzik: the description aims "to point out the surrounding glory and effulgence." Jasper may be a clear, diamond-like stone; sardius is blood-red. Guzik notes they were the first and last stones on the high priest's breastplate (Exod 28:17–20). The rainbow recalls God's covenant with Noah (Gen 9:12–17). Trapp calls it *signum gratiae et foederis* — a sign of grace and covenant. Judgment comes from this throne — but it is a throne wrapped in a promise.

### The twenty-four elders (v4)

Commentators debate whether they are angels or glorified people. Guzik: they "certainly seem to represent God's people." Angels wear white, but crowns are promised to believers (1 Cor 9:25; 2 Tim 4:8; 1 Pet 5:4). The number may echo the twenty-four courses of priests (1 Chr 24), or the twelve tribes and twelve apostles together (compare 21:12–14).

### Lightning, lamps and glass (vv5–6a)

The lightning and thunder echo Sinai (Exod 19:16). The seven lamps are "the seven Spirits of God" — the Holy Spirit in His fullness (1:4; Isa 11:2). Guzik notes the Spirit is usually unseen, and when He is seen He appears as a dove or as fire (Matt 3:16; Acts 2:3). The sea of glass is calm, clear, still — nothing in heaven is in turmoil. Guzik connects it with the tabernacle laver, where the priests washed (Exod 30:18–21; Eph 5:26).

### The four living creatures (vv6b–8)

The KJV says "beasts," but Guzik corrects it: these are living creatures — cherubim, like those of Ezekiel (Ezek 1:5–10; 10:20) and the seraphim of Isaiah (Isa 6:2–3). Full of eyes, they see everything. Guzik: failure to worship comes from failure to see. The four faces have been read as the four Gospels (lion–Matthew, ox–Mark, man–Luke, eagle–John), as the standards of Israel's camp (Num 2), or as the noblest of creation — wild beast, tame beast, man and bird. Guzik says the Gospel link has no firm basis. Their song is the thrice-holy of Isaiah 6:3. Johnson, in Guzik: the threefold repetition is the superlative — God is infinitely holy. *Pantokratōr*, "the Almighty," means the One who has His hand on everything.

### Casting crowns (vv9–11)

The elders worship because the creatures do. Their crowns are *stephanos* — victory wreaths, like an Olympic prize — not royal diadems. Clarke, in Guzik, compares kings laying their crowns before the Roman emperor. Whatever they won, they give back. They worship God first as Creator: all things exist "because of Your will" (v11). We were made for Him, not He for us (Col 1:16). Spurgeon, in Guzik, warns that heaven's choir has no place for untrained voices — the time to learn to worship is now.

### Word study (Greek)

- **after these things — *meta tauta* (G3326 + G3778):** "after this," the hinge phrase of 1:19 and 4:1.
- **door — *thyra* (G2374):** a door or entrance; Jesus stood at one in 3:20, now one opens in heaven.
- **trumpet — *salpinx* (G4536):** a trumpet — the sound of a summons.
- **throne — *thronos* (G2362):** a seat of royal authority; the key word of the chapter.
- **jasper — *iaspis* (G2393):** a precious stone, probably clear and brilliant.
- **rainbow — *iris* (G2463):** a rainbow or halo of light encircling the throne.
- **elder — *presbyteros* (G4245):** an older person, a leader or representative.
- **crown — *stephanos* (G4735):** a victor's wreath, not a king's diadem.
- **lightning — *astrapē* (G796):** a flash of lightning.
- **lamp — *lampas* (G2985):** a torch or lamp burning with fire.
- **crystal — *krystallos* (G2930):** ice, rock crystal — clear and transparent.
- **living creature — *zōon* (G2226):** a living being — not "beast" (*thērion*).
- **holy — *hagios* (G40):** set apart, utterly pure.
- **Almighty — *pantokratōr* (G3841):** ruler of all, the One who holds everything.
- **worship — *proskyneō* (G4352):** to bow down, fall prostrate in reverence.
- **worthy — *axios* (G514):** deserving, of equal weight.
- **created — *ktizō* (G2936):** to create, bring into being.

### Cross-references

Gen 1:1; Gen 9:12–17; Exod 19:16–19; Exod 24:10; Exod 28:17–21; 1 Kgs 22:19; 1 Chr 24:1–19; Ps 11:4; Ps 47:8; Isa 6:1–4; Isa 11:2; Ezek 1:4–28; Ezek 10:20; Dan 7:9–10; 2 Cor 12:2–4; Col 1:16; 1 Thess 4:16–17; 2 Tim 4:8; Heb 4:16; 1 Pet 5:4; Rev 1:4, 8, 10, 19; Rev 3:20–21.

## 03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 4:1 (KJV)

1 After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter .

### Command to obey — "Come up here."

Before John could understand what was happening on earth, he had to see the throne in heaven (v1). I need the same order. When the news, the bills or the diagnosis are loud, my first move is to go up — to prayer and to the Word — before I try to make sense of anything down here. For a man fresh out of prison or in early recovery, the world feels like chaos. The first step is not to fix it all; it's to look up and see Who is on the throne.

### Sin to confess — sitting on the throne myself

Guzik's line stays with me: humanism puts man on the throne. I do it every time I insist on my own way, my own timing, my own glory. I confess the crowns I keep wearing — reputation, achievement, even ministry — that belong at His feet.

### Warning to heed — worship is learned here

The creatures never stop; the elders fall down every time (vv8–10). Heaven is full of worship, and if I don't love worship now, I am not ready for heaven. Spurgeon's warning about untrained voices is a warning for me: I can't save my praise for later.

### Promise to trust — the throne is occupied

"A throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne" (v2). It is not empty, and it is not shaking. And a rainbow surrounds it (v3) — the God of judgment is also the God who keeps His promises. To the man who has lost all hope: whatever is falling apart in your life, the throne is not.

### Example to follow — the elders cast their crowns

They won those crowns, and they gave them back (v10). Every victory I've had — sobriety, a finished book, a man who comes to Christ — I want to lay at His feet and say, "Worthy are You." The men I disciple need to see that the strongest thing a man can do is bow.

### Worship

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come" (v8). He made all things, and by His will they exist (v11) — including me. I join the elders and the living creatures: worthy are You, our Lord and our God.

### Prayer

Lord God Almighty, You sit on the throne and nothing is out of Your hand. Lift my eyes to heaven before I try to understand the earth. Get me off the throne of my own life. Take every crown I've been clinging to; they were Yours all along. Teach me to worship now, and let the men I serve see a man who bows before You. Holy, holy, holy. Amen.

# Revelation 5

## *The Lion Who Is a Lamb: Worthy Is the Lamb*

**OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION**

*"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."*
**Acts 17:11**

CHAPTER THEME

History is a sealed book, and no one is good enough to open it — no angel, no king, no man. Then the Lamb who was slain steps forward and takes it, and all of heaven and earth breaks into song. The One who holds the future is the One who bled for me.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

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# 00 The Text

REVELATION 5 (KJV), MARKED

**Gold** God — His character & actions
**Green** Command / instruction
**Sky** Key repeated word
**Rose** Sin / warning
**Violet** Promise / blessing
**Amber** Time / place / contrast

[1] And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.

[2] And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

[3] And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

[4] And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

[5] And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

[6] And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

[7] And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

[8] And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

[9] And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

[10] And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

[11] And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

[12] Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

[13] And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

[14] And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

## Marked in the text

- **v1** in the right hand of him that sat on the throne
- **v1** sealed with seven seals
- **v1** book *(every occurrence)*
- **v2** Who is worthy to open the book

- **v2** ⇄ worthy *(every occurrence)*
- **v3** ⚠ no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth
- **v4** ⚠ I wept much
- **v5** ❚❚ Weep not
- **v5** ▲ the Lion of the tribe of Juda
- **v5** ▲ the Root of David
- **v5** ★ hath prevailed
- **v6** ▲ a Lamb as it had been slain
- **v6** ▲ seven horns and seven eyes
- **v7** ▲ took the book
- **v8** ❚❚ fell down before the Lamb
- **v8** ★ golden vials full of odours
- **v8** ★ the prayers of saints
- **v9** ⇄ a new song
- **v9** ▲ thou wast slain
- **v9** ★ hast redeemed us to God by thy blood
- **v9** ★ every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation
- **v10** ★ kings and priests
- **v10** ★ we shall reign on the earth
- **v11** ◷ ten thousand times ten thousand
- **v12** ▲ Worthy is the Lamb that was slain
- **v13** ◷ every creature
- **v14** ❚❚ worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever

*Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.*

# 01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 5:5 (KJV)

5 And one of the elders saith unto me, ❚❚ Weep not: behold, ▲ the Lion of the tribe of Juda, ▲ the Root of David, ★ hath prevailed to open the ⇄ book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

## Setting

John is still in the throne room of chapter 4. The same throne, the same elders, the same living creatures — but now his eyes go to the right hand of the One on the throne, and to what is in it. Chapter 4 worships God as Creator; chapter 5 worships the Lamb as Redeemer.

## Structure

- vv1–4 — **the sealed book and the search:** in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne, "a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals" (v1). "A strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?'" (v2). But "no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the book or to look into it" (v3). John says, "I began to weep greatly because no one was found worthy" (v4).
- vv5–7 — **the Lion who is a Lamb:** an elder says, "Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals" (v5). John turns and sees "a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth" (v6). "He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne" (v7).

- vv8–10 — **the new song:** the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fall down before the Lamb, "each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints" (v8). "And they sang a new song": the Lamb is worthy, "for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation" (v9). "You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth" (v10).
- vv11–12 — **the angels join:** around the throne, "myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands" (v11), saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing" (v12).
- vv13–14 — **all creation joins:** "every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea" says, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever" (v13). "And the four living creatures kept saying, 'Amen.' And the elders fell down and worshiped" (v14).

### Repeated words

book (vv1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9); seals (vv1, 2, 5, 9); worthy (vv2, 4, 9, 12); Lamb (vv6, 8, 12, 13); throne (vv1, 6, 7, 11, 13); elders (vv5, 6, 8, 11, 14); slain (vv6, 9, 12); in heaven / on the earth / under the earth (vv3, 13); seven (vv1, 5, 6).

### Contrasts

no one worthy (vv3–4) ⟷ the Lamb is worthy (vv9, 12). John weeping (v4) ⟷ "Stop weeping" (v5). John is told of a Lion (v5) ⟷ he sees a Lamb (v6). "As if slain" (v6) ⟷ standing (v6). No one in heaven, earth or under the earth able to open (v3) ⟷ every creature in heaven, earth, under the earth and sea praising (v13). Worship of God as Creator (4:11) ⟷ worship of the Lamb as Redeemer (5:9).

### Chapter theme (my words)

History is a sealed book, and no one is good enough to open it — no angel, no king, no man. Then the Lamb who was slain steps forward and takes it, and all of heaven and earth breaks into song. The One who holds the future is the One who bled for me.

## 02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 5:9 (KJV)

9 And they sung ⇄ a new song, saying, Thou art ⇄ worthy to take the ⇄ book, and to open the seals thereof: for ▲ thou wast slain, and ★ hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of ★ every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

### What is the book? (v1)

A scroll written on both sides and sealed with seven seals — each seal had to be broken before the whole could be read. Guzik surveys the views: Scripture, a decree against Israel, the sentence on the

church's enemies, the text of Revelation, or the title deed to the earth (compare the sealed deed of Jer 32:9–14). He calls the title deed view "an attractive idea" but hard to prove. He settles on Barclay's broader view: the scroll is God's final settlement of the affairs of the universe — history written in advance, held in God's hand, waiting to be carried out. Walvoord, in Guzik, connects it with the way Roman wills were sealed. Either way, the point is the same: the future is not loose. It is written, and it is in His hand.

### Who is worthy? (vv2–4)

The question is not who is strong enough but who is *worthy*. Every creature everywhere is searched, and no one qualifies. Guzik: no creature can determine its own destiny; someone above creation must unfold history. John weeps because, if no one can open the book, the story never ends — evil is never judged and God's people are never vindicated.

### The Lion is a Lamb (vv5–7)

The elder announces a Lion — the royal Messiah of Judah (Gen 49:9–10) and the Root of David (Isa 11:1, 10; Rev 22:16). John turns and sees a Lamb. Guzik notes, with Clarke, that the word means a little lamb. This is the heart of the gospel: the Lion conquers *as* the Lamb. He "has overcome" (v5) by being slain (v9). The Lamb is "standing, as if slain" — wounded and alive. Guzik: there is nothing "stale or outworn" in Christ's sacrifice; it is as fresh before God now as the day it was offered. Seven horns speak of complete power; seven eyes, of complete knowledge — "the seven Spirits of God" (Zech 4:10). Then the Lamb takes the book from the Father's hand (v7). The cross gave Him the right.

### Harps and bowls (v8)

The harps are for praise. The golden bowls of incense "are the prayers of the saints" (Ps 141:2). Guzik is careful: the elders present the prayers, they don't answer them or mediate them. There is "one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim 2:5). None of the prayers of God's people are lost; they are kept in gold before the throne — and in chapter 8 they rise again before God, and fire is thrown to the earth in answer (8:3–5).

### The new song (vv9–10)

Guzik notes that Roman emperors were greeted with the Latin acclamation *vere dignus*, "truly worthy." Here the real King receives the cry. The song tells the whole gospel: You were slain (the cost), purchased for God (the purpose), with Your blood (the price), from every tribe and tongue and people and nation (the reach). Then the result: a kingdom and priests who will reign (Exod 19:6; 1 Pet 2:9; Rev 1:6). Guzik quotes Spurgeon on the priesthood of all believers — no other priest is needed between a believer and God. The KJV reads "us … we shall reign"; the NASB and most modern versions follow manuscripts that read "them … they will reign." Either way, the redeemed reign with Christ.

### Angels and all creation (vv11–14)

The circle widens: living creatures and elders, then countless angels, then every creature everywhere. Angels sing of redemption they watch but do not need (1 Pet 1:12; Eph 3:10). The same worship is given "to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb" (v13). Clarke, in Guzik: if Jesus were not God, this would be idolatry. L. Morris adds that the Lamb is reckoned with God and as God. Heaven never worships a creature (19:10; 22:9). Worshiping the Lamb alongside the Father is heaven's testimony that

Jesus is God (John 5:23; Phil 2:9–11). The scene ends where all true worship ends: "Amen," and faces on the ground.

### Word study (Greek)

- **book — *biblion* (G975):** a scroll, a written document.
- **seal — *sphragis* (G4973):** a seal stamped in wax, guaranteeing a document stays closed.
- **worthy — *axios* (G514):** deserving, of matching weight — the key word of the chapter.
- **open — *anoigō* (G455):** to open.
- **wept — *klaiō* (G2799):** to weep aloud, to sob.
- **Lion — *leōn* (G3023):** a lion; the royal emblem of Judah.
- **root — *rhiza* (G4491):** a root or shoot — both David's source and his descendant.
- **overcome — *nikaō* (G3528):** to conquer, win the victory.
- **Lamb — *arnion* (G721):** a little lamb; John uses it for Christ throughout Revelation.
- **slain — *sphazō* (G4969):** to slaughter, as a sacrifice; the perfect tense in v6 points to a past death with lasting effect.
- **horn — *keras* (G2768):** a horn — a symbol of power and strength.
- **harp — *kithara* (G2788):** a lyre or harp.
- **bowl — *phialē* (G5357):** a broad, shallow bowl used in temple service.
- **incense — *thymiama* (G2368):** incense, the fragrance offered to God.
- **purchased / redeemed — *agorazō* (G59):** to buy in the marketplace; to buy out of bondage.
- **new — *kainos* (G2537):** new in kind, fresh — not merely recent.

### Cross-references

Gen 22:8; Gen 49:9–10; Exod 12:3–13; Exod 19:6; Ps 141:2; Isa 11:1, 10; Isa 53:7; Jer 32:9–14; Dan 7:10, 13–14; Zech 4:10; John 1:29; John 5:23; Acts 20:28; 1 Cor 6:20; Eph 3:10; Phil 2:9–11; 1 Tim 2:5; 1 Pet 1:12, 18–19; 1 Pet 2:9; Rev 1:6; Rev 4:11; Rev 8:3–4; Rev 22:16.

## 03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 5:8 (KJV)

8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

### Command to obey — "Stop weeping; behold."

The elder doesn't tell John his tears are wrong. He tells him where to look (v5). When I am crying over a world — or a life — that seems stuck, the command is to look at the Lamb. For a man who has lost

hope, sitting in a cell or in the wreckage of his addiction, the word is the same: stop weeping and behold. Someone has overcome.

### Sin to confess — trying to be worthy

No one in heaven or on earth was found worthy (v3), and I still try to earn my place — enough good days, enough service, enough clean time. I confess that my worth before God doesn't come from my record. It comes from the Lamb's blood.

### Warning to heed — no one else can open the book

Not a politician, not a program, not a philosophy. Every human solution was searched and failed (v3). If I put my hope for the future anywhere but in the Lamb, I will end up weeping with nothing to show for it.

### Promise to trust — purchased with His blood

"You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation" (v9). That includes the men no one else wanted — the felon, the addict, the man who ruined everything. The price is already paid. And my prayers aren't lost; they are kept in golden bowls before the throne (v8).

### Example to follow — the Lion who became a Lamb

Jesus conquered by laying down His life. Real strength for a man is not swagger; it's sacrifice. I want to lead the men around me the way the Lamb leads — by giving myself for them.

### Worship

"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing" (v12). I add my voice to the elders, the angels and every created thing — and fall down and say "Amen."

### Prayer

Lamb of God, You alone are worthy. When I weep over what I can't fix, turn my eyes to You. Stop me from trying to earn what You bought with Your blood. Thank You that my prayers are kept before Your throne. Let the men I serve hear that You purchased people from every tribe and tongue and nation — and from every prison and every gutter too. Worthy is the Lamb. Amen.

# Revelation 6

## *The Seals Are Opened: Who Is Able to Stand?*

**OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION**

*"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."*

**Acts 17:11**

**CHAPTER THEME**

The Lamb who was slain is the One who opens the judgments. Conquest, war, famine and death ride out — but only as far as they are permitted. The martyrs are heard, the proud are humbled, and the chapter ends with the only question that matters: who is able to stand?

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

# 00 The Text

REVELATION 6 (KJV), MARKED

**Gold** God — His character & actions
**Green** Command / instruction
**Sky** Key repeated word
**Rose** Sin / warning
**Violet** Promise / blessing
**Amber** Time / place / contrast

1 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.

2 And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see.

4 And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.

8 And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

11 And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;

13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

### Marked in the text

- **v1** ▲ the Lamb opened one of the seals
- **v1** ▮▮ Come and see *(every occurrence)*
- **v2** ◷ a white horse
- **v2** ⚠ a crown was given unto him
- **v2** ⚠ conquering, and to conquer
- **v4** ◷ another horse that was red
- **v4** ⚠ to take peace from the earth
- **v4** ⚠ a great sword
- **v5** ◷ a black horse
- **v5** ⚠ a pair of balances
- **v6** ▮▮ see thou hurt not the oil and the wine
- **v8** ◷ a pale horse
- **v8** ⚠ Death, and Hell followed with him
- **v8** ◷ the fourth part of the earth
- **v9** ◷ under the altar
- **v9** ★ slain for the word of God
- **v9** ★ the testimony which they held
- **v10** ▲ How long, O Lord, holy and true
- **v11** ★ white robes were given unto every one of them
- **v11** ★ rest yet for a little season
- **v12** ◷ a great earthquake
- **v12** ◷ the moon became as blood
- **v14** ◷ the heaven departed as a scroll
- **v15** ⚠ hid themselves
- **v16** ⚠ hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne
- **v16** ▲ the wrath of the Lamb
- **v17** ⚠ the great day of his wrath is come
- **v17** ⚠ who shall be able to stand

*Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.*

## 01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 6:2 (KJV)

2 And I saw, and behold ◷ a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and ⚠ a crown was given unto him: and he went forth ⚠ conquering, and to conquer.

### Setting

In chapter 5 the Lamb took the sealed book from the hand of the One on the throne. Now He begins to break the seals. Heaven has been singing; now the earth begins to shake. Every judgment in this chapter starts with the Lamb's hand: "I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals" (v1).

### Structure

- vv1–2 — **first seal, the white horse:** one of the living creatures says, "as with a voice of thunder, 'Come.'" (v1). "Behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer" (v2).
- vv3–4 — **second seal, the red horse:** "to him who sat on it, it was granted to take peace from the earth, and that men would slay one another; and a great sword was given to him" (v4).
- vv5–6 — **third seal, the black horse:** the rider has "a pair of scales in his hand" (v5). A voice from among the living creatures: "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not damage the oil and the wine" (v6).

- vv7–8 — **fourth seal, the ashen horse:** "he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him. Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth" (v8).
- vv9–11 — **fifth seal, the martyrs:** "underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained" (v9). They cry, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" (v10). Each is given a white robe and told "that they should rest for a little while longer," until their fellow servants and brethren are completed (v11).
- vv12–17 — **sixth seal, the great day:** "a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood" (v12). Stars fall "as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind" (v13). "The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places" (v14). Kings, great men, commanders, the rich, the strong, slave and free — all "hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains" (v15), crying, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" (vv16–17).

### Repeated words

seal (vv1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 12); Come (vv1, 3, 5, 7); horse (vv2, 4, 5, 8); he who sat on it (vv2, 4, 5, 8); was given / was granted (vv2, 4, 8, 11); earth (vv4, 8, 10, 13, 15); wrath (vv16, 17); the Lamb (vv1, 16).

### Contrasts

the Lamb in heaven, worshiped (ch. 5) ⟷ the wrath of the Lamb on earth (v16). A rider who conquers with a bow and a crown (v2) ⟷ the Lamb who conquered by being slain (5:5–6). The martyrs crying "How long?" (v10) ⟷ given white robes and told to rest (v11). The saints slain on earth (v9) ⟷ the persecutors hiding from the throne (vv15–16). Kings and great men ⟷ slaves — all equally hiding (v15). Men who wanted no God ⟷ men begging the rocks to hide them from God (v16).

### Chapter theme (my words)

The Lamb who was slain is the One who opens the judgments. Conquest, war, famine and death ride out — but only as far as they are permitted. The martyrs are heard, the proud are humbled, and the chapter ends with the only question that matters: who is able to stand?

# 02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 6:1 (KJV)

[1]And I saw when ▲ the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, ▮▮ Come and see.

### How to read the seals

Guzik holds a futurist view: the seals begin the judgments of Daniel's seventieth week (Dan 9:24–27), the Great Tribulation, and he speaks of the antichrist's rise coming "after He takes His church from this earth" (2 Thess 2:6–7). He does not read the seals, trumpets and bowls as strictly chronological; Bullinger, in Guzik, calls the seals a "Summary of the judgments distributed over the whole book." Other Christians read them differently: historicists see the course of church and Roman history, preterists see judgment on first-century Jerusalem and Rome, and idealists see conditions true of every age between Christ's comings. Guzik grants that these conditions — conquest, war, famine, death — have always been with us; in the Tribulation they are intensified. Many readers also notice how closely the order follows Jesus' words on the Mount of Olives: false christs, wars, famines, earthquakes, persecution, and signs in the sun and moon (Matt 24:4–29).

### "Come" (vv1, 3, 5, 7)

The KJV reads "Come and see," as if John were being invited closer; the NASB follows manuscripts that read simply "Come." Guzik notes it could be translated "go forth" — each living creature summons a rider onto the stage.

### The white horse (vv1–2)

Who is this rider? Some have seen Christ, since Jesus rides a white horse in 19:11; others see the triumph of the gospel. Guzik rejects the identification with Christ. This rider carries a bow, not the sword of the Word (19:15); his crown is *given* to him; and he heads a parade of war, famine and death. Guzik calls him "a satanic dictator who imitates Jesus" — the antichrist, conquering at first without war. Jennings, in Guzik: "His reign shall not bring war, famine, and strife in its train." Yet war, famine and death follow right behind him.

### The red horse (vv3–4)

Peace is taken from the earth, "and that men would slay one another." Guzik: peace is God's gift, not the natural state of the world. Take His restraining hand away, and men turn on each other. This authority is "directly or indirectly, the judgment of God."

### The black horse (vv5–6)

Scales mean rationing. A denarius was a day's wage (Matt 20:2). Guzik: the prices are about twelve times normal — a whole day's work buys bread for one person. Walvoord: "a time of famine when life will be reduced to the barest necessities." Yet the oil and wine are not touched. Luxury remains for those who can afford it, while the poor go hungry.

### The ashen horse (vv7–8)

The color is *chlōros* — the sickly green-gray of a corpse. Death rides, and Hades, the grave, follows to collect. A fourth of the earth dies by sword, famine, pestilence and wild beasts — the same four judgments named in Ezek 14:21. Walvoord, in Guzik: a judgment that takes a fourth of the earth's population has not been seen since the days of Noah. Yet even here "authority was given to them." Guzik: God "still holds the scroll and opens the seals."

### The martyrs (vv9–11)

Under the altar is where the blood of sacrifices was poured (Lev 4:7). These lives were poured out for God. Guzik reads them as all who have died for the word of God. Their cry for justice is not bitterness; God Himself promised to avenge innocent blood (Gen 4:10; Deut 32:43). Guzik notes that "the number of" in some translations is supplied, and the text may speak of their fellow servants being made complete in character: "It is character – the way that one lives – that makes a martyr, not the way that one dies." God's answer is not "never," but "a little while longer" — and a white robe in the meantime.

### The sixth seal (vv12–17)

Earthquake, black sun, blood moon, falling stars, a sky rolled up like a scroll — the language of the prophets for the Day of the Lord (Isa 34:4; Joel 2:10, 31; Zeph 1:14–16). Guzik: the images are "real, but poetic." The most striking thing is human: from kings to slaves, everyone hides — like Adam among the trees (Gen 3:8) — and they know exactly whom they are hiding from (Hos 10:8; Luke 23:30). Torrance, in Guzik, calls it "the wrath of sacrificial love." Swete: sinners dread "the revealed presence of God" more than death. "The wrath of the Lamb" — the gentlest of images joined to the most terrifying word. The One who was slain for sinners is the One who will judge those who refuse Him (John 5:22).

### "Who is able to stand?" (v17)

Guzik's answer: only the one who is justified — who stands in grace by faith (Rom 5:1–2; 1 Cor 15:1; 1 Pet 5:12). Chapter 7 answers the same question with a sealed and countless multitude standing before the throne (7:9).

### Word study (Greek)

- **seal — *sphragis* (G4973):** a wax seal; each one broken releases the next judgment.
- **horse — *hippos* (G2462):** a horse — a picture of war and swift conquest.
- **bow — *toxon* (G5115):** an archer's bow.
- **crown — *stephanos* (G4735):** a victor's wreath, here *given* to him.
- **conquering — *nikaō* (G3528):** to conquer, overcome — the same verb used of the Lamb in 5:5.
- **red — *pyrros* (G4450):** fiery red, the color of blood and fire.
- **sword — *machaira* (G3162):** a large knife or short sword, for slaughter.
- **pair of scales — *zygos* (G2218):** a yoke, or the balance beam of a scale.
- **quart — *choinix* (G5518):** about a quart of grain — one man's daily ration.
- **denarius — *dēnarion* (G1220):** a silver coin, a laborer's daily wage.
- **ashen — *chlōros* (G5515):** pale green; the color of a corpse.
- **Hades — *hadēs* (G86):** the realm of the dead, the grave.
- **altar — *thysiastērion* (G2379):** the altar of sacrifice.

- **testimony — *martyria* (G3141):** witness; the root of our word "martyr."
- **avenge — *ekdikeō* (G1556):** to vindicate, to carry out justice.
- **wrath — *orgē* (G3709):** settled, righteous anger.
- **stand — *histēmi* (G2476):** to stand, hold one's ground.

