

# Lesson 34: Revelation Review #1

We've reached the conclusion of our journey through the Book of Revelation! As we wrap up, I want us to do something a bit special. Instead of staying down in the details, we're going to zoom out and see the whole book as a grand panorama. Think of Revelation as a series of overlapping cycles viewing *This Age* (from Christ's first advent to His return) from multiple vantage points, with only the 7th cycle carrying us into *The Age to Come*. In this lesson, we'll do a quick overview of each chapter so we can appreciate how the whole book retells this grand story and brings us to the threshold of *The Age to Come*.



## Cycle I

### Chapter 1 — Introduction to the Revelation and Vision of Jesus

Our overview begins with Revelation 1. The first 8 verses set the stage for the entire book. Here, John introduces the Revelation as a message from Jesus Christ to His servants, given through angelic messengers. We have a blessing at the start for those who read, hear, and keep what is written (the 1-2-3 "Revelation Waltz"). Then John greets the 7 churches in Asia, anchoring this vision in real historical communities. We're reminded that Jesus is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. In other words, this is a cosmic message with immediate relevance.

Specifically, John intentionally echoes the Greek translation of Daniel 2 to indicate that what follows is a series of symbolic, apocalyptic visions. This isn't a newsreel of the future. Instead, God is using symbolic terms and imagery to show His people what to expect in *This Age* and provide hope for *The Age to Come*, showing that, no matter what tribulation comes, God is in control, the Lamb triumphs, the Dragon is defeated, and those who conquer will reign with Christ forever and ever.

Then, from verse 9 onward, John describes his vision of the risen Christ. He sees Jesus in glory, walking among the 7 golden lampstands, symbolizing His presence with His churches. Christ holds the keys of Death and Hades, reassuring John and us that He controls all of history. This chapter sets the tone for the entire book: it's a series of symbolic visions meant to show us Christ's lordship over *This Age* and His care for His people.

### Chapters 2-3 — The 7 Letters to the 7 Churches

Now let's take a look at Revelation 2-3 as a single unit. These chapters contain Christ's letters to 7 churches in Asia Minor: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. Each letter is both an individual message to a specific church and part of a larger pattern that applies to the whole church throughout *This Age*.



In these letters, we see a recurring structure: Christ introduces Himself with a unique title that fits the situation of that church, He commends what is good, He rebukes what needs correction, and He gives promises to those who overcome, and ends with the refrain, 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches', a call that still addresses us in *This Age*. For example, Ephesus is praised for its doctrinal vigilance but warned about losing its first love. Smyrna is encouraged to remain faithful in suffering. Pergamum is called out for tolerating false teaching, and Thyatira is warned about moral compromise. Sardis has a reputation for being alive but is actually spiritually asleep, while Philadelphia is commended for its perseverance. Finally, Laodicea is lovingly rebuked for being lukewarm and self-reliant, yet invited to intimate table fellowship with Christ (Revelation 3:20).

By looking at these letters together, we see that they represent the full range of challenges and encouragements the church faces throughout *This Age*. Each church is a facet of the church universal, and these messages remind us that Christ is intimately involved with His people, guiding them, correcting them, and promising them the blessings of *The Age to Come* if they remain faithful.

In other words, these two chapters as a whole show us how the church is to live in the time between Christ's ascension and return. They highlight the ongoing spiritual battles, the need for repentance and perseverance, and the hope we have in Christ's ultimate victory. With this overview, we can really see how each of these letters fits into the bigger picture of Revelation as a whole. These messages to the 7 churches aren't just historical snapshots, they're a kind of spiritual map for the entire church age (another name for *This Age*), showing us that every congregation in every era faces similar challenges and needs the same encouragement to stay faithful to Christ. These letters anchor the rest of the book in the real-life experiences of the church in *This Age* until Christ returns.

## Cycle 2

### Chapter 4 — Heaven's Throne Room (1st recapitulation)

Now the camera lifts to heaven. **Revelation 4** gives us the controlling viewpoint for the entire Church Age: God on the throne. Jasper and carnelian tell of His holy beauty; the emerald rainbow recalls covenant mercy. 24 elders, symbolic of the one people of God throughout history, surround the throne, crowned yet casting those crowns in worship. Lightning and thunder remind us that history is governed from above, not below. 4 living creatures call all creation to ceaseless praise. This chapter doesn't advance a clock; it resets our perspective. Whatever the church faces on earth in *This Age*, the first truth is this: the Lord reigns. We live doxologically under His sovereignty. Everything that follows—seals, trumpets, bowls—must be read with this throne-room as the backdrop. The church's story is turbulent, but heaven is unshaken. Worship, not worry, is the right starting point.

