

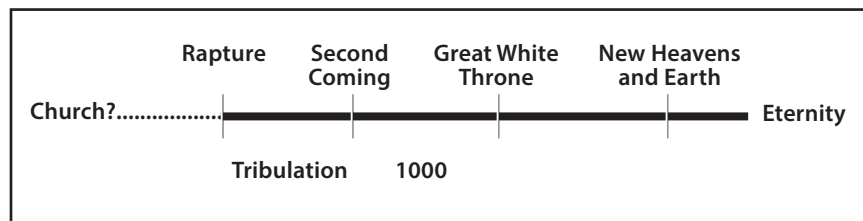
SESSION 4

(Tribulation—Part Two—Revelation 12-14)

I. PRAYER

II. PANORAMA: BROAD CONTEXT

A. Movement #12: Timeline

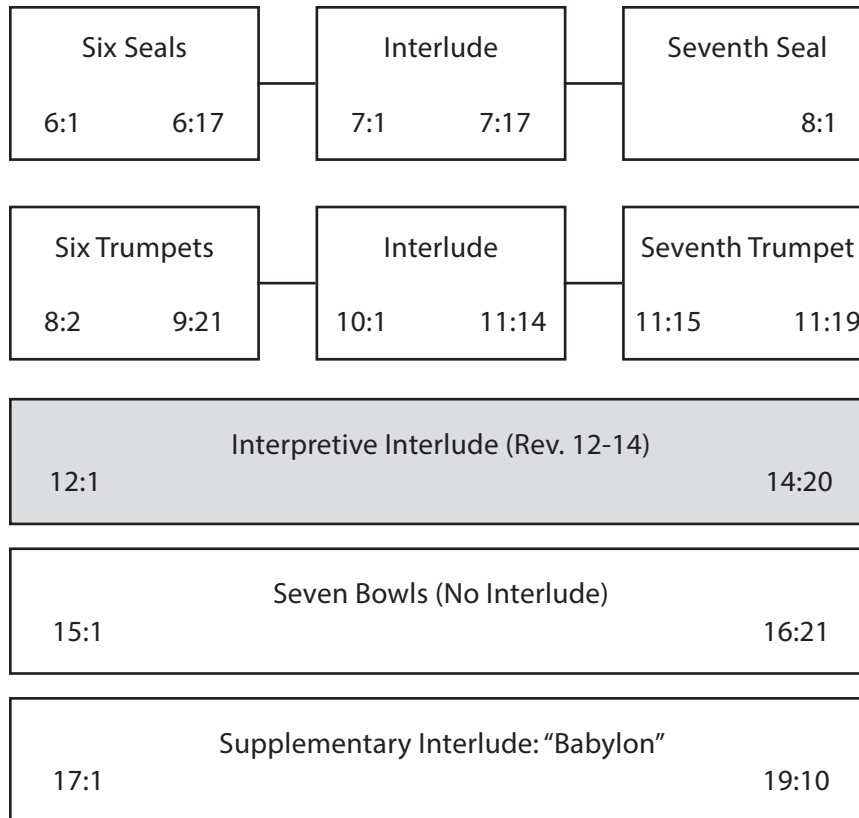


B. Book of Revelation: Charted

REVELATION														
Outline: "Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later." (Rev. 1:19 NIV 84)														
Chapter 1	Chapters 2-3	Chapters 4-22												
"what you have seen"	"what is now"	"what will take place later"												
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salutation (prologue/greeting) • Vision ("have seen") • Outline (1:19) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 Letters to 7 Churches (historical) (representative) (prophetic?) 	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Throne Scene</td> <td style="text-align: center;">5</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">6</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Tribulation</td> <td style="text-align: center;">19</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">19</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Second Coming & Millennium</td> <td style="text-align: center;">20</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">21</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Eternal State</td> <td style="text-align: center;">22</td> </tr> </table>	4	Throne Scene	5	6	Tribulation	19	19	Second Coming & Millennium	20	21	Eternal State	22
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6	Tribulation	19												
19	Second Coming & Millennium	20												
21	Eternal State	22												
1	2	3												

III. INTERTEXTUAL STRUCTURE

Revelation 6:1-19:10



Note: Session 4 will deal with the first shaded Interpretive Interlude.

IV. BIBLICAL DEVELOPMENT: REVELATION 12-14

Before the judgment of the seven bowls, the Biblical author describes supplementary information concerning satanic activity in the Great Tribulation (latter half of the seven years of the Tribulation).

A. Satanic Opposition (12:1-16)

Since the time of Lucifer's rebellion (cf. Isa. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:11-19) there has been angelic warfare between the forces of evil (Satan and his demonic horde) and the forces of good (God and His elect angels). Much of the interplay of the Tribulation is an outworking of this conflict. Beginning

in Revelation 12, John pictures the greater cosmic struggle.