### Cross-references

Gen 3:8; Gen 4:10; Lev 4:7; Lev 26:21–26; Deut 32:43; Ps 2:12; Ps 76:7; Isa 2:19–21; Isa 13:9–10; Isa 34:4; Ezek 14:21; Hos 10:8; Joel 2:10–11, 31; Nah 1:6; Zeph 1:14–16; Zech 6:1–8; Mal 3:2; Matt 24:4–29; Luke 18:7–8; Luke 23:30; Rom 5:1–2, 9; 2 Thess 1:6–10; 2 Thess 2:3–8; 1 Thess 1:10; 1 Thess 5:9; Rev 7:9–14; Rev 19:11–15.

# 03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 6:9 (KJV)

9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

### Command to obey — keep the testimony

The souls under the altar were slain "because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained" (v9). Maintained — held on to. I'm not asked to die today, but I am asked to keep holding on to what I know is true when it costs me something. For a man inside, that may mean keeping his Bible open on a tier where it gets him mocked. For a man in recovery, it means saying "Jesus" out loud in rooms where people would rather he said "higher power."

### Sin to confess — hiding from God

The kings and slaves of v15 are doing what every sinner has done since Eden: hiding. I hide too — behind busyness, behind excuses, behind a good reputation. I confess that I would rather run to the rocks than to the Lamb. But the Lamb is the only safe place to run.

### Warning to heed — the wrath of the Lamb is real

I like the Lamb who is meek and was slain. But the same Lamb will judge (v16). If I soften that, I make the cross small. The men I disciple need to hear both: He will take your judgment on Himself, or you will face it from Him.

### Promise to trust — "a little while longer."

The martyrs' cry was heard. God did not say "no"; He said "rest a little while longer," and gave them white robes (v11). To the man who has been wronged — abused, betrayed, falsely accused — God has not forgotten your blood or your tears. Justice is coming, and you do not have to take it into your own hands (Rom 12:19).

### Example to follow — the martyrs who left vengeance to God

They didn't take revenge; they took their cry to the throne (v10). That is where I take mine. A man who learns to pray "How long, O Lord?" instead of plotting payback is a free man, even behind bars.

### Worship

The Lamb holds the seals. War, famine and death ride only as far as they are permitted. Nothing in this chapter is out of control. I worship the Lord, "holy and true" (v10), who will judge the world in righteousness.

### Prayer

Lord, holy and true, You hold the book and You break the seals. When the world is shaking, let me stand in You and not in myself. Keep me from hiding from You — I run to You instead. Give me courage to maintain my testimony, patience to leave vengeance to You, and urgency for every man I know who isn't ready to stand. Thank You that the Lamb who will judge is the Lamb who was slain for me. Amen.

# Revelation 7

## *The Sealed and the Multitude: Who Is Able to Stand?*

**OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION**

*"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."*
**Acts 17:11**

CHAPTER THEME

Before the storm breaks, God marks His own and holds back the wind until they are safe. And on the other side of the great tribulation stands a crowd too big to count, washed in the Lamb's blood, with every tear wiped away. Who can stand? Those the Lamb has washed.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

# 00 The Text

REVELATION 7 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

1 And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

2 And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,

3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

5 Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand.

6 Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nepthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand.

7 Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand.

8 Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

17 For ▲ the Lamb which is in the midst of the ⇄ throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto ★ living fountains of waters: and ★ God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

### Marked in the text

- **v1** ◷ four winds of the earth
- **v1** ◷ that the wind should not blow on the earth
- **v2** ▲ having the seal of the living God
- **v3** ▮▮ Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees
- **v3** ⇄ sealed *(every occurrence)*
- **v3** ★ the servants of our God in their foreheads
- **v4** ⇄ an hundred and forty and four thousand
- **v4** ◷ all the tribes of the children of Israel
- **v5** ⇄ twelve thousand *(every occurrence)*
- **v9** ★ a great multitude, which no man could number
- **v9** ◷ of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues
- **v9** ▲ the Lamb *(every occurrence)*
- **v9** ⇄ throne *(every occurrence)*
- **v9** ⇄ white robes *(every occurrence)*
- **v9** ★ palms in their hands
- **v10** ▲ Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb
- **v11** ▮▮ fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God
- **v12** ▲ Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might
- **v13** ◷ whence came they
- **v14** ▮▮ Sir, thou knowest
- **v14** ⚠ came out of great tribulation
- **v14** ★ washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb
- **v15** ▮▮ serve him day and night in his temple
- **v15** ★ he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them
- **v16** ★ They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more
- **v17** ▲ the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them
- **v17** ★ living fountains of waters
- **v17** ★ God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes

*Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.*

# 01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 7:9 (KJV)

9 After this I beheld, and, lo, ★ a great multitude, which no man could number, ◷ of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the ⇄ throne, and before ▲ the Lamb, clothed with ⇄ white robes, and ★ palms in their hands;

### Setting

Six seals have been broken (ch. 6), and the sixth ended with the whole earth hiding from "the wrath of the Lamb" and asking who is able to stand (6:16–17). Before the seventh seal is opened, John is shown a pause. Chapter 7 is the answer to that question: two groups who belong to God — one sealed on earth, one standing before the throne in heaven.

### Structure

- vv1–3 — **the winds held back:** four angels stand "at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth" (v1). Another angel comes "from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God" (v2) and cries, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads" (v3).
- vv4–8 — **the 144,000 sealed:** John hears the number — "one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel" (v4). Twelve thousand from each of twelve tribes, listed by name (vv5–8). Judah comes first; Dan is missing; Joseph stands in for Ephraim.
- vv9–12 — **the great multitude:** John looks and sees "a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues," standing before the throne and the Lamb, "clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands" (v9). They cry, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb" (v10). The angels, elders and living creatures fall "on their faces before the throne and worshiped God" (v11) with a sevenfold blessing (v12).
- vv13–17 — **who they are and what they receive:** an elder asks John, "These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?" (v13). John answers, "My lord, you know." "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (v14). They "serve Him day and night in His temple," and He "will spread His tabernacle over them" (v15). No more hunger, thirst or scorching heat (v16); "the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd," He "will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes" (v17).

### Repeated words

four (vv1, 2, 11); harm (vv2, 3); sealed / seal (vv2, 3, 4, 5, 8); twelve thousand (vv5–8); throne (vv9, 10, 11, 15, 17); the Lamb (vv9, 10, 14, 17); white (vv9, 13, 14); loud voice (vv2, 10); robes (vv9, 13, 14).

### Contrasts

the earth hiding from the Lamb's wrath (6:16) ⟷ a multitude standing before the Lamb (v9). The winds held back (v1) ⟷ judgment about to blow (8:1–7). A number John *hears* (v4) ⟷ a multitude no one could count that John *sees* (v9). The tribes of Israel (vv4–8) ⟷ every nation, tribe, people and tongue (v9). Robes washed in blood ⟷ made white (v14). Hunger, thirst, heat and tears (vv16–17) ⟷ the Shepherd, living water and God's own hand (v17).

### Chapter theme (my words)

Before the storm breaks, God marks His own and holds back the wind until they are safe. And on the other side of the great tribulation stands a crowd too big to count, washed in the Lamb's blood, with every tear wiped away. Who can stand? Those the Lamb has washed.

# 02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 7:17 (KJV)

17 For ▲ the Lamb which is in the midst of the ⇄ throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto ★ living fountains of waters: and ★ God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

### A pause between seals

Chapter 6 ends with the sixth seal and the question of who is able to stand. The seventh seal does not open until 8:1. Chapter 7 is an interlude — a look behind the curtain at God's people before the trumpet judgments fall. The "four corners of the earth" is not a flat-earth map; Guzik reads it as the four points of the compass — the whole earth. The winds are instruments of judgment (Hos 13:15; Jer 49:36), and he suggests a link to the four horsemen, since in Zechariah's vision the four chariots are the four "spirits" or winds of heaven (Zech 6:1–8; Hebrew *ruach* can mean either).

### The seal on the forehead (vv2–3)

A seal marked ownership and protection. Ezekiel saw a mark put on the foreheads of those who grieved over Jerusalem's sin, and they were spared (Ezek 9:4–6). Here God's name is the mark (14:1) — the opposite of the beast's mark that comes later (13:16–17). Guzik notes that this sealing is a special one for this group, but every believer is also sealed by the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 1:21–22; Eph 1:13; 4:30; 2 Tim 2:19). The judgment cannot start until God's servants are safe.

### Who are the 144,000? (vv4–8)

Christians read this differently:

- **Jewish believers in the tribulation** — Guzik's view (futurist, pre-tribulation). They are literally "of every tribe of the sons of Israel," 12,000 from each, sealed for protection through the coming judgments. He argues that the New Testament never calls the church "Israel," and that 14:1–5 describes them as a distinct firstfruits group. They are the beginning of Israel's turning to her Messiah (Rom 11:26; Matt 23:39). Seiss, in Guzik: "They are not a part of the Church proper; for their repentance comes too late for that."
- **The whole people of God, symbolically** — many amillennial and idealist interpreters see 144,000 (12 × 12 × 1,000) as the complete church, the true Israel (Gal 6:16). They note that John *hears* 144,000 and then *sees* a countless multitude, just as he *heard* of a Lion and *saw* a Lamb (5:5–6) — two pictures of one people.

Guzik also mentions groups like the Jehovah's Witnesses that have claimed the number for themselves — which neither view supports.

### The missing tribe

Dan is left out and Ephraim is named only through Joseph. Some have connected Dan to the Antichrist (Gen 49:17; Jer 8:16); Guzik calls that uncertain. What is certain is Dan's history of idolatry — the

Danites set up a carved image for themselves (Judg 18:30), and Jeroboam put a golden calf in Dan (1 Kgs 12:29–30); Ephraim too was "joined to idols" (Hos 4:17). Yet grace still has the last word: Dan is named first in Ezekiel's portioning of the land (Ezek 48:1). Guzik also points out that the Old Testament has at least twenty different tribal lists, so a varied list does not by itself prove the number is symbolic.

### The great multitude (vv9–12)

Here is the Great Commission finished (Matt 24:14; 28:19). Every nation, tribe, people and tongue — distinct, not erased. Spurgeon, in Guzik: "There will be in heaven not a company of persons, all struck off alike so that you cannot tell who is who." White robes speak of righteousness given and priestly purity; palm branches recall the crowd that met Jesus at Jerusalem (John 12:13). Spurgeon: "The palm, the ensign of triumph, indicates most certainly a conflict and conquest." Their song credits no one but God: "Salvation to our God … and to the Lamb" (v10). Salvation is received, not achieved. The angels answer "Amen" with a sevenfold blessing (v12) — the creatures who never needed saving worship more deeply when they see sinners saved.

### "The great tribulation" (vv13–14)

The elder has to prompt John, and John humbly answers, "My lord, you know." In Greek the article is emphatic — *the* tribulation, the great one. Guzik, consistent with his pre-tribulation view, sees these as people saved during the tribulation itself, many of them martyrs (6:9–11), perhaps reached through the witness of the 144,000. Others read "the great tribulation" more broadly as the suffering of the church across the whole age (John 16:33; Acts 14:22). Either way the main point is the same: they did not wash their robes in their own suffering or martyrdom. Spurgeon: "They washed their robes nowhere but in the blood of the Lamb." Only blood makes a robe white (Isa 1:18; 1 John 1:7).

### What they receive (vv15–17)

Heaven is not idleness: they "serve Him day and night." Walvoord, in Guzik: "Heaven is not only a place of rest from earthly toil but also a place of privileged service." God will "spread His tabernacle over them" — the word is *skēnoō*, the same John used for the Word who "dwelt" among us (John 1:14). The promises echo Isaiah 49:10 and 25:8. And notice the paradox: the Lamb becomes the Shepherd. Guzik says the tears wiped away are tears of earthly suffering and sorrow. Spurgeon on how the saints can be at peace in heaven: "Perfect acquiescence in the divine will is probably the secret of it."

### Word study (Greek)

- **winds — *anemos* (G417):** wind; in prophecy, a picture of judgment sweeping the earth.
- **harm — *adikeō* (G91):** to injure, do wrong, damage.
- **seal — *sphragis* (G4973):** a seal, signet — a mark of ownership and security.
- **sealed — *sphragizō* (G4972):** to set a seal on, to mark as one's own and protect.
- **forehead — *metōpon* (G3359):** the forehead; the place of the beast's mark, and of God's name.
- **bond-servants — *doulos* (G1401):** a slave, one owned by a master.
- **tribe — *phylē* (G5443):** a tribe, clan, people group.
- **multitude — *ochlos* (G3793):** a crowd, throng.
- **tongues — *glōssa* (G1100):** tongue, language.
- **robes — *stolē* (G4749):** a long flowing robe, garment of honor.

- **palm branches — *phoinix* (G5404):** the date palm; a sign of victory and festival.
- **salvation — *sōtēria* (G4991):** deliverance, rescue, salvation.
- **tribulation — *thlipsis* (G2347):** pressure, affliction, crushing distress.
- **washed — *plynō* (G4150):** to wash, especially garments.
- **serve — *latreuō* (G3000):** to render priestly, worshipful service.
- **spread His tabernacle — *skēnoō* (G4637):** to pitch a tent, to dwell — John 1:14.
- **be their shepherd — *poimainō* (G4165):** to tend, feed and guide as a shepherd.
- **wipe — *exaleiphō* (G1813):** to wipe out, erase completely.

### Cross-references

Gen 49:17; Judg 18:30; Ps 23:1–2; Isa 1:18; Isa 25:8; Isa 49:10; Ezek 9:4–6; Ezek 48:1–7; Hos 4:17; Zech 6:1–8; Matt 24:14; John 1:14; John 10:11; John 12:13; Rom 11:26; 2 Cor 1:21–22; Eph 1:13; Eph 4:30; Rev 5:5–6, 9; Rev 6:9–11, 16–17; Rev 14:1–5; Rev 21:4.

## 03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 7:3 (KJV)

3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

### Command to obey — be a bond-servant who is sealed

The seal goes on "the bond-servants of our God" (v3). I am not my own; I belong to Him, and His Spirit is the seal (Eph 1:13). Today I'll live like a man who is owned — with His name on my forehead, out in the open, not hidden.

### Sin to confess — idolatry that leaves a tribe off the list

Dan's and Ephraim's names are missing, and their history is idolatry. I can't build my life around a golden calf and expect my name to stay in the story. The men I walk with know what this looks like — the bottle, the pipe, the old life — but so do I: comfort, approval, my own work. I name my idols and turn from them.

### Warning to heed — the wind is only held back

The angels hold back the four winds "until" the servants are sealed (v3). The pause is mercy, not cancellation. Judgment is coming, and this quiet moment is the time to be ready and to help others get ready.

### Promise to trust — "God will wipe every tear from their eyes."

Not tears dried by time, but wiped away by His own hand (v17). The Lamb will be their Shepherd and lead them to springs of living water. For the man in a cell who thinks his story is too dark, for the man

in recovery who has cried more tears than he can count — this is where the story ends for those washed in the Lamb's blood.

### Example to follow — "My lord, you know."

John didn't pretend to understand what he didn't understand. He let the elder teach him (v14). When I study Revelation — and every hard passage — I want that humility: ask, listen, and let God explain.

### Worship

"Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb" (v10). Every nation, every tongue, a crowd no one can number — and not one of them saved by their own effort. I join their song and the angels' sevenfold Amen.

### Prayer

Lamb of God, thank You for washing my robe white in Your blood when I could never clean it myself. Seal me as Yours and keep me through every storm. Make me humble enough to say, "You know," and faithful enough to serve You day and night. Use me to bring men from every place into that great multitude. Shepherd me to living water, and one day wipe away my tears. Amen.

# Revelation 8

## *The Seventh Seal: Silence, Prayer and Four Trumpets*

**OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION**

*"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."*
**Acts 17:11**

CHAPTER THEME

Heaven goes quiet, and the prayers of God's people rise to His throne — and those prayers come back down as fire. The first four trumpets strike land, sea, water and light, but only a third. Judgment is real, it is measured, and it is a warning that worse is coming for those who will not turn.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

# 00 The Text

REVELATION 8 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

[1] And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

[2] And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.

[3] And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with ★ the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

[4] And ★ the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

[5] And the angel took the censer, and ▲ filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were ▲ voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

[6] And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

[7] The first angel sounded, and there followed ⚠ hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and ⚠ all green grass was burnt up.

[8] And the second angel sounded, and as it were ⚠ a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of ⚠ the sea became blood;

[9] And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

[10] And the third angel sounded, and ⚠ there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters;

[11] And the name of the star is called ⚠ Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and ⚠ many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

[12] And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

[13] And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, ⚠ Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabiters of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!

## Marked in the text

- **v1** silence in heaven about the space of half an hour
- **v2** the seven angels which stood before God
- **v2** seven trumpets
- **v3** golden censer
- **v3** much incense
- **v3** ★ the prayers of all saints
- **v4** ★ the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God
- **v5** ▲ filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth
- **v5** ▲ voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake

- **v6** prepared themselves to sound
- **v7** sounded *(every occurrence)*
- **v7** hail and fire mingled with blood
- **v7** third part *(every occurrence)*
- **v7** all green grass was burnt up
- **v8** a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea
- **v8** the sea became blood
- **v9** the third part of the ships were destroyed
- **v10** there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp
- **v11** Wormwood
- **v11** many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter
- **v12** the third part of the sun was smitten
- **v12** the day shone not for a third part of it
- **v13** Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabiters of the earth
- **v13** which are yet to sound

*Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.*

# 01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 8:7 (KJV)

7 The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

## Setting

Chapter 7 held back the winds until God's servants were sealed. Now the Lamb breaks the last seal on the scroll (5:1–7), and what comes out of it is not an end but a new series — seven angels with seven trumpets. Before a single trumpet sounds, heaven goes silent, and the prayers of the saints rise before God.

## Structure

- vv1–2 — **silence and seven trumpets:** "When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour" (v1). John sees "the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them" (v2).
- vv3–6 — **the prayers and the fire:** another angel stands at the altar "holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne" (v3). "The smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand" (v4). Then the angel "filled it with the fire of the altar, and threw it to the earth," and there followed "peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake" (v5). The seven angels "prepared themselves to sound them" (v6).
- v7 — **first trumpet, the land:** "hail and fire, mixed with blood" — "a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up."
- vv8–9 — **second trumpet, the sea:** "something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea"; a third of the sea becomes blood, a third of sea life dies, and "a third of the ships were

destroyed."

- vv10–11 — **third trumpet, fresh water:** "a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch," on the rivers "and on the springs of waters" (v10). "The name of the star is called Wormwood"; a third of the waters turn bitter, and "many men died from the waters, because they were made bitter" (v11).
- vv12–13 — **fourth trumpet, the lights, and a warning:** "a third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars were struck" (v12). Then John hears "an eagle flying in midheaven, saying with a loud voice, 'Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth,'" because of "the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!" (v13).

### Repeated words

a third (twelve times, vv7–12); angel(s) (vv2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 13); trumpet(s) (vv2, 6, 13); sounded (vv7, 8, 10, 12); altar (vv3, 5); incense (vv3, 4); prayers of the saints (vv3, 4); fire (vv5, 7, 8); blood (vv7, 8); threw / thrown (vv5, 7, 8).

### Contrasts

the loud worship of chapters 4–7 ⟷ "silence in heaven" (v1). Prayers going up (v4) ⟷ fire coming down (v5). The same altar gives incense to God and fire to the earth (vv3, 5). A third struck ⟷ two-thirds spared (vv7–12). A great star "burning like a torch" (v10) ⟷ the sun, moon and stars darkened (v12). Four trumpets already sounded ⟷ three woes still to come (v13).

### Chapter theme (my words)

Heaven goes quiet, and the prayers of God's people rise to His throne — and those prayers come back down as fire. The first four trumpets strike land, sea, water and light, but only a third. Judgment is real, it is measured, and it is a warning that worse is coming for those who will not turn.

## 02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 8:5 (KJV)

5 And the angel took the censer, and ▲ filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were ▲ voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

### Silence in heaven (v1)

After all the thunder and song of chapters 4–7, this is startling. Guzik gives several possibilities — breathing space, or a hush so the saints' prayers can be heard — but he favors an awestruck silence before the storm of judgment. The prophets called for this kind of silence before the Lord's day (Hab 2:20; Zeph 1:7; Zech 2:13). When God is about to act, the right response is to stop talking.

### Seven trumpets (v2)

In Israel trumpets sounded the alarm for war and gathered the people (Num 10:1–10; Joel 2:1). Seven trumpets brought down Jericho (Josh 6). Guzik mentions Jewish tradition of seven angels who stand before God (compare Gabriel, Luke 1:19).

### The prayers of the saints (vv3–5)

Who is this angel? Some see Jesus, the Angel of the LORD, interceding as our High Priest. Others, Guzik reports, answer that the Greek for "another" means another *of the same kind* — another angel like the seven — which leans against that view. Clarke, in Guzik: "It is not said that the angel presents these prayers." The incense is added to the prayers; it does not replace them. Incense is a picture of prayer (Ps 141:2; Rev 5:8), and at the temple the people prayed outside while the incense burned (Luke 1:10). Guzik's point: the prayers of the saints — including the martyrs' cry "How long?" (6:10) and every "Your kingdom come" — help set the end in motion (2 Pet 3:12). Torrance, in Guzik, calls prayer "more potent, more powerful than all the dark and mighty powers let loose in the world." The same censer that carries prayer up carries fire down. God answers.

### How do the trumpets relate to the seals?

Guzik lays out the options:

- **Recapitulation** — the seals, trumpets and bowls cover the same ground from different angles. Morris, in Guzik: "He goes over the ground again and again, each time teaching us something new." Many amillennial and idealist readers take this view.
- **Sequential / telescoping** — the seventh seal contains the seven trumpets, and the seventh trumpet contains the seven bowls, each series more severe than the last. Guzik sees difficulties with a strict version of this.
- **A heavenly perspective** — the order is real but not easy to pin down from our side of time.

Whichever view, Guzik insists the judgments are real events, not just symbols.

### Literal, historical, or symbolic? (vv7–12)

Guzik, as a futurist, reads the trumpets as literal catastrophes coming in the tribulation. Seiss, in Guzik: "if earth, trees, and grass do not mean earth, trees, and grass, no man can tell what they mean." Historicist interpreters have matched the trumpets to events like the barbarian invasions of Rome, and later to Attila, Genseric and Arius for the falling star. Clarke lists these identifications and warns it is "easy to find coincidences when fancy runs riot." Idealist readers see the trumpets as pictures of God's judgments repeated through all of history. What all can see is the echo of Egypt: hail and fire (Exod 9:23–25), water turned to blood (Exod 7:20–21), darkness (Exod 10:21–23). The God who judged Pharaoh to free His people will do it again on a world scale. Guzik also stresses that God is the one acting — this is not just "nature" (compare 16:9, 11).

### Land, sea, water, light (vv7–12)

The "something like a great mountain" (v8) is not an actual mountain — Guzik sees something like a burning meteor or asteroid, and rejects reading the mountain as a nation (as some do from Jer 51:25). The star Wormwood (vv10–11) may be a comet or meteor, though Guzik allows that God may mean more. Wormwood is a bitter plant, proverbial in Scripture for bitterness and sorrow (Jer 9:15; Lam 3:19;

Amos 5:7). The fourth trumpet is not a dimming but darkness for a third of the day and night (Matt 24:29). One textual note: the KJV lacks "a third of the earth was burned up" in v7; the NASB follows Greek manuscripts that include it.

### Severity and mercy

Guzik notes the first four trumpets strike the basics of life — food, water, light, time. But only a third. Two-thirds is spared. These are warning shots meant to drive people to repentance before the end (compare 9:20–21).

### The eagle's woe (v13)

The KJV reads "angel"; the NASB reads "eagle." Guzik explains that the two Greek words look very much alike, and some ancient copies read "eagle" — the reading the NASB follows. Either way the message is the same: three woes for the three trumpets left. The worst is still ahead.

### Word study (Greek)

- **silence — *sigē* (G4602):** silence, stillness.
- **half an hour — *hēmiōrion* (G2256):** a half hour; used only here in the New Testament.
- **trumpet — *salpinx* (G4536):** a trumpet, war or assembly signal.
- **sound — *salpizō* (G4537):** to blow a trumpet.
- **altar — *thysiastērion* (G2379):** altar, place of sacrifice or incense.
- **censer — *libanōtos* (G3031):** a vessel for burning frankincense.
- **incense — *thymiama* (G2368):** incense, fragrant offering.
- **prayers — *proseuchē* (G4335):** prayer directed to God.
- **earthquake — *seismos* (G4578):** a shaking, earthquake.
- **hail — *chalaza* (G5464):** hail.
- **third — *tritos* (G5154):** third, a third part.
- **star — *astēr* (G792):** a star or heavenly body.
- **torch — *lampas* (G2985):** a torch, lamp.
- **Wormwood — *apsinthos* (G894):** wormwood, a bitter plant; bitterness.
- **made bitter — *pikrainō* (G4087):** to make bitter.
- **struck — *plēssō* (G4141):** to strike, smite.
- **eagle — *aetos* (G105):** an eagle.
- **woe — *ouai* (G3759):** an exclamation of grief and doom.

### Cross-references

Exod 7:20–21; Exod 9:23–25; Exod 10:21–23; Num 10:1–10; Josh 6:1–20; Ps 141:2; Jer 9:15; Jer 51:25; Lam 3:19; Joel 2:1, 30–31; Amos 5:7; Hab 2:20; Zeph 1:7, 14–16; Zech 2:13; Matt 24:29; Luke 1:10, 19; 2 Pet 3:10–12; Rev 5:8; Rev 6:9–11; Rev 9:20–21; Rev 16:9, 11.

# 03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 8:3 (KJV)

3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

### Command to obey — keep praying

The prayers of "all the saints" are gathered on the golden altar (v3). Not one is lost. The prayers I've prayed for years for men who seem unreachable — for sons, for brothers in prison, for friends still using — are going up before God. Today I'll keep praying instead of giving up.

### Sin to confess — talking when I should be still

Heaven fell silent before God's judgment (v1). I am quick to explain, defend and comment, and slow to be quiet before Him. I confess my noise, and I want to learn to stop and listen.

### Warning to heed — "Woe, woe, woe."

These trumpets are warnings, and only a third is struck. The eagle cries because worse is coming (v13). God's partial judgments are His mercy calling people to turn while there is still time. When hard consequences come into a man's life — an arrest, an overdose, a broken home — they can be God's trumpet. I don't want to waste mine, and I want to help the men I disciple not waste theirs.

### Promise to trust — my prayers reach the throne

"The smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God" (v4). A man in a cell with no one to call still has direct access to the throne of heaven. Prayer is not a last resort; it is one of the ways God moves history.

### Example to follow — the angels who stand before God

The seven angels stand before Him, receive their trumpets, and prepare themselves (vv2, 6). They wait for His timing and then obey. I want to be ready — prepared, standing in His presence, and moving when He says move.

### Worship

The God of Revelation 8 rules land, sea, rivers and stars. He hears every whisper of prayer and answers with fire. I worship Him in silence first, then with my voice.

### Prayer

Lord God, thank You that not one of my prayers is lost before Your throne. Teach me to be still in Your presence. Wake me and the men I love with Your warnings before it is too late. Let my prayers rise like incense, and let Your kingdom come. Amen.

# Revelation 9

## *The Abyss Opened: Locusts, Horsemen and Hearts That Will Not Repent*

**OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION**

*"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."*
**Acts 17:11**

CHAPTER THEME

Hell is let loose on earth — torment from the pit, then an army of destruction — and still God holds the key, sets the hour, protects His sealed ones and limits the damage. The most frightening thing in the chapter is not the locusts or the horsemen. It's the last two verses: people who have seen it all and still will not turn from their idols, drugs, sex and stealing.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

# 00 The Text

REVELATION 9 (KJV), MARKED

Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
Rose Sin / warning | Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

1 And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

2 And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

5 And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.

6 And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

7 And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men.

8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.

9 And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.

10 And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months.

11 And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.

12 One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter .

13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,

14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

15 And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.

16 And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.

17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.

