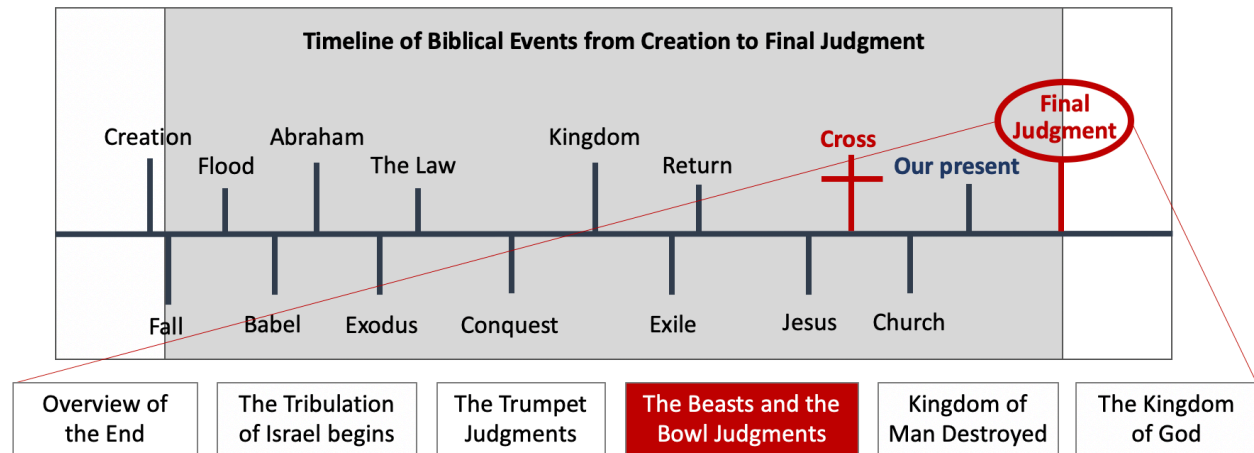


Lesson 50: The Beasts and the Bowl Judgments

Previously...

In the book of Revelation, Jesus tells John to record how in the future, God will severely judge evil mankind and crown Jesus as the rightful King.



John is given two types of advance information.

- He is shown what happens in heaven to help him understand what God is doing (for example, “A” in the diagram below).
- And he is also shown what actually happens on earth based on what he saw in heaven (for example, “a”).

After the events of “B” in heaven and “b” on earth, Jesus explains more (“C”). But this time, He gives John two types of information.

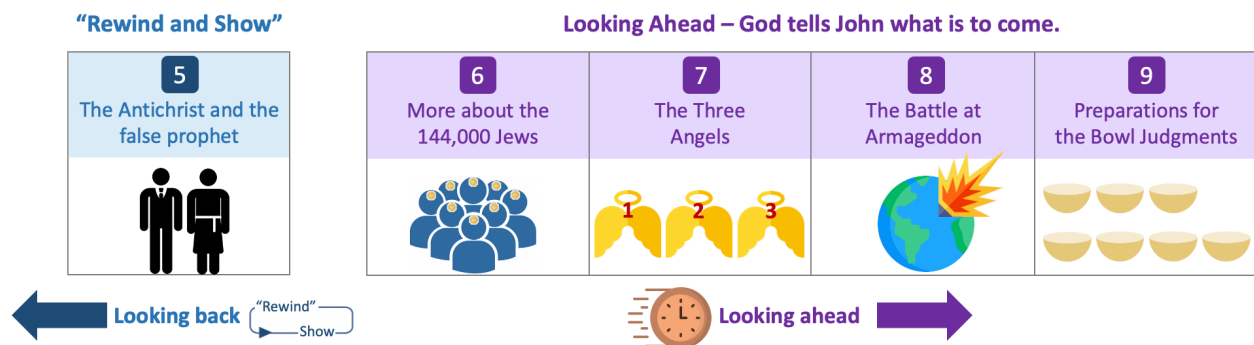


“Rewind and Show” – God explains the background behind what John has already been shown.



1. **The Temple:** God tells John that He will allow His tribulation temple and Jerusalem to be trampled by Gentiles for 3½ years. This will happen after the Antichrist breaks the peace treaty with Israel at the midpoint of the Tribulation. Jews will then face the worst persecution in all of their history.
2. **The Two Witnesses:** God will send two people who will serve as His witnesses during this terrible time. However, once their job is done, God will allow them to be murdered by the Antichrist. But He will raise them back to life and take them up to heaven.
3. **The Third Woe (The 7th Trumpet):** John also sees the seventh trumpet being blown, which announces Jesus’ second coming!
4. **The Woman and the Dragon:** After that, John sees the war that has been happening— Satan (the dragon) has been trying to destroy Jews (the woman) and ruin God’s salvation plan for man since the beginning.

But this wasn’t all the additional information John is given. He is told more (#5–9).





5. The Antichrist and the False Prophet

John sees how angry Satan becomes when God hides and protects Jews from him. Then he sees Satan call two beasts whom he will work through, to try to destroy the Jews and believers. He calls one beast out of the sea and another out from the earth.

Revelation 12:17–18, 13:1a, 11a

¹⁷ And the dragon was angry at the woman and declared war against the rest of her children—all who keep God’s commandments and maintain their testimony for Jesus.

¹⁸ Then the dragon took his stand on the shore beside the sea.

¹ Then I saw a beast rising up out of the sea.

¹¹ Then I saw another beast come up out of the earth.



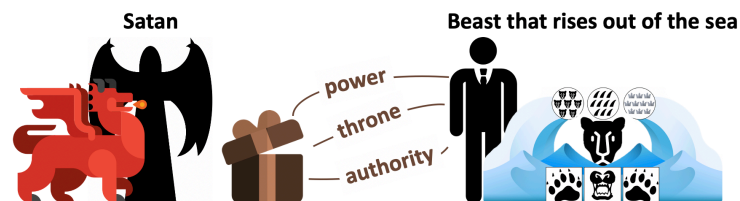
The beast that rises out of the sea

Revelation 13:1–2

¹ Then I saw a beast rising up out of the sea.