1. The woman, the dragon, the child (1-6)

a. Sign #1: the woman (1-2)

Revelation 12:1-2

*A great **sign** appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. ²She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth.*

- (1) Some see the identity of the woman as Mary, the mother of Jesus. Better, however, the woman symbolizes the nation of Israel (cf. Isa. 54:1-6; Jer. 3:19-20; et al.).
- (2) The child is the Christ, born of the tribe of Judah of the covenant people Israel.

b. Sign #2: the dragon (3-4)

Revelation 12:3-4

Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on its heads. ⁴Its tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that it might devour her child the moment he was born.

- (1) The “red dragon” is identified as Satan.

Revelation 20:2

He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.

- (2) Satan’s original rebellion caused one-third of the angels to follow his insurrection (cf. Rev. 12:8-9; 9:1; Jude 6; 2 Pet. 2:4).

c. Sign #2 (continued) The child (5-6)

Revelation 12:5-6

She gave birth to a son, a male child, who “will rule all the nations with an iron scepter.” And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne. ⁶The woman fled into the wilderness to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.

- (1) The child is the Messiah-King who will “rule all the nations with an iron scepter” (5).
- (2) The child was protected from death at birth and was resurrected and “snatched up to God” as an adult.
- (3) The child’s mother (Israel) will also be protected in the days of the Great Tribulation.

2. The warfare in heaven (7-9)

Revelation 12:7-9

Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. ⁸But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. ⁹The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

3. The song of victory (10-12)

Satan’s defeat which is celebrated as certain and sure will be complete at the end of the Millennial Kingdom (cf. 20:1-10).

The saints who resisted Satan had three “weapons” in their arsenal:

- a. Blood of the Lamb: Basis of redemption
- b. Word of their testimony: Truth of the Word of God
- c. Surrender: No fear of death (submission)

4. The wrath on earth (13-16)

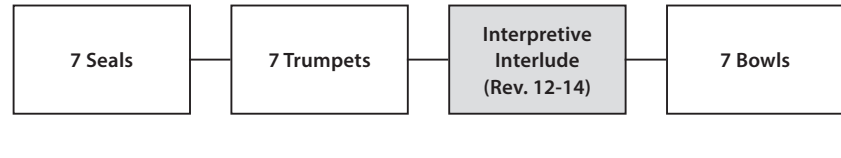
Unable to accuse the saints in heaven (cast out of heaven—see 12:7-9), now Satan persecutes Israel (the woman) on earth.

B. Two Beasts (13:1-18)

Revelation 13:1

The dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on its horns, and on each head a blasphemous name.

CONTEXT: REVIEW



1. Beast out of the sea (1-10)

Opposing the will and ways of God is a “satanic trinity” of the dragon (Satan), the beast out of the sea (Anti-christ), and the beast out of the earth (False Prophet). Revelation 13 addresses the two beasts, certainly not literal animals but devilish people with beastly aspirations and powers.

a. Described (1-4)

- (1) Summoned by the dragon (1) (see also 12:17)
- (2) Empowered by the dragon (2)
- (3) Described metaphorically (2)
 - “leopard” (swift, agile, cruel)
 - “bear” (brutal, strong)
 - “lion” (majestic, powerful)

Insight:

These animal descriptions fit the prophetic scheme revealed in Daniel 7. Greece (leopard), Medo-Persia (bear) and Babylon (lion) all subjugated Israel. The destruction of Israel will be the beast’s aim. Also, the little horn of Daniel 7 likely refers to the Antichrist prophetically.

- (4) Survived fatal wound (3)

This may refer to one of the ten nations under Antichrist’s rule that survives near extinction or it could refer to the Antichrist surviving a near-fatal head wound.
- (5) Worshiped alongside the dragon (4)

Who is this beast out of the sea?
The best answer is the Antichrist.

b. Activities (5-8)

Revelation 13:5-8

The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise its authority for forty-two months. ⁶It opened its mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. ⁷It was given power to wage war against God's holy people and to conquer them. And it was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. ⁸All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the Lamb's book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world.

- (1) Blasphemy (5-6)
- (2) Warfare (7)
- (3) False worship (8)

c. Reactions (9-10)

- (1) God's judgments on unbelievers will be sure;
- (2) God's saints must exercise "patient endurance and faithfulness" (10).

2. Beast out of the earth (11-18)

a. Description of the beast (11-17)

Revelation 13:11

Then I saw a second beast, coming out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb, but it spoke like a dragon.

- "earth"—if Israel (i.e., the land), then a Jew; but most likely a Gentile.
- "lamb"—appears peaceful and gentle.
- "spoke like a dragon"—foul mouthpiece of the dragon (cf. Matt. 24:23-24)

Revelation 13:12-15

It exercised all the authority of the first beast on its behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. ¹³And it performed great signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to the earth in full view

of the people. ¹⁴Because of the signs it was given power to perform on behalf of the first beast, it deceived the inhabitants of the earth. It ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. ¹⁵The second beast was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that the image could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed.

- Exercised religious authority on behalf of the first beast, the Antichrist (12)
- Performed miracles and deceived peoples (13-15)

Revelation 13:16-17

It also forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads, ¹⁷so that they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of its name.

b. Riddle about the beast (18)

Revelation 13:18

This calls for wisdom. Let the person who has insight calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man. That number is 666.