18 By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.

19 For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet ⇄ repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not ⚠ worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: ⚠ which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:

21 Neither repented they of their murders, ⚠ nor of their sorceries, ⚠ nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

### Marked in the text

- **v1** ⚠ a star fall from heaven unto the earth
- **v1** ▲ to him was given the key of the bottomless pit
- **v1** ⇄ bottomless pit *(every occurrence)*
- **v2** ⚠ as the smoke of a great furnace
- **v2** ⇄ smoke *(every occurrence)*
- **v3** ⚠ locusts upon the earth
- **v3** ⇄ scorpions
- **v4** ★ only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads
- **v5** ▲ they should not kill them
- **v5** ◷ five months *(every occurrence)*
- **v6** ⚠ shall men seek death, and shall not find it
- **v6** ⚠ death shall flee from them
- **v7** ◷ like unto horses prepared unto battle
- **v11** ⚠ the angel of the bottomless pit
- **v11** ⚠ Abaddon
- **v11** ⚠ Apollyon
- **v12** ◷ One woe is past
- **v13** ▲ the four horns of the golden altar which is before God
- **v14** ◷ Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates
- **v15** ▲ prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year
- **v15** ⇄ the third part of men *(every occurrence)*
- **v16** ◷ two hundred thousand thousand
- **v17** ⚠ fire and smoke and brimstone
- **v20** ⇄ repented not *(every occurrence)*
- **v20** ⚠ worship devils, and idols of gold
- **v20** ⚠ which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk
- **v21** ⚠ nor of their sorceries
- **v21** ⚠ nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts

*Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.*

# 01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 9:1 (KJV)

1 And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw ⚠ a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and ▲ to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

### Setting

The first four trumpets struck land, sea, water and light (ch. 8), and the eagle cried, "Woe, woe, woe" over the three trumpets still to come (8:13). Now the fifth and sixth trumpets sound — the first two woes. The judgments move from nature to the spirit world: the bottomless pit is opened, and an army is released from the Euphrates.

### Structure

- vv1–6 — **fifth trumpet, the pit opened:** "I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him" (v1). Smoke rises "like the smoke of a great furnace," darkening sun and air (v2). Out of the smoke come locusts, and "power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power" (v3). They may not touch grass or trees, "only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads" (v4). "They were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torment for five months" (v5). "Men will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death flees from them" (v6).
- vv7–12 — **the locusts described:** "like horses prepared for battle," with crowns like gold, and "their faces were like the faces of men" (v7); hair like women's, teeth like lions' (v8); iron breastplates, and "the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to battle" (v9); tails and stings, with "power to hurt men for five months" (v10). "They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon" (v11). "The first woe is past; behold, two woes are still coming after these things" (v12).
- vv13–19 — **sixth trumpet, the army from the Euphrates:** "a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God" (v13) says, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates" (v14). They were prepared "for the hour and day and month and year," released "so that they would kill a third of mankind" (v15). The horsemen number "two hundred million; I heard the number of them" (v16). Breastplates of fire, hyacinth and brimstone; heads like lions; "out of their mouths proceed fire and smoke and brimstone" (v17). "A third of mankind was killed by these three plagues" (v18); "their tails are like serpents and have heads" (v19).
- vv20–21 — **no repentance:** the survivors "did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk" (v20); "they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts" (v21).

### Repeated words

bottomless pit / abyss (vv1, 2, 11); smoke (vv2, 3, 17, 18); scorpion(s) (vv3, 5, 10); power (vv3, 10, 19); five months (vv5, 10); hurt / harm (vv4, 10, 19); fire and brimstone (vv17, 18); plagues (vv18, 20); a third of mankind (vv15, 18); repent (vv20, 21); like (vv2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 17, 19).

### Contrasts

those with God's seal (v4) ⟷ those without it. A key given (v1) ⟷ a pit that cannot open without one. Men who seek death (v6) ⟷ death that flees from them. Faces like men ⟷ teeth like lions (vv7–8). The golden altar of prayer (v13) ⟷ the release of destroyers (v14). A third of mankind killed (v18) ⟷ the rest who "did not repent" (v20). Idols that cannot see, hear or walk (v20) ⟷ the living God who hears from His altar (v13).

### Chapter theme (my words)

Hell is let loose on earth — torment from the pit, then an army of destruction — and still God holds the key, sets the hour, protects His sealed ones and limits the damage. The most frightening thing in the chapter is not the locusts or the horsemen. It's the last two verses: people who have seen it all and still will not turn from their idols, drugs, sex and stealing.

# 02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 9:5 (KJV)

5 And to them it was given that ▲ they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented ◷ five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.

### The fallen star (v1)

This "star" is a person — the key is given "to him," and NASB's "had fallen" shows he was already down when John saw him. Guzik lists the suggestions — Nero, Satan, a fallen angel, a good angel, the Word of God, even Jesus — and leans toward an angel. Whether good or evil depends on whether he is the same as "the angel of the abyss" in v11. Either way, the key is *given*. Guzik notes that the idea of Satan as master of hell is foreign to Scripture; this pit opens only by God's permission and for God's purpose (compare 1:18; 20:1).

### The bottomless pit

The Greek *abyssos* is the prison of demons. The demons begged Jesus not to send them there (Luke 8:31; compare 2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6). Guzik takes it as a real place, and he rejects spiritualized readings that make the star "the Word of God" and the pit "human nature" as far from the plain meaning.

### Demonic locusts (vv3–11)

These are not ordinary insects. Ordinary locusts eat green things; these are told *not* to touch grass or trees, but people (v4). Walvoord, in Guzik: "A visual representation of the hordes of demons loosed upon the earth." Proverbs 30:27 says locusts have no king; these do (v11). Guzik reads the string of "like" comparisons as a picture of unnatural cruelty, not a description to be decoded part by part. Christians have read these locusts in many ways:

- **Demonic hordes in the tribulation** — Guzik's futurist view.
- **Historical armies** — historicists have identified them with Saracens, Turks and others; Guzik also notes they've been made heretics, monks, Jesuits and Protestants, and rejects all of these.
- **Modern weapons** — some recent writers see attack helicopters; Guzik calls this speculative and says it doesn't fit all the details.
- **Symbolic** — idealists see the torment that sin and the demonic bring on unbelievers in every age.

The Old Testament already used locust plagues as God's judgment (Exod 10:4–15; Joel 1:4; 2:1–11).

### Limits on the torment (vv4–6)

Three limits: only those without God's seal (Guzik ties this to the 144,000 "and perhaps more"); no killing, only pain; and only five months. The purpose, Guzik says, is to bring people to repentance — which makes vv20–21 all the more tragic. A scorpion's sting is agonizing but rarely fatal. And verse 6 is one of the darkest verses in the Bible: death will not be an escape. Guzik contrasts it with Paul, who wanted to depart because to die was gain — to be with Christ (Phil 1:21–23).

### Abaddon and Apollyon (v11)

Both names mean *destruction*. Guzik takes this king to be Satan himself or a high-ranking demon. The contrast is plain: Jesus came to give life (John 10:10); the king of the pit has only one name, and it is destroyer.

### The voice from the altar (v13)

The voice comes from the horns of the golden altar — the altar of incense where the prayers rose in 8:3–5, whose horns were touched with atoning blood (Exod 30:10). Guzik notes again how large a role prayer plays in these events.

### Four angels bound at the Euphrates (vv14–15)

These angels are bound, so Guzik takes them as evil — and yet they are held for God's exact moment: "the hour and day and month and year." He cites Newell's suggestion that while most of Satan's angels are free, some high-ranking offenders are kept bound. Guzik says they may or may not be the four angels of 7:1. The Euphrates is loaded with history — the river of Eden (Gen 2:14), the boundary of the land promised to Abraham (Gen 15:18), the region of Babel and Babylon (Gen 11:1–9), and the old frontier of Rome.

### Two hundred million (vv16–19)

Is the number literal? Guzik notes that all the armies of World War II together peaked around 70 million. He cites Hocking's suggestion that the figure may mean an army beyond counting. Some see a human army from the east (compare 16:12); Guzik leans toward a demonic army, while allowing a modern, mechanized reading is possible. Fire, smoke and brimstone — the same elements as the final judgment (14:10; 19:20; 21:8) — kill a third of mankind. Add the fourth of the earth killed under the fourth seal (6:8), and by my count about half the world's people will have died.

### They did not repent (vv20–21)

This is the point of the chapter. God's trumpets are meant to bring people to repentance, and the survivors refuse. Their sins come in two groups: against God — worshiping demons and lifeless idols (Ps 115:4–8; 1 Cor 10:20) — and against people — murders, sorceries, immorality, thefts. The word for "sorceries" is *pharmakeia*, from which we get "pharmacy." Guzik links it to drug use; in the ancient world sorcery and drugs often went together. Guzik also observes how quickly people go back to normal after a calamity. Pain alone does not change a heart.

### Word study (Greek)

- **key — *kleis* (G2807):** a key; the authority to open and shut (1:18; 3:7; 20:1).
- **bottomless pit / abyss — *abyssos* (G12):** the deep, the prison of demons (Luke 8:31; Rev 20:3).
- **furnace — *kaminos* (G2575):** a furnace, kiln.
- **locusts — *akris* (G200):** locust, grasshopper.
- **scorpion — *skorpios* (G4651):** a scorpion.
- **torment — *basanizō* (G928) / *basanismos* (G929):** to torture; torture, torment.
- **stings — *kentron* (G2759):** a sting, a goad (Acts 26:14; 1 Cor 15:55–56).
- **Abaddon — (G3):** Hebrew "destruction" (Job 26:6; Prov 15:11).

- **Apollyon — *Apollyōn* (G623):** Greek "destroyer."
- **horns — *keras* (G2768):** horn; the corners of the altar, a symbol of power.
- **Euphrates — *Euphratēs* (G2166):** the great river of Mesopotamia.
- **brimstone — *theion* (G2303):** sulfur.
- **repent — *metanoeō* (G3340):** to change one's mind and turn.
- **demons — *daimonion* (G1140):** an evil spirit.
- **idols — *eidōlon* (G1497):** an image, a false god.
- **sorceries — *pharmakeia* (G5331) / *pharmakon* (G5332):** sorcery, magic arts, drugs and potions.
- **immorality — *porneia* (G4202):** sexual immorality of every kind.
- **thefts — *klemma* (G2809):** theft, stealing.

### Cross-references

Gen 2:14; Gen 15:18; Exod 10:4–15; Exod 30:10; Job 26:6; Ps 115:4–8; Prov 30:27; Isa 14:12–15; Jer 46:10; Joel 1:4; Joel 2:1–11; Luke 8:31; Luke 10:18–19; John 10:10; 1 Cor 10:20; Gal 5:19–21; Phil 1:21–23; 2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6; Rev 7:1–4; Rev 8:3–5, 13; Rev 16:12; Rev 20:1–3.

## 03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 9:4 (KJV)

4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but ★ only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

### Command to obey — repent now

The whole chapter turns on the words "did not repent" (vv20, 21). Every trumpet is an invitation to turn, and the worst thing is to sit through God's warnings unchanged. Today I'll name one thing God has been warning me about and turn from it — not later, now.

### Sin to confess — sorceries

*Pharmakeia* is on the list right next to murder and immorality (v21). Drugs and alcohol are not a side issue to God; they are a spiritual bondage. The men I disciple know this better than anyone. And I have my own ways of numbing out instead of bringing my pain to God. I confess them.

### Warning to heed — death is not an escape

"Men will seek death and will not find it" (v6). The enemy whispers to hopeless men that dying would end the pain. It is a lie. The answer to torment is not death but the Savior. For any man I meet who has thought about ending it — there is hope, and His name is Jesus, not Apollyon.

### Promise to trust — the sealed are protected

The locusts could hurt "only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads" (v4). The pit opens only with a key God gives, and the angels move only at the hour He set (v15). The destroyer is real, but he is on a leash. If I belong to Christ, I am sealed by His Spirit (Eph 1:13).

### Example to follow — the voice from the altar

The sixth trumpet starts at the altar of prayer (v13). Heaven's business moves on the prayers of the saints. I want to be a man of prayer who intercedes for others before the trouble comes.

### Worship

Even with hell let loose, God is the One holding the key, setting the hour, counting the months and marking His own. I worship the God whose power has no rival and whose patience still calls people to repent.

### Prayer

Lord God, You hold the key to the abyss and the hour of every judgment. Seal me as Yours. Free me and the men I love from every idol and every chemical chain. Don't let pain leave us unchanged — let it turn us to You. Give hope to the hopeless who think death is their way out, and let them find life in Jesus, the One who came that we might have life. Amen.

# Revelation 10

## *The Little Book: Sweet and Bitter*

**OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION**

*"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."*
**Acts 17:11**

CHAPTER THEME

God holds the end in His hand, and He has sworn by Himself that it will not be delayed forever. Before the last trumpet, His servant has to take the Word inside himself — sweet to receive, bitter to digest — and then go speak it to the whole world.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

# 00 The Text

REVELATION 10 (KJV), MARKED

**Gold** God — His character & actions
**Green** Command / instruction
**Sky** Key repeated word
**Rose** Sin / warning
**Violet** Promise / blessing
**Amber** Time / place / contrast

[1] And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:

[2] And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth,

[3] And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.

[4] And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

[5] And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven,

[6] And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are , and the earth, and the things that therein are , and the sea, and the things which are therein , that there should be time no longer:

[7] But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

[8] And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth.

[9] And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.

[10] And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.

[11] And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

## Marked in the text

- **v1** mighty angel
- **v1** come down from heaven
- **v1** a rainbow was upon his head
- **v1** his face was as it were the sun
- **v2** little book *(every occurrence)*
- **v2** his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth
- **v3** as when a lion roareth
- **v3** seven thunders *(every occurrence)*
- **v4** Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered
- **v4** write them not
- **v6** sware by him that liveth for ever and ever
- **v6** who created heaven
- **v6** that there should be time no longer
- **v7** the voice of the seventh angel
- **v7** the mystery of God should be finished
- **v7** his servants the prophets
- **v8** Go and take the little book

- **v9** Take it, and eat it up
- **v9** bitter *(every occurrence)*
- **v9** sweet as honey *(every occurrence)*
- **v10** ate it up
- **v11** Thou must prophesy again
- **v11** many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings

*Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.*

# 01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 10:1 (KJV)

[1]And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:

## Setting

Six trumpets have sounded, and the sixth ended with men who "did not repent" (9:20–21). Before the seventh trumpet (11:15), God pauses the action. Chapter 10 is an interlude, like the pause between the sixth and seventh seals (ch. 7). John is no longer watching from heaven's throne room; a mighty angel comes down to earth, and John himself is drawn into the scene.

## Structure

- vv1–4 — **the strong angel and the seven thunders:** "another strong angel coming down out of heaven, clothed with a cloud," with a rainbow on his head, a face "like the sun," and feet "like pillars of fire" (v1). He holds "a little book which was open" and sets his right foot on the sea and his left on the land (v2). He cries out "as when a lion roars," and the seven peals of thunder speak (v3). John is about to write, but a voice from heaven says, "Seal up the things which the seven peals of thunder have spoken and do not write them" (v4).
- vv5–7 — **the oath:** the angel lifts his right hand to heaven and swears "by Him who lives forever and ever," the Creator of heaven, earth and sea (vv5–6), "that there will be delay no longer" (v6). When the seventh angel sounds, "the mystery of God is finished, as He preached to His servants the prophets" (v7).
- vv8–10 — **the little book eaten:** the voice from heaven tells John, "Go, take the book which is open" (v8). The angel says, "Take it and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey" (v9). John eats it, and it is just as he was told (v10).
- v11 — **the commission:** "You must prophesy again concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings."

## Repeated words

angel (vv1, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10); heaven (vv1, 4, 5, 6, 8); sea (vv2, 5, 6, 8); little book / book (vv2, 8, 9, 10); seven peals of thunder (vv3, 4); voice (vv3, 4, 7, 8); bitter (vv9, 10); sweet as honey (vv9, 10).

### Contrasts

Things to seal up (v4) ⟷ things to prophesy again (v11). The thunders kept secret (v4) ⟷ the mystery of God finished (v7). Sweet in the mouth ⟷ bitter in the stomach (vv9–10). The long patience of God ⟷ "delay no longer" (v6). One foot on the sea ⟷ one foot on the land (v2) — nothing outside His claim.

### Chapter theme (my words)

God holds the end in His hand, and He has sworn by Himself that it will not be delayed forever. Before the last trumpet, His servant has to take the Word inside himself — sweet to receive, bitter to digest — and then go speak it to the whole world.

## 02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 10:6 (KJV)

6 And ▲ sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, ▲ who created heaven, and the things that therein are , and the earth, and the things that therein are , and the sea, and the things which are therein , ◷ that there should be time no longer:

### Who is the strong angel? (v1)

Many readers see Jesus here: the cloud, the rainbow, the face like the sun and the feet like fire all echo the glorified Christ of 1:15–16 and the throne of 4:3. Guzik disagrees. He notes that angels are never clearly identified with Jesus in Revelation or the rest of the New Testament, and he leans toward Michael, because of the parallels with Daniel 12, where a heavenly figure swears an oath with hands raised toward heaven (Dan 12:7). Either way, Barclay says the angel "has come from the very presence of God." He carries heaven's glory. The rainbow points back to God's promise after the flood (Gen 9:13); mercy is still in the picture as judgment draws near.

### Feet on sea and land (vv2–3)

Walvoord says the stance "indicates complete authority over the entire earthly situation." Clarke: his power "was universal." The roar like a lion fits the Lion of the tribe of Judah (5:5) and the God who "roars from Zion" (Joel 3:16; Amos 1:2). The little book is probably not the same as the sealed scroll of chapter 5; Guzik takes it as a shorter portion of God's plan that John must now receive and record. Walvoord notes that its contents are "nowhere revealed in Revelation."

### The sealed thunders (v4)

This is the only thing in Revelation John hears and is forbidden to write. Guzik connects the thunders to the "voice of the LORD" of Psalm 29 and refuses to guess their content. Walvoord: "there are secrets which God has not seen fit to reveal to man at this time." Guzik counts this a lesson in humility for anyone who builds prophetic charts with confidence; Morris warns against acting as if everything has been revealed (Deut 29:29).

### "Delay no longer" (vv5–7)

The KJV's "time no longer" does not mean time ceases; the word *chronos* here means the time of waiting is over. God has been patient (2 Pet 3:9), but the angel swears by the eternal Creator that the end is now set in motion — Guzik: "absolutely no turning back." The "mystery of God" is something that can be known only when God reveals it. Guzik takes it here as God's whole plan of the ages brought to completion, and possibly the answer to why God has allowed evil to run so long. Walvoord ties it to the Old Testament promises of God's kingdom on earth (Dan 2:44; 7:27). When the seventh trumpet sounds, the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of our Lord (11:15).

### How to read the interlude

Guzik reads Revelation as future, in sequence, with chapter 10 a real pause before the final trumpet. Historicists have tied the angel and the little book to events in church history (often the Reformation and the open Bible); idealists see a timeless picture of how the church receives and proclaims God's Word in every age. All agree on the core: God's plan will be finished, and His servants must take in His Word and speak it.

### Sweet and bitter (vv8–11)

John is told to *take* the book — the Word is offered, but he must reach for it. Eating the scroll echoes Ezekiel (Ezek 2:8–3:3) and Jeremiah (Jer 15:16). Johnson: eating it "symbolized the reception of the Word of God into the innermost being." Swete calls revelation "bitter-sweet": it discloses mercy and judgment both. It is sweet to know God's Word and see His victory; it is bitter to know what is coming on a world that will not repent. Mounce (in Guzik) sees the bitterness as the ordeal believers must pass through before final triumph. Then the commission: "prophesy again" — not to one empire or only to the church, but to "many peoples and nations and tongues and kings" (v11). Chapter 11's two witnesses will show what that costs.

### Word study (Greek)

- **strong — *ischyros* (G2478):** mighty, powerful.
- **angel — *angelos* (G32):** messenger.
- **cloud — *nephelē* (G3507):** a cloud; often the sign of God's presence (Exod 13:21; Acts 1:9).
- **rainbow — *iris* (G2463):** rainbow, as around the throne (4:3).
- **little book — *biblaridion* (G974):** a small scroll.
- **thunder — *brontē* (G1027):** thunder; the voice of God's power (Ps 29:3).
- **seal up — *sphragizō* (G4972):** to seal, to keep secret.
- **swore — *omnyō* (G3660):** to take an oath.
- **delay / time — *chronos* (G5550):** a span of time; here, the waiting period.
- **mystery — *mystērion* (G3466):** a secret known only by God's revealing it.
- **finished — *teleō* (G5055):** to complete, bring to its goal.
- **preached — *euangelizō* (G2097):** to announce good news.
- **eat — *katesthiō* (G2719):** to eat up, devour.
- **bitter — *pikrainō* (G4087):** to make bitter.
- **sweet — *glykys* (G1099):** sweet.

- **prophesy — *prophēteuō* (G4395):** to speak forth God's message.

### Cross-references

Gen 9:13–16; Exod 13:21; Deut 29:29; Ps 19:10; Ps 29:3–9; Ps 119:103; Jer 15:16; Ezek 1:28; Ezek 2:8–3:3, 14; Dan 2:44; Dan 7:27; Dan 12:4–9; Joel 3:16; Amos 3:7–8; Matt 24:14; Rom 16:25–26; Eph 3:3–9; 2 Pet 3:9; Rev 1:15–16; Rev 4:3; Rev 5:1–5; Rev 11:15.

## 03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 10:7 (KJV)

7 But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, ★ the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to ▲ his servants the prophets.

### Command to obey — "Take it and eat it."

The Word is held out to John, but he has to go get it and swallow it (vv8–9). Reading about the Bible is not eating the Bible. I'll stop skimming and chew on one passage today until it gets inside me. That's what I want for the men I disciple, too — not a verse on the wall, but the Word in the gut, where it has to be when the craving comes at 2 a.m.

### Sin to confess — wanting to know more than God has said

John was told to seal up the thunders (v4). I confess I'm often more curious about what God hasn't told me than obedient to what He has. I spend energy on charts and dates and speculation while the plain commands go undone (Deut 29:29).

### Warning to heed — the delay will end

God's patience is real, but it is not forever (v6; 2 Pet 3:9). Every man who thinks, "I'll get right with God later," is betting on a delay that has been sworn to end. I need to say that plainly — to myself first, and then to the men I serve.

### Promise to trust — "the mystery of God is finished."

God will finish what He started (v7; Phil 1:6). The questions I can't answer about suffering and evil will not stay open forever. For the man in a prison cell or a halfway house who feels his life is one long delay, God has not lost the thread. His plan will be completed, and those who are His will see it.

### Example to follow — John, who ate the bitter book and still went

The Word was sweet to him and then bitter, and God still said, "You must prophesy again" (v11). Telling men the truth — about sin, about judgment, about Christ — is sweet and bitter for me too. I'll follow John: take it in, feel the weight, and speak anyway, with love.

### Worship

The angel swears by "Him who lives forever and ever," who made heaven, earth and sea and everything in them (v6). Nothing in all of it is outside His claim. I worship the Creator who keeps His word and finishes His plan.

### Prayer

Lord God, Creator of heaven and earth, thank You that Your Word is sweet as honey. Make me hungry to take it and eat it, not just read it. Keep me humble about what You have not revealed, and obedient to what You have. Give me courage to speak the bitter truth with Your sweet grace to the men You've put in front of me, before the delay is over. Amen.

# Revelation 11

## *The Two Witnesses: The Kingdom of Our Lord*

**OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION**

*"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."*
**Acts 17:11**

CHAPTER THEME

God knows exactly who is His, and His witnesses cannot be silenced until their work is done. The world may kill them and throw a party, but God raises them up in front of everyone. Then the last trumpet sounds, and the kingdom belongs to Christ forever.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

# 00 The Text

REVELATION 11 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

1 And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein .

2 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

3 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

4 These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

9 And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

11 And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

13 And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

14 The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art , and wast , and art to come ; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

18 And ⚠ the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest ★ give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple ▲ the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an ⇄ earthquake, and great hail.

### Marked in the text

- **v1** ▮ measure the temple of God
- **v2** ◷ forty and two months
- **v3** ⇄ my two witnesses
- **v3** ◷ a thousand two hundred and threescore days
- **v3** ⇄ clothed in sackcloth
- **v4** ▲ the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks
- **v5** ▲ fire proceedeth out of their mouth
- **v6** ▲ power to shut heaven
- **v7** ◷ when they shall have finished their testimony
- **v7** ⚠ the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit
- **v8** ⇄ dead bodies *(every occurrence)*
- **v8** ⚠ Sodom and Egypt
- **v8** ◷ where also our Lord was crucified
- **v10** ⚠ shall rejoice over them, and make merry
- **v11** ★ the Spirit of life from God entered into them
- **v11** ★ they stood upon their feet
- **v12** ▮ Come up hither
- **v13** ⇄ earthquake *(every occurrence)*
- **v13** ▲ gave glory to the God of heaven
- **v14** ⚠ the third woe cometh quickly
- **v15** ▲ The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ
- **v15** ★ he shall reign for ever and ever
- **v16** ▮ fell upon their faces, and worshipped God
- **v17** ▲ O Lord God Almighty
- **v18** ⚠ the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come
- **v18** ★ give reward unto thy servants
- **v19** ▲ the ark of his testament

*Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.*

# 01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 11:3 (KJV)

3 And I will give power unto ⇄ my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy ◷ a thousand two hundred and threescore days, ⇄ clothed in sackcloth.

### Setting

The interlude that began in chapter 10 continues. John has just eaten the little book and been told, "You must prophesy again" (10:11). Now he is given a measuring rod, and then he sees two witnesses who prophesy, die and rise again. Only after that does the seventh trumpet finally sound (v15), and heaven breaks out in worship.

### Structure

- vv1–2 — **the temple measured:** "Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it" (v1). The outer court is left out, "for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months" (v2).
- vv3–6 — **the two witnesses empowered:** "I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth" (v3). They are "the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth" (v4). Fire devours their enemies (v5); they can shut the sky, turn waters into blood, and strike the earth "with every plague, as often as they desire" (v6).
- vv7–10 — **the witnesses killed:** "When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them" (v7). Their bodies lie in the street of the great city, "where also their Lord was crucified" (v8). The world looks on for three and a half days, rejoices and sends gifts, "because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth" (vv9–10).
- vv11–14 — **the witnesses raised:** "the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet" (v11). A loud voice says, "Come up here," and they go up into heaven in the cloud while their enemies watch (v12). An earthquake kills seven thousand, and "the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven" (v13). "The second woe is past" (v14).
- vv15–19 — **the seventh trumpet:** "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever" (v15). The twenty-four elders fall on their faces and give thanks that He has "begun to reign" (vv16–17). It is the time for the dead to be judged and for His servants to be rewarded (v18). The temple in heaven opens, and "the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple" (v19).

### Repeated words

temple (vv1, 2, 19); measure (vv1, 2); two witnesses / two (vv3, 4, 10); prophesy / prophets / prophesying (vv3, 6, 10, 18); dead bodies (vv8, 9); dwell on the earth (v10, twice); earthquake (vv13, 19); heaven (vv12, 13, 15, 19); reign (vv15, 17).

### Contrasts

The measured temple ⟷ the court left to the nations (vv1–2). The witnesses' power (vv5–6) ⟷ their bodies in the street (v8). The world celebrating (v10) ⟷ great fear when they stand up (v11). Their enemies watching (v12) ⟷ the rest giving glory to God (v13). The kingdom of the world ⟷ the kingdom of our Lord (v15). The nations enraged ⟷ Your wrath came (v18).

### Chapter theme (my words)

God knows exactly who is His, and His witnesses cannot be silenced until their work is done. The world may kill them and throw a party, but God raises them up in front of everyone. Then the last trumpet sounds, and the kingdom belongs to Christ forever.

# 02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 11:13 (KJV)

13 And the same hour was there a great ⇄ earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the ⇄ earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and ▲ gave glory to the God of heaven.