It had seven heads and ten horns, with ten crowns on its horns. And written on each head were names that blasphemed God.

² This beast looked like a leopard, but it had the feet of a bear and the mouth of a lion! And the dragon gave the beast his own power and throne and great authority.



Who or what is this beast? And why does it rise out of the sea?

In Scripture, the seas are often used to represent nations, especially Gentile nations.

Revelation 17:15

Then the angel said to me, “The waters where the prostitute is ruling represent masses of people of every nation and language.



The seas represent Gentile nations

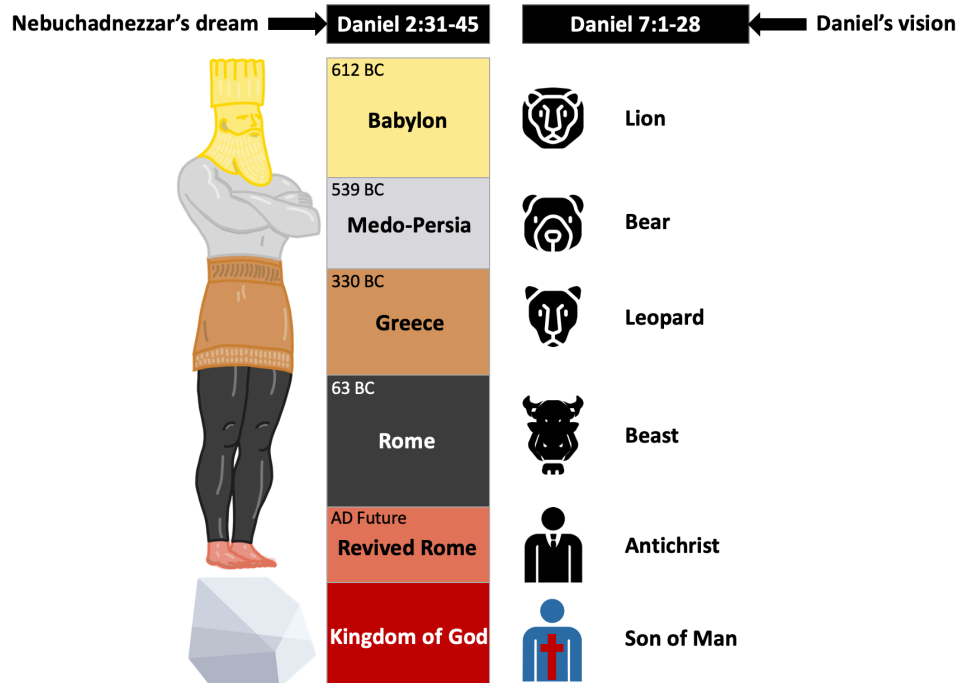


(See also Isaiah 17:12–13, 57:20, 60:5; Ezekiel 26:3.)

Note: Verses in blue indicate the study moving ahead verse by verse through Revelation.

So this beast is someone who comes out of the pagan nations of the world. Who is he?

Revelation is not the first time we see this beast. In the Old Testament, Daniel also saw beasts rising out of the sea in a vision. His vision was about Yahweh handing over power to the pagan kingdoms of man. Daniel's vision matched the dream of the statue that God gave to King Nebuchadnezzar telling him that God was handing political power over to a series of Gentile kingdoms for a time.



Daniel 7:2–4a, 5a, 6a, 7

² In my vision that night, I, Daniel, saw a great storm churning the surface of a great sea, with strong winds blowing from every direction. ³ Then four huge beasts came up out of the water, each different from the others.



⁴ The first beast was like a lion with eagles' wings.



⁵ Then I saw a second beast, and it looked like a bear.

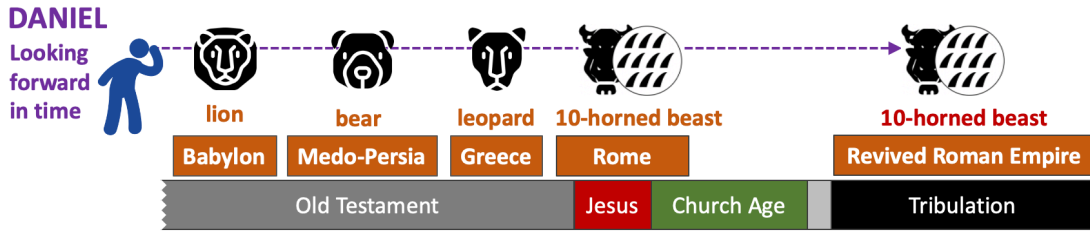


⁶ Then the third of these strange beasts appeared, and it looked like a leopard.

⁷ Then in my vision that night, I saw a fourth beast—terrifying, dreadful, and very strong. It devoured and crushed its victims with huge iron teeth and trampled their remains beneath its feet. It was different from any of the other beasts, and it had ten horns.



Daniel was looking ahead in time and he saw the future pagan kingdoms as beasts.



But God told Daniel more. In fact, He had an “interpreting angel” explain what Daniel was seeing. This was what happened as Daniel looked at the fourth beast.



Daniel 7:8, 21–25

⁸ As I was looking at the horns, suddenly another small horn appeared among them. Three of the first horns were torn out by the roots to make room for it. This little horn had eyes like human eyes and a mouth that was boasting arrogantly.



²¹ As I watched, this horn was waging war against God’s holy people and was defeating them, ²² until the Ancient One—the Most High—came and judged in favor of his holy people. Then the time arrived for the holy people to take over the kingdom.

