

1. Chapter 3 of Revelation concludes the first vision of the book. Jesus is walking among the 7 churches delivering messages of encouragement and warning.
2. The letters to the churches at Sardis and Laodicea are missing the commendation, but they have the condemnation and warning, as well as the promise to overcomers. At Sardis, Christ notes that there are a few who have not soiled their clothes, but at Laodicea there is nothing for which Christ can commend the church.
3. To the Sardinians, “If you overcome you will be dressed in white, your name will not be blotted out of the Book of Life.” In the Last Supper Discourse, there was emphasis upon the absolute security of the one who comes to and believes in Christ. Here in Revelation 3 and in 1 John there is a different emphasis - my actions must match my claim to fellowship with God. The resolution may be found in the phrase we will later explore, “the perseverance of the saints.”
4. The great invitation in Revelation 3:20 is actually addressed to Christians who to repent.
5. The second vision begins in chapter 4 with the phrase, “I was in the Spirit”. Three words to add to our eschatological vocabulary: pre-tribulation, mid-tribulation and post-tribulation. These define the 3 major types of pre-millennial thought. Pre-millennialists believe that Christ will return to earth before the establishment of an earthly kingdom over which Christ will reign for 1,000 years before Satan is loosed. Some pre-millennial believers believe that Christ will return secretly to rapture His church and take all Christians to heaven before a 7-year tribulation. This is the pre-tribulation view. They look for a second (secret) coming and a third (public) coming as well. The church would be delivered from the terrible persecution that will characterize the tribulation. There is no direct support for this position in the Book of Revelation.
6. The setting for this vision, the Throne Room of Heaven, bears strong resemblances to Ezekiel 1.
7. Most important thing about Chapter 4 and 5 is the focus they place on the central activity of heaven, worship.
8. A myriad of hymns and worship songs come from Revelation 4 and 5. Revelation chapter 5 is one of the great chapters of the Bible. It shows how important and eternal worship is.
9. The Lamb of God opens the scroll by breaking each of the 7 seals. (Make a chart to compare the seals with the trumpets and the bowls.) There are striking similarities, which raise the possibility that each of those series of 7 is viewing the same time span from a different perspective (‘recapitulating’ view). The alternative is to believe there is a sequential arrangement.
10. The apocalyptic language of the Book of Revelation is rooted in the Old Testament. We saw the imagery of the four horsemen in Zechariah. There are all kinds of theories regarding the identity of each figure which appears. Notice two things:
 - A. The series of seals ends with the 6th seal, which describes the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in terms borrowed from Jesus’ words in the Olivet Discourse. There is an interlude after the first seal.
 - B. Those who were martyred for their faith in Christ have an honored place now with Christ in heaven. They will be avenged at the proper time.

1. 7th seal - trumpets, still in the 2nd vision: Each stands by itself and must be interpreted with the understanding that 1 vision will not necessarily apply to the others. 'Recapitulation' means that the seals, trumpets and bowls of the second vision are in fact 3 different views of the same set of events.
2. "Overlapping" view: A long period which is covered by the seals, a starting at the beginning of the church age; then a second series that goes back only part way, to the beginning of the Tribulation; then the bowls, which only go back a little way. All carry through to the Christ's return.
3. Between the 6th and 7th seals there is an interlude. (Also in Chapter 10 after the 6th trumpet.) This interlude involves the sealing of God's people – 144,000 saints, a symbolic number. Whenever 12 and 12, or 12 x 12, is mentioned, this is the church of the Old Testament and New Testament. This imagery comes straight from Ezekiel. In both Ezekiel and Revelation those marked by the angels are spared the judgments of God.
4. The 12 tribes found in Chapter 7 are different from all other lists. Joseph, Levi, and Manasseh are here, but Ephraim is missing. That would make for 13 tribes, but there are only 12 - Dan is missing.
5. '144,000' - saints on earth during the Tribulation. Church in heaven: multitude that no one can number.
6. The 7th seal is opened and there is a half hour of silence. The seals put the focus on the persecution of the saints. The trumpets place the focus upon God's judgment of the ones who do the persecuting.
7. The trumpets: 2 groups of 4 and 3 respectively. The first 4 trumpets bring physical judgment upon God's enemies, but are not final or total. They do what trumpets do, they warn, but they still did not repent. God's judgments always have repentance as their goal.
8. Last 3 trumpets: unleashing of demonic forces to bring spiritual judgment on the wicked. It is a comfort to God's afflicted people to know that even the forces of evil will be used by God to accomplish His will and purposes. The "king" of these demonic forces is Abbadon (Apollyon) - "Destroyer." That is Satan.
9. In Chapter 10 there is another link to Ezekiel, who was told to eat a scroll, which was sweet as honey in his mouth. This happens to John. His prophetic role and message were confirmed by the experience. This is the first of 2 accompanying intervals between the 6th and 7th trumpets.
10. The trumpets - introduced by noting that an angel in heaven stood at the altar offering incense to accompany the prayers of the saints, that trigger the movement of God to judge their persecutors.
11. Many Christians believe that the Great Tribulation will last for exactly 7 years; that the Antichrist will reveal himself and offer blasphemous sacrifices on the altar in Jerusalem. (There would need to be a rebuilt Temple for this to happen.) This could happen, but I am not sure it will happen that way.
12. From Jesus' instructions to His disciples (Olivet Discourse), the Book of Acts and Epistles of Peter and Paul, that tribulation is not simply reserved for Christians in one 7-year end-time period. He said "all who live godly lives in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution". (Stephen, 20th Century Christians)
13. In 1 John, he insisted that the last days had already begun; the spirit of the antichrist was already here. Could it be that the Great Tribulation will last for the entire church age and that the seals, trumpets and bowls all span the same period from the death of Christ until His return?