### Measuring the temple (vv1–2)

Measuring in Scripture marks what belongs to God and what He protects (Ezek 40–43; Zech 2:1–5; Rev 21:15). Guzik weighs the view that the temple here is the church (Eph 2:21; 1 Pet 2:5), but finds that it doesn't explain the specific details — the altar, the worshippers, the outer court. He takes it as a literal, future temple in Jerusalem, in line with Daniel 9:27, Matthew 24:15 and 2 Thessalonians 2:4. Many other Christians read the temple as God's people, protected inwardly while the outward church is trampled. Both see the same comfort: God knows and keeps His own. Forty-two months, like the 1,260 days of v3, is three and a half years; Guzik places it in the last half of Daniel's seventieth week. Robertson defines "tread under foot" as "to trample with contempt."

### Who are the two witnesses? (vv3–6)

Christians differ here. Some read them as a symbol — the witnessing church, or the Law and the Prophets. Guzik finds that the details (bodies in a street, three and a half days, a public ascension) point to two real men. Elijah is the most common suggestion: he shut the sky (1 Kgs 17:1; Jas 5:17), called down fire (2 Kgs 1:10), never died (2 Kgs 2:11), and was promised before the day of the LORD (Mal 4:5). The second is often Moses, who turned water into blood (Exod 7:20) and appeared with Elijah at the Transfiguration (Matt 17:3); some prefer Enoch, who also never died (Gen 5:24). Guzik concludes that their identity must not be terribly important, or we would have been told exactly who they are. The olive trees and lampstands come from Zechariah 4: oil that never runs out, the Spirit's power for God's servants — "'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts" (Zech 4:6). Walvoord: their power is such "that they are able to witness for 1,260 days in spite of the antagonism of the world."

### Killed only when finished (vv7–10)

The beast cannot touch them until "they have finished their testimony" (v7). God's servants are immortal until their work is done. Guzik: "Witness is not something we do; it is something we are." The "great city" is called Sodom (immorality) and Egypt (bondage and oppression) "mystically" — spiritually — and is identified as the place "where also their Lord was crucified," which Guzik takes as Jerusalem. Leaving the bodies unburied was the worst humiliation; Johnson: "To have his dead body lie in view of all was the worst humiliation a person could suffer from his enemies." The world sends gifts — a dark Christmas — because the preaching of repentance "tormented" them (v10).

### Raised before their enemies (vv11–14)

The "breath of life from God" recalls Ezekiel's valley of dry bones (Ezek 37:10). "Come up here" echoes the call to John (4:1). Their enemies watch them go. The earthquake kills seven thousand, and "the rest ... gave glory to the God of heaven" (v13). Guzik notes that the text leaves it unclear whether this is saving repentance or only terror.

### The seventh trumpet (vv15–19)

"Has become" is a settled fact in Greek; heaven celebrates Christ's reign as already won, even before chapters 12–19 show how. Morgan: "In their praise, impending events are set forth, to be more fully described later." The elders praise God "who are and who were" — no longer "who is to come" (compare 4:8), because He has come. Newell: "Religion is decent, but surrender to God is intolerable to the nations of this world." The ark of the covenant, lost to human sight for centuries, appears in heaven's temple. Alford calls it "the symbol of God's faithfulness in bestowing grace on His people, and inflicting vengeance on His people's enemies." The lightning, thunder and earthquake echo Sinai (Exod 19:16–18).

### Word study (Greek)

- **measuring rod — *kalamos* (G2563):** a reed, used as a measuring stick.
- **temple — *naos* (G3485):** the sanctuary itself, the dwelling of God.
- **tread under foot — *pateō* (G3961):** to trample.
- **witness — *martys* (G3144):** one who testifies; became our word "martyr."
- **sackcloth — *sakkos* (G4526):** coarse cloth worn in mourning and repentance.
- **olive tree — *elaia* (G1636):** source of oil for lamps.
- **lampstand — *lychnia* (G3087):** lampstand, as in 1:20.
- **testimony — *martyria* (G3141):** witness, the content of what is testified.
- **abyss — *abyssos* (G12):** the bottomless pit.
- **mystically — *pneumatikōs* (G4153):** spiritually, in a spiritual sense.
- **tormented — *basanizō* (G928):** to torture, vex.
- **breath — *pneuma* (G4151):** breath, spirit, the Spirit.
- **reign — *basileuō* (G936):** to rule as king.
- **Almighty — *pantokratōr* (G3841):** ruler over all.
- **covenant — *diathēkē* (G1242):** covenant, testament.

### Cross-references

Exod 7:20; Exod 19:16–18; 1 Kgs 17:1; 2 Kgs 1:10; 2 Kgs 2:11; Ezek 37:5–10; Ezek 40:3; Dan 7:13–14, 27; Dan 9:27; Zech 2:1–5; Zech 4:1–14; Mal 4:5; Matt 17:3; Matt 24:15; Luke 21:24; John 15:18–20; 2 Thess 2:4; Heb 9:4; Jas 5:17; Rev 4:1; Rev 13:1–7; Rev 15:5; Rev 16:18–21.

# 03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 11:11 (KJV)

11 And after three days and an half ★ the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and ★ they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

### Command to obey — be a witness

"I will grant authority to my two witnesses" (v3). They didn't make themselves witnesses; God did, and He gave the power. Guzik's line stays with me: witness is not something I do, it's something I am. Today I'll tell one person what Jesus has done for me. For a man in recovery or just out of prison, his testimony is his strongest sermon — he doesn't need a seminary degree, just the truth of what God did.

### Sin to confess — fear of being mocked

The world threw a party over the witnesses' dead bodies (v10). I confess that I sometimes go quiet because I'd rather be liked than faithful. Their prophesying "tormented" people, and they kept going anyway.

### Warning to heed — religion is easy, surrender is not

The nations "were enraged" (v18). People will tolerate a little religion, but not a King who demands their whole life. I need to check whether I've given Christ my Sunday or my all.

### Promise to trust — "the breath of life from God came into them."

The world thought the story was over at v9. Three and a half days later, they stood on their feet (v11). Many of the men I serve feel like their bodies are lying in the street — record, addiction, broken family, the whole world watching. God's breath still raises the dead. No man is finished until God says he is finished, and God's servants are safe until their work is done.

### Example to follow — the witnesses in sackcloth

They had power to call down fire, and they still wore mourners' clothes (v3). Power and brokenness went together. I want to minister the same way: confident in God's authority, humble and grieving over sin, beginning with my own.

### Worship

"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever" (v15). With the elders, I fall on my face. He has taken His great power and begun to reign.

### Prayer

Lord God, the Almighty, who are and who were, thank You that the kingdom belongs to Christ. Fill me with Your Spirit like oil in the lamp, so I can witness with Your power and not mine. Take away my fear

of being mocked. Breathe life into the men I love who feel dead in the street, and let them stand on their feet for Your glory. Amen.

# Revelation 12

## *The Woman and the Dragon: Overcome by the Blood*

**OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION**

*"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."*

**Acts 17:11**

CHAPTER THEME

Behind every attack on God's people stands an angry, defeated enemy. He could not stop the Child, he could not stay in heaven, and he cannot win against those who stand on the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. His wrath is great because his time is short.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

# 00 The Text

REVELATION 12 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions
Green Command / instruction
Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning
★ Violet Promise / blessing
Amber Time / place / contrast

1 And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:

2 And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.

14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time , and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

### Marked in the text

- **v1** a great wonder in heaven
- **v1** a woman clothed with the sun
- **v1** a crown of twelve stars
- **v3** a great red dragon
- **v3** dragon *(every occurrence)*
- **v4** the third part of the stars of heaven
- **v4** for to devour her child
- **v5** a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron
- **v5** caught up unto God, and to his throne
- **v6** wilderness *(every occurrence)*
- **v6** a place prepared of God
- **v6** a thousand two hundred and threescore days
- **v7** there was war in heaven
- **v8** prevailed not
- **v9** that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan
- **v9** which deceiveth the whole world
- **v10** Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God
- **v10** the accuser of our brethren is cast down
- **v11** they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb
- **v11** by the word of their testimony
- **v11** they loved not their lives unto the death
- **v12** rejoice, ye heavens
- **v12** having great wrath
- **v12** he hath but a short time
- **v14** two wings of a great eagle
- **v14** and times, and half a time
- **v16** the earth helped the woman
- **v17** keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ

*Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.*

# 01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 12:1 (KJV)

[1]And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:

### Setting

The seventh trumpet has sounded and heaven has announced that "the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord" (11:15). Now John steps back to show the war behind all the wars. Chapter 12 is a new vision of "signs" (vv1, 3) — a woman, a dragon and a child — that pulls back the curtain on why the world rages against God's people.

### Structure

- vv1–2 — **the woman:** "A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars" (v1). She is with child and cries out in labor (v2).
- vv3–4 — **the dragon:** "a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems" (v3). His tail sweeps away "a third of the stars of heaven," and he stands before the woman "so that when she gave birth he might devour her child" (v4).

- vv5–6 — **the child and the wilderness:** "she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne" (v5). The woman flees into the wilderness to "a place prepared by God," nourished there for 1,260 days (v6).
- vv7–9 — **war in heaven:** "Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon" (v7); the dragon is "not strong enough" (v8). "The great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world" (v9).
- vv10–12 — **heaven's song:** "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down" (v10). "They overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death" (v11). Heaven rejoices, but "woe to the earth and the sea," because the devil has come down "having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time" (v12).
- vv13–17 — **the woman pursued:** the dragon persecutes the woman (v13). She is given "the two wings of the great eagle" and nourished "for a time and times and half a time" (v14). The serpent pours out water like a river; the earth swallows it (vv15–16). The dragon, enraged, goes off "to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus" (v17).

### Repeated words

woman (vv1, 4, 6, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17); dragon (vv3, 4, 7, 9, 13, 16, 17); thrown down (vv9, 10, 13); heaven / heavens (vv1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 10, 12); wilderness (vv6, 14); war (vv7, 17); serpent (vv9, 14, 15); child (vv2, 4, 5, 13).

### Contrasts

The woman clothed with the sun ⟷ the red dragon (vv1–3). The dragon ready to devour ⟷ the child caught up to God (vv4–5). Michael's angels ⟷ the dragon's angels (v7). Accused day and night (v10) ⟷ overcame by the blood of the Lamb (v11). Rejoice, O heavens ⟷ woe to the earth and the sea (v12). The dragon's great wrath ⟷ his short time (v12). The flood from his mouth ⟷ the earth opening its mouth to help (vv15–16).

### Chapter theme (my words)

Behind every attack on God's people stands an angry, defeated enemy. He could not stop the Child, he could not stay in heaven, and he cannot win against those who stand on the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. His wrath is great because his time is short.

# 02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 12:5 (KJV)

5 And she brought forth ▲ a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was ▲ caught up unto God, and to his throne.

### The woman (vv1–2)

Christians identify her in different ways. Roman Catholic tradition has seen Mary. Many Protestants and others see the people of God across both testaments — Israel giving birth to the Messiah and continuing as the church. Guzik, reading from a futurist and dispensational view, says, "Scripturally, this woman clothed with the sun should be identified with Israel." His reason is Joseph's dream, where the sun, moon and eleven stars stand for Jacob's family (Gen 37:9–10). He sets aside Mary because Mary does not flee into the wilderness for 1,260 days. The labor pains fit Israel's long travail awaiting the Messiah (Isa 66:7–8; Mic 5:2–3). Guzik also notes, "Women often represent religious systems in Revelation" — compare the harlot of chapter 17 and the bride of chapter 19.

### The dragon (vv3–4)

Verse 9 removes all doubt: the dragon is "the devil and Satan." Johnson says the description "symbolically suggests his fierce power and murderous nature." The seven heads, ten horns and crowns look ahead to the beast of 13:1 and 17:3, 12; Walvoord ties them to a revived Roman empire. Guzik: "The crowns represent his presumptive claims of royal authority against the true King." The third of the stars swept from heaven is taken by many — Guzik among them — as the angels who fell with Satan; the stars are angels in 1:20. The dragon waiting to devour the child points to Satan's war against the promised Seed from Genesis 3:15 on, and directly to Herod's slaughter at Bethlehem (Matt 2:16).

### The male child caught up (vv5–6)

The child is clearly Christ, who will "rule all the nations with a rod of iron" (Ps 2:9; Rev 19:15). Alford: "Words can hardly be plainer than these." John goes straight from His birth to His ascension; Guzik notes that by naming the starting and ending points of Jesus' earthly work, John alluded to all that stood in between — including the cross. The flight into the wilderness for 1,260 days jumps forward to the end; Guzik places it in the last half of Daniel's seventieth week and calls this kind of gap a "near-far" break typical of prophecy. Those who read the woman as the church see the wilderness as the whole church age, in which God feeds and protects His people in a hostile world.

### War in heaven (vv7–9)

Michael is the archangel who stands guard over Israel (Dan 10:13, 21; 12:1; Jude 9). Guzik rejects the view that Michael is Jesus; Alford agrees: "Michael is not to be identified with Christ, any more than any other of the great angels in this Book." Satan once had access to heaven to accuse (Job 1:6–12; Zech 3:1), but here "there was no longer a place found for them in heaven" (v8). Guzik places this casting down at the midpoint of the tribulation; others connect it with the victory of Christ's cross and

ascension (Luke 10:18; John 12:31). Satan's names give his record: dragon, ancient serpent (Gen 3:1), devil (slanderer), Satan (adversary), deceiver of the whole world.

### How the saints overcome (vv10–12)

The accuser works "day and night" (v10). But the saints overcome him three ways. First, *the blood of the Lamb*. Guzik: "It is not a magical potion, nor is it the literal blood of Jesus"; rather, "The blood speaks to us of the real, physical death of Jesus Christ in our place." Satan's accusations may be true, but the blood answers them (Rom 8:33–34). Second, *the word of their testimony* — telling the truth about what Jesus has done overcomes Satan's deception (John 9:25). Third, *they did not love their life even when faced with death* — Guzik: "Loving not their lives overcomes Satan's violence" (Phil 1:21). The devil's great wrath is the rage of a beaten enemy who knows he has only a short time.

### The woman protected (vv13–17)

The two wings of the great eagle recall the Exodus: "I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself" (Exod 19:4). "A time and times and half a time" is three and a half years (Dan 7:25; 12:7), the same as the 1,260 days. The flood may be literal or a picture of overwhelming persecution (Ps 124:2–5); either way God makes the earth itself fight for her. Walvoord: "Israel is hated by Satan not because of any of its own characteristics." Unable to destroy the woman, the dragon turns on "the rest of her children," whom Guzik takes as including Gentiles who come to faith during the tribulation. They are marked by two things: obedience to God's commands and holding to the testimony of Jesus.

### Word study (Greek)

- **sign — *sēmeion* (G4592):** a sign, a mark pointing to something beyond itself.
- **woman — *gynē* (G1135):** woman, wife.
- **dragon — *drakōn* (G1404):** a dragon, a great serpent.
- **diadem — *diadēma* (G1238):** a royal crown, the crown of a king.
- **devour — *katesthiō* (G2719):** to eat up, consume.
- **caught up — *harpazō* (G726):** to seize, snatch away (1 Thess 4:17).
- **wilderness — *erēmos* (G2048):** a desolate, deserted place.
- **nourished — *trephō* (G5142):** to feed, sustain.
- **war — *polemos* (G4171):** war, battle.
- **thrown down — *ballō* (G906):** to throw, cast.
- **devil — *diabolos* (G1228):** slanderer, false accuser.
- **deceives — *planaō* (G4105):** to lead astray.
- **accuser — *katēgōr* (G2725):** a prosecutor, one who brings charges.
- **overcame — *nikaō* (G3528):** to conquer, prevail.
- **testimony — *martyria* (G3141):** witness, testimony.
- **wrath — *thymos* (G2372):** fierce anger, rage.

### Cross-references

Gen 3:15; Gen 37:9–10; Exod 19:4; Job 1:6–12; Ps 2:7–9; Isa 66:7–8; Dan 7:25; Dan 10:13, 21; Dan 12:1, 7; Zech 3:1–5; Mic 5:2–3; Matt 2:13–16; Matt 24:15–21; Luke 10:18; John 12:31; Rom 8:33–34; Gal 4:4; Phil 1:21;

Heb 2:14; 1 Pet 5:8; Jude 9; Rev 13:1; Rev 20:2.

## 03 Application
HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 12:6 (KJV)

6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

### Command to obey — stand on the blood and speak

"They overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony" (v11). When the accuser comes, I won't argue my own record. I'll point to the blood and say out loud what Jesus has done for me. That is the weapon I want every man I disciple to carry. A man with a record can't out-argue the accuser, but he doesn't have to — the blood has already answered.

### Sin to confess — agreeing with the accuser

Satan "accuses them before our God day and night" (v10), and too often I take his side against myself, replaying old failures God has already forgiven. That isn't humility; it's unbelief. I confess it and receive what the blood says about me (Rom 8:1, 33–34).

### Warning to heed — the enemy is angry

He has "great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time" (v12). I shouldn't be surprised when attacks come, especially right after a victory. The men coming out of prison or out of treatment often get hit hardest in the first weeks. I need to warn them ahead of time and stand with them when the flood comes.

### Promise to trust — "a place prepared by God."

God had a place ready for the woman and nourished her there (v6, 14). He does not take His people into the wilderness without feeding them. For a man in a cell or a man starting over with nothing, the wilderness is real — but so is God's provision in it.

### Example to follow — "they did not love their life even when faced with death."

These saints held their lives loosely because Christ was worth more (v11; Phil 1:21). I want to love Jesus more than comfort, reputation or safety. The one who has already lost his life to Christ has nothing left for the enemy to threaten.

### Worship

"Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come" (v10). The Child the dragon wanted to devour sits on God's throne. The accuser has been thrown down. I worship the Lamb whose blood silences every charge against me.

### Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You that the dragon could not devour You and cannot pluck me from Your hand. When the accuser reminds me of my past, teach me to answer with Your blood and my testimony. Make me love You more than my own life. Protect the men I disciple in their wilderness, feed them there, and make them overcomers. Amen.

# Revelation 13

## *Two Beasts:*
## *The Great Counterfeit*

**OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION**

*"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."*

**Acts 17:11**

CHAPTER THEME

Satan cannot create; he can only copy. He builds a counterfeit trinity, a counterfeit resurrection, a counterfeit worship and a counterfeit seal — and the whole world follows. But every "was given" in this chapter reminds me that the beast runs on a leash God holds, and for a set time only.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

# 00 The Text

REVELATION 13 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw ⚠ a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads ⚠ the name of blasphemy.

2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and ⚠ the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

3 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his ⇄ deadly wound was healed: and ⚠ all the world wondered after the beast.

4 And they ⇄ worshipped the dragon which gave ⇄ power unto the beast: and they ⇄ worshipped the beast, saying, ⚠ Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and ⇄ power was given unto him to continue ◷ forty and two months.

6 And he opened his mouth in ⚠ blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

7 And it was given unto him ⚠ to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and ⇄ power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall ⇄ worship him, whose names are not written in ★ the book of life of the Lamb ▲ slain from the foundation of the world.

9 ▮ If any man have an ear, let him hear.

10 He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is ▮ the patience and the faith of the saints.

11 And I beheld ⚠ another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had ◷ two horns like a lamb, and ⚠ he spake as a dragon.

12 And he exerciseth all the ⇄ power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to ⇄ worship the first beast, whose ⇄ deadly wound was healed.

13 And ⚠ he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

14 And ⚠ deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had ⇄ power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an ⇄ image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

15 And he had ⇄ power to give life unto the ⇄ image of the beast, that the ⇄ image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not ⇄ worship the ⇄ image of the beast should be killed .

16 And he causeth all, both ◷ small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a ⇄ mark in their right hand , or in their foreheads:

17 And that ◷ no man might buy or sell, save he that had the ⇄ mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath
understanding count the number of the beast:
for it is the number of a man; and his number is
Six hundred threescore and six.

### Marked in the text

- **v1** a beast rise up out of the sea
- **v1** the name of blasphemy
- **v2** the dragon gave him his power
- **v2** power *(every occurrence)*
- **v3** deadly wound *(every occurrence)*
- **v3** all the world wondered after the beast
- **v4** worship *(every occurrence)*
- **v4** Who is like unto the beast
- **v5** forty and two months
- **v6** blasphemy against God
- **v7** to make war with the saints
- **v8** the book of life of the Lamb
- **v8** slain from the foundation of the world
- **v9** If any man have an ear, let him hear
- **v10** the patience and the faith of the saints
- **v11** another beast coming up out of the earth
- **v11** two horns like a lamb
- **v11** he spake as a dragon
- **v13** he doeth great wonders
- **v14** deceiveth them that dwell on the earth
- **v14** image *(every occurrence)*
- **v16** small and great
- **v16** mark *(every occurrence)*
- **v17** no man might buy or sell
- **v18** Here is wisdom
- **v18** count the number of the beast
- **v18** it is the number of a man

*Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.*

# 01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 13:11 (KJV)

11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

### Setting

Chapter 12 showed the dragon cast down to earth, "having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time" (12:12). Now "the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore" (v1) and calls up his helpers. John sees two beasts, one from the sea and one from the earth. The war against the woman's children (12:17) now has a face, a voice and a mark.

### Structure

- vv1–4 — **the beast from the sea:** "having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names" (v1). He is like a leopard, a bear and a lion, "and the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority" (v2). One head looks slain,

"and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast" (v3). They worship the dragon and the beast: "Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?" (v4).

- vv5–8 — **his mouth and his war:** "a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him" (v5). He blasphemes "His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven" (v6). He makes war with the saints and overcomes them, with "authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation" (v7). All the earth worships him — "everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain" (v8).
- vv9–10 — **a call to the saints:** "If anyone has an ear, let him hear" (v9). Captivity and the sword will come; "Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints" (v10).
- vv11–15 — **the beast from the earth:** "he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon" (v11). He makes the earth "worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed" (v12). "He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men" (v13). He deceives the earth-dwellers into making an image to the beast (v14), gives it breath so it speaks, and has those who refuse to worship it killed (v15).
- vv16–18 — **the mark and the number:** everyone — small and great, rich and poor, free and slave — is "to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead" (v16), so "that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark" (v17). "Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six" (v18).

### Repeated words

beast (throughout the chapter); worship (vv4, 8, 12, 15); authority (vv2, 4, 5, 7, 12); was given (vv5, 7, 14, 15); wound (vv3, 12, 14); blasphemous / blasphemies (vv1, 5, 6); dragon (vv1, 2, 4, 11); signs (vv13, 14); image (vv14, 15); sword (vv10, 14); mark (vv16, 17); number (vv17, 18).

### Contrasts

the beast's head "as if it had been slain" (v3) ⟷ "the Lamb who has been slain" (v8). "Two horns like a lamb" ⟷ "he spoke as a dragon" (v11). The world asks "Who is like the beast?" (v4) ⟷ the name Michael means "Who is like God?" (12:7). A name written in the book of life (v8) ⟷ a name and number on the hand (vv16–17). The beast's mark on the forehead (v16) ⟷ God's seal on the foreheads of His bond-servants (7:3). The beast overcomes the saints (v7) ⟷ the saints overcome "because of the blood of the Lamb" (12:11).

### Chapter theme (my words)

Satan cannot create; he can only copy. He builds a counterfeit trinity, a counterfeit resurrection, a counterfeit worship and a counterfeit seal — and the whole world follows. But every "was given" in this chapter reminds me that the beast runs on a leash God holds, and for a set time only.

# 02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 13:8 (KJV)

[8] And all that dwell upon the earth shall ⇄ worship him, whose names are not written in ★ the book of life of the Lamb ▲ slain from the foundation of the world.

### How to read the beast

Christians read this chapter four main ways, and I want to understand each before I settle:

- **Futurist** — the beast is a coming world ruler, the Antichrist, heading a final empire just before Christ returns. This is Guzik's view.
- **Preterist** — the beast is first-century Rome and its emperors, especially Nero; the early church sometimes linked 666 to Nero's name, as Guzik notes.
- **Historicist** — the beast is a power running through church history; through the centuries many have pinned 666 on popes, reformers and dictators.
- **Idealist** — the beast is the recurring spirit of state power demanding worship. Mounce, quoted by Guzik, captures this note: "The beast has always been, and will always be, in a final intensified manifestation, the deification of secular authority."

These views overlap more than they fight. Rome was a beast to John's first readers, beasts have risen in every age, and Guzik expects a final one.

### The beast from the sea (vv1–4)

To Israel the sea was a picture of chaos and the restless nations. The beast looks like his father the dragon — seven heads, ten horns (12:3). Leopard, bear and lion are Daniel's beasts in reverse order (Dan 7:4–6): this last empire gathers up all the empires before it. Daniel's fourth beast had ten horns (Dan 7:7, 24), and Guzik ties this to a revived form of Rome. Is the beast a system or a person? Guzik leans toward a man closely identified with his empire — he is worshiped, his number "is that of a man," and he goes to destruction. Seiss: "This beast is finally damned." His power is borrowed: the dragon gives him what Jesus refused in the wilderness (Matt 4:8–10).

### The counterfeit resurrection (v3)

The word for "slain" is the same word used of the Lamb (5:6; 13:8). Satan mimics the cross and the empty tomb, and the whole earth is amazed. Guzik: "Satan can't create, but he can effectively deceive with imitation." The world's question — "Who is like the beast?" — is worship built on power. Robertson, in Guzik: "Worship of the devil and the devil's agent is justified purely on the ground of brute force."

### Given, given, given (vv5–8)

Four times the text says "was given." The beast's mouth, his time and his war are all permitted. Forty-two months is three and a half years, the same span as 11:2–3 and 12:6, 14, and Daniel's "time, times, and half a time" (Dan 7:25; compare Dan 9:27). He "overcomes" the saints — Guzik: this does not mean

"that the beast can overcome the faith of the saints." They lose their lives, not their crown. Who are these saints? Guzik, holding a pre-tribulation rapture, sees believers who come to faith during the tribulation; post-tribulation readers see the church itself. Either way, the dividing line is not courage but the book of life of the Lamb (v8). Whether "from the foundation of the world" goes with the names written or with the Lamb slain, both are true (1 Pet 1:19–20; Eph 1:4).

### Captivity and the sword (vv9–10)

"If anyone has an ear" — the same call as the seven letters (2:7). God's people will not fight the beast with the beast's weapons. Guzik reads v10 as a reminder that each person still answers for what he does. The saints' only weapon is "the perseverance and the faith of the saints."

### The beast from the earth (vv11–15)

Later called "the false prophet" (16:13; 19:20; 20:10). He looks like a lamb and talks like a dragon. Guzik calls the three an unholy trinity: the dragon in place of the Father, the first beast in place of Christ, and the second beast imitating the Holy Spirit — pointing people to worship someone else, working signs, giving breath (v15). His fire from heaven copies Elijah (1 Kgs 18:38) and the two witnesses (11:5). Miracles alone prove nothing (Deut 13:1–3; Matt 24:24; Exod 7:11–12). Guzik: "Signs and wonders will be present among Christians, but the real marks of God's work are love and truth." The speaking image recalls Nebuchadnezzar's statue (Dan 3), and Guzik connects it with the abomination of desolation (Dan 9:27; Matt 24:15; 2 Thess 2:3–4).

### The mark (vv16–17)

No class is exempt — small and great, rich and poor. The mark controls commerce: no mark, no groceries. Guzik notes the word *charagma* was used for an engraving or stamp, and says, "a literal mark needed to buy or sell is certainly conceivable and practical." But the mark is more than technology; it is a public pledge of loyalty, the devil's copy of God's seal (7:3; 14:1). Chapter 14 makes clear that taking it is a choice of worship (14:9–11).

### 666 (v18)

"Here is wisdom" — a call to discernment, not to a guessing game. Guzik: "the schemes for unlocking the number of the beast are as confusing as they are endless." He notes several possibilities: in Greek the letters of "Jesus" total 888, so 666 may picture man falling short again and again; and Solomon's yearly gold weighed 666 talents (1 Kgs 10:14), a picture of a gifted man ruined by glory. The plainest point is the text's own: "the number is that of a man." The beast, for all his wonders, is only a man.