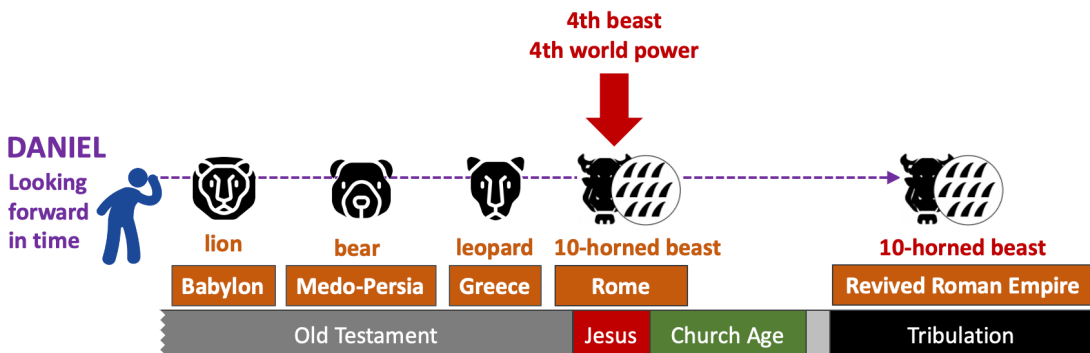


²³ Then he said to me, “This fourth beast is the fourth world power that will rule the earth. It will be different from all the others. It will devour the whole world, trampling and crushing everything in its path.

²⁴ Its ten horns are ten kings who will rule that empire. Then another king will arise, different from the other ten, who will subdue three of them. ²⁵ He will defy the Most High and oppress the holy people of the Most High. He will try to change their sacred festivals and laws, and they will be placed under his control for a time, times, and half a time.

Daniel was given quite a lot of information!

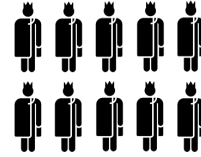
- a. The fourth beast that Daniel saw represents the “fourth world power” or the first version of the Roman Empire that has come and gone in history (Daniel 7:23).



However, Daniel also saw that this fourth beast has ten horns. He was told that these ten horns represent ten kings or rulers.



10 horns represent 10 rulers

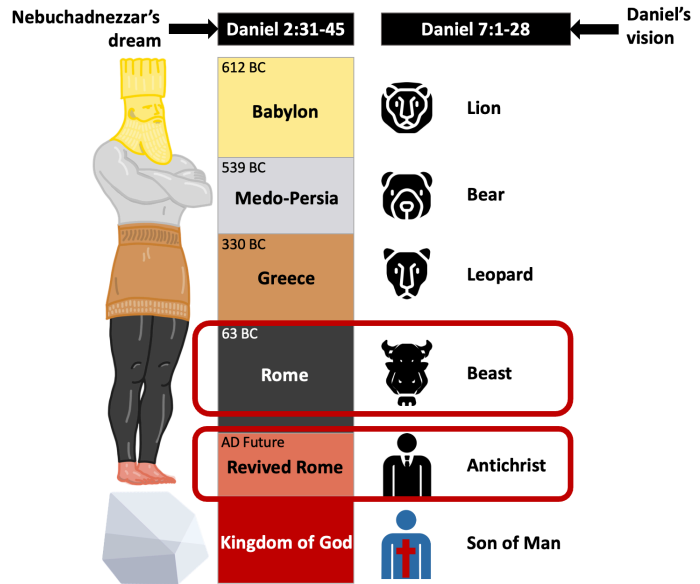


Since ancient Rome was never controlled by ten rulers all at the same time, these horns show that there will be a revived Roman Empire that will come in the future.

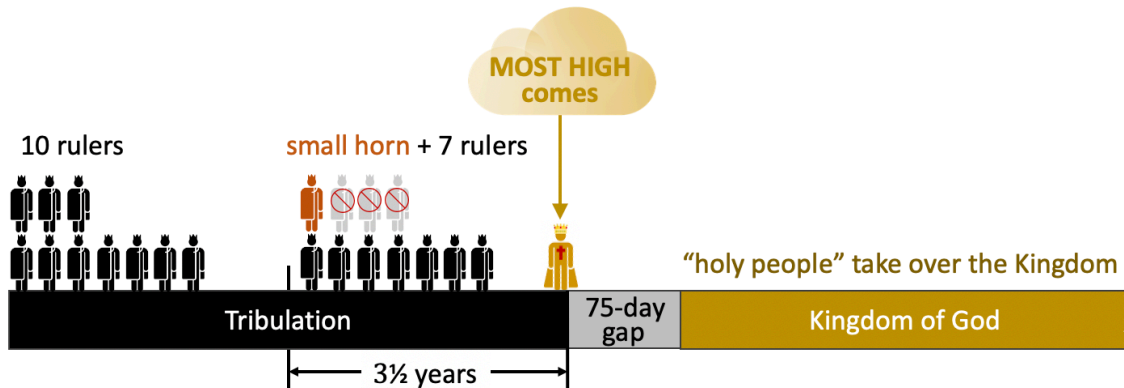
So the beast in Daniel's vision is both:

- the Roman Empire that has already passed but also
- a yet-to-come revived Roman Empire ruled by ten kings at the same time.

Once again, this is yet another Bible prophecy that will be fulfilled in two parts.

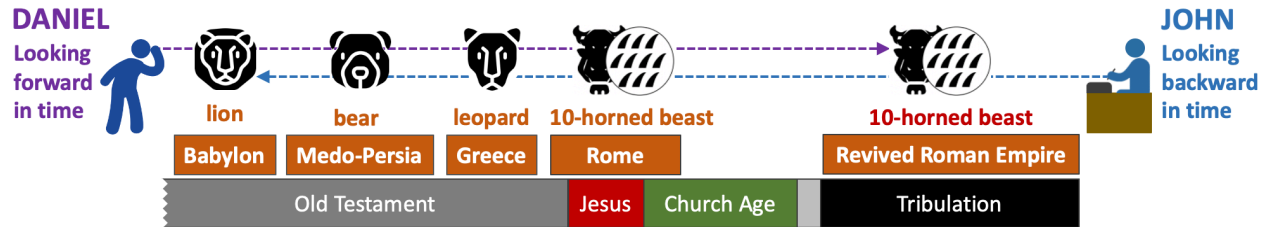


- b. The final form of the evil Kingdom of Man will be some type of revived Roman Empire ruled by ten kings. Then another ruler, the “small horn”, will come. He will get rid of three of the kings and he will go against Yahweh and believers for 3½ years (“a time, times and half a time”). In fact, he will triumph over God’s believers until the Most High Himself comes and judges the world. At that point, the “holy people” (believers) will take over the Kingdom (Daniel 7:21).