### Chapter 5 — The Redeemer Revealed

**Revelation 5** brings the Lamb into the center. A sealed scroll, history's plan and the church's inheritance, rests in the Father's hand, and no creature can open it. John weeps...until the Lion of Judah appears...and turns out to be a slain-yet-standing Lamb. He takes the scroll, and heaven erupts in a new song: "*Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation*". (**Revelation 5:9b**) **Revelation 5:9-10** is the gospel in two verses: redemption accomplished and a royal-priestly vocation bestowed. Here's the heartbeat of our hope: history is not random; it unfolds by the working of nail-scarred hands. The church's mission flows from the Lamb's victory, and our worship fuels our witness. **Revelation 4** said, '*God reigns.*' **Revelation 5** adds, '*The Lamb reigns with Him.*' The center of the universe is Father and Son, adored by the Spirit's 7-fold fullness.

### Chapter 6 — Seals: The Church's Experience in This Age

Now in **Revelation 6** the Lamb breaks the seals and we see what life in *This Age* looks like from the church's side of the glass. The 4 horsemen depict recurring realities: conquest, war, scarcity, and death; not a one-time sequence but the ordinary sorrows of *This Age* between the Advents. Under the altar, martyrs cry, '*How long?*' This is a question the church keeps asking throughout *This Age*. They are given white robes and told to rest until the full number is complete. Then the 6th seal pulls back the curtain to an end-of-*This-Age* scene: cosmic shaking, rulers undone, the great day of wrath looming. The seal cycle thus surveys the Church Age (*This Age*) and then displays the end, so our endurance is framed by the promise of final justice. The takeaway: suffering is normal; crying '*How long?*' is faithful; and the Lamb's lordship guarantees an end to the story.

### Chapter 7 — Who Can Stand?

**Revelation 7** answers the 6th seal's question: '*Who can stand?*' God's redeemed can. First, the 144,000, the symbolic, non-literal fullness of the whole covenant people, are sealed, marked out as God's own (echoing **Deuteronomy 6**) and preserved for faithful witness. Then John looks again and sees the same reality from another angle: a great multitude no one can number, from all nations, standing before the throne in white robes. They have come through the great tribulation, not by *escaping This Age*, but by being *kept* and brought *through it*. Their robes are washed in the blood of the

Lamb; their hunger and tears are answered by the Shepherd who leads them to living waters. The church on earth (sealed) and the church triumphant in heaven (standing) are one people. Assurance is the point: the Lamb loses none of His own. In a turbulent age, God's seal and the Lamb's blood suffice.

## Cycle 3 (After 8:I-5 Transition)

### Chapter 8 — Silence; Trumpets Begin (2nd recapitulation)

Opening the 7th seal yields silence, half an hour of holy hush, signaling God's awe-filled readiness to act and the gravity of judgment. The prayers of the saints rise like incense; then fire from the altar falls; our prayers move history. With **Revelation 8:6** the trumpet cycle begins, recapitulating *This Age* from a different angle: not so much the church's felt experience, but the world's hardening under partial judgments. Trumpets sound warnings: limited, fractional blows (*'thirds'*) that call for repentance. Creation is struck, waters are bittered, darkness encroaches. These are Exodus-like signs revisited on a rebellious world. The message is pastoral and evangelistic: God's judgments in history are mercifully measured, designed to awaken consciences. The church prays; God answers; the world is summoned to turn while there is time. But time is slipping away, both for individuals and *This Age*.

### Chapter 9 — Trumpets Intensify; Impenitence Exposed

Trumpets 5 and 6 darken the picture. Demonic *'locusts'* torment those without God's seal, spiritual warfare made visible. Then 4 bound angels are released at the Euphrates, and a vast cavalry brings death. The point isn't to build a weapons catalog; it's to reveal what idolatry invites when restraints are lifted. Yet the chapter ends on a sobering note: even under severe warnings, *'they did not repent'* of their idolatries and injustices. Trumpets teach us that judgment alone doesn't regenerate hearts; the gospel must. For the church, the call is steady: preach Christ, pray fervently, and don't be surprised when hardness persists. For the world, the call is urgent: today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your heart.