### Word study (Greek)

- **beast — *thērion* (G2342):** a wild, dangerous animal; contrast *zōon*, the "living creatures" around the throne.
- **diadems — *diadēma* (G1238):** royal crowns of rule, not the victor's wreath (*stephanos*).
- **blasphemies — *blasphēmia* (G988):** slander, speech that insults God.
- **slain — *sphazō* (G4969):** to slaughter; used of the Lamb (5:6) and of the beast's head (v3).
- **wound — *plēgē* (G4127):** a blow, stroke, wound; elsewhere "plague."
- **amazed — *thaumazō* (G2296):** to marvel, wonder at.
- **worship — *proskyneō* (G4352):** to bow down, kiss toward, pay homage.

- **authority — *exousia* (G1849):** delegated right and power to act.
- **overcome — *nikaō* (G3528):** to conquer, prevail; the word of the promises "to him who overcomes" (chs. 2–3).
- **perseverance — *hypomonē* (G5281):** endurance, staying under the load.
- **Lamb — *arnion* (G721):** a little lamb; the second beast's "lamb" horns borrow the word.
- **signs — *sēmeion* (G4592):** a miracle that points to something beyond itself.
- **deceives — *planaō* (G4105):** to lead astray, make to wander.
- **image — *eikōn* (G1504):** a likeness, statue, representation.
- **mark — *charagma* (G5480):** an engraving, stamp or brand.
- **calculate — *psēphizō* (G5585):** to count with pebbles, to reckon.

### Cross-references

Exod 7:11–12; Deut 13:1–3; 1 Kgs 10:14; 1 Kgs 18:38; Dan 3:1–7; Dan 7:3–8, 23–25; Dan 9:27; Dan 11:36; Matt 4:8–10; Matt 24:15, 24; John 5:43; 2 Cor 11:14; 2 Thess 2:3–12; 1 John 2:18; 1 John 4:1–4; Rev 7:3; Rev 12:9–17; Rev 14:9–11; Rev 17:8; Rev 19:20.

# 03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 13:18 (KJV)

18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.

### Command to obey — "If anyone has an ear, let him hear."

The whole earth was amazed and followed (v3). I'm called to listen to Jesus instead of the crowd. Test what impresses me — success, power, signs — by love and truth. "Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God" (1 John 4:1).

### Sin to confess — following power

The world worshiped the beast because no one could fight him (v4). I've been drawn to strength more than holiness — to the man with money, the leader with a crowd. The men I disciple know this pull: the dealer with the car and the cash, the gang that seemed like it could protect them. That worship never ends free.

### Warning to heed — the mark is a choice

No one wanders into the mark; they take it to keep their job and feed their family (v17). Every compromise I make to keep my paycheck or my standing is practice for a bigger one. Small surrenders train the heart for the big one.

### Promise to trust — "greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4)

The beast was "given" everything he had, and only for forty-two months. My name is written in the Lamb's book (v8). The beast can take a man's life; he cannot take his name out of that book.

### Example to follow — the perseverance and faith of the saints (v10)

They didn't win by the sword. They endured and believed. For a man in prison, a man fighting to stay clean, a man with no hope left, this is the way through: not a dramatic victory but faithful endurance, one day at a time, refusing to bow.

### Worship

"Who is like the beast?" the world asks. I answer with Michael's name: who is like God? The beast's wound was healed for a season; the Lamb was truly slain and truly rose, and He alone is worthy.

### Prayer

Lord Jesus, Lamb who was slain, open my ears to hear You above the crowd. Keep me from being amazed by power and signs and from bowing to whatever promises to feed me. Give me the perseverance and faith of Your saints. Thank You that my name is written in Your book. Make me a steady voice for the men who are tempted to follow the beasts of this age. Amen.

# Revelation 14

## *The Lamb on Mount Zion: Two Harvests*

**OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION**

*"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."*

**Acts 17:11**

**CHAPTER THEME**

Revelation 13 asks whether the beast wins. Revelation 14 answers: no. The Lamb stands, His people sing, the gospel goes out one last time, Babylon falls, and the harvest comes in God's time. Every person ends up with one name on his forehead and one of two cups in his hand.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

# 00 The Text

REVELATION 14 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions
Green Command / instruction
Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning
★ Violet Promise / blessing
Amber Time / place / contrast

1 And I looked, and, lo, ▲ a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having ★ his Father's name written in their foreheads.

2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:

3 And they sung as it were ★ a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were ▲ redeemed from the earth.

4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which Green follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the ★ firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.

5 And Green in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

6 And I saw Sky another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having ▲ the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

7 Saying with a loud voice, Green Fear God, and give glory to him; for Amber the hour of his judgment is come: and Green worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

8 And there followed Sky another angel, saying, ⚠ Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, ⚠ If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

10 The same shall drink of ⚠ the wine of the wrath of God, which is ⚠ poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up Amber for ever and ever: and ⚠ they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

12 Green Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, ★ Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may ★ rest from their labours; and ★ their works do follow them.

14 And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud ▲ one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp Sky sickle.

15 And Sky another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy Sky sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for Amber the harvest of the earth is ripe.

16 And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his Sky sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

19 And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

20 And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

### Marked in the text

- **v1** a Lamb stood on the mount Sion
- **v1** his Father's name written in their foreheads
- **v3** a new song
- **v3** redeemed from the earth
- **v4** follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth
- **v4** firstfruits unto God
- **v5** in their mouth was found no guile
- **v6** another angel *(every occurrence)*
- **v6** the everlasting gospel
- **v7** Fear God, and give glory to him
- **v7** the hour of his judgment is come
- **v7** worship him that made heaven
- **v8** Babylon is fallen, is fallen
- **v9** If any man worship the beast and his image
- **v10** the wine of the wrath of God
- **v10** poured out without mixture
- **v11** for ever and ever
- **v11** they have no rest day nor night
- **v12** Here is the patience of the saints
- **v13** Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord
- **v13** rest from their labours
- **v13** their works do follow them
- **v14** one sat like unto the Son of man
- **v14** sickle *(every occurrence)*
- **v15** the harvest of the earth is ripe
- **v19** the great winepress of the wrath of God
- **v20** without the city

*Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.*

# 01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 14:7 (KJV)

7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

### Setting

Chapter 13 ended in darkness — the beast, the image, the mark, and no one able to buy or sell. Now John looks again: "Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion" (v1). Before the

last bowls of wrath (chs. 15–16), God shows the end of the story: His people safe, the gospel preached, Babylon fallen, and the earth harvested.

### Structure

- vv1–5 — **the Lamb and the 144,000:** the Lamb stands on Mount Zion with the 144,000, "having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads" (v1). A sound "like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder" (v2). They sing "a new song," and "no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth" (v3). They "have kept themselves chaste," they "follow the Lamb wherever He goes," purchased "as first fruits to God and to the Lamb" (v4). "No lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless" (v5).
- vv6–7 — **the first angel:** "having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people" (v6). "Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters" (v7).
- v8 — **the second angel:** "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality."
- vv9–13 — **the third angel and the saints:** "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand" (v9), "he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger" (v10). "The smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night" (v11). "Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus" (v12). "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!" — they rest from their labors, "for their deeds follow with them" (v13).
- vv14–16 — **the harvest of the earth:** on a white cloud "one like a son of man, having a golden crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand" (v14). An angel from the temple cries, "Put in your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe" (v15). "The earth was reaped" (v16).
- vv17–20 — **the wine press of wrath:** another angel with a sharp sickle (v17); the angel "who has power over fire" calls, "gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, because her grapes are ripe" (v18). They are thrown "into the great wine press of the wrath of God" (v19). Blood comes out "up to the horses' bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles" (v20).

### Repeated words

Lamb (vv1, 4, 10); purchased (vv3, 4); another angel (vv6, 8, 9, 15, 17, 18); loud voice (vv7, 9, 15, 18); worship (vv7, 9, 11); the beast and his image (vv9, 11); mark (vv9, 11); wine (vv8, 10); wrath of God (vv10, 19); rest (vv11, 13); sickle (vv14–19); cloud (vv14, 15, 16); ripe (vv15, 18); wine press (vv19, 20).

### Contrasts

the beast's name on the forehead (13:16) ⟷ the Father's name on the forehead (v1). Those who worship the beast "have no rest day and night" (v11) ⟷ the dead in the Lord "rest from their labors" (v13). The wine of Babylon's immorality (v8) ⟷ the wine of the wrath of God (v10). The beast's mouth full of blasphemies (13:5–6) ⟷ "no lie was found in their mouth" (v5). The grain harvest (vv14–16) ⟷ the grape harvest (vv17–20). The beast's apparent victory (ch. 13) ⟷ the Lamb standing on Mount Zion (v1).

### Chapter theme (my words)

Revelation 13 asks whether the beast wins. Revelation 14 answers: no. The Lamb stands, His people sing, the gospel goes out one last time, Babylon falls, and the harvest comes in God's time. Every person ends up with one name on his forehead and one of two cups in his hand.

## 02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 14:1 (KJV)

[1]And I looked, and, lo, ▲ a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having ★ his Father's name written in their foreheads.

### The answer to chapter 13

Guzik: "Revelation 14 is the perfect answer to Revelation 13." The beast seemed unstoppable; the Lamb is simply standing — calm, in control, on His own mountain (Ps 2:6).

### Who are the 144,000? (vv1–5)

Guzik links them to the sealed servants of 7:3–8 and reads them as Jewish believers, saved by grace through faith, who come through the tribulation alive — the same company seen before the trouble, now seen after it. "They prove God's ability to preserve His people." He takes Mount Zion as the earthly Jerusalem. Others read the 144,000 as a symbolic number for the whole people of God, and Zion as heavenly (Heb 12:22). Either way the point holds: not one of the sealed was lost. Spurgeon on the new song: "Heaven is not the place to learn that song; it must be learned on the earth." "Kept themselves chaste" may mean literal celibacy in a time of distress or, as so often in Scripture, faithfulness against spiritual adultery (2 Cor 11:2); Robertson, in Guzik, notes the word "can be applied to men as well as women." They are "first fruits" — the first of a larger harvest to come.

### The eternal gospel (vv6–7)

Even now, at the edge of judgment, God sends good news. This angel's message is fear, glory and worship of the Creator — creation preaches it too (Ps 19:1; Acts 14:15; Rom 1:20). It fulfills Jesus' word that the gospel will be preached to all nations before the end (Matt 24:14). Guzik adds a needed word: "God has not given the responsibility for spreading the Gospel to angels, but unto His people."

### Babylon fallen (v8)

Announced here, explained in chapters 17–18. The double "fallen, fallen" echoes Isaiah 21:9. Babylon is the world system in rebellion against God; Guzik sees her immorality as mostly spiritual idolatry, often joined by the literal kind.

### The cup of wrath (vv9–11)

The plainest warning about hell in the Bible. The wine is "mixed in full strength" — undiluted, nothing held back (Ps 75:8; Jer 25:15). Guzik: "No one will casually or accidentally take the mark." Torment is "in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb" — Guzik: "This shows that God is not

absent from hell," present in justice, not in comfort. "Forever and ever" — Walvoord, in Guzik: "the strongest expression of eternity of which the Greek is capable." Some Christians hold that the lost are finally destroyed rather than endlessly punished (conditional immortality); Guzik, with the historic majority, reads this as conscious and eternal (Matt 25:46). The present tense of "worship" and "receives" stresses an ongoing choice — and "no rest" answers it.

### Perseverance and rest (vv12–13)

Nearly the same phrase as 13:10: "Here is the perseverance of the saints." Their endurance is the answer to the beast's threats. Then the second of Revelation's seven beatitudes: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." The wicked have "no rest" (v11); the faithful "rest from their labors." Their deeds follow with them — not to earn heaven, but because nothing done for Christ is lost (1 Cor 15:58; Heb 6:10).

### Two harvests (vv14–20)

The "one like a son of man" with a golden crown is Jesus (Dan 7:13; Rev 1:13). An angel from the temple brings word that the hour has come — the Son submits to the Father's timing (Mark 13:32). Guzik notes the harvest comes only when it is ripe: God does not judge in haste. The word for ripe in v15 means dried or withered — overripe. Readers differ on the first harvest: some see a gathering of the righteous (Matt 13:30; John 4:35); others, with the grape harvest that follows, see two pictures of judgment (Joel 3:13). The wine press is unmistakably wrath (Isa 63:1–6; Rev 19:15). "Outside the city" — most likely outside Jerusalem. Blood to the bridles for 1,600 stadia (about 200 miles) — Guzik: "a picture of tremendous carnage," pointing to Armageddon (16:16; 19:17–21).

### Word study (Greek)

- **Zion — *Siōn* (G4622):** the hill of Jerusalem, God's chosen dwelling.
- **new — *kainos* (G2537):** new in kind and quality, not just recent.
- **purchased — *agorazō* (G59):** to buy in the marketplace; redeemed at a price (5:9).
- **chaste — *parthenos* (G3933):** a virgin; pure, undefiled.
- **first fruits — *aparchē* (G536):** the first portion of the harvest, given to God.
- **blameless — *amōmos* (G299):** without spot or blemish, like a sacrifice.
- **eternal — *aiōnios* (G166):** age-long, everlasting.
- **gospel — *euangelion* (G2098):** good news.
- **wrath — *thymos* (G2372):** boiling, passionate anger; ten of its eighteen NT uses are in Revelation.
- **anger — *orgē* (G3709):** settled, steady anger — the common NT word for God's wrath.
- **full strength — *akratos* (G194):** unmixed, undiluted.
- **tormented — *basanizō* (G928):** to torture, test by pain.
- **rest — *anapausis* (G372) / *anapauō* (G373):** relief, refreshment, ceasing from toil.
- **sickle — *drepanon* (G1407):** a curved blade for harvest.
- **ripe — *xērainō* (G3583):** to dry up, wither (v15).
- **wine press — *lēnos* (G3025):** a trough where grapes were trodden.

### Cross-references

Ps 2:6; Ps 75:8; Isa 21:9; Isa 63:1–6; Jer 25:15–16; Dan 7:13–14; Joel 3:13; Matt 13:24–30, 36–43; Matt 24:14; Matt 25:46; Mark 13:32; 2 Cor 11:2; Heb 12:22; Rev 7:1–8; Rev 13:10, 16–17; Rev 16:16–19; Rev 18:2; Rev 19:15.

## 03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 14:13 (KJV)

13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, ★ Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may ★ rest from their labours; and ★ their works do follow them.

### Command to obey — "Fear God, and give Him glory."

The last gospel call is simple: fear Him, honor Him, worship the One who made everything (v7). I want to give God glory now, freely, while it is still a choice — and to carry this eternal gospel to men myself, not wait for an angel to do it.

### Sin to confess — a lie in my mouth

"No lie was found in their mouth" (v5). I know how quickly a half-truth comes out to protect my image. In recovery they say we're as sick as our secrets, and every man I sit across from — in a prison visiting room or a church basement — has learned to lie to survive. Truth-telling is where following the Lamb starts.

### Warning to heed — two cups

Everyone drinks from one. Babylon's wine (v8) is sweet going down and turns into the wine of God's wrath (v10). Every addiction a man has fought is a small version of this: the drink that promises rest gives him "no rest day and night" (v11). Only the Lamb's cup — the one He drank for us (Matt 26:39) — sets him free.

### Promise to trust — "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord" (v13)

For a believer, death is rest, not ruin. And nothing I do for Jesus is wasted; my deeds follow with me. The man who comes to Christ late, in a cell, with little time left, still gets this blessing.

### Example to follow — "these are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes" (v4)

Not just where it's comfortable. The 144,000 kept faith through the worst days earth will see. I want to follow Him into hard places, and to show the men I serve that following is daily and wherever.

### Worship

The Lamb is standing. The beast had his chapter; the Lamb has the mountain, the song and the harvest. I worship the One who made heaven and earth, sea and springs of water, and who will judge it all in perfect time.

### Prayer

Lamb of God, I fear You and give You glory. Thank You for drinking the cup of wrath I deserved so that I could rest. Put a new song in my mouth and take every lie out of it. Make me faithful to carry the eternal gospel to men who have no hope. Let me follow You wherever You go. Amen.

# Revelation 15

## *Seven Last Plagues:*
## *The Song of Moses and the Lamb*

**OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION**

*"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."*
**Acts 17:11**

CHAPTER THEME

Before the last bowls are poured out, heaven sings. The men and women the beast killed are standing, harps in hand, praising God for His ways — righteous and true. His wrath is not a temper tantrum; it is holy, and when it is finished, all the nations will worship Him.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

# 00 The Text

REVELATION 15 (KJV), MARKED

**Gold** God — His character & actions
**Green** Command / instruction
**Sky** Key repeated word
**Rose** Sin / warning
**Violet** Promise / blessing
**Amber** Time / place / contrast

1 And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

5 And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:

6 And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.

7 And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

## Marked in the text

- **v1** another sign in heaven, great and marvellous
- **v1** seven angels *(every occurrence)*
- **v1** the seven last plagues
- **v1** filled up the wrath of God
- **v2** a sea of glass mingled with fire
- **v2** gotten the victory over the beast
- **v2** having the harps of God
- **v3** the song of Moses the servant of God
- **v3** the song of the Lamb
- **v3** Great and marvellous are thy works
- **v3** Lord God Almighty
- **v3** just and true are thy ways
- **v4** Who shall not fear thee, O Lord
- **v4** glorify thy name
- **v4** thou only art holy
- **v4** all nations shall come and worship before thee
- **v4** thy judgments are made manifest
- **v5** the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony
- **v6** pure and white linen
- **v7** seven golden vials full of the wrath of God
- **v7** who liveth for ever and ever
- **v8** filled with smoke from the glory of God
- **v8** no man was able to enter into the temple
- **v8** fulfilled

*Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.*

# 01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 15:3 (KJV)

3 And they sing ⇄ the song of Moses the servant of God, and ⇄ the song of the Lamb, saying, ▲ Great and marvellous are thy works, ▲ Lord God Almighty; ▲ just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

## Setting

Chapter 14 ended with the wine press of God's wrath. Before the last judgments fall (ch. 16), John is taken back into heaven. It is the shortest chapter in Revelation — a pause for worship before the storm. "Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous" (v1) — the third "sign" in heaven, after the woman (12:1) and the dragon (12:3).

## Structure

- v1 — **the seven last plagues:** "seven angels who had seven plagues, which are the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished."
- vv2–4 — **the victors' song:** "something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had been victorious over the beast," "standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God" (v2). "They sang the song of Moses, the bond-servant of God, and the song of the Lamb" (v3): "Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are Your ways, King of the nations!" (v3). "Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy; for all the nations will come and worship before You, for Your righteous acts have been revealed" (v4).
- vv5–6 — **the temple opened:** "the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven was opened" (v5). The seven angels come out, "clothed in linen, clean and bright, and girded around their chests with golden sashes" (v6).
- vv7–8 — **the bowls given, the temple closed:** "one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever" (v7). "The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power; and no one was able to enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished" (v8).

## Repeated words

seven angels (vv1, 6, 7, 8); plagues (vv1, 6, 8); the wrath of God (vv1, 7); finished (vv1, 8); great and marvelous (vv1, 3); sea of glass (v2, twice); song (v3, twice); temple (vv5, 6, 8); nations (vv3, 4); glory / glorify (vv4, 8).

### Contrasts

the beast's apparent victory over the saints (13:7) ⟷ the saints "victorious over the beast" (v2). The song of Moses by the Red Sea (Exod 15) ⟷ the song of Moses and the Lamb by a sea of glass (v3). Plagues on Egypt ⟷ the seven last plagues on the world (v1). The temple opened (v5) ⟷ no one able to enter it (v8). God's wrath in golden bowls (v7) ⟷ the same golden bowls holding the prayers of the saints (5:8). The martyrs sing nothing about themselves ⟷ everything about God (vv3–4).

### Chapter theme (my words)

Before the last bowls are poured out, heaven sings. The men and women the beast killed are standing, harps in hand, praising God for His ways — righteous and true. His wrath is not a temper tantrum; it is holy, and when it is finished, all the nations will worship Him.

## 02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 15:4 (KJV)

4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

### Recapitulation (v1)

Guzik says chapter 15 is not a new step after chapter 14 but a closer look at the same end-time events. Erdman, in Guzik: "As is the plan of the prophet, he reviews, he recapitulates, he enlarges upon the scene he has already sketched." Guzik: "This reminds us that Revelation is not strictly chronological in its arrangement." Some readers see the seals, trumpets and bowls as one long sequence; others see them as overlapping views of the same end. Either way, these are the *last* — in them "the wrath of God is finished." The word means brought to its goal (*teleō*); the same word comes back in v8. Guzik: "God isn't just blowing off steam."

### The sea of glass mixed with fire (v2)

We saw the sea of glass, like crystal, before the throne in 4:6; now it is mixed with fire. Guzik reads the fire as judgment — "This is a place where God's anger flashes hot." Walvoord, in Guzik: "The sea is designed to reflect the glory of God." Guzik also suggests it may picture God's Word, connected to the bronze laver of the tabernacle (Exod 30:18; Eph 5:26), and it surely recalls Israel standing safe on the far shore of the Red Sea.

### Who are the victors? (v2)

Guzik identifies them with the tribulation martyrs of 7:9–14 and 13:15: "They are not those who survive the tribulation." They overcame the beast by refusing him, even to death (12:11). The beast thought he won (13:7); heaven says they did. Guzik notes that the word translated "on" (*epi*) can also mean "over" or "beside" the sea.

### The song of Moses and the Lamb (vv3–4)

The first song of Moses was sung on the shore after the Red Sea (Exod 15) — the Lord is a warrior, Pharaoh is drowned, and no god is like Him. Moses also wrote a song of warning near the end of his life (Deut 32). Here one song carries both names: Moses and the Lamb, law and grace, the old exodus and the final one. The song praises God's *works* (great and marvelous), His *ways* (righteous and true), His *worthiness* (who will not fear?), and the coming *worship* of all nations (Ps 86:9; Jer 10:7). Guzik: "These martyrs are only focused on God." They don't sing about their suffering or their courage — and they are "not like the modern anti-hero or vigilante, who sink down to the level of the criminals they fight." The textual variant "King of the nations" versus "King of saints" (KJV) is worth noting; both are true, but the song's point is that all nations will bow.

### The temple of the tabernacle of testimony (vv5–6)

Moses built the tabernacle after a heavenly pattern (Exod 25:9, 40; Heb 8:5). The "testimony" was the law kept in the ark (Exod 25:16). Judgment comes out of the place where God's law is kept — the world is judged by the standard it rejected. The angels wear clean, bright linen and golden sashes, priestly clothing (compare Jesus in 1:13): God's judgment is holy and undefiled.

### Bowls and smoke (vv7–8)

One of the living creatures hands out the bowls. Guzik says these were broad, shallow bowls; Seiss calls them "shallow, pan-like, golden bowls, or censers." Poured from a shallow bowl, the contents come out all at once. The smoke of glory recalls the tabernacle (Exod 40:34–35) and Solomon's temple (1 Kgs 8:10–11) and Isaiah's vision (Isa 6:4). No one can enter until the plagues are finished — Guzik: "This declares that judgment was now irreversible." The time for intercession is over.

### Word study (Greek)

- **sign — *sēmeion* (G4592):** a mark or wonder that points beyond itself.
- **marvelous — *thaumastos* (G2298):** wonderful, causing amazement.
- **plagues — *plēgē* (G4127):** blows, strokes, wounds.
- **wrath — *thymos* (G2372):** passionate, boiling anger.
- **finished — *teleō* (G5055):** to complete, bring to the goal; Jesus' word on the cross (John 19:30).
- **glass — *hyalinos* (G5193):** glassy, transparent.
- **victorious — *nikaō* (G3528):** to overcome, conquer.
- **bond-servant — *doulos* (G1401):** a slave, one owned by his master.
- **Almighty — *pantokratōr* (G3841):** ruler of all.
- **true — *alēthinos* (G228):** genuine, real, as opposed to counterfeit.
- **holy — *hosios* (G3741):** pure, devout, set apart.
- **righteous acts — *dikaiōma* (G1345):** just decrees, righteous deeds.
- **temple — *naos* (G3485):** the inner sanctuary, the dwelling place of God.
- **testimony — *martyrion* (G3142):** witness, evidence.
- **bowls — *phialē* (G5357):** broad, shallow bowls; the KJV "vials" misleads.
- **smoke — *kapnos* (G2586):** smoke; with glory, the sign of God's presence.

### Cross-references

Exod 7–12; Exod 15:1–18; Exod 25:9, 40; Exod 40:34–35; Lev 26:21; Deut 32:4; 1 Kgs 8:10–11; Ps 86:8–10; Ps 111:2; Ps 145:17; Isa 6:1–4; Jer 10:6–7; Rom 11:33; Heb 8:5; Rev 4:6; Rev 5:8; Rev 7:9–14; Rev 12:11; Rev 13:15; Rev 16:1.

## 03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 15:2 (KJV)

2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

### Command to obey — "Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name?"

The martyrs ask it as a question no one can answer. I'm to fear Him and glorify His name now, in my work, my words and my home. That fear is not terror — it is taking God seriously.

### Sin to confess — making my story about me

The victors in heaven sing about God's works and ways, not about their suffering (vv3–4). I tell my testimony and too often I'm the hero of it. The men I disciple carry stories of what was done to them and what they did; healing begins when the song turns to what God has done.

### Warning to heed — the door closes

"No one was able to enter the temple until the seven plagues ... were finished" (v8). There comes a time when the way in is shut. Today the door is open. For the man in a cell thinking he has time to get right with God later, later is not promised.

### Promise to trust — His ways are "righteous and true."

I don't understand everything God allows. The martyrs died and still sang that His ways are just. For a man who has lost everything — family, freedom, hope — this is the anchor: God has not done wrong, and He will make every wrong right.

### Example to follow — overcoming without becoming the beast

The saints were "victorious over the beast" by refusing to bow, not by fighting his way. Guzik's word fits: they are no vigilantes. When men have been wronged, the pull is to answer like the dragon. The victory is faithfulness.

### Worship

"Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty." I join the song of Moses and the Lamb — the God who brought Israel through the sea brings me through the cross. All the nations will come and worship before Him, and I start now.

### Prayer

Lord God Almighty, King of the nations, Your ways are righteous and true even when I can't see it. Teach me to fear You and glorify Your name. Take my story and make it a song about You. Open the door for the men I serve while it is still open. Let me overcome by faithfulness and not by force. Amen.

# Revelation 16

## *The Seven Bowls of Wrath*

**OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION**

*"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."*

**Acts 17:11**

CHAPTER THEME

God's patience has an end, and when it comes, His judgments are complete, righteous and unanswerable — yet hearts that refuse grace still refuse to repent under wrath.

Ed Smith · Started 10 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

# 00 The Text

REVELATION 16 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

1 And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the ▲ wrath of God upon the earth.

2 And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the ⚠ mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.

3 And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.

4 And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.

5 And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art ▲ righteous, O Lord, which art , and wast , and shalt be , because thou hast judged thus.

6 For they have shed the ⚠ blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.

7 And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, ▲ true and righteous are thy judgments.

8 And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.

9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they ⚠ repented not to give him glory.

10 And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,

11 And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and ⚠ repented not of their deeds.

12 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

13 And I saw three ⚠ unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

15 Behold, I come as ▲ a thief. ★ Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, ▲ It is done.

18 And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.

19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

21 And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

### Marked in the text

- **v1** pour out
- **v1** wrath of God
- **v2** poured *(every occurrence)*
- **v2** mark of the beast
- **v5** righteous
- **v6** blood of saints and prophets
- **v7** true and righteous
- **v9** blasphemed *(every occurrence)*
- **v9** repent
- **v11** repent
- **v12** Euphrates
- **v12** the east
- **v13** unclean spirits like frogs
- **v14** great day of God
- **v15** a thief
- **v15** Blessed is
- **v16** Armageddon
- **v16** Har-Magedon
- **v17** It is done
- **v19** Babylon
- **v19** wrath

*Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.*

## 01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 16:1 (KJV)

1 And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

### Setting

Heaven's temple, filled with smoke from God's glory so that no one can enter (15:8). A loud voice from the temple sends the seven angels: "Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God" (v1). This is the last series of judgments — the bowls complete God's wrath (15:1).