Insight: Who is the second beast?

The False Prophet fills the role described of the beast out of the earth. This beast is called the False Prophet three times in Revelation (16:13; 19:20-20:2; 20:10). The Antichrist and the False Prophet will work in concert to advance Satan's will and strategies. They are also in direct contrast with the previous ministry of Christ and John the Baptist (a true prophet who introduced the ministry of Jesus Christ).

Hitchcock (276) summarizes the descriptions and activities of the False Prophet (in Revelation 13) in the following way:

TEN IDENTIFYING FEATURES OF THE FALSE PROPHET FROM REVELATION 13
rises out of the earth (13:11)
controls religious affairs with deceptive speech (13:11)
motivated by Satan, the dragon (13:11)
promotes worship of the first beast (13:12)
performs signs and miracles (13:13)
deceives the whole world (13:14)
empowers the image of the Beast (13:15)
kills all who refuse to worship (13:15)
controls all economic commerce (13:17)
controls the mark of the Beast (13:17, 18)

C. Judgment at the End of the Great Tribulation (14:1-20)

The Interpretive Interlude (Rev. 12-14) continues by spotlighting events near the end of the Great Tribulation. The next two chapters (Rev. 15-16) will return to the final seven bowl judgments.

1. The Lamb and the 144,000 (1-5)

Revelation 14:1-5

Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. ²And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of rushing waters and like a loud peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps. ³And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. ⁴These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they remained virgins. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among mankind and offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb. ⁵No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless.

a. Identifications

- (1) "Lamb" (resurrected Christ)
- (2) "Mt. Zion" (literal place, SW of Temple Mount in Jerusalem)
- (3) "144,000" (believing Israelites; see Rev. 7 and the seal of ownership/protection upon their foreheads)
- (4) "Four living creatures" (cherubim; Rev. 6:1)
- (5) "Elders" (representative of the people of God)

b. Descriptions of the 144,000

- (1) Redeemed (14:3)
- (2) Sealed (Rev. 7:3-4)
- (3) Preserved (from judgment; cf. 9:4)
- (4) Pure (14:4)
- (5) Resolute (follow the Lamb) (14:4)
- (6) Blameless (14:5)
- (7) Proclaimers (Matt. 29:14)

2. The three angels (6-13)

Angel	Basic Message
1	"Fear God...give Him glory...Worship Him"
2	"Fallen is Babylon the Great"
3	Judgment on those who worship the beast and his image

3. Son of Man and other angels (14-20)

Revelation 14:14-20

*I looked, and there before me was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one like **a son of man** with a crown of gold on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. ¹⁵Then another angel came out of the temple and called in a loud voice to him who was sitting on the cloud, "Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for **the harvest** of the earth is ripe." ¹⁶So he who was seated on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was harvested. ¹⁷Another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. ¹⁸Still another angel, who had charge of the fire, came from the altar and called in a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, "Take your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from the earth's vine, because its grapes are ripe." ¹⁹The angel swung his sickle on the earth, gathered its grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God's wrath. ²⁰They were trampled in the winepress outside the city, and blood flowed out of the press, rising as high as the horses' bridles for a distance of 1,600 stadia.*

a. "Son of Man" (14)

- Seated in clouds (Shekinah glory?)
- Crown of gold (kingly rule/authority)
- Sharp sickle (judgment)

b. "Harvest" (15-20)

- Judgment time has come.
- Prayers of the martyrs has been realized.

Revelation 6:9-10

When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. ¹⁰They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?"

- Harvest of blood—Armageddon (?)

Joel 3:12-14

"Let the nations be roused; let them advance into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit to judge all the nations on every side. ¹³Swing the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, trample the grapes, for the winepress is full and the vats overflow—so great is their wickedness!" ¹⁴Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.

V. RECAP

A. Spiritual Warfare

The angelic conflict between the fallen angel Lucifer (Isa. 14; Ezek. 28) or Satan and with God and His elect angels is highlighted again in Revelation 12. Spiritual warfare is real. The NT consistently warns the believer to be on alert.

James 4:7-8^a

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸Come near to God and he will come near to you...

Ephesians 6:10-12

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹²For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

B. Unholy Trinity

Satan (the dragon), the Antichrist (beast out of the sea) and the False Prophet (beast out of the earth) oppose the will and ways of the Holy Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit).

A counterfeit Trinity will use counterfeit signs and religion to confuse and mislead the people on earth. John also authored three NT letters and 1 John 4:1-3 declares,

*Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but **test the spirits** to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ²This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, ³but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the **spirit of the Antichrist**, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.*

C. Right to Rule

Behind the conflict described in Revelation 12-14 is a theological question: Who in all the cosmos, in all of heaven and earth, truly has the right to rule and reign? Satan has attempted to usurp God's rightful authority and rule the earth as its sovereign. The Book of Revelation will consistently counter this devilish claim and assert that the Lord God alone has the right to rule.

Deuteronomy 4:39 KJV

Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the LORD he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else.