The beast from the sea that John saw

In Revelation, John sees a beast with ten horns rising out of the sea. This beast has all the body parts of the same animals that Daniel saw. From John’s future point of view, he is looking backwards in history and seeing the same beasts that Daniel saw, but in reverse order!



The Beasts	Daniel looks ahead prophetically (Daniel 7)	John looks back in history from the point of view of the future (Revelation 13)
	3a Then four huge beasts came up out of the water,	
Lion 	4a The first beast was like a <u>lion</u> with eagles’ wings.	2 ...and the mouth of a <u>lion</u> !
Bear 	5a Then I saw a second beast, and it looked like a <u>bear</u> .	2 ...but it had the feet of a <u>bear</u> ...
Leopard 	6a Then the third of these strange beasts appeared, and it looked like a <u>leopard</u> .	2 This beast looked like a <u>leopard</u> ...
Ten-Horned Beast 	7b a fourth beast—terrifying, dreadful, and very strong. It devoured and crushed its victims with huge iron teeth and trampled their remains beneath its feet. It was different from any of the other beasts, and it had <u>ten horns</u> .	1 Then I saw a beast rising up out of the sea. It had seven heads and <u>ten horns</u> , with ten crowns on its horns. And written on each head were names that blasphemed God.

Is this beast that John sees also the revived Roman Empire that Daniel saw? Yes. But it is more than that. This is what John recorded.

Revelation 13:3–10

³ I saw that one of the heads of the beast seemed wounded beyond recovery—but the fatal wound was healed! The whole world marveled at this miracle and gave allegiance to the beast. ⁴ They worshiped the



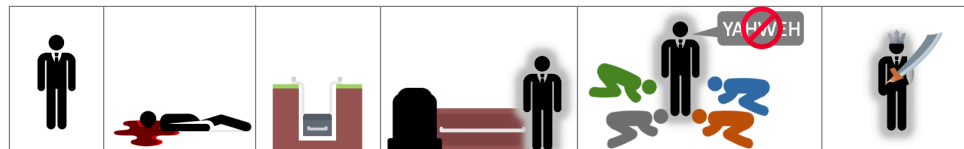
dragon for giving the beast such power, and they also worshiped the beast. “Who is as great as the beast?” they exclaimed. “Who is able to fight against him?”



⁵ Then the beast was allowed to speak great blasphemies against God. And he was given authority to do whatever he wanted for forty-two months. ⁶ And he spoke terrible words of blasphemy against God, slandering his name and his dwelling—that is, those who dwell in heaven. ⁷ And the beast was allowed to wage war against God’s holy people and to conquer them. And he was given authority to rule over every tribe and people and language and nation. ⁸ And all the people who belong to this world worshiped the beast. They are the ones whose names were not written in the Book of Life that belongs to the Lamb who was slaughtered before the world was made.

- ⁹ Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand.
- ¹⁰ Anyone who is destined for prison will be taken to prison.
- Anyone destined to die by the sword will die by the sword.

This means that God’s holy people must endure persecution patiently and remain faithful.



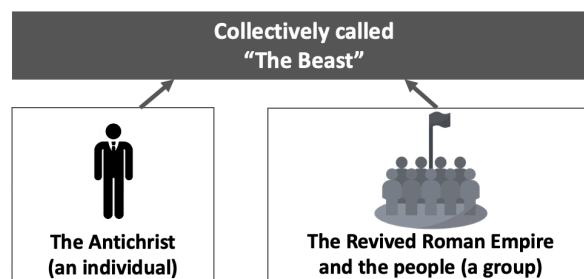
We learn three very important things from what John recorded.

a. The beast is both the Revived Roman Empire and a specific person

God tells John that this fourth beast is a person! This beast will have a fatal wound, get healed, will be worshipped as a god, speak blasphemies against Yahweh, wage war and rule!

God is therefore telling John that this beast refers to both:

- the revived Roman Empire (as Daniel saw) as well as
- the leader of the Empire itself, a specific person!

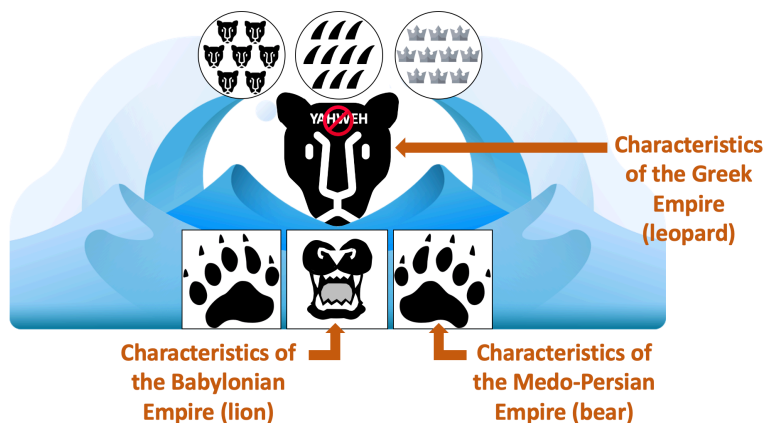


Who is this person? He is known as the “Antichrist” but the Bible also has other titles for him.

Titles of the Beast that Rises from the Sea	Scripture References
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The little horn • The prince who is to come • The wilful king • Man of sin or lawlessness • Son of destruction or perdition • The Antichrist • The rider on the white horse • The Beast 	<p>Daniel 7:8 Daniel 9:26 Daniel 11:36–45 2 Thessalonians 2:3 2 Thessalonians 2:3 1 and 2 John Revelation 6:2 Revelation 13:1</p>

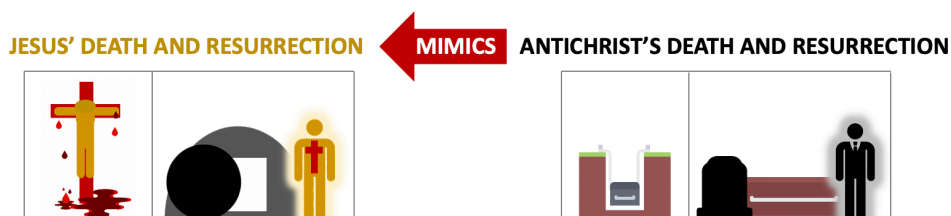
Interestingly, understanding that “the beast” refers to both a person and the revived Roman Empire helps us understand why this one beast that John sees has all the body parts of the other animals.