### The seven bowls

1. **Earth** — a loathsome, malignant sore on those who have the mark of the beast and worship his image (v2).
2. **Sea** — it becomes blood like that of a dead man; every living thing in the sea dies (v3).

3. **Rivers and springs** — they become blood (v4). Interlude: the angel of the waters declares God righteous, because those who shed the blood of saints and prophets are given blood to drink; the altar answers, "true and righteous are Your judgments" (vv5–7).
4. **Sun** — it scorches men with fierce heat; they blaspheme the name of God and do not repent to give Him glory (vv8–9).
5. **The throne of the beast** — his kingdom goes dark; men gnaw their tongues in pain, blaspheme the God of heaven and do not repent of their deeds (vv10–11).
6. **The Euphrates** — dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the east (v12). Three unclean spirits like frogs come from the mouths of the dragon, the beast and the false prophet; they are spirits of demons performing signs, gathering the kings of the whole world for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty (vv13–14). Parenthesis from Jesus: "Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes" (v15). They gather at the place called in Hebrew Har-Magedon (v16).
7. **The air** — a loud voice from the throne: "It is done." Lightning, thunder, the greatest earthquake since man has been on the earth (vv17–18). The great city splits into three parts, the cities of the nations fall, and Babylon the great is remembered before God to receive the cup of His fierce wrath (v19). Islands flee, mountains vanish (v20), and huge hailstones of about a hundred pounds fall; men blaspheme God because of the plague (v21).

### Repeated words

poured out, bowl, great/loud (Greek *megas*), blasphemed, did not repent, wrath, righteous, voice.

### Contrasts

the angel and the altar declare Him righteous (vv5–7) ⟷ the earth-dwellers blaspheme His name (vv9, 11, 21). The demonic trinity's mouths send out frogs ⟷ the throne speaks "It is done."

### Parallels with the trumpets (ch. 8–9)

earth, sea, waters, sun, darkness, Euphrates — but the trumpets struck a third, and the bowls strike everything.

### Parallels with Egypt

sores (Ex 9:10), water to blood (Ex 7:20), darkness (Ex 10:22), frogs (Ex 8:6), hail (Ex 9:23).

### Chapter theme (my words)

God's patience has an end, and when it comes, His judgments are complete, righteous and unanswerable — yet hearts that refuse grace still refuse to repent under wrath.

# 02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 16:15 (KJV)

15 Behold, I come as ▲ a thief. ★ Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

### Who speaks (v1)?

Guzik reasons that the loud voice is God Himself, since no one else could be in the temple (15:8). The bowls are the last of the three woes (11:14), and Guzik places them at the very end of the seven years, just before Christ returns. They answer the martyrs' cry "How long?" (6:10).

### Literal, not just symbolic

Guzik answers commentators who make "earth," "sea" and "sun" mean something else (Poole, for example). His point: if earth doesn't mean earth, no one can say what it means. The Exodus plagues are the pattern, and the reality will be worse than the symbols, not milder.

### Bowls 2–3 — total, not partial

The second trumpet turned a third of the sea to blood (8:8–9); the second bowl turns all of it. Guzik notes that "blood like that of a dead man" is congealed and rotting — the ocean as a corpse. With fresh water gone too (v4), the world's ecology collapses. That is one reason Guzik thinks the time from these bowls to Christ's return must be very short.

### God is just (vv5–7)

Those who poured out the blood of saints and prophets are given blood to drink — Guzik, quoting Clarke: they thirsted for blood, and now they have it. The voice from the altar (where the martyrs' souls were, 6:9) says "Yes" (v7). Judgment is not God losing His temper; it is God being exactly right.

### Bowls 4–5 — pain without repentance

The sun, God's gift, becomes a weapon (vv8–9). Darkness falls on the beast's throne — a preview of the "outer darkness" (Matt 25:30). Twice John says they did not repent. Guzik's key lesson, citing Spurgeon: suffering by itself does not produce repentance, and pain and poverty are not evangelists. Those who are not won by grace will not be won by wrath. Guzik also distinguishes the fear-driven regret of a man who only hates the consequences from true repentance, which hates the sin.

### Bowl 6 — the stage is set (vv12–16)

The Euphrates was the eastern boundary of the Roman world and of the land promised to Abraham (Gen 15:18). Drying it removes the last barrier to the armies of the east. The frog-like spirits are unclean and noisy, all croak and no substance. Guzik, citing Swete: Christ cast out unclean spirits; His enemies send them out. They work signs to deceive the kings into gathering, but it is God who gathers them, to their own destruction (compare 19:19–21; Joel 3:2; Zech 14:2–3).

### Armageddon (v16)

*Har-Magedon* = "mountain of Megiddo." Megiddo guarded the pass into the Jezreel Valley (the plain of Esdraelon), the most fought-over ground in Israel — Deborah's victory (Judg 5:19), Josiah's death (2 Kings 23:29). Guzik takes it as a literal place where the armies assemble before marching on Jerusalem. He distinguishes three end-time battles: Gog and Magog against Israel (Ezek 38–39), Armageddon against the returning Christ (Rev 19), and the final rebellion after the Millennium (Rev 20:7–10).

### The parenthesis (v15)

In the middle of the gathering armies, Jesus speaks to His own: "I am coming like a thief." Guzik reads the garments as practical righteousness. The blessed believer is awake, dressed, and not spiritually exposed (compare 3:18; Matt 24:42–44; 1 Thess 5:2–6).

### Bowl 7 — "It is done" (vv17–21)

Greek *gegonen*, "it has come to pass." On the cross Jesus said *tetelestai*, "It is finished" — salvation's work completed (John 19:30). Here judgment's work is completed. Babylon is "remembered" (v19), and chapters 17–18 now zoom in on exactly how. The hailstones weigh about a talent each (NASB: "about one hundred pounds"), and still men blaspheme.

### The "great" chapter

Guzik notes how often "great" (*megas*) appears: great voice, great heat, great river, great day, great earthquake, great city, great Babylon, great hail. It is great evil met by a great God.

### Word study (Greek)

- **bowl — *phialē* (G5357):** a wide, shallow bowl. It empties all at once rather than trickling.
- **wrath — *thymos* (G2372) and *orgē* (G3709):** *thymos* is passionate, boiling anger; *orgē* is settled, steady anger. In v19 both appear together ("His fierce wrath"). Walvoord, quoted by Guzik, calls the combination the strongest kind of outpouring of divine judgment.
- **sore — *helkos* (G1668):** an ulcerated, festering sore; the same word the Greek Old Testament uses for Egypt's boils (Ex 9:9–11).
- **righteous — *dikaios* (G1342):** just, right — the angel's verdict on God (v5).
- **blasphemed — *blasphēmeō* (G987):** to speak injuriously, to slander God's name.
- **repent — *metanoeō* (G3340):** to change one's mind, turn around. Twice: "they did not."
- **frogs — *batrachos* (G944):** used only here in the New Testament; the Law made such water creatures detestable (Lev 11:10–12).
- **Har-Magedon — *Harmagedōn* (G717):** "mountain of Megiddo."
- **It is done — *gegonen*** (perfect of *ginomai*, G1096): "it stands accomplished."
- **talent-weight — *talantiaios* (G5006):** used only here; a talent weighed about 100 lb.

### Cross-references

Ex 7–10; Rev 8:6–9:21; Rev 15:1, 7–8; Ps 79:6; Joel 3:2, 12–14; Zech 14:2–3; Rev 19:11–21; Matt 24:42–44; John 19:30.

# 03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 16:2 (KJV)

2 And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.

### Promise to trust

"Righteous are You … true and righteous are Your judgments" (vv5, 7). When I can't make sense of the evil done to God's people — to believers in prisons overseas, to the men I know whose lives were wrecked by others — this chapter tells me that God keeps the books. Not one drop of the blood of saints and prophets is forgotten. I can leave vengeance with Him (Rom 12:19).

### Warning to heed

Three times men blaspheme, and twice they "did not repent." Pain didn't change them, and it won't change anyone without grace. That rescues me from a common lie in ministry: "He just needs to hit bottom." Bottom doesn't save anyone; Christ does. Suffering can open a door, but only grace walks a man through it. So I keep preaching grace *before* the bowls fall, while it is still "today" (Heb 3:15).

### Command to obey

"Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes" (v15). Right in the middle of the armies gathering for Armageddon, Jesus speaks to me about my own wardrobe. Am I awake spiritually? Am I clothed in practical righteousness, or have I let something expose me? For men in recovery, "stay awake" is very practical: guard the late night, the lonely hour, the old places.

### Sin to confess

The frogs come out of mouths. Deception travels by speech: slick, noisy and persuasive. Lord, guard what goes into my ears and what comes out of my mouth, and keep my teaching clean of hype.

### Worship

"It is done." The same Lord who said "It is finished" over my sin will one day say "It is done" over all evil. Because He drank the cup of wrath for me at Calvary, I will never drink this one. That is the gospel in the middle of the bowls.

### Prayer

Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments. Thank You that Jesus drank the cup I deserved. Keep me awake and clothed, keep my mouth clean of deception, and make me urgent to tell men about grace while it is still today. Amen.

# Revelation 17

## *Mystery Babylon, the Harlot on the Beast*

**OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION**

*"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."*

**Acts 17:11**

CHAPTER THEME

False religion looks rich, powerful and in charge, but it is a harlot riding a beast that will devour her. God turns His enemies on each other, and the Lamb wins.

Ed Smith · Started 10 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

# 00 The Text

REVELATION 17 (KJV), MARKED

Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
Rose Sin / warning | Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

1 And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:

2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:

5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

8 The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was , and is not, and yet is.

9 And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth .

10 And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

11 And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

12 And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

15 And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

16 And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

17 For God hath put ▲ in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree , and give their kingdom unto the ⇄ beast, until the ▲ words of God shall be fulfilled.

18 And the woman which thou sawest is that ◷ great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

### Marked in the text

- **v1** ⚠ great harlot
- **v1** ⚠ great whore
- **v1** ◷ many waters
- **v1** ⇄ harlot *(every occurrence)*
- **v1** ⇄ whore *(every occurrence)*
- **v3** ⇄ beast *(every occurrence)*
- **v3** ◷ wilderness
- **v3** ⚠ scarlet
- **v5** ⚠ BABYLON THE GREAT
- **v5** ⚠ MOTHER OF HARLOTS
- **v6** ⚠ with the blood of the saints
- **v8** ⇄ wonder *(every occurrence)*
- **v8** ★ book of life
- **v8** ◷ foundation of the world
- **v9** ▮▮ wisdom
- **v12** ◷ one hour
- **v13** ⚠ one purpose
- **v13** ⚠ one mind
- **v14** ▲ Lord of lords
- **v14** ▲ King of kings
- **v14** ★ overcome them
- **v14** ★ chosen
- **v17** ▲ in their hearts
- **v17** ▲ words of God
- **v18** ◷ great city

*Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.*

# 01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 17:1 (KJV)

1 And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the ⚠ great whore that sitteth upon ◷ many waters:

### Setting

One of the seven bowl angels takes John aside: "Come here, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters" (v1). Chapter 16 announced Babylon's fall in a single verse (16:19); chapters 17–18 slow down and show it.

### Who / what

- **The woman / great harlot** — sits on many waters (v1); the kings of the earth committed immorality with her, and the earth-dwellers got drunk on the wine of her immorality (v2).
- **The scarlet beast** she rides — full of blasphemous names, seven heads and ten horns (v3); the beast of 13:1.

- **Her appearance** — purple and scarlet, gold, precious stones and pearls; a gold cup full of abominations and the unclean things of her immorality (v4).
- **Her name** on her forehead — a mystery: BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH (v5).
- **Her drink** — the blood of the saints and of the witnesses of Jesus; John wonders greatly (v6).
- **The angel explains (vv7–18):**
  - The beast "was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction" (v8). The earth-dwellers whose names are not in the book of life will wonder at him (v8).
  - Seven heads = seven mountains on which the woman sits, and seven kings: five have fallen, one is, one has not yet come (vv9–10). The beast is an eighth, yet one of the seven, and goes to destruction (v11).
  - Ten horns = ten kings who receive authority with the beast for one hour; they have one purpose and give their power to the beast (vv12–13).
  - They wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb overcomes them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings; those with Him are the called and chosen and faithful (v14).
  - The waters = peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues (v15).
  - The ten horns and the beast will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire (v16) — because God put it in their hearts to execute His purpose, until the words of God are fulfilled (v17).
  - The woman = the great city that reigns over the kings of the earth (v18).

### Repeated words

harlot / immorality (fornication); beast; kings; waters; wonder / marvel; "which you saw"; was / is not.

### Contrasts

this woman (ch. 17) ⟷ the woman clothed with the sun (ch. 12) ⟷ the Bride of the Lamb (ch. 19, 21). The harlot rides the beast and seems in control ⟷ the beast turns and devours her. The kings make war on the Lamb ⟷ the Lamb overcomes. The earth-dwellers *wonder* at the beast ⟷ the called, chosen and faithful are *with the Lamb*.

### Places

many waters; a wilderness; seven mountains; the abyss; the great city.

### Time words

"was, and is not, and is about to come"; five fallen, one is, one not yet; "a little while"; "one hour"; "until the words of God will be fulfilled."

### Chapter theme (my words)

False religion looks rich, powerful and in charge, but it is a harlot riding a beast that will devour her. God turns His enemies on each other, and the Lamb wins.

# 02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 17:14 (KJV)

14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall ★ overcome them: for he is ▲ Lord of lords, and ▲ King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and ★ chosen, and faithful.

### What Babylon is (Guzik)

Babylon is mentioned more than any other city in the Bible except Jerusalem. It began as a real city (Babel, Gen 10–11) and became Scripture's symbol for organized human rebellion against God: idolatry, persecution of God's people, and the world-system. Guzik, quoting Tenney, calls it organized hostility to God. Guzik reads chapter 17 as **religious Babylon** and chapter 18 as **commercial Babylon**. They are intertwined, but they are judged at different moments.

### The great harlot = false religion (vv1–6)

In the Old Testament, harlotry is God's word for spiritual adultery — idolatry (Jer 3:6–9; Ezek 16; Hos 2). Guzik traces a stream of false worship back to Babel, mentioning the Tammuz cult and the "queen of heaven" (Ezek 8:14; Jer 7:18; 44:17–19). She "sits on many waters," and v15 says the waters are peoples and nations, so she is global and multi-ethnic. Guzik says the harlot cannot be limited to Roman Catholicism, though it doesn't exclude any apostate Christendom. Hocking, quoted by Guzik: the woman pictures the false religion that will dominate the world in the Tribulation.

### She rides the beast (v3)

Walvoord (in Guzik): she appears to direct the beast but is really subordinate to it. The Antichrist's system uses religion to unite the world and then discards it. Her clothing is royal and rich, while her cup is full of filth. Johnson (in Guzik): for all her glamour she is just a prostitute.

### Drunk with the blood of the saints (v6)

John "wondered greatly." He wasn't surprised that pagan Rome persecuted believers, but he was stunned that the persecution came *from religion*. Walvoord, in Guzik: false religion is always the worst enemy of true religion. Remember that it was the religious leaders who handed Jesus over to be crucified.

### The beast who "was, and is not, and will come" (vv8, 11)

This mimics God, "who is and who was and who is to come" (1:8). It also echoes the head with the fatal wound that was healed (13:3). The world wonders, but only those whose names are not in the book of life.

### Seven heads, seven mountains, seven kings (vv9–11)

The angel answers John's question himself (v7), so the text speaks first: "Here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue

a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition" (vv9–11, KJV). So the heads are two things at once — seven *mountains* and seven *kings* — and "the mind which hath wisdom" tells me it takes discernment, not a quick read.

Mountains and kings are probably the same picture seen twice. The word is *orē*, "mountains," and in prophecy a mountain is often a kingdom: the stone becomes "a great mountain, and filled the whole earth" (Dan 2:35), and Babylon is a "destroying mountain" (Jer 51:25). Guzik grants that Rome sat on seven hills (as Clarke notes), but he reads the heads as seven seats of world power with a king at the head of each, and the woman riding all of them.

### How the seven kings are counted — three readings

- **Seven world empires (futurist — Guzik leans here).** Five fallen by John's day: 1 Egypt, 2 Assyria, 3 Babylon, 4 Medo-Persia, 5 Greece. **6 Rome** — the one that "is." 7 a future kingdom, "not yet come… a short space" (often called a revived Roman-world kingdom). **8 the beast himself** — "the eighth, and is of the seven," the Antichrist's final kingdom growing out of the rest.
- **Rome and its emperors (preterist).** Rome was the city on seven hills, so the first readers heard Rome; the seven kings are a run of Roman emperors, though no one agrees where to start the count or whether to skip the short-lived ones. Here Rome isn't one head — Rome is the whole beast.
- **Symbolic fullness (idealist).** Seven is completeness, so the heads are the full sweep of godless world power in every age, not seven countable rulers.

### The heads run all through the book

The dragon has seven heads and ten horns (12:3), and so does the beast from the sea (13:1) — the beast carries his master's likeness. And Daniel's four beasts add up to seven heads: lion 1, bear 1, leopard 4, terrible beast 1 (Dan 7:4–7). John's one beast gathers all of Daniel's kingdoms into one body.

### So what number is Rome, and what number is the heavenly kingdom?

In the empires count Rome is **six** — "one is." The heavenly kingdom has **no number at all**. It is not the eighth; the text gives eighth place to the beast. God's kingdom is not another head on the beast — it stands outside the count and ends it: "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed… it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Dan 2:44, KJV), a stone "cut out without hands" (Dan 2:34). "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev 11:15, KJV). The beast's kingdoms are numbered because they are counted out. Christ's isn't numbered because it doesn't end.

### Amir Tsarfati (*Revealing Revelation*, with Rick Yohn)

Futurist, pre-tribulation rapture (the church is gone before the Antichrist is revealed, from 2 Thess 2), premillennial — Christ returns bodily to the Mount of Olives and reigns from Jerusalem — and Israel stays central to God's plan. On chapter 17 he reads the harlot as a worldwide false religious system in the Tribulation that persecutes believers, Babylon as both a system and a city (religious here, commercial in ch. 18), and the beast as the Antichrist's government that rides with religion until the ten horns turn and burn her (v16), when he demands worship for himself alone. *I haven't confirmed his*

*exact count of the seven heads — check his chapter on Rev 17 before teaching it in his name.* His framework fits the seven-empires reading.

I hold the count loosely; the point is certain — the beast "goeth into perdition" (v11), and "the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings" (v14, KJV).

### Ten kings, one hour, one purpose (vv12–14)

These match the ten horns of Daniel 7:7, 24 and the ten toes of Daniel 2. They rule briefly ("one hour") and hand their authority to the beast, and then they make war on the Lamb. The outcome is never in doubt: the Lamb overcomes because He is Lord of lords and King of kings (19:16). Those with Him are called (by grace), chosen (by election) and faithful (proven in life).

### The beast devours the harlot (vv16–17)

Guzik places this around the midpoint of the seven years, when the Antichrist no longer needs the religious system and demands worship of himself alone (13:15; 2 Thess 2:4; Matt 24:15). The striking theological line is v17: "God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose." Even wicked kings, acting freely and wickedly, end up carrying out God's judgment. That is why my workbook lesson calls this chapter *God Eradicates Religion.*

### The great city (v18)

In John's day, the city that reigned over the kings of the earth was Rome (Mounce, in Guzik). In the end it is the capital of the world-system, wherever and whatever it is then.

### Word study (Greek)

- **harlot — *pornē* (G4204):** a prostitute; with *porneia* (G4202) and *porneuō* (G4203), "immorality / commit immorality" — spiritual unfaithfulness here.
- **mystery — *mystērion* (G3466):** something hidden that God reveals. Her name is a symbol to be explained (v7).
- **drunk — *methuō* (G3184):** intoxicated. The nations are drunk on her wine (v2), and she is drunk on the saints' blood (v6).
- **wonder — *thaumazō* (G2296), with *thauma* (G2295):** "wondered with great wonder" — deep astonishment.
- **abominations — *bdelygma* (G946):** a detestable thing, especially an idol. It is the same word as Jesus' "abomination of desolation" (Matt 24:15).
- **abyss — *abyssos* (G12):** the bottomless pit, the prison of demons (9:1; 20:1–3).
- **destruction — *apōleia* (G684):** ruin, perdition; the beast's destiny (vv8, 11; 2 Thess 2:3, "son of destruction").
- **mountains — *oros* (G3735):** mountain; in prophetic imagery, a kingdom.
- **one purpose — *mia gnōmē* (G1520 + G1106):** one mind, one counsel — a unified world government.
- **called, chosen, faithful — *klētoi* (G2822), *eklektoi* (G1588), *pistoi* (G4103):** the full description of the Lamb's army.
- **desolate — *erēmoō* (G2049):** made a wilderness, stripped bare.

### Cross-references

Gen 10:8–10; 11:1–9; Jer 51:7, 13, 25; Ezek 16; Hos 2; Dan 2; Dan 2:34–35, 44; Dan 7:4–8, 24; Rev 11:15; Rev 12:1–6; Rev 12:3; Rev 13:1–18; Rev 19:7–8, 16; 2 Thess 2:3–12.

## 03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 17:8 (KJV)

8 The ⇄ beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall ⇄ wonder, whose names were not written in the ★ book of life from the ◷ foundation of the world, when they behold the ⇄ beast that was , and is not, and yet is.

### Warning to heed — glitter is not godliness

The harlot wears purple and scarlet, gold and pearls, and holds a gold cup, and the cup is full of filth (v4). Religion can look rich, beautiful and powerful and still be spiritual adultery. I want to measure churches, ministries, teachers — and my own work — by faithfulness to Christ, not by production value.

### Sin to confess — the drink that intoxicates

"Made drunk with the wine of her immorality" (v2). False religion works like a drug: it numbs, flatters and makes people feel spiritual while they stay unchanged. I know men who traded the bottle for a religious high that never touched their heart. Lord, keep me sober in Your truth, not drunk on religious feeling.

### Example to follow — John's honest astonishment

John "wondered greatly" (v6) that the persecution came from religion. I shouldn't be shocked when the fiercest opposition to the gospel comes from inside religious systems. Jesus was condemned by religious men. Expect it, forgive it, and stay with the Lamb.

### Promise to trust — the kingdom without a number

Seven heads, an eighth, ten horns for "one hour" — every power in this chapter is counted, and everything counted runs out. Christ's kingdom isn't on the list because it never runs out (Dan 2:44; Rev 11:15). When I feel ruled by something — a habit, a past, a system, a cell block — I can ask: is this one of the numbered things? Then it has an end. My King has none.

### Promise to trust — the Lamb wins

"The Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings" (v14). The world government gets "one hour" (v12); the Lamb gets forever. And God is sovereign even over evil men's hearts (v17). Nothing happening in the world today has slipped out of His hand.

### Identity to embrace — called, chosen, faithful

Those with the Lamb are "the called and chosen and faithful" (v14). The first two are God's work — He called me and chose me. The third is my response: stay faithful. That's my word for the men in recovery and the men coming out of prison: you're already called and chosen; now be faithful one day at a time.

### Prayer

Lord Jesus, Lamb of God, King of kings — keep me from the gold cup of false religion and from being dazzled by what glitters. Thank You for calling and choosing me. Make me faithful. When religion turns against Your people, help me stand with You and love my enemies. Amen.

# Revelation 18

## *The Fall of Commercial Babylon*

**OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION**

*"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."*

**Acts 17:11**

CHAPTER THEME

The world's economy of greed, luxury and pride — the system that sells even souls — collapses in an hour. God calls His people out of it before it falls, and heaven rejoices when justice comes.

Ed Smith · Started 10 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

# 00 The Text

REVELATION 18 (KJV), MARKED

Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
Rose Sin / warning | Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

1 And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.

7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

9 And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning,

10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

11 And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:

12 The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,

13 And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

14 And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.

15 The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,

16 And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!

17 For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off,

18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!

19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.

20 Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.

21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.

22 And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;

23 And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.

24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

## Marked in the text

- **v1** his glory
- **v2** fallen *(every occurrence)*
- **v2** Babylon the great
- **v2** dwelling place of demons
- **v2** habitation of devils
- **v4** Come out of her, my people
- **v4** her sins
- **v5** remembered her iniquities
- **v6** double *(every occurrence)*
- **v7** a queen
- **v8** in one day
- **v8** the Lord God
- **v10** hour *(every occurrence)*
- **v13** human lives
- **v13** souls of men
- **v14** fruit
- **v20** Rejoice over her
- **v20** apostles and prophets
- **v21** great millstone
- **v23** sorcer
- **v23** deceived
- **v24** blood of prophets

*Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.*

# 01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 18:2 (KJV)

2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, ⚠ Babylon the great is ⇄ fallen, is ⇄ fallen, and is become the ⚠ habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

## Setting

"After these things" — after the harlot is shown (ch. 17) — another angel comes down from heaven with great authority, and the earth is lit up with his glory (v1).

## Structure

- vv1–3 — **the announcement:** "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!" She has become a dwelling place of demons and every unclean spirit and bird. Why: all the nations drank of her immorality, the kings committed it with her, and the merchants grew rich from her sensuality.
- vv4–8 — **the call and the charges:** "Come out of her, my people," so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues (v4). Her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities (v5). Pay her back double (v6). Because she glorified herself and lived sensuously, and said in her heart "I sit as a queen and I am not a widow, and will never see mourning," her plagues will come in one day — pestilence, mourning, famine, fire — for the Lord God who judges her is strong (vv7–8).
- vv9–19 — **three laments, all from a distance:**
  - Kings (vv9–10): "Woe, woe, the great city … in one hour your judgment has come."
  - Merchants (vv11–17a): no one buys their cargoes any more. The cargo list: gold, silver, stones, pearls, fine linen, purple, silk, scarlet, citron wood, ivory, costly wood, bronze, iron, marble, cinnamon, spice, incense, perfume, frankincense, wine, olive oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle, sheep, horses, chariots, slaves and human lives (vv12–13). "In one hour such great wealth has been laid waste."
  - Sea captains and sailors (vv17b–19): dust on their heads; "in one hour she has been laid waste."
- v20 — **the counter-call:** "Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment for you against her."
- vv21–24 — **the millstone:** a strong angel throws a great millstone into the sea — "so will Babylon … be thrown down with violence, and will not be found any longer." No music, no craftsman, no millstone, no lamp, no bride and groom (vv22–23). Why: her merchants were the great men of the earth, all the nations were deceived by her sorcery (v23), and in her was found the blood of prophets and saints and of all who have been slain on the earth (v24).

## Repeated words

fallen; in one hour / in one day; at a distance; woe, woe; great city; merchants; no longer / not any longer (vv21–23); weep and mourn.

### Contrasts

earth weeps (vv9–19) ⟷ heaven rejoices (v20). "I sit as a queen … will never see mourning" (v7) ⟷ mourning and famine in one day (v8). The merchants' list starts with gold and ends with human lives (v13). Babylon's "no longer" ⟷ the New Jerusalem's "no longer any … tears, death, mourning" (21:4).

### Chapter theme (my words)

The world's economy of greed, luxury and pride — the system that sells even souls — collapses in an hour. God calls His people out of it before it falls, and heaven rejoices when justice comes.

## 02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 18:8 (KJV)

8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is ▲ the Lord God who judgeth her.

### Same Babylon as chapter 17, or a different one?

Guzik: intertwined but distinct. Chapter 17 is **religious** Babylon, a harlot destroyed by her political allies (the beast and ten horns), probably around the midpoint. Chapter 18 is **commercial** Babylon, a port city of trade, greed and luxury, destroyed suddenly by God at the end. My workbook lesson names it well: *The Death of Politics and Wealth.* Guzik notes the literal-rebuilt-Babylon view (Saddam Hussein's reconstruction project) but concludes the chapter most likely describes the whole world-system and its capital. Barnhouse, in Guzik: Babylon stands for what Christ called "the world."