### Chapter 10 — Angelic Interlude: Sweet/Bitter Commission

A mighty angel descends with a little scroll open: God's message now ready to be proclaimed. John is told to eat the scroll; it is *sweet* in his mouth and *bitter* in his stomach. That's the prophet's (and the church's) calling: the gospel is *sweet*, but the message includes judgment and suffering, which is *bitter*. John must prophesy again about peoples, nations, languages, and kings; mission renewed mid-stream. This interlude reminds us: we don't merely analyze visions; we embody a vocation. Fed by God's Word, we speak to *This Age*, but it won't always welcome it. The *sweetness* keeps us joyful; the *bitterness* keeps us compassionate and realistic.

### Chapter 11 — Two Witnesses; Seventh Trumpet (Trumpet Culmination)

**Revelation 11** shows the church's witness in symbolic form. The temple is measured: God knows and keeps His worshiping people. The 2 witnesses, lampstands and olive trees, evoke Zechariah and signify the Spirit-empowered church bearing testimony for a set time (1,260 days). The beast makes war and seems to silence them; the world rejoices, yet God raises them, and fear falls on the unrepentant city. Then the 7th trumpet sounds: heaven announces that the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. The time for rewarding God's servants and judging the destroyers of the earth is declared. This is yet another end-of-*This-Age* vista, the consummation motif ringing out. The pattern is clear: witness, apparent defeat, vindication, and kingdom. That's the Church Age (*This Age*) in miniature, ending with certain triumph.

## Cycle 4

### Chapter 12 — 3rd Recapitulation: The Story Behind the Story

Now the veil is drawn back to the spiritual narrative of *This Age*. A woman (the covenant people) gives birth to a male child (clearly the Messiah, Jesus) whose birth-to-ascension is covered in a single

sweep. A great dragon (Satan) seeks to devour but fails; the child is enthroned, and the woman is nourished in the wilderness for the appointed time during *This Age*. War in heaven means the accuser is cast down; he rages on earth with limited time, but the saints overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony, loving not their lives even unto death. **Revelation 12** retells the whole era from Christ's victory to the church's perseverance under spiritual assault. The key is assurance again: the decisive battle is won; our battles are real but bounded. We fight *from* victory, not *for* it.

### **Revelation 13 — The Two Beasts: State & Spirit of Antichrist**

**Revelation 13** zooms in on the church's adversaries during *This Age*. From the *sea* rises a composite beast: empire/state power that apes sovereignty and demands worship. From the *land* comes a second beast (the '*false prophet*') who works signs, enforces idolatry, and turns economy and culture into tools of coercion. The 'mark' is not a barcode; it's visible allegiance and moral conformity to beastly rule (again echoing **Deuteronomy 6**). '666' is the number of man—tripled imperfection—fitting both Nero's pattern and every empire that absolutizes itself. The saints aren't told to decode timetables but to endure and keep the faith. The message: expect formidable pressure (political, religious, economic) to bow to the beast; resist by loyal worship of the Lamb.

### **Revelation 14 — Zion, Angelic Warnings, and the Harvest**

Against the beasts stands the Lamb on Zion with the **144,000**, one people, sealed and singing. **3** angels fly mid-heaven: the first proclaims the eternal gospel and calls all to fear God; the second announces the inevitable fall of Babylon; the third warns that worshipers of the beast face undiluted wrath. Here's the church's posture: patient endurance and faithful obedience (**Revelation 14:12**). A beatitude anchors us: '*Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord... their deeds follow them*' (**Revelation 14:13**). Then comes a double harvest: grain gathered to God and grapes trodden in judgment. It's a panoramic end-of-*This-Age* glimpse reminding us that witness is urgent, apostasy is perilous, and the Lamb keeps His own.

## Cycle 5

### **Revelation 15 — Prelude to the Bowls: Wrath Brought to Completion**

Conquerors stand beside a sea like glass and sing the Song of Moses and the Lamb, a new exodus praise. The heavenly temple opens, and **7** angels receive **7** last plagues; with them the wrath of God is finished. The imagery is worship-filled: judgment flows from God's holy presence in answer to His people's song and prayer. This short chapter teaches pacing: before the final cycle, God centers us in adoration so we read the bowls as righteous, covenantal acts, not random catastrophes.