1. Chapters 11-13 - still in 2nd vision, 2nd interlude between the 6th and 7th trumpets - same pattern as the seals. Chapters 12 -13 - dragon, woman, man-child and two beasts, one from the sea and one from the earth
2. 2nd interlude between the 6th and 7th trumpets (reminiscent of Ezekiel). John was given a rod to measure the Temple and altar, but not the outer court, which will be profaned by the Gentiles (3 ½ years); 1260 days (42 thirty-day months), the length of the ministry of the 2 witnesses who will speak for God and be killed by the beast from hell in Jerusalem. After 3 ½ days, they will rise and ascend to heaven.
3. “Landmarks” to identify:
 - A. 7th trumpet sounds - loud voices from heaven say, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ and He shall reign forever and ever.” The seals and trumpets both end with the second coming.
 - B. Chapter 12, the man-child is Christ Jesus, who will rule all nations with an iron scepter, who the dragon sought to devour, but who was caught up to God, leaving the woman behind to be protected from the dragon. The picture of the war waged by the dragon (Satan) and the two beasts against the woman, is the war against the church, lasting for 3 ½ years.
4. What may be happening here is that John is describing in a general way the whole church age which will be a tribulation, a war in which Satan will do everything he can to destroy the church. At the same time it is pointing us to a literal 3 ½ year time at the end of history when everything is concentrated, focused, and much more intense during a “Great Tribulation.”
5. The measuring of the Temple in Ezekiel was symbolic, and so I believe it is in Revelation 11. God is assuring believers, (the Temple of God), of God’s protection during His judgment upon the unbelievers.
6. The two witnesses are literal men who will preach boldly at the end of the age. I am not ready to insist that they are Elijah and Moses, or Elijah and Enoch. The outcome of the great battle is not in question.
 - A. There is a great war being waged between God and Satan, who wants to destroy the church.
 - B. In this battle, the saints of the Lord will be attacked, persecuted and even be put to death.
 - C. The outcome is not in question. The dragon has been cast from heaven (why he rages upon the earth). The church will be protected and will emerge victorious when Christ returns as judge.
 - D. While this battle has been in progress since the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, it is going to greatly intensify in the time immediately before Christ’s return.
 - E. During this period of intensification there will be 2 things happening at the same time. Satan and his followers will be persecuting the church and God will be judging the persecutors.
 - F. It is not clear how much of John’s end time vision is to be interpreted literally and how much is to be interpreted figuratively. Keep our eyes on the return of our Lord – and to faithful!
7. 2 things to note: 1) John has moved from Ezekiel into Daniel for the source of his images. 2) The 42-month time frame and imagery of the 2 beasts come from the visions that Daniel was given of end times.
8. Many Christians expect the Antichrist to emerge from the European Union to persecute the church and Jews in the 7-year tribulation period - rooted in Daniel where successive empires are identified.
9. Satan is a great counterfeiter - the dragon and two beasts, an unholy trinity. The third beast directs worship toward the second beast who was wounded but who yet lives and performs supernatural miracles. Just as in Ezekiel and Revelation where God sent angels to mark His people, so there is a mark of the beast, 666.