### Prophetic doom-song style

Chapter 18 is woven from the Old Testament oracles against Babylon (Isa 13–14; 21:9; 47; Jer 50–51) and against Tyre, the great sea-trading city (Ezek 26–28). Morris, in Guzik: John has caught the spirit of the prophetic doom songs. Compare "Fallen, fallen is Babylon" (Isa 21:9), "I will be a queen forever … I will not sit as a widow" (Isa 47:7–8), "Come forth from her midst, My people" (Jer 51:45), and Tyre's cargo list and mourning sailors (Ezek 27).

### The angel and the announcement (vv1–3)

He comes so recently from God's presence that his glory lights the earth (Swete, in Guzik). The double "fallen, fallen" is a dirge (Robertson). A city of luxury becomes a haunt of demons and carrion birds. Her sins: immorality (idolatry), luxury and greed — the merchants "became rich by the wealth of her sensuality."

### "Come out of her, my people" (vv4–5)

Guzik: a believer can't belong to *religious* Babylon, but *commercial* Babylon is a constant pull on every Christian, like Lot settling in Sodom. The call is to separate from her sins so as not to share her plagues (2 Cor 6:14–17; Eph 5:11). Her sins have "piled up" (*kollaō*, glued together, stacked) to heaven,

like a new Tower of Babel. God *remembers* her iniquities — while He promises to remember ours no more (Heb 8:12).

### Paid back double (vv6–8)

The verb "pay back" is *apodidōmi*, to repay what is owed. Guzik connects "double" with Exodus 22's law of double restitution for theft — full justice. Her three sins: self-glorification, sensual luxury, and the arrogant security of "I will never see mourning." That last sin is the delusion that money insulates you from sorrow. Judgment comes in one day, by a God who is "strong."

### The laments (vv9–19)

Guzik notes that every mourner stands far off. They weep for their losses, not for her, and not one of them weeps for sin. The merchants mourn because "no one buys their cargoes any more" (v11). The list runs from luxuries to the most chilling item — "slaves and human lives" (v13). Guzik applies it to every system that turns people into products: trafficking, prostitution, pornography. "The fruit you long for has gone from you" (v14) — Guzik sees a picture of hell as desire that is never fulfilled. Walvoord, in Guzik: the merchants show a complete abandonment to the wealth of this world.

### Rejoice (v20)

Heaven's joy is not gloating. It is joy that God has finally set things right and vindicated His people ("God has pronounced judgment for you against her"). The prayer of 6:10 has been answered.

### The millstone (vv21–24)

This is an acted parable straight out of Jeremiah 51:63–64, where Seraiah tied a stone to the scroll and sank it in the Euphrates: "Just so shall Babylon sink down and not rise again." Guzik also recalls Matthew 18:6 — the millstone for those who cause little ones to stumble. Then the six "no longers" silence everything that made a city live: music, trade, industry, light and weddings. Her final charges are that her merchants were the world's great men, the nations were deceived by her *pharmakeia*, and the blood of all the slain is found in her. Guzik notes that the breadth of that charge shows Babylon is the whole world-system, not just one city.

### Word study (Greek)

- **fallen — *epesen* (from *piptō*, G4098):** an aorist, "has fallen" — announced as already done.
- **dwelling place — *katoikētērion* (G2732):** a permanent home; she becomes a demons' residence.
- **sensuality / lived sensuously — *strēnos* (G4764) / *strēniaō* (G4763):** luxurious, arrogant excess, living wantonly.
- **come out — *exelthate* (from *exerchomai*, G1831):** a decisive command: get out.
- **participate — *synkoinōneō* (G4790):** to be a partner in, share fellowship with.
- **piled up — *kollaō* (G2853):** glued together, stuck — sins stacked up to heaven.
- **pay back — *apodidōmi* (G591):** to render what is due, to settle a debt.
- **double — *diploō* (G1363) / *diplous* (G1362):** to repay twofold, in full measure.
- **in one hour — *mia hōra* (G1520 + G5610):** the suddenness of collapse.
- **lives / souls — *psychē* (G5590):** the soul, the person — "human lives" sold as cargo.
- **millstone — *mylos* (G3458), *lithos mylinos*:** a great millstone, the kind turned by a donkey.

- **sorcery — *pharmakeia* (G5331):** the root of our word "pharmacy." In the ancient world it meant drugs, potions and the occult working together. Guzik ties it to the drug-like spell of a culture's advertising and deception.
- **deceived — *planaō* (G4105):** to lead astray, cause to wander.

### Cross-references

Isa 13:19–22; 21:9; 47:7–9; Jer 50:8; 51:6–9, 45, 63–64; Ezek 26–27; 2 Cor 6:14–18; 1 John 2:15–17; James 5:1–5; Matt 6:19–24; Heb 8:12; Rev 6:9–11; Rev 21:4.

## 03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 18:4 (KJV)

4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

### Command to obey — "Come out of her, my people."

This is a present-tense call for me, not just for Tribulation saints. Where has the world's economy of more crept into my heart — the craving, the comparing, the "I need this to be okay"? Today I'll name one place where I've been "participating in her sins" and walk out of it. For the men I disciple, "come out of her" may mean literally leaving a place, a phone app or a circle of friends.

### Sin to confess — "I will never see mourning."

Babylon's deepest sin is false security: wealth as a wall against sorrow (v7). I'm tempted to trust savings, health, a good plan or my own competence more than God. Jesus warned about the rich fool (Luke 12:16–21). Money can't keep mourning away; only Christ can turn mourning into joy.

### Warning to heed — "slaves and human lives."

Every system that buys and sells people falls under this judgment: trafficking, pornography, exploitation. I've seen what pornography's market does to men's souls, and this verse tells me God has it on His ledger. It strengthens my resolve to fight for the men I serve to be free, and to never treat any person as a product.

### Promise to trust — "The fruit you long for has gone."

Babylon's pleasures never satisfy and always leave. That is how sin works, and how addiction works. Only Christ satisfies (John 6:35), and His pleasures are "forever" (Ps 16:11). When craving speaks, I remind myself that the fruit it promises is already rotting.

### Example to follow — heaven's perspective

Earth stands far off and cries "Woe, woe"; heaven says "Rejoice" (v20). I want to see the news and my own losses from heaven's side: God is just, He keeps every record, and He will set it all right.

### Worship

Babylon's lights go out, her music stops, her weddings end (vv22–23). But a better city is coming, where a Bride is ready and the Lamb is its lamp (19:7; 21:23). I'm not losing a world; I'm gaining one.

### Prayer

Strong Lord God who judges — pull me out of Babylon wherever she has a grip on me. Break my trust in wealth and my craving for her fruit. Give me a heart that grieves over souls, not over lost profits. Let me rejoice in Your justice and live for the city that cannot be shaken. Amen.

# Revelation 19

## *Hallelujah, the Marriage of the Lamb, and the King of Kings*

**OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION**

*"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."*

**Acts 17:11**

**CHAPTER THEME**

Heaven bursts into praise because God's judgments are true, the Bride is made ready, and the King of kings rides out to end the rebellion with a word. The question every reader has to answer: which supper am I invited to?

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

# 00 The Text

REVELATION 19 (KJV), MARKED

Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
Rose Sin / warning | Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

1 And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:

2 For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.

3 And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

4 And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.

5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.

6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;

18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

## Marked in the text

- **v1** Alleluia *(every occurrence)*
- **v1** Hallelujah *(every occurrence)*
- **v1** the Lord our God
- **v2** true and righteous are his judgments
- **v2** the great whore
- **v2** avenged the blood of his servants
- **v3** for ever and ever
- **v5** Praise our God
- **v6** the Lord God omnipotent reigneth
- **v7** Let us be glad and rejoice
- **v7** the marriage of the Lamb
- **v7** made herself ready
- **v8** fine linen *(every occurrence)*
- **v9** Blessed
- **v9** marriage supper of the Lamb
- **v10** worship God
- **v11** heaven opened
- **v11** Faithful and True
- **v12** many crowns
- **v13** The Word of God
- **v15** sword *(every occurrence)*
- **v15** rod of iron
- **v16** KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS
- **v17** the supper of the great God
- **v18** flesh *(every occurrence)*
- **v19** make war
- **v19** the beast *(every occurrence)*
- **v20** the false prophet
- **v20** deceived
- **v20** lake of fire

*Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.*

# 01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 19:1 (KJV)

[1]And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:

## Setting

"After these things" — after Babylon's fall (ch. 18) — John hears heaven answer the call of 18:20, "Rejoice over her, O heaven." The scene moves from heaven's worship (vv1–10) to heaven opened (vv11–21).

## Structure

- vv1–5 — **three hallelujahs over Babylon:** a great multitude cries, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God; because His judgments are true and righteous" (vv1–2). He has judged the great harlot and avenged the blood of His bond-servants. "Her smoke rises up forever and ever" (v3). The twenty-four elders and four living creatures fall down: "Amen. Hallelujah!" (v4). A voice from the throne: "Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants" (v5).
- vv6–10 — **the marriage of the Lamb:** the multitude sounds like many waters and mighty peals of thunder: "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns" (v6). "The marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready" (v7). She is given fine linen, bright and clean — "the righteous acts of the saints" (v8). "Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb" (v9). John falls to worship the angel and is stopped: "Do not do that … worship God" (v10).
- vv11–16 — **the Rider on the white horse:** heaven opens. He is called Faithful and True; in righteousness He judges and wages war (v11). Eyes a flame of fire, many diadems, a name no one knows (v12). A robe dipped in blood; His name is The Word of God (v13). The armies of heaven follow in fine linen, white and clean (v14). From His mouth comes a sharp sword; He will rule with a rod of iron and tread the wine press of the fierce wrath of God (v15). On His robe and thigh: "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (v16).
- vv17–21 — **the great supper of God:** an angel standing in the sun calls the birds: "Come, assemble for the great supper of God" (v17), to eat the flesh of kings, commanders, mighty men, horses and all men, free and slaves, small and great (v18). The beast, the kings and their armies gather to make war against Him (v19). The beast is seized, with the false prophet who deceived those who took the mark; both are thrown alive into the lake of fire (v20). The rest are killed with the sword from His mouth (v21).

## Repeated words

Hallelujah (vv1, 3, 4, 6 — its only appearances in the New Testament); fine linen … clean (v8 "bright and clean," v14 "white and clean"); supper (vv9, 17); horse / sat on the horse (vv11, 14, 18, 19, 21); flesh (vv18, 21); sword out of His mouth (vv15, 21); name (vv12, 13, 16).

### Contrasts

the harlot (v2) ⟷ the bride (v7). The marriage supper of the Lamb (v9) ⟷ the great supper of God (v17). The harlot's purple and scarlet (17:4) ⟷ the bride's fine linen (v8). The first white horse that conquers by deceit (6:2) ⟷ the true Rider, Faithful and True (v11). Earth's armies gather (v19) ⟷ not one battle is described — one word from His mouth ends it (v21).

### Chapter theme (my words)

Heaven bursts into praise because God's judgments are true, the Bride is made ready, and the King of kings rides out to end the rebellion with a word. The question every reader has to answer: which supper am I invited to?

## 02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 19:2 (KJV)

2 For ▲ true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged ⚠ the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath ▲ avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.

### Why hallelujah now? (vv1–5)

Guzik: the multitude is likely the martyrs whose cry "How long, O Lord?" (6:10) has now been answered. "Hallelujah" is Hebrew — *hallelu-Yah*, "Praise the LORD," a command — and Revelation 19 is the only place the New Testament uses it. Heaven praises God for His *works*, especially His righteous judgment. Guzik notes the voice from the throne is probably an angel rather than Jesus, since it says "our God." The Hallel Psalms (113–118), sung at Passover, end the same way: praise for deliverance.

### The marriage of the Lamb (vv6–9)

Guzik traces the bride through Scripture: Israel as God's often-unfaithful wife (Hosea; Isa 54:5; Ezek 16) and the church as Christ's betrothed (2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:25–27). Mounce, in Guzik: the church, "espoused to Christ by faith, now awaits the parousia." In a Jewish wedding the groom came for the bride after the betrothal and the feast followed — the highest joy a village knew. Spurgeon pictures the church as a Cinderella bride, overlooked now, revealed in glory then. Spurgeon also warns: "We ought not to worship God in a half-hearted sort of way."

### The bride's dress (v8)

Notice the order: "it was *given* to her." The fine linen is "the righteous acts of the saints," but even those acts are a gift — God works in us and then clothes us with what He has worked (Eph 2:10; Phil 2:13). Johnson, in Guzik: *katharos* (clean) speaks of purity and faithfulness; *lampros* (bright) of radiant glory. Compare the harlot's purple and scarlet — expensive, but dirty.

### "Do not do that" (v10)

Even John, overwhelmed, bows to the wrong one. Robertson: John "either felt that the angel represented God or he was beside himself with excitement." The angel calls himself a fellow servant. Only God receives worship — and Jesus *does* receive it (Matt 14:33; John 9:38; Heb 1:6), which tells us who He is. Hocking, in Guzik: "Any teaching of prophecy that takes our minds and hearts away from Him is not being properly communicated." That is a word for anyone who studies Revelation: the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

### The Rider (vv11–16)

This is the Second Coming — the climax of the book and the answer to Isaiah 64:1, "Oh, that You would rend the heavens and come down." The white horse is the conqueror's horse. His names tell who He is:

- **Faithful and True** (v11) — the opposite of the deceiver on the first white horse (6:2).
- **A name no one knows** (v12) — there is always more of Him than we have grasped.
- **The Word of God** (v13) — the same title as John 1:1.
- **King of kings and Lord of lords** (v16) — written where every eye can read it.

Walvoord, in Guzik: once grace is spurned, "there is nothing more inflexible than divine judgment." Clarke: His wars are "righteous in their principle and in their object." The many crowns are *diadēmata*, crowns of royal rule — the dragon wore seven (12:3), the beast ten (13:1), but He wears many. The robe dipped in blood may be His own (the Lamb who was slain) or His enemies' (Isa 63:1–3). The armies with Him carry no weapons; they are dressed for a wedding, not a war. The only weapon is the sword from His mouth — Johnson: "Christ conquers by the power of His Word."

### The other supper (vv17–21)

Guzik notes Newell's four suppers: the supper of salvation (Luke 14:16–24), the Lord's Supper, the marriage supper of the Lamb, and the great supper of God. Everyone attends one. "Flesh" is repeated five times in v18 — man who lived for the flesh is given over to it. Walvoord: judgment is "no respecter of persons or station" — kings and slaves alike (v18). The kings still gather to fight Him (v19) — Newell calls it "the incurable insanity of sin." Barnhouse: "the laughter of God against the climax of man's arrogance" (Ps 2:1–4). There is no battle, only a verdict. The beast and false prophet are thrown *alive* into the lake of fire — the first ever sent there, a thousand years before the devil joins them (20:10).

### Word study (Greek)

- **hallelujah — *allēlouia* (G239):** from Hebrew *hallelu-Yah*, "Praise the LORD" — a command to praise.
- **true — *alēthinos* (G228):** genuine, real, the true as opposed to the counterfeit (vv2, 9, 11).
- **avenged — *ekdikeō* (G1556):** to vindicate, to do justice for someone.
- **reigns — *ebasileusen* (from *basileuō*, G936):** aorist — "has begun to reign," the kingdom has arrived.
- **marriage — *gamos* (G1062):** a wedding and its feast.
- **made ready — *hetoimazō* (G2090):** to prepare; the same word as John 14:2–3, "I go to prepare a place."
- **clean — *katharos* (G2513):** pure, without stain.
- **bright — *lampros* (G2986):** radiant, shining.
- **righteous acts — *dikaiōma* (G1345):** deeds that are right; plural.

- **fellow servant — *syndoulos* (G4889):** a slave alongside another slave.
- **diadems — *diadēma* (G1238):** the crown of royal authority, not the *stephanos* (G4735) wreath of victory.
- **Word — *logos* (G3056):** the same title as John 1:1, 14.
- **rule — *poimainō* (G4165):** literally "to shepherd" — He shepherds the nations with an iron rod (Ps 2:9).
- **seized — *piazō* (G4084):** to arrest, take hold of.

### Cross-references

Ps 2:1–12; Ps 45:3–7; Ps 113–118; Isa 11:4; Isa 61:10; Isa 63:1–6; Isa 64:1; Ezek 39:17–20; Zech 14:3–5; Matt 22:1–14; Matt 24:29–31; Matt 25:1–13; John 1:1, 14; John 14:2–3; 2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:25–27; 2 Thess 1:7–8; 2 Thess 2:8; Rev 6:2, 10; Rev 17:14; Rev 20:10.

## 03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 19:7 (KJV)

7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

### Command to obey — "Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants."

Heaven's worship is loud, full and focused on what God has done. Spurgeon was right that half-hearted worship doesn't fit a God like this. This week I'll praise Him out loud for His specific works — what He has judged, what He has delivered me from — not just hum along. For the men I disciple, "small and great" means there is no man too broken to be called to praise.

### Sin to confess — bowing to the wrong thing

If John, at the end of the Bible, could fall at the wrong feet, so can I. Good things become idols: ministry, study, even prophecy itself. Do I get more excited about the timeline than about the King? The angel's word is my correction: "worship God."

### Warning to heed — two suppers

Every man will attend one: the marriage supper of the Lamb (v9) or the great supper of God (v17). The invitation is open now (Luke 14:23; Rev 22:17), but the day comes when the door shuts (Matt 25:10). This is why I share the gospel with the men I serve — not to scare them, but because the feast is real and so is the other table.

### Promise to trust — the Bride's dress is given

"It was given to her" (v8). I can't weave my own wedding garment. Christ's righteousness covers me (Isa 61:10), and then He works righteous acts through me. For the man who feels his past disqualifies him: the dress is a gift.

### Example to follow — Faithful and True

My King keeps His word and judges rightly. I want to be a man whose name means the same thing — faithful to my wife, true to my word, steady with the men who are counting on me.

### Worship

The armies of heaven ride behind Him dressed for a wedding, not carrying weapons. He wins with a word. I don't have to fight the final battle; I only have to be found with Him when He rides out.

### Prayer

King of kings and Lord of lords — Faithful and True — thank You that Your judgments are true and righteous. Clothe me in what You have given, keep my eyes on You and not on the scenery of prophecy, and make me ready for the marriage supper of the Lamb. Use me to carry the invitation to every man who still can come. Hallelujah. Amen.

# Revelation 20

## *The Thousand Years and the Great White Throne*

**OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION**

*"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."*

**Acts 17:11**

CHAPTER THEME

Satan is bound, the faithful reign with Christ, and the last rebellion ends with fire from heaven. Then every person stands before the great white throne, and only one thing matters: is my name written in the book of life?

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

# 00 The Text

REVELATION 20 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | ⇄ Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | ◷ Amber Time / place / contrast

[1] And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the ⇄ bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

[2] And he laid hold on ⚠ the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him ⇄ a thousand years,

[3] And cast him into the ⇄ bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should ⚠ deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed ◷ a little season.

[4] And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and ★ judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded ★ for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they ★ lived and reigned with Christ ⇄ a thousand years.

[5] But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is ⇄ the first resurrection.

[6] ★ Blessed and holy is he that hath part in ⇄ the first resurrection: on such ⇄ the second death hath no power, but they shall be ★ priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him ⇄ a thousand years.

[7] And when the thousand years are expired, ◷ Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

[8] And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, ◷ Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

[9] And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and ▲ fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

[10] And the devil that deceived them was cast into the ⚠ lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

[11] And I saw ▲ a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven ◷ fled away; and there was found no place for them.

[12] And I saw the dead, ◷ small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is ★ the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, ⇄ according to their works.

[13] And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and ⚠ death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man ⇄ according to their works.

[14] And ⚠ death and hell were cast into the ⚠ lake of fire. This is ⇄ the second death.

[15] And whosoever was ⚠ not found written in ★ the book of life was cast into the ⚠ lake of fire.

## Marked in the text

- **v1** ⇄ bottomless pit *(every occurrence)*
- **v2** ⚠ the dragon, that old serpent

- **v2** ⇄ a thousand years *(every occurrence)*
- **v3** ⚠ deceive the nations
- **v3** ◷ a little season
- **v4** ★ judgment was given unto them
- **v4** ★ for the witness of Jesus
- **v4** ★ lived and reigned with Christ
- **v5** ⇄ the first resurrection *(every occurrence)*
- **v6** ★ Blessed and holy
- **v6** ⇄ the second death *(every occurrence)*
- **v6** ★ priests of God
- **v7** ◷ Satan shall be loosed
- **v8** ◷ Gog and Magog
- **v9** ▲ fire came down from God
- **v10** ⚠ lake of fire *(every occurrence)*
- **v11** ▲ a great white throne
- **v11** ◷ fled away
- **v12** ◷ small and great
- **v12** ★ the book of life *(every occurrence)*
- **v12** ⇄ according to their works *(every occurrence)*
- **v13** ⚠ death and hell *(every occurrence)*
- **v15** ⚠ not found written

*Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.*

# 01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 20:4 (KJV)

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and ★ judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded ★ for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they ★ lived and reigned with Christ ⇄ a thousand years.

## Setting

The King has come (19:11–16), the beast and false prophet are in the lake of fire (19:20). Now John sees what happens to the dragon himself, to the saints, and finally to the dead. Again and again he writes "I saw" (vv1, 4, 11, 12).

## Structure

- vv1–3 — **Satan bound:** an angel comes down "holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand" (v1). He lays hold of "the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan," binds him for a thousand years (v2), throws him into the abyss, shuts and seals it "so that he would not deceive the nations any longer" (v3). Afterward "he must be released for a short time."
- vv4–6 — **the saints reign:** thrones, and judgment given to those who sit on them. The souls of those beheaded "because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God," who had not worshiped the beast or taken his mark — "they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years" (v4). "The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection" (v5). "Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power" (v6).

- vv7–10 — **Satan released and finished:** after the thousand years he is released and deceives the nations "in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog" — a number "like the sand of the seashore" (vv7–8). They surround "the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them" (v9). The devil is thrown into the lake of fire "where the beast and the false prophet are also," tormented "day and night forever and ever" (v10).
- vv11–15 — **the great white throne:** earth and heaven flee from His presence (v11). The dead, great and small, stand before the throne; books are opened, and "another book … which is the book of life" (v12). Everyone is judged "according to their deeds" (vv12–13). Death and Hades are thrown into the lake of fire — "This is the second death, the lake of fire" (v14). "If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire" (v15).

### Repeated words

a thousand years (six times, vv2–7); abyss / bottomless pit (vv1, 3); deceive (vv3, 8, 10); reign (vv4, 6); first resurrection (vv5, 6); second death (vv6, 14); lake of fire (vv10, 14, 15); book(s) / book of life (vv12, 15); according to their deeds (vv12, 13); the dead (vv5, 12, 13).

### Contrasts

Satan shut in the abyss (v3) ⟷ released for a short time (v7). Those who "came to life" (v4) ⟷ "the rest of the dead did not come to life" (v5). The first resurrection ⟷ the second death (v6). The saints on thrones (v4) ⟷ the dead standing before the throne (v12). The books of deeds ⟷ the book of life (v12). A thousand years of Christ's reign ⟷ a human heart that still rebels at the end (vv8–9).

### Chapter theme (my words)

Satan is bound, the faithful reign with Christ, and the last rebellion ends with fire from heaven. Then every person stands before the great white throne, and only one thing matters: is my name written in the book of life?

## 02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 20:11 (KJV)

11 And I saw ▲ a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven ◷ fled away; and there was found no place for them.

### How to read the thousand years

Christians have held three main views. I want to know all three before I settle:

- **Premillennial** — Christ returns (ch. 19) *before* a literal thousand-year reign on earth. This is Guzik's view, and the view of most early church fathers until Augustine.
- **Amillennial** — the thousand years are symbolic of the present church age; Satan is "bound" by the gospel's advance (Matt 12:29), and the saints reign now in heaven. Guzik traces it to Tyconius and Augustine; much of the Reformation held it.

- **Postmillennial** — the gospel gradually wins the world, ushering in a golden age, and Christ returns after it.

Guzik's case for premillennialism: chapter 20 follows chapter 19 in sequence ("Then I saw"); Satan clearly still "deceives the nations" today (2 Cor 4:4; 1 Pet 5:8); and over 400 Old Testament verses describe a coming earthly reign (Ps 72; Isa 2:2–4; 11:4–9; Jer 23:5–6). To spiritualize the binding, he says, "does not take the text seriously." Seiss: "Is this a literal transaction? Certainly it is."

### Satan bound (vv1–3)

Notice who does it — "only an unnamed angel" (Morris, in Guzik). Satan is no rival god; one angel with a chain is enough. Barnhouse: "the conquest of Satan and his powers does not come by any human effort." His four names tell his record: dragon (cruel), serpent of old (the deceiver of Eden, Gen 3:1), devil (slanderer), Satan (adversary). The purpose of the prison is specific: so he would not *deceive* the nations. Seiss: deception is "the great work and business of Satan in every age."

### Thrones and the first resurrection (vv4–6)

Who sits on the thrones? Guzik lists the options: the twenty-four elders, the apostles (Matt 19:28), or the saints together (1 Cor 6:2–3; Rev 3:21). Then John singles out the martyrs of the tribulation — the word for "beheaded" really means executed — and shows them vindicated and reigning. The first resurrection is the resurrection of the righteous (John 5:28–29; Luke 14:14). Walvoord: it "is not an event but an order of resurrection" — Christ the firstfruits, then those who are His at His coming (1 Cor 15:20–23), completed with these martyrs. Over them "the second death has no power." They will be "priests of God and of Christ" — the calling Israel was given at Sinai (Exod 19:6) and the church has now (1 Pet 2:9; Rev 1:6).

### Why release Satan? (vv7–10)

This is the hardest question in the chapter. Guzik's answer: the millennium proves that man's problem is not his environment but his heart. After a thousand years under a perfect King, with Satan locked away, the nations still rebel the moment they're tempted. Hoste, in Guzik: the human heart "remains at heart only evil and at enmity with God" apart from new birth (Jer 17:9; John 3:3). "Gog and Magog" borrows the names from Ezekiel 38–39, but Guzik sees a different battle — Ezekiel's comes before Christ's return, this one after the millennium. Again there is no battle: fire from heaven devours them (v9). The devil joins the beast and false prophet, who are *still there* after a thousand years — the lake of fire does not annihilate. "Forever and ever" is literally "to the ages of the ages" (Walvoord).

### The great white throne (vv11–15)

*Great* in authority, *white* in purity, a *throne* because the King sits as Judge (John 5:22). Earth and heaven flee — there is nowhere left to hide (contrast Adam hiding in the garden, Gen 3:8). Walvoord: the dead are standing because "they are now about to be sentenced." Guzik notes that believers do not stand here; our sins were judged at the cross (John 5:24; Rom 8:1). We will stand before the judgment seat of Christ for reward, not condemnation (2 Cor 5:10; 1 Cor 3:12–15).

Two kinds of books are opened. The *books* record deeds — Mounce: "the irrefutable evidence of a man's actual relationship with God." Judgment by deeds also means degrees of punishment (Matt 11:20–24). But the deciding book is the *book of life* (Exod 32:32–33; Dan 12:1; Luke 10:20; Phil 4:3; Rev 3:5; 13:8). No one is saved by what is written in the first books; everyone is lost who is not written in the

second. Death and Hades — the grave and the holding place of the dead — are themselves thrown into the lake of fire (1 Cor 15:26). Alford: "there is also a second and deeper death."