It is because this beast, the revived Roman Empire, has a continuity or connection with the past evil kingdoms (Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece). It has characteristics of these previous kingdoms.



b. Risen Antichrist

One of the most shocking things that will happen during the Tribulation is that the Antichrist will die but then he will be raised to life again! Satan will use the Antichrist to mimic or copy the death and resurrection of Jesus to trick the people of the world!



And it will work! This will cause all the unbelievers in the whole world to worship both Satan (the dragon) and the Antichrist (the beast)! They are worshipped as god! The apostle Paul warns us that the time of the Tribulation will be a time of strong delusion unlike any other time in history. (In the following passage, “this man” refers to the beast.)

2 Thessalonians 2:9–12

⁹ This man will come to do the work of Satan with counterfeit power and signs and miracles. ¹⁰ He will use every kind of evil deception to fool those on their way to destruction, because they refuse to love and accept the truth that would save them.



¹¹ So God will cause them to be greatly deceived, and they will believe these lies. ¹² Then they will be condemned for enjoying evil rather than believing the truth.

God will allow the Antichrist to deceive those who have already rejected Him and have hardened their hearts against Him. These are not the “innocent” or the “ignorant” who don’t know the truth. They have already decided to reject the truth.

Jesus said that during the Tribulation, these deceptive signs and wonders will be so great, even the believers at that time will almost be fooled by them.

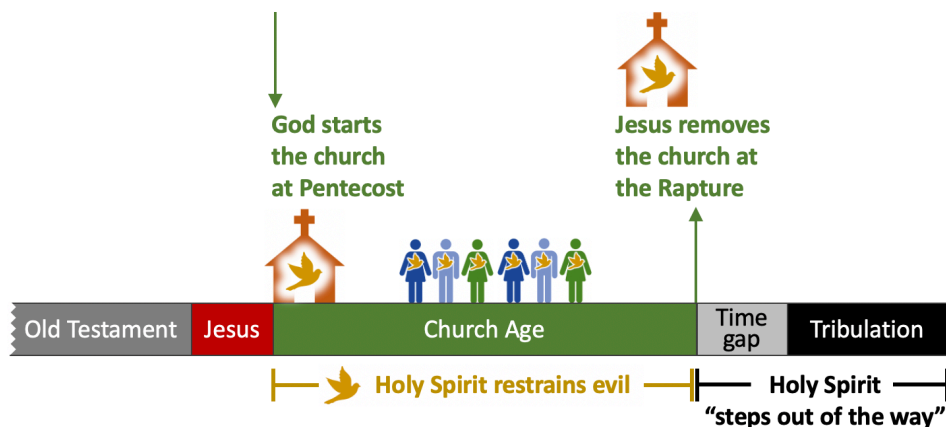
Matthew 24:24–25

²⁴ For false messiahs and false prophets will rise up and perform great signs and wonders so as to deceive, if possible, even God’s chosen ones. ²⁵ See, I have warned you about this ahead of time.

But why will there be so much seemingly “uncontrolled”, widespread deception and evil during the Tribulation?

Paul explains that during the Tribulation, God will pull back His restraining hand on evil. During the church age, the Holy Spirit is in every believer and He works through the body of Christ to “hold back” the rapid spread of evil.

However, once the church is removed at the rapture, the powerful restraining work of the Holy Spirit through the church is gone. The Holy Spirit “steps out of the way”. At this point, evil will massively increase.



(In the following passage, “him” is the Antichrist and “the one who is holding it back” is the Holy Spirit.)

2 Thessalonians 2:5–7

⁵ Don't you remember that I told you about all this when I was with you? ⁶ And you know what is holding him back, for he can be revealed only when his time comes. ⁷ For this lawlessness is already at work secretly, and it will remain secret until the one who is holding it back steps out of the way.

Only God is able to hold back the Antichrist so Paul is saying that when the Holy Spirit departs with the church, God allows Satan through his Antichrist, to act in more powerful ways than the world has ever seen. This includes allowing Satan to raise the beast from the dead!

However, this does not mean that the Holy Spirit is completely absent from the earth after the rapture. Rather, it appears the Holy Spirit will go back to working like He did during Old Testament times.

The reason we believe this is because people will still come to believe in Jesus during the Tribulation. This is the work of the Holy Spirit, so we know He cannot be entirely absent from the earth.

c. Yahweh is sovereign!

Notice that Yahweh is still sovereign even in the midst of all this evil that Satan and the Antichrist are doing. In fact, Yahweh is the One who “allows” their actions! For example, this is what we see in Revelation 13:

- (verse 5) “Then the beast was allowed to speak great blasphemies against God. And he was given authority to do whatever he wanted for forty-two months.”
- (verse 7) “And the beast was allowed to wage war against God’s holy people and to conquer them. And he was given authority to rule over every tribe and people and language and nation.”

Without Yahweh’s permission, Satan and the Antichrist can do nothing! Yahweh even uses Satan and the Antichrist for His purposes!

Why does Yahweh want us to know He is in control? Because knowing He is sovereign will help all believers, especially those living during the Tribulation, endure all the persecution patiently and faithfully. He isn’t asleep and He hasn’t left everything to unravel by itself! At no point during the events of the Tribulation is He not still in charge!



Satan calls this first beast out of the sea, but he also calls a second beast out of the earth.



The beast that rises out of the earth

This is what John sees after the first beast.

Revelation 13:11–18

¹¹ Then I saw another beast come up out of the earth. He had two horns like those of a lamb, but he spoke with the voice of a dragon. ¹² He exercised all the authority of the first beast. And he required all the earth and its people to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed.