1. The 2nd vision is dominated by 3 series of sevens: seals, trumpets and bowls. An additional series of 7 people: the dragon, woman, man-child, two beasts, Michael and the Lamb. Some interludes: sealing of the 144,000 on earth and the multitude in heaven, the eating of the scroll, and measuring of the Temple.
2. The Lamb is standing on Mount Zion with 144,000 singing a new song, representing all the redeemed (12 for the OT tribes times 12 for the NT apostles, times 1,000 for good measure). Some think the 144,000 are only the martyrs, but that interpretation is not demanded by the text. The description of their celibacy is probably not a reference to physical chastity but to spiritual purity.
3. The word chaste (virgins) can refer to spiritual conditions, not only to physical relations. John on several occasions speaks of the idolatrous worship of the beast as “porneia” - fornication. The 144,000 are “virgins” - they have not defiled themselves by worshipping the beast but kept themselves pure for God.
4. The twin themes of the persecution (earlier part of vision) of God’s saints and the judgment (prominent today) of their enemies permeate the second vision. God is actively judging the wicked.
5. Those who hold to the mid-tribulation view see this as a very important distinction. God never promised that Christians would be exempt from persecution but Christians will not face the wrath of God. Since the focus changed from persecution to wrath in the middle of the tribulation, it might be reasonable to look at that point for the rapture of the church (if you are inclined to look for a secret coming). In the middle of chapter 14, an angel is told to swing his sickle to harvest the earth. The mid-tribulation view, like the pre-tribulation view, uses an obscure phrase to mark the point of the church’s departure into heaven. I cannot clearly see from Revelation where the key events to these scenarios would occur.
6. Both views are right about insisting that God’s judgment will never be poured out upon His saints - (Noah’s ark, land of Goshen), the saints of God are sealed, and His Temple is measured in Revelation.
7. 1st angel of Chapter 14: “Fear God and give Him glory because the hour of His judgment has come.” The 2nd angel is specifically announcing the fall of Babylon. The 3rd angel warns that anyone who receives the mark of the beast will “drink of the wine of God’s fury which has been poured full strength into the cup of His wrath...” - a powerful antidote to those who believe that a loving God would never send anyone to hell. His holy wrath is as real as His holy love.
8. 2 angels with sickles: first may be harvesting the righteous, second is harvesting the wicked into God’s winepress of wrath.
9. 7 angels/7 plagues (bowls) of wrath: 1st plague - sores on those bearing the mark of the beast. 2nd - the sea turns to blood. 3rd - fresh water turns to blood. 4th plague - sun’s power scorches people with fire. The people refuse to repent. The 5th bowl - darkness. (All parallel the plagues of Egypt. The redeemed in heaven are singing the same song Moses taught Israel to sing after the Red Sea crossing.
10. First century Christians were pointed back to the past. Pharaoh persecuted Israel. Then came the judgments against Egypt, deliverance and victory. There will be terrible persecution, but God’s judgment will fall upon the persecutor; the church will be delivered.
11. 6th and 7th bowls bring us to Armageddon and the end of the 2nd vision. Clear anchors: 6th seal, 7th trumpet, and 7th bowl all refer to the same event – the second coming of Christ at the very end of the age.

1. Chapter 17 begins the 3rd vision, the final judgment of Babylon, the great harlot, at the Battle of Armageddon, concluding with the return of Christ, and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.
2. Identifying Babylon. Here are the most obvious options:
 - A. Babylon means Babylon. The Old Testament city will make a comeback at the time of Christ's return and will be a God-hater and persecutor of righteousness. Against this is the prophecy of Isaiah that Babylon will be destroyed and never again inhabited. To this date it has not been rebuilt.
 - B. The second possible identification (the most popular with 1st century Christians) was Rome. "The 7 heads are 7 hills on which the woman sits". Rome is built upon 7 hills. In 90 AD it was the capital city of a godless empire that persecuted the church.
 - C. Most modern commentators would say the Babylon in Old Testament times and Rome in New Testament times were the personification of greed and wickedness - John is pointing to an end-time empire that embodies this.
3. Vision of Christ in Chapter 19: "I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice He judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire and on His head are many crowns... He will rule with an iron scepter. He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty." (Contrast to his 1st coming - born in obscurity and lived in humility)
4. The beast - Chapter 17: "the beast which you saw, once was, now is not, and will come up out of the abyss and go to his destruction". Satan tries to imitate God. He puts together an unholy trinity. If Christ is the one who was, and is, and is to come, then the devil will invent one who was, now is not, and will come out of the abyss; godly city of Zion - ungodly city of Babylon; Christ does miracles, do will the Antichrist and false prophets. The dragon, beasts, Antichrist, false prophets, harlot, 10 kings - Chapter 17:13, 14: "They have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the beast. They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because He is Lord of Lords and King of Kings. And with Him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers."
5. "I read the last chapter - we win." We can be patient and endure because at the end of the battle there will be a rider on a white horse - The King of Kings and Lord of Lords; we will be standing with Him. Then comes the Marriage Supper of the Lamb and we, the church, the bride of Christ will be invited.
6. Some of the language of Chapter 19 is from Ezekiel - the great end-times battle passage. The conclusion of the Battle of Armageddon comes quickly and decisively after the arrival of the rider on the white horse. "The beast was captured and with him the false prophet... the two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulphur." This is not the complete end to their mischief.
7. We have not covered some of the details of Revelation. Who are the 7 kings? 5 have fallen when John writes. Of the 2 remaining, one is and the other will come later and remain for a little while.
8. 3rd vision - the new heaven and the new earth. Preterists are those who believe that Revelation related only to first century Christians. Futurists are those who believe that all or most of Revelation deals with only those things which happen at the end times during the tribulation. The historicist view sees Revelation as dealing with the whole scope of church history from the 1st century to the 2nd coming of Christ. This seems most natural to me because the main components of the 2nd vision (seals, trumpets and bowls) seem to cover the whole history of the church with each series ending at the return of Christ.