

# REVELATION 12-22

## Study Guide

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

For more detailed information, review the study guide for chapters 1-11. The author names himself as John (Rev. 1:1), and most scholars and early church fathers consider the Apostle John, who wrote the Gospel of John and 1-3 John, to have authored Revelation. The book was written most likely between A.D. 95-96.

### KEY LOCATIONS FOR REVELATION



Map from Bethany Green, *Revelation: The Seven Churches*

**It is important to remember** that everything in Revelation was originally written & sent to the churches above. As you read the remainder of the book, keep in mind what encouragement and instruction these churches received for their specific situations that still applies to us today!

### A COUPLE REMINDERS

**OLD TESTAMENT IMAGERY** – Here are just a few of the Old Testament items to be looking for:

- Lamb
- Lampstands
- Babylon
- Olive trees
- Actions or visions similar to Moses, Elijah, Ezekiel, Zechariah

## SYMBOLIC NUMBERS

- Frequently used to signify completeness and perfection:
  - 4 – living creatures, horsemen, angels
  - 7 – churches, spirits of God, thunders, seals, trumpets, bowls
  - 12 – elders, gates, foundations, fruit
  - Multiples of 12 – such as 24 or 144,000 (is a multiple of 12 & therefore symbolizes the totality, not a literal amount)
- Satan and evil also are represented by numbers.
  - 3 ½ -- often associated with Satan and evil, a picture of a fracturing of God's completeness and unity.
  - 42 months (3 ½ years or 1,260 days) – represents the timeframe of intensified evil (Rev. 11:2; 13:5)
  - 666 – number of the beast (Rev. 13:18). This is most likely tied to the Hebrew and Greek numbering system which would then spell out “Nero Caesar.” The concept is that evil personified would return to lead the armies of Satan against God.

## FOUR WAYS OF INTERPRETING REVELATION

There are 4 main ways scholars and readers have interpreted this book.

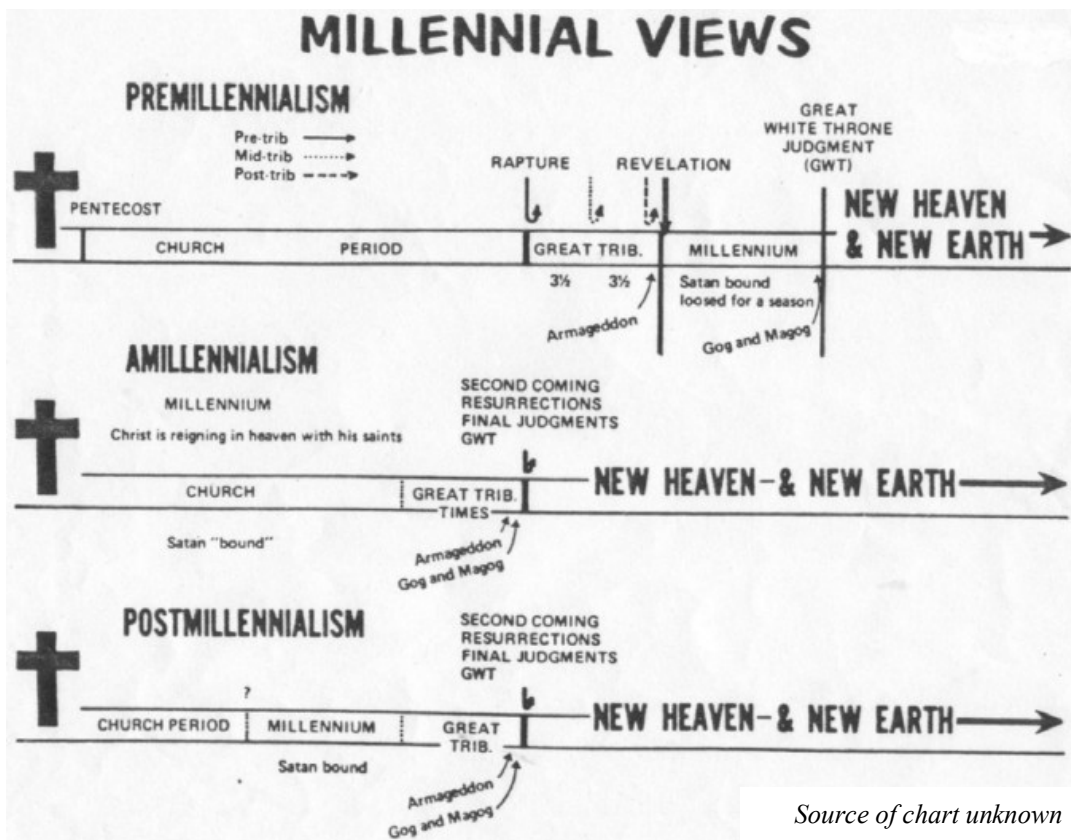
- **PRETERIST** – The book reflects events specific to the persecuted church of John's time. The symbolism was completely understandable by those of that day, therefore this book served primarily as great encouragement to churches during that timeframe.
- **CONTINUOUS HISTORICAL** – A view of what beholds the church from the time of John's writing to the end of the age. In other words, a look at the history of the church from persecutions happening at that time to the final victory.
- **SPIRITUALIST** – Symbolism within the book is focused upon and the book as a whole is viewed as a symbolic representation of the great principles of divine government and the struggle between good and evil, applicable to John's day and to ours.
- **FUTURISTIC** – Interpreting the majority of Revelation as future events once the church is removed from the earth and glorified in heaven. Using Rev. 1:19 as a guide, “Therefore write what you saw, what is, and what will be after these things,” Rev. 1:9-20 makes up “what you saw,” chapters 2-3 define “what is,” and chapter 4-22 reflects future events with Israel and Gentile nations as the focus.