¹³ He did astounding miracles, even making fire flash down to earth from the sky while everyone was watching. ¹⁴ And with all the miracles he was allowed to perform on behalf of the first beast, he deceived all the people who belong to this world. He ordered the people to make a great statue of the first beast, who was fatally wounded and then came back to life. ¹⁵ He was then permitted to give life to this statue so that it could speak. Then the statue of the beast commanded that anyone refusing to worship it must die.



¹⁶ He required everyone—small and great, rich and poor, free and slave—to be given a mark on the right hand or on the forehead.

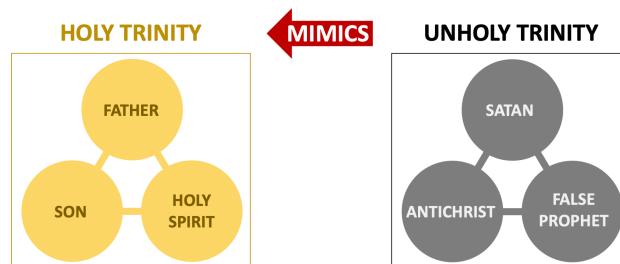
¹⁷ And no one could buy or sell anything without that mark, which was either the name of the beast or the number representing his name. ¹⁸ Wisdom is needed here. Let the one with understanding solve the meaning of the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man. His number is 666.



Mimicking God

Right from the start, Satan had wanted to be god (Isaiah 14:13–14). He was not satisfied with the position and role that Yahweh had given him. Later, he tried to get Jesus to bow down and worship him (Luke 4:5–7).

Right to the time of the Tribulation, Satan will not give up trying to be god and getting the whole world to worship him. In fact, he will imitate God even more during the Tribulation. He will have his own version of the Son and Holy Spirit! Together, they try to mimic the Holy Trinity.



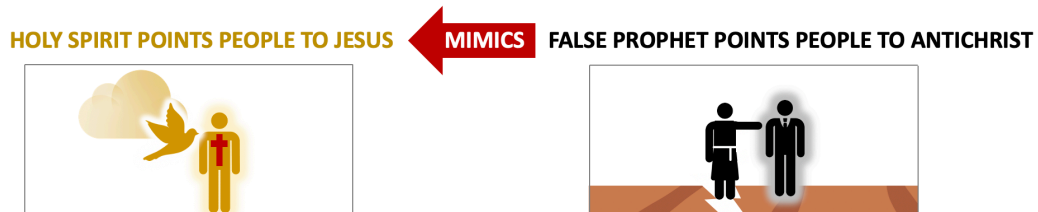
The first beast, the Antichrist, mimics Jesus by ruling over the world. He even mimics Jesus' death and resurrection.

The Bible calls this second beast the false prophet.

Revelation 19:20a

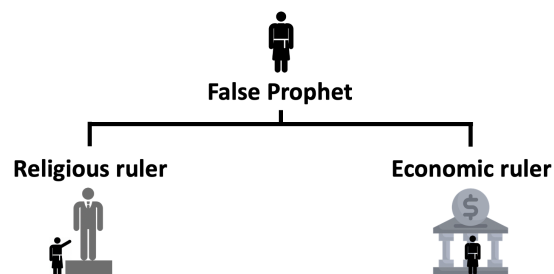
And the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who did mighty miracles on behalf of the beast—

He is the opposite of the Holy Spirit. While God the Holy Spirit descended from heaven to start the church, this false prophet comes out of the earth. He looks like a good person (“horns like those of a lamb”) but he speaks with the voice of a dragon (Satan). And he mimics the work of the Holy Spirit. How? Just as the Holy Spirit points people to Jesus (the true God), the false prophet will point people towards the Antichrist (the false god)!



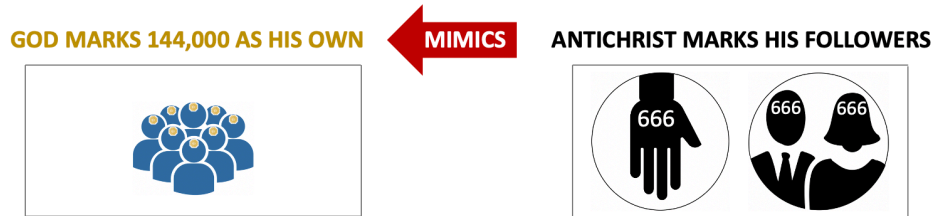
- He will force everyone to worship the Antichrist.
- He will deceive the world with astounding signs and miracles.
- He will raise the Antichrist from the dead.
- He will order people to build a statue of the Antichrist and he will give the statue life!

Religious and Economic Ruler



The false prophet is the religious ruler. He will be in charge of this new “one-world religion”, forcing everyone to worship the Antichrist.

But not only that, he is also the economic ruler. He will be in control of all commerce in the world. No one can buy, sell, trade or do business unless they have a mark that identifies them as being in support of the Antichrist! It is like the Antichrist’s “mark of ownership” on them! Again, just as God marks 144,000 Jews as His own (Revelation 7:1–8), Satan will also “mark” his followers as his own.



(Note: The Greek word for “mark” in verse 16 means “to etch”. This mark is a literal, visible brand or tattoo to be placed on the right hand or forehead of people during the Tribulation. It is a future mark that does not exist today.)

John records that people must have this “mark” which is either the name of the Antichrist or his number, 666, on their right hand or forehead. But what does this number mean?

In Hebrew and Greek, the letters of the alphabet have numerical values. This means we can take someone’s name and add up the numerical value of his name to get a final number.

Example of the Hebrew alphabet and the corresponding numeric values.