### **Revelation 16 — Bowls: Totalized Judgments; 'It Is Done!'**

The bowls recapitulate the age from the world's side with intensified scope. Unlike trumpet '*thirds*', bowl judgments are comprehensive, striking land, sea, rivers, sun, throne of the beast. The 6th bowl exposes propaganda (demonic '*frogs*') gathering kings to '*Armageddon*', which is not a GPS coordinate but the symbol of decisive, God-won defeat. As in Exodus, hard hearts curse rather than repent. The 7th bowl thunders from the temple, '*It is done!*' This is the final consummation note. Babylon is remembered for judgment; a quake uncreates the pretensions of empire. **For the church:** pray (since the bowls of judgment contain the incense of the saints' prayers), persevere, and don't be mesmerized by end-times theater. God's word, not human coalitions, writes the last line.

## Cycle 6

### **Revelation 17 — Babylon Unveiled: The Seduction of the City**

A gaudy woman, Babylon, rides the beast, drunk with the blood of the saints. She's the world-city across the ages: luxury, idolatry, and power intertwined. **7** heads/mountains/kings signal a trans-historical pattern (Rome then, but many Rome-like empires since); the beast carries her until he and

his confederates devour her, reminding the church that evil self-destructs. This is a call for wisdom: persecution isn't the only threat; seduction also is. Babylon conquers many by allure not sword. God's people must see past the glamour to the grime, and measure success by fidelity, not finances.

### Revelation 18 — 'Fallen, Fallen': Lament & Call to Come Out

Heaven declares Babylon's fall; earth's elites wail. Kings, merchants, and shipmasters mourn not her sins but their lost profits. In one hour she is laid waste. Judgment is sudden, total, just. A voice calls, 'Come out of her, my people', pressing separation in conduct, affections, and identity. Heaven rejoices while earth laments. That contrast tests our hearts: which song are we ready to sing? The church lives in cities of men, but belongs to the city of God; we engage while refusing conformity.

### Revelation 19 — Hallelujahs, Marriage Supper, and the Faithful Rider

4 hallelujahs shake heaven: salvation and justice are God's. The marriage of the Lamb has come; the Bride is clothed in the righteous deeds God Himself supplies. Then the heavens open: the Faithful and True rides forth, the Word of God whose sword is His speech. He strikes the nations, not with steel but with sovereign verdict; the beast and false prophet are consigned to the lake of fire. Two suppers divide humanity: joy with the Lamb or judgment under the birds. The point is not a CGI battle but the certainty that Christ's appearing consummates the victory His cross secured.

## Cycle 7 (Only Cycle to Show The Age to Come)

### Revelation 20 — The Millennium, Final Rebellion, and Final Judgment

Satan is bound so he cannot deceive the nations as before, freeing gospel mission across This Age. The '1,000 years' spans This Age: the souls of the martyrs (and by extension all in Christ) live and reign with Him; this 'first resurrection' is their blessed participation in Christ's life, over whom the 'second death' has no power. After a short release, Satan gathers 'Gog and Magog', a globalized echo of ancient foes, for one last, doomed revolt; fire falls from heaven. Then comes the great white throne: books are opened, the dead are raised, judgment is according to deeds, and any not found in the Book of Life are cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death. For the church: present reign in Christ now; sober hope regarding the end; confidence that no injustice survives the judgment of God.

### Revelation 21 — New Creation & the Bride-City

John sees the new heavens and new earth; the sea, a symbol of chaos, is no more. The holy city, New Jerusalem, comes down as a Bride; God dwells with His people, wiping tears, ending death. Note the deliberate counterpoint with Revelation 17: an angel shows a woman/city (then Babylon, now New Jerusalem; then a harlot, now a Bride). The city's cubic measurements and jewels proclaim perfection and priestly glory. Its gates bear Israel's 12 tribes and its foundations the 12 apostles, highlighting the unity of the one redeemed people of God. No temple, because God and the Lamb are its temple; no sun, because the Lamb is its lamp. Nations and kings bring their glory in: culture fulfilled, not erased. Nothing unclean enters. This is the world the covenant always promised, finally and forever.

### Revelation 22 — River, Tree, Invitation, and Benediction

The river of life flows from the throne; the tree of life spans the city's street and river, bearing perpetual fruit; its leaves heal the nations. God's servants see His face and reign forever, Augustine's 'beatific vision' as vocation. The book is not to be sealed; the time is near. Jesus's repeated 'I am coming soon' invites readiness and hope. A closing beatitude commends those who 'wash their robes' to enter the city and eat from the tree of life. The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come', the gospel's final open door, and the canon ends with grace. Revelation leaves us not with timelines but with a Person, a promise, and an invitation:

*'Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.'*