### THREE MILLENNIAL VIEWS

Millennial, meaning “thousand,” refers to the reign of Christ for that period of time (Rev. 20:1-6). Some Christians view this to be a literal 1,000-year reign; others see this is a symbolic representation of an extended period – in the same way that a “day” can be literally 24-hours or reference a greater amount of time, such as “in John’s day.”

It should also be noted that while the descriptions and images below give some general idea of what each camp believes, there are multitudes of nuances within each view.

- **PREMILLENNIAL** – Christ returns prior to His millennial reign on earth. Within this view are three different opinions on when the rapture of the church will take place: Pre-Tribulation, Mid-Tribulation, and Post-Tribulation.
- **AMILLENNIAL** – Christ’s millennial reign is interpreted in a symbolic sense, believing Christ’s reign to have begun either during His earthly ministry or at the point of His resurrection. They hold to Acts 2:33-36 which states that Christ now rules from the right hand of God, therefore He is currently ruling and reigning from heaven.
- **POSTMILLENNIAL** – Christ’s visible return (2<sup>nd</sup> coming) follows the Millennium. This means gospel proclamation through the church will usher in an extended time of peace and righteousness, at which point Christ will return.



## THE TRIBULATION

The timing of when the church is raptured from earth and unto heaven is a common question. Three main opinions exist: pre-tribulation, mid-tribulation, and post-tribulation. Pre-tribulation is obviously prior to when the Great Tribulation starts. Mid-tribulationists believe the church will be raptured at the 3 ½ year mark, while post-tribulationists believe the church will remain throughout the Tribulation and be raptured immediately prior to Christ's second coming.

There is biblical evidence for all three of these views, and how one interprets when the Tribulation will take place affects how one might live life now. For example, a pre-tribulationist might not be prepared for persecution, while a mid-tribulationist might grow weary amidst hardship. In light of the numerous warnings throughout Scripture to remain faithful, not fall away, and persevere, it might be best to hope for pre-tribulation, but prepare for post-tribulation. The main point of it all is that the Lord is coming back for His church, but He determines when that will take place. Our job is to live a life holy and pleasing to Him from now until our own death or His coming for the church!

## OBSERVATION WORDS FOR REVELATION 12-22

- Jesus – *take note of different names, representations, actions, etc.*
- Holy Spirit
- God
- Woman – *note differences between woman giving birth & woman on the beast*
- References to and pictures of the church (*beheaded, bride, "those who..."*)
- Testimony
- Old Testament references/images
- Book of Life

## SUMMARY QUESTIONS

- What lesson did the Spirit highlight to you out of this book? How will you go about applying what you've learned? In what way(s) will your life look different as a result?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What did you learn about Jesus through this book? How is He described? What does He do?

- What did you learn about the Holy Spirit through this book?
  
- What did you learn about God through this book?
  
- What are the Old Testament images, references, and allusions you saw? What did they mean in the Old Testament and what do they mean in Revelation?
  
- What do you believe each of the following represent & why are they important?
  - Dragon
  - Woman Giving Birth
  - Male Child
  - Beast #1 & #2
  - 144,000
  - Babylon
  
- What does this book teach regarding the world and those who follow its ways?
  
- What warnings & encouragements are given to the church & believers? What warning or encouragement do you need to hold onto in your life right now?

- Based on this book, describe Hell. What is it? Where is it? Who resides there?
  
- What is the most meaningful thing to you about Heaven?
  
- How does this book also address unbelievers? How does this impact your own passions for evangelism?
  
- How would you describe your interpretation of Revelation, the Millennium, and Tribulation?  
*(Use the guides above to help you)*

## **FOR THE WHOLE BOOK**

**KEY WORD:**

**KEY VERSE:**

**KEY CHAPTER:**

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