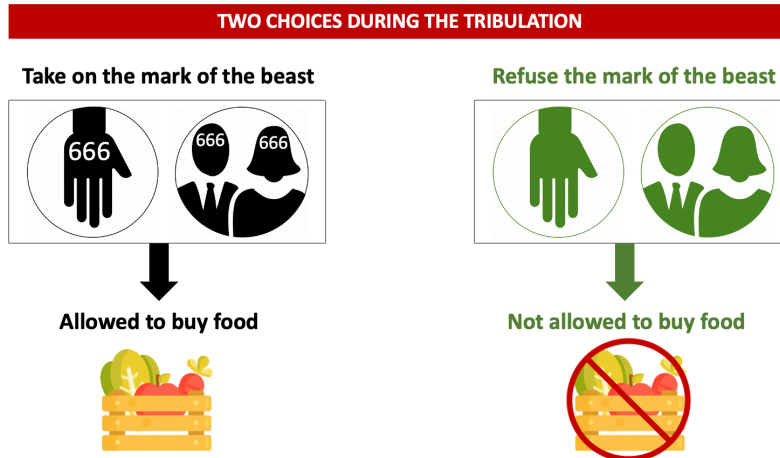
letter	numeric value	letter	numeric value	letter	numeric value
א	1	י	10	ק	100
ב	2	כ	20	ר	200
ג	3	ל	30	ש	300
ד	4	מ	40	ת	400
ה	5	נ	50	ך	500
ו	6	ס	60	ם	600
ז	7	ע	70	ן	700
ח	8	פ	80	ף	800
ט	9	צ	90	ץ	900

When we do that to the first beast’s name, the final number is 666. So, believers living during the Tribulation will be able to calculate this number and know who the Antichrist is.

However, believers in this church age cannot do that because the Antichrist has not yet been revealed to the world (2 Thessalonians 2:5–7).

But at the time of the Tribulation, the Antichrist will be known. People will only have two choices:

- they can either take on the mark of the Antichrist, allowing them to buy food or
- they can choose the true God, Jesus, and potentially starve.



The Bible says that those who have already chosen to reject Jesus will take on this mark.

After God gives John additional information about what has been happening since the start of the Tribulation (#1–5), He shows John a preview of what will be coming next (#6–9).

“Rewind and Show” – God explains the background behind what John has already been shown.



Looking Ahead – God tells John what is to come.





6. More about the 144,000 Jews

Revelation 14:1–5

¹ Then I saw the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with him were 144,000 who had his name and his Father’s name written on their foreheads.

² And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of mighty ocean waves or the rolling of loud thunder. It was like the sound of many harpists playing together. ³ This great choir sang a wonderful new song in front of the throne of God and before the four living beings and the twenty-four elders. No one could learn this song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth.



⁴ They have kept themselves as pure as virgins, following the Lamb wherever he goes. They have been purchased from among the people on the earth as a special offering to God and to the Lamb. ⁵ They have told no lies; they are without blame.

John sees the start of the Kingdom of God! The 144,000 Jews that God had sealed for Himself (Revelation 7:1–8) will survive through the terrible Tribulation! They will enter with Jesus into the Kingdom of God.



Why does God show this to John? He wants John and all believers to know that He is faithful. He will not allow Satan to destroy the Jews. God will preserve them as He said He would.



7. The Three Angels

First Angel

Revelation 14:6–7

⁶ And I saw another angel flying through the sky, carrying the eternal Good News to proclaim to the people who belong to this world—to every nation, tribe, language, and people. ⁷ “Fear God,” he shouted. “Give glory to him. For the time has come when he will sit as judge. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and all the springs of water.”



At some point during the Tribulation, God will send an angel to loudly proclaim the gospel to the entire world! God Himself will make sure that the whole world hears the message of salvation before He brings the final judgment. This is God’s personal and final call for repentance and belief in Him.



Second Angel

Revelation 14:8

Then another angel followed him through the sky, shouting, “Babylon is fallen—that great city is fallen—because she made all the nations of the world drink the wine of her passionate immorality.”



John is then given a preview of the fall of Babylon. Later on in Revelation 17 and 18, God reveals more details about this.

Third Angel

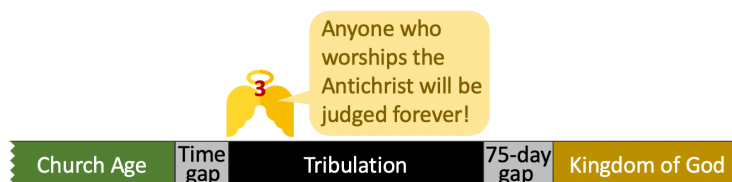
Revelation 14:9–13

⁹ Then a third angel followed them, shouting, “Anyone who worships the beast and his statue or who accepts his mark on the forehead or on the hand ¹⁰ must drink the wine of God’s anger. It has been poured full strength into God’s cup of wrath. And they will be tormented with fire and burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb. ¹¹ The smoke of their torment will rise forever and ever, and they will have no relief day or night, for they have worshiped the beast and his statue and have accepted the mark of his name.”



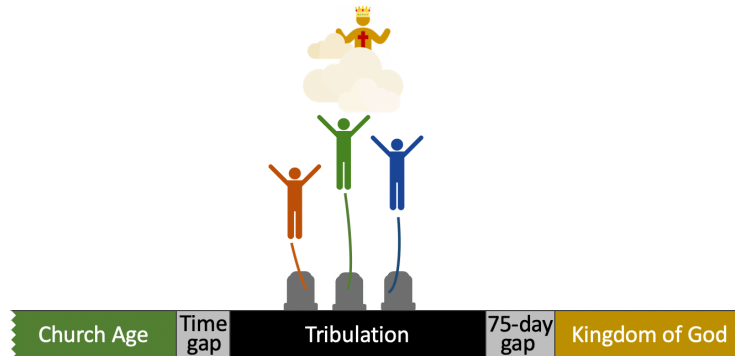
¹² This means that God’s holy people must endure persecution patiently, obeying his commands and maintaining their faith in Jesus.

¹³ And I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Write this down: Blessed are those who die in the Lord from now on. Yes, says the Spirit, they are blessed indeed, for they will rest from their hard work; for their good deeds follow them!”



In this very frightening preview, God says that the fate of those who worship the Antichrist is confirmed. They are conscious even in physical death and will be tormented forever with God's wrath in front of Jesus and the angels.