### Word study (Greek)

- **abyss — *abyssos* (G12):** the bottomless pit, a prison for demons (Luke 8:31; Rev 9:1).
- **bound — *deō* (G1210):** to tie, bind, imprison.
- **deceive — *planaō* (G4105):** to lead astray, cause to wander — Satan's chief work (12:9; 20:3, 8, 10).
- **thousand — *chilioi* (G5507):** a thousand; Latin *mille* gives us "millennium."
- **beheaded — *pelekizō* (G3990):** from *pelekys*, an axe — executed.
- **testimony — *martyria* (G3141):** witness; *martys* (G3144) became our word "martyr."
- **came to life — *zaō* (G2198):** to live; the same verb for the saints (v4) and the rest of the dead (v5).
- **resurrection — *anastasis* (G386):** a standing up again.
- **blessed — *makarios* (G3107):** the fifth of Revelation's seven beatitudes.
- **released — *lyō* (G3089):** to loose, set free.
- **tormented — *basanizō* (G928):** to torture, torment.
- **forever and ever — *eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn* (G165):** "to the ages of the ages."
- **book — *biblion* (G975) / *biblos* (G976):** a scroll, a written record.
- **deeds — *ergon* (G2041):** works, what a person does.
- **Hades — *hadēs* (G86):** the realm of the dead; the Greek counterpart of Hebrew *Sheol*.

### Cross-references

Gen 3:1, 15; Exod 19:6; Exod 32:32–33; Ps 2:6–9; Ps 72:8–11; Isa 2:2–4; Isa 11:1–10; Isa 65:20–25; Ezek 38–39; Dan 7:9–10, 22, 27; Dan 12:1–2; Zech 14:9–17; Matt 19:28; Matt 25:41; John 5:22–29; Rom 16:20; 1 Cor 6:2–3; 1 Cor 15:20–26; 2 Cor 5:10; 2 Pet 3:8; Rev 3:5, 21; Rev 12:9; Rev 21:8.

# 03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 20:6 (KJV)

6 ★ Blessed and holy is he that hath part in ⇄ the first resurrection: on such ⇄ the second death hath no power, but they shall be ★ priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him ⇄ a thousand years.

### Command to obey — be faithful to death

The martyrs refused the mark "because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God" (v4). The pressure I face is smaller, but it is real — to go along, stay quiet, take the easy mark. Today I'll speak for Jesus where I've been silent. For the men I disciple, faithfulness may look like a hard phone call, an honest step-four inventory, or walking away from old friends.

### Sin to confess — "it's my environment."

I like to blame my circumstances: if things were different, I'd be different. The millennium ends that excuse. A perfect King, a perfect world, no devil — and the human heart still rebels (vv8–9). My problem is my heart, and only the new birth fixes it (Ezek 36:26; John 3:3). That's the message for every man in recovery: a new zip code isn't a new heart.

### Warning to heed — the books are open

Every deed is written (v12). Nothing is hidden, nothing forgotten, no one too small or too great to stand there. If I'm counting on my good outweighing my bad, the books will not save me. The only question at that throne is v15.

### Promise to trust — "over these the second death has no power."

If I belong to Christ, I will die once at most, and death has already lost its sting (1 Cor 15:55–57). I will not stand at the great white throne for condemnation (John 5:24; Rom 8:1). My name is written (Luke 10:20) — and Jesus said that is the thing to rejoice in.

### Example to follow — the deceiver is on a chain

One unnamed angel binds him. Satan is strong, but he is not God's equal and never was. When I feel overpowered by temptation, I remember who holds the key (Rev 1:18) and that "the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet" (Rom 16:20).

### Worship

Death and Hades — the two enemies every man fears — are themselves thrown away (v14). The last enemy is abolished. The next chapter promises "no longer any death" (21:4). I worship the Judge who is also my Savior.

### Prayer

Lord Jesus, Judge of all the earth, thank You that my name is written in the book of life by Your grace and not by my deeds. Give me courage to bear testimony to You when it costs me something. Don't let me blame my circumstances for what is in my heart. Make me urgent for the men around me whose names I want to see written there too. Amen.

# Revelation 21

## *All Things New: The New Jerusalem*

**OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION**

*"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."*
**Acts 17:11**

**CHAPTER THEME**

God finishes what He started in Eden. He makes everything new, moves in with His people, and wipes away every tear. The city is His gift to His Bride, lit by the Lamb, open to every thirsty person — and closed to everything unclean.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

# 00 The Text

REVELATION 21 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as ★ a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, ▲ the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

4 And God shall ★ wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be ★ no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, ▲ I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

6 And he said unto me, ▲ It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of ★ the water of life freely.

7 ★ He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

8 But ⚠ the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and ⚠ all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is ⚠ the second death.

9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee ★ the bride, the Lamb's wife.

10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

11 Having ▲ the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;

12 And had a wall great and high, and had ⇄ twelve gates, and at the gates ⇄ twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the ⇄ twelve tribes of the children of Israel:

13 On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.

14 And the wall of the city had ⇄ twelve foundations, and in them the names of the ⇄ twelve apostles of the Lamb.

15 And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

16 And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed , ⇄ twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

17 And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

18 And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was ⇄ pure gold, like unto clear glass.

19 And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;

20 The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

22 And I saw no temple therein : for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

24 And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

26 And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.

27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

## Marked in the text

- **v1** a new heaven and a new earth
- **v1** no more sea
- **v2** the holy city
- **v2** a bride adorned for her husband
- **v3** the tabernacle of God is with men
- **v4** wipe away all tears
- **v4** no more death
- **v5** I make all things new
- **v6** It is done
- **v6** the water of life freely
- **v7** He that overcometh shall inherit all things
- **v8** the fearful, and unbelieving
- **v8** all liars
- **v8** the second death
- **v9** the bride, the Lamb's wife
- **v11** the glory of God *(every occurrence)*
- **v12** twelve *(every occurrence)*
- **v16** foursquare
- **v18** pure gold *(every occurrence)*
- **v22** no temple
- **v22** the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb
- **v23** the Lamb is the light thereof
- **v25** no night there
- **v27** any thing that defileth
- **v27** written in the Lamb's book of life

*Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.*

# 01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 21:8 (KJV)

[8] But ⚠ the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and ⚠ all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is ⚠ the second death.

## Setting

The last enemy is gone. Death and Hades are in the lake of fire (20:14), and the great white throne has spoken. Now John sees what comes after judgment: "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth" (v1).

## Structure

- vv1–2 — **all things new:** a new heaven and a new earth, "for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea" (v1). The holy city, new Jerusalem, comes down out of heaven from God, "made ready as a bride adorned for her husband" (v2).
- vv3–4 — **God with us:** "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them" (v3). "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away" (v4).
- vv5–8 — **the One on the throne speaks:** "Behold, I am making all things new" (v5). "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega" (v6). Water of life "without cost" to the one who thirsts (v6). "He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son" (v7). But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, immoral, sorcerers, idolaters and all liars — "their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (v8).
- vv9–21 — **the Bride, the city:** one of the seven bowl angels says, "Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb" (v9). From a great and high mountain John sees the city "having the glory of God" (vv10–11). A great, high wall; twelve gates with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, three on each side (vv12–13); twelve foundation stones with the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb (v14). It is measured with a gold rod: square, length, width and height equal — twelve thousand stadia, which the NASB95 gives as fifteen hundred miles (vv15–16). The wall is jasper; the city is pure gold like clear glass; the foundations are adorned with twelve precious stones; each gate is a single pearl; the street is pure gold, like transparent glass (vv18–21).
- vv22–27 — **what the city doesn't need:** no temple, "for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple" (v22). No sun or moon, "for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb" (v23). The nations walk by its light; the kings bring their glory into it (vv24, 26). Its gates are never closed, "for there will be no night there" (v25). Nothing unclean will ever enter — "but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life" (v27).

## Repeated words

new (vv1, 2, 5); no longer / no more (vv1, 4); twelve (vv12, 14, 21); gates (vv12, 13, 15, 21, 25); glory (vv11, 23, 24, 26); bride (vv2, 9); the Lamb (vv9, 14, 22, 23, 27); city (vv2, 10, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 23); gold (vv15,

18, 21).

### Contrasts

first heaven and earth ⟷ new heaven and earth (v1). Babylon the harlot (17–18) ⟷ Jerusalem the bride (vv2, 9). Tears, death, mourning ⟷ "no longer" (v4). The thirsty who drink freely (v6) ⟷ those whose part is the lake of fire (v8). Babylon's lamp goes out (18:23) ⟷ "its lamp is the Lamb" (v23). Babylon's gold bought souls (18:12–13) ⟷ the city's gold is pavement (v21). Nothing unclean (v27) ⟷ only those written in the Lamb's book of life.

### Chapter theme (my words)

God finishes what He started in Eden. He makes everything new, moves in with His people, and wipes away every tear. The city is His gift to His Bride, lit by the Lamb, open to every thirsty person — and closed to everything unclean.

## 02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 21:6 (KJV)

6 And he said unto me, ▲ It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of ★ the water of life freely.

### What "new" means (v1)

Guzik: the word is *kainos* — new in kind and quality, fresh — not *neos*, new in time. God isn't simply starting over with a copy; He is making a better creation. Isaiah promised it: "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth" (Isa 65:17; 66:22). Peter saw the old one dissolve (2 Pet 3:10–13). Guzik places this after the millennium of chapter 20; the millennial passages still have seas (Ps 72:8; Ezek 47), but here "there is no longer any sea."

### No more sea

To the Jewish mind the sea was the place of chaos and separation. The beast rose from it (13:1), it held the dead (20:13), and "the wicked are like the tossing sea" (Isa 57:20). John himself wrote from Patmos, cut off by the sea from the churches he loved (1:9). In the new creation nothing separates God's people from Him or from each other.

### God with us (vv2–4)

The heart of the chapter is v3: God dwells with His people. Guzik traces the line — God walking with Adam in the garden (Gen 3:8), the tabernacle in the wilderness (Exod 25:8; 29:45), the Word who "became flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14 — literally *tabernacled*), and now God's home among men forever. The city is a gift that comes down from God; man didn't build it (Heb 11:10, 16). Guzik notes Seiss's list of the tears God will wipe away — tears of grief, of pain, of regret, of disappointment. Walvoord, in Guzik: the point is God's comfort, not shame over tears; this verse is not a rebuke to the believer who grieves now.

### "I am making all things new" (v5)

The verb is present tense. Guzik: God's renewing work has already begun in the believer (2 Cor 4:16; 5:17). Redeemed humanity will be better than innocent Adam ever was. H. Morris, in Guzik: in the new creation nothing will decay; the law of decay will be "repealed" (Rom 8:21).

### "It is done" (v6)

The same idea Jesus spoke on the cross, "It is finished" (John 19:30), is now said over all creation. Alpha and Omega, the first and last letters — He began it and He completes it (Isa 44:6). Then the invitation: water of life *without cost* to the thirsty (Isa 55:1; John 4:14; 7:37–38). Spurgeon, in Guzik, on how simple drinking is — nothing to earn, only to receive. Guzik: overcoming is by faith in Jesus (1 John 5:4–5).

### The list in v8

It begins with "the cowardly." L. Morris, in Guzik: this is not natural timidity but the person who chooses self and safety over Christ. The list describes lives that never turned to Christ — not believers who have stumbled in these sins and been washed (1 Cor 6:9–11). Paul's list ends, "Such were some of you."

### The Bride is the city (vv9–14)

The same kind of angel who showed John the harlot (17:1) now shows him the Bride. Guzik takes the city as a real place, called the Bride because it is where God's people dwell. The names on it unite God's people across history: the twelve tribes on the gates, the twelve apostles on the foundations (Eph 2:19–20). The wall isn't for defense — there are no enemies left — but it marks the city as set apart. The three gates on each side may echo Israel's camp arranged around the tabernacle (Num 2).

### The measurements (vv15–17)

Twelve thousand stadia is about 1,500 miles in each direction — length, width and height equal. The only other perfect cube in the Bible is the Holy of Holies (1 Kgs 6:20). Guzik: the whole city is the Most Holy Place. In the tabernacle only the high priest entered, once a year, with blood. In the new Jerusalem all of God's people live there. L. Morris, in Guzik: there is splendor here, and room for all.

### The materials (vv18–21)

Guzik takes them as real, but pointing beyond anything we know. The twelve stones echo the high priest's breastplate, which carried the names of the tribes over his heart (Exod 28:15–21, 29). Johnson, in Guzik: the imagery speaks of God's glory and holiness, not luxury. Walvoord: gold "like clear glass" shows a city that lets the glory of God pass through it without obstruction. The gates of pearl are worth remembering: a pearl forms around a wound in the oyster. What men pave roads with on earth, God paves streets with there.

### No temple, no sun (vv22–27)

Every ancient city had temples; this one has none, because God Himself is present everywhere in it. Alford, in Guzik: no place of worship or sacrifice is needed. The glory that filled the tabernacle (Exod 40:34) now fills the city, and its lamp is the Lamb (Isa 60:19–20). "No night" means no darkness, danger or closing of the gates. The nations and kings bring their glory into it (Isa 60:3, 11). And the door is defined by one thing: names written in the Lamb's book of life. Johnson, in Guzik: one must turn one's loyalties to the Lamb now to share in the city then.

### Word study (Greek)

- **new — *kainos* (G2537):** new in kind and quality, fresh — not *neos* (G3501), new in time.
- **passed away — *aperchomai* (G565):** to go away, depart.
- **tabernacle — *skēnē* (G4633):** a tent, God's dwelling; *skēnoō* (G4637), "dwell," is the verb of John 1:14.
- **wipe away — *exaleiphō* (G1813):** to wipe out, erase — the same word as "erase" in 3:5 and "wiped away" in Acts 3:19.
- **mourning — *penthos* (G3997):** grief, sorrow — the very thing Babylon said she would never see (18:7).
- **It is done — *gegonan* (from *ginomai*, G1096):** perfect tense — it has come to pass and stands done.
- **without cost — *dōrean* (G1432):** as a gift, freely.
- **overcomes — *nikaō* (G3528):** to conquer, win the victory.
- **cowardly — *deilos* (G1169):** fearful, timid in a shameful way.
- **bride — *nymphē* (G3565):** a bride, a young wife.
- **measure — *metreō* (G3354):** to measure out.
- **stadia — *stadion* (G4712):** a unit of about 600 feet; twelve thousand is roughly 1,400–1,500 miles (NASB95: "fifteen hundred miles").
- **temple — *naos* (G3485):** the inner sanctuary, the dwelling of God.
- **lamp — *lychnos* (G3088):** a lamp — the same word for Babylon's lamp that goes out (18:23).
- **unclean — *koinos* (G2839):** common, defiled, profane.

### Cross-references

Gen 2:8–10; Gen 3:8; Exod 25:8; Exod 28:15–21; Lev 26:11–12; Num 2; 1 Kgs 6:20; Isa 25:8; Isa 35:10; Isa 55:1; Isa 60:1–3, 11, 19–20; Isa 65:17–19; Ezek 37:27; Ezek 48:30–35; John 1:14; John 14:2–3; 1 Cor 2:9; 1 Cor 6:9–11; 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 4:26; Eph 2:19–22; Heb 11:10, 16; Heb 12:22–24; 2 Pet 3:10–13; Rev 3:12.

## 03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 21:2 (KJV)

2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

### Command to obey — "come and drink."

The water of life is "without cost" to "the one who thirsts" (v6). The only requirement is thirst. I'll stop trying to earn what He gives freely, and today I'll go to Him thirsty instead of trying to look full. For the men I serve who have tried every other well — drugs, drink, porn, approval — this is the invitation: come and drink.

### Sin to confess — cowardice

"The cowardly" heads the list in v8. Not the nervous man, but the man who picks his own safety over Christ. Where have I kept quiet to protect my comfort or my reputation? I'll name it and ask for courage. The cure isn't trying harder to be brave; it's trusting more the One who already overcame.

### Warning to heed — nothing unclean will enter

God's city is holy; v27 shuts the gate on anything unclean. But the same God says, "Such were some of you; but you were washed" (1 Cor 6:11). The warning drives me to the only One who can make me clean, and it gives me urgency for men who haven't come yet.

### Promise to trust — "He will wipe away every tear."

Not just a tissue for today, but an end to the cause of every tear. Death, mourning, crying and pain — all "no longer" (v4). For the man grieving a son, a marriage or lost years, this is not a pat answer. It is God's personal promise: He will do the wiping Himself.

### Example to follow — God dwelling with His people

The goal of the whole Bible is v3: God with us. If that is where history ends, I want my days to look like it now — time with Him, not just work for Him. I'll practice His presence: start the day in the Word, walk with Him through it, end it with thanks.

### Worship

No temple, because He is there. No sun, because the Lamb is the light. No night, no locked gates, no tears. Even the gates of pearl began with a wound. I'm going home to a city built by a God who was wounded to bring me in.

### Prayer

Alpha and Omega, You make all things new. Thank You that the end of the story is You living with us and wiping away every tear. I come thirsty — let me drink freely. Wash what is unclean in me, give me courage where I've been a coward, and make me an inviter for every man who still needs the water of life. Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

# Revelation 22

## *Paradise Restored:*
## *Behold, I Am Coming Quickly*

**OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION**

*"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."*
**Acts 17:11**

CHAPTER THEME

The Bible ends where it began — a garden, a river, the tree of life — but better: no curse, and God's face seen. Jesus is coming quickly. Until then the invitation stands open: whoever is thirsty, come.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

# 00 The Text

REVELATION 22 (KJV), MARKED

Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
Rose Sin / warning | Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:

4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle , neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

6 And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

8 And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.

9 Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.

10 And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

### Marked in the text

- **v1** water of life *(every occurrence)*
- **v1** the throne of God and of the Lamb *(every occurrence)*
- **v2** the tree of life *(every occurrence)*
- **v2** healing of the nations
- **v3** no more curse
- **v3** his servants shall serve him
- **v4** see his face
- **v5** no night there
- **v5** for ever and ever
- **v6** faithful and true
- **v7** I come quickly *(every occurrence)*
- **v7** blessed *(every occurrence)*
- **v9** worship God
- **v10** Seal not
- **v10** the time is at hand
- **v11** filthy *(every occurrence)*
- **v12** my reward is with me
- **v13** Alpha and Omega
- **v14** do his commandments
- **v15** without are dogs
- **v16** the root and the offspring of David
- **v16** the bright and morning star
- **v17** Come *(every occurrence)*
- **v18** add unto
- **v19** take away
- **v21** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ

*Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.*

# 01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 22:1 (KJV)

1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

### Setting

The angel who showed John the city (21:9) keeps showing him: "Then he showed me a river of the water of life" (v1). Then the vision ends, and the last voice of the Bible is Jesus speaking directly to the churches (vv6–21).

### Structure

- vv1–5 — **Paradise restored:** "a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb" (v1). On either side "the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations" (v2). "There will no

longer be any curse" (v3). "His bond-servants will serve Him; they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads" (vv3–4). "There will no longer be any night … because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever" (v5).

- vv6–11 — **the words are true; keep them:** "These words are faithful and true" (v6). "And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book" (v7). John falls at the angel's feet a second time and is told again, "Do not do that … worship God" (vv8–9). "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near" (v10). Let each one continue on the path he has chosen (v11).
- vv12–16 — **Jesus speaks:** "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done" (v12). "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (v13). "Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city" (v14). Outside are the dogs, sorcerers, immoral, murderers, idolaters, "and everyone who loves and practices lying" (v15). "I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star" (v16).
- vv17–21 — **the last invitation, the last warning, the last word:** "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.' … let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost" (v17). Anyone who adds to the words of this book, God will add the plagues to him; anyone who takes away, God will take away his part from the tree of life and the holy city (vv18–19). "Yes, I am coming quickly." "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus" (v20). "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen" (v21).

### Repeated words

coming quickly (vv7, 12, 20); blessed (vv7, 14); the words of the prophecy of this book (vv7, 10, 18; compare vv9, 19); come (v17 three times, v20); the tree of life (vv2, 14, 19); throne of God and of the Lamb (vv1, 3); water of life (vv1, 17); worship God (v9); testify (vv16, 18, 20).

### Contrasts

the tree of life guarded by a sword in Eden (Gen 3:24) ⟷ open, with the right to eat (vv2, 14). The curse begins (Gen 3:17) ⟷ "no longer be any curse" (v3). Adam hides from God's face (Gen 3:8) ⟷ "they will see His face" (v4). Those who wash their robes go in (v14) ⟷ those who love lying stay outside (v15). Adding to the book ⟷ taking away from it (vv18–19). The Old Testament ends with "a curse" (Mal 4:6) ⟷ the New ends with "grace" (v21).

### Chapter theme (my words)

The Bible ends where it began — a garden, a river, the tree of life — but better: no curse, and God's face seen. Jesus is coming quickly. Until then the invitation stands open: whoever is thirsty, come.

# 02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 22:16 (KJV)

16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am ▲ the root and the offspring of David, and ▲ the bright and morning star.

### Genesis 2 meets Revelation 22

Guzik calls it Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained. The river that watered Eden (Gen 2:10) flows again — a "better river" than even Ezekiel's (Ezek 47:1–12; Zech 14:8; Ps 46:4). The tree of life, barred after the fall so that man would not eat and live forever in his sin (Gen 3:22–24), stands open on both banks. What Adam lost, the Last Adam restores, and more.

### "The healing of the nations" (v2)

Does heaven have sickness? Guzik: the word is *therapeia*, which can mean service or care, so "health-giving" fits — the leaves sustain life rather than cure disease. Twelve kinds of fruit, every month: endless, abundant provision.

### No curse, His face, His name (vv3–5)

The curse of Genesis 3:16–19 — pain, thorns, sweat, dust — is gone. Guzik notes that Isaiah 65:20 shows death still possible in the millennium; here it is finished. Moses was told, "no man can see Me and live" (Exod 33:20). Now "they will see His face" — the promise of the pure in heart (Matt 5:8; 1 John 3:2). His name on their foreheads marks ownership and likeness, the opposite of the beast's mark (13:16). Heaven is not idle: "His bond-servants will serve Him" (v3) — and reign forever (v5).

### "I am coming quickly" (vv7, 12, 20)

Three times in one chapter. Morgan, in Guzik: the sense is closer to *suddenly* than *soon* — when He comes, He will come swiftly. Mounce calls the church's posture the "tension of imminence": every generation lives expecting Him. The blessing is for the one who *heeds* — keeps, guards, obeys — what is written (v7), the same blessing as 1:3. Revelation opens and closes with the promise that this book is meant to be obeyed, not just decoded.

### John bows again (vv8–9)

He did this in 19:10 and does it again. Even an apostle, near the end of his life, can be dazzled by the messenger and forget the Master. The angel's answer has not changed: "worship God." Only God receives worship — and Jesus does (Matt 8:2; Heb 1:6).

### "Do not seal" (vv10–11)

Daniel was told to keep his vision secret, "for it pertains to many days in the future" (Dan 8:26), and to seal up the book (Dan 12:4, 9). John is told the opposite: "the time is near." Revelation is meant to be read, understood and lived. Verse 11 is a sobering word: a day comes when character is fixed. Guzik: the time to repent is now, not after He comes.

### Reward by works (v12)

Not salvation by works, but works as the evidence of real faith (James 2:20; Titus 3:8). Believers are saved by grace and then rewarded for faithfulness (1 Cor 3:12–15; 2 Cor 5:10).

### Alpha and Omega (v13)

God called Himself "the first and … the last" in Isaiah (Isa 41:4; 44:6; 48:12). Here Jesus says it of Himself. Guzik: there is no clearer claim to deity.

### "Wash their robes" (v14)

The KJV reads "do his commandments"; the NASB reads "wash their robes." Guzik explains the difference is in the Greek manuscripts: *plynontes tas stolas* ("washing the robes") and *poiountes tas entolas* ("doing the commandments") look and sound much alike. Either way the meaning holds — those cleansed by the Lamb's blood (7:14) live in obedience. Outside are "the dogs," a picture of the unclean and shameless (Matt 7:6; Phil 3:2).

### Root and morning star (v16)

As the *root* of David, Jesus is David's source — his God. As the *descendant* of David, He is David's Son, the promised King (Isa 11:1, 10; Matt 22:41–45). The bright morning star appears in the darkest hour, right before dawn (Num 24:17; 2 Pet 1:19; Rev 2:28).

### The last invitation (v17)

Guzik reads two directions here: the Spirit and the Bride say "Come" to Jesus — come back — and to the thirsty — come and drink. Every believer who hears joins the call. The only qualification is thirst and willingness: "let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost" (Isa 55:1; John 7:37).

### The last warning (vv18–19)

Adding to or taking from this book brings judgment (compare Deut 4:2; Prov 30:6). Guzik notes that the warning assumes the book can be understood. Poole sees it as a seal on the whole canon. It is a warning to every teacher — and every student — to handle prophecy with fear and humility.

### The last word (vv20–21)

"Come, Lord Jesus" is the Aramaic prayer *Maranatha* (1 Cor 16:22), on the lips of the earliest church. The Old Testament ends with "a curse" (Mal 4:6). The New Testament ends with "grace."

### Word study (Greek)

- **river — *potamos* (G4215):** a river, a flowing stream.
- **tree — *xylon* (G3586):** wood, a tree — the same word Peter and Paul used for the cross (Acts 5:30; Gal 3:13; 1 Pet 2:24).
- **healing — *therapeia* (G2322):** service, care, healing — our word "therapy."
- **curse — *katathema* (G2652):** an accursed thing.
- **serve — *latreuō* (G3000):** to serve in worship, priestly service.
- **face — *prosōpon* (G4383):** face, presence.
- **quickly — *tachy* (G5035):** swiftly, suddenly, without delay.
- **heeds / keeps — *tēreō* (G5083):** to guard, keep, observe.

- **seal — *sphragizō* (G4972):** to seal up, close.
- **reward — *misthos* (G3408):** wages, reward.
- **wash — *plynō* (G4150):** to wash, especially clothing.
- **robes — *stolē* (G4749):** a long flowing robe.
- **root — *rhiza* (G4491):** root, source.
- **morning — *prōinos* (G4407):** of the early morning.
- **come — *erchou* (from *erchomai*, G2064):** a present imperative — "come," and keep coming.
- **grace — *charis* (G5485):** undeserved favor — the last word of Scripture.

### Cross-references

Gen 2:8–10; Gen 3:8, 17–19, 22–24; Exod 33:20–23; Num 24:17; Deut 4:2; Ps 36:8–9; Ps 46:4; Prov 30:6; Isa 11:1, 10; Isa 44:6; Isa 55:1; Isa 60:19–20; Ezek 47:1–12; Dan 12:4, 9; Zech 14:8; Mal 4:6; Matt 5:8; John 4:14; John 7:37–38; 1 Cor 13:12; 1 Cor 16:22; Titus 2:13; 2 Pet 1:19; 1 John 3:2–3; Rev 1:3; Rev 2:7; Rev 7:14–17.

## 03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 22:2 (KJV)

2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there ★ the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the ★ healing of the nations.

### Command to obey — "heed the words of this book."

Revelation opens and closes with a blessing for those who keep it (1:3; 22:7). Now the question is what I'll do with it. I'll pick one thing from these final chapters — come out of Babylon, worship God alone, come thirsty — and live it this week. For the men I disciple, prophecy should produce obedience, not just charts.

### Sin to confess — worshiping the messenger

John did it twice. I can be dazzled by a teacher, a ministry, a study tool or my own insight, and lose sight of Jesus. Everything I build — every study, every app, every film — has to point past itself: "worship God."

### Warning to heed — character is being set

"Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong … the one who is holy, still keep himself holy" (v11). The choices I make now are shaping who I'll be when He comes. Don't add to His Word, don't take from it, and don't put off repentance.

### Promise to trust — "they will see His face."

Everything in me that longs for home is pointing here. Not just a better place, but Him — face to face (1 Cor 13:12). For the man who carries shame and can't look anyone in the eye: one day you will look

into His face, washed and unashamed.

### Example to follow — the Bride says "Come."

The church's last recorded word in the Bible is an invitation. I want to be an inviter: to Jesus, "Come back"; to every thirsty man, "Come and drink." No one is too far gone. "Let the one who wishes take."

### Worship

Alpha and Omega. Root and descendant of David. Bright morning star. The Bible begins with "In the beginning God" and ends with the grace of the Lord Jesus. My life is held between those two.

### Prayer

Lord Jesus, You are the first and the last, and You are coming quickly. Wash my robes. Keep me from worshiping anything but You. Make me a man who heeds Your Word and carries Your invitation to every thirsty man I meet. Until I see Your face — Maranatha. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Amen.