Because of this, God tells John that believers must endure the time of the Tribulation with patience, obedience and faith. Even if they die because of persecution, they need to know that they are "blessed". How so? When they die physically, they will be freed from further torture in the terrible Tribulation! Instead, they will finally "rest" in God's presence! And they will be rewarded for all their "good deeds".



So God is encouraging tribulation believers not to be afraid of physical death. Many of them will indeed die, but they will be safe with God after that. They will be in a better place!

On the other hand, those who take on the mark of the beast may be able to buy food and survive better physically during the Tribulation, but they will die the eternal death because of their choice.



8. The Battle at Armageddon

After this, John sees Jesus and three other angels.

Revelation 14:14–20

¹⁴ Then I saw a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was someone like the Son of Man. He had a gold crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. ¹⁵ Then another angel came from the Temple and shouted to the one sitting on the cloud, "Swing the sickle, for the time of harvest has come; the crop on earth is ripe." ¹⁶ So the one sitting on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the whole earth was harvested.

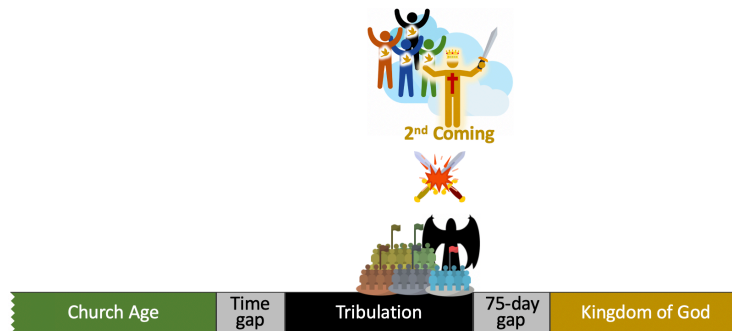


¹⁷ After that, another angel came from the Temple in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle. ¹⁸ Then another angel, who had power to destroy with fire, came from the altar. He shouted to the angel with the sharp sickle, "Swing your sickle now to gather the clusters of grapes from the vines of the earth, for they are ripe for judgment." ¹⁹ So the angel swung



his sickle over the earth and loaded the grapes into the great winepress of God's wrath.
²⁰ The grapes were trampled in the winepress outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress in a stream about 180 miles long and as high as a horse's bridle.

What John sees is a preview of the battle against the Lord on that great judgment day of God the Almighty. Satan gathers the nations of the world at a place called Armageddon to fight against Jesus and His army at His second coming.



The wine press

The Bible describes this judgment as Jesus trampling on His enemies like He is trampling on grapes.

During the first century, harvested grapes were thrown into a big stone pit or winepress and someone would get in to trample or stomp on the grapes. The juice drained into a vat. This was how grape juice was collected.

Revelation takes this image to show Jesus throwing the grapes (representing the nations of the world) into big winepress (representing God's wrath). But instead of juice, blood runs out! The blood flows for 180 miles (289 km) and splashes as high as a horse's bridle.



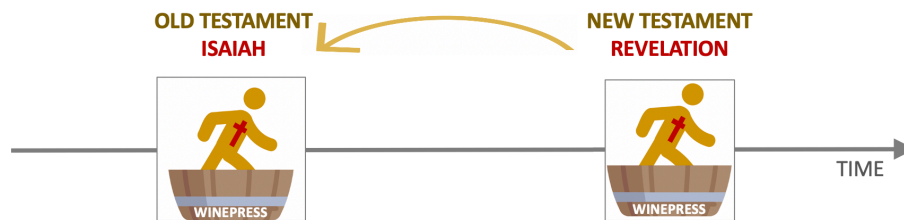
But this isn't the first time we see the winepress image. Yahweh first described this to the prophet Isaiah when He was telling him about this very same event!

Isaiah 63:1–3

- ¹ Who is this who comes from Edom,
 from the city of Bozrah,
 with his clothing stained red?
- Who is this in royal robes,
 marching in his great strength?
- "It is I, the LORD, announcing your salvation!
 It is I, the LORD, who has the power to save!"
- ² Why are your clothes so red,
 as if you have been treading out grapes?
- ³ "I have been treading the winepress alone;

no one was there to help me.
In my anger I have trampled my enemies
as if they were grapes.
 In my fury I have trampled my foes.
 Their blood has stained my clothes.

In Isaiah, it is Yahweh who is treading on Israel's enemies like one who treads grapes in a winepress. Here in Revelation, we see Jesus treading out the winepress. This is yet another example of the Bible saying clearly that Jesus is Yahweh. Jesus is judging His enemies. Later on, God gives John the details of this battle (Revelation 16, 19:11–21).



9. Preparations for the Bowl Judgments

After giving John all this background as well as a preview of what is to come, God then shows him the preparations for the bowl judgments in heaven. These judgments will be the last of God's tribulation wrath.

Revelation 15:1–8

¹ Then I saw in heaven another marvelous event of great significance. Seven angels were holding the seven last plagues, which would bring God's wrath to completion.

² I saw before me what seemed to be a glass sea mixed with fire. And on it stood all the people who had been victorious over the beast and his statue and the number representing his name. They were all holding harps that God had given them. ³ And they were singing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb:

“Great and marvelous are your works,
 O Lord God, the Almighty.
 Just and true are your ways,
 O King of the nations.

⁴ Who will not fear you, Lord,
 and glorify your name?
 For you alone are holy.

All nations will come and worship before you,
 for your righteous deeds have been revealed.”



⁵ Then I looked and saw that the Temple in heaven, God’s Tabernacle, was thrown wide open. ⁶ The seven angels who were holding the seven plagues came out of the Temple. They were clothed in spotless white linen with gold sashes across their chests.

⁷ Then one of the four living beings handed each of the seven angels a gold bowl filled with the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever. ⁸ The Temple was filled with smoke from God’s glory and power. No one could enter the Temple until the seven angels had completed pouring out the seven plagues.

The tribulation believers who have died

John sees the tribulation believers who have been killed by the Antichrist, now in heaven with God! They are victorious because they refused to worship the beast. They are singing two songs, the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb.

In the Old Testament, we see two songs of Moses:

- **Exodus 15**—this song was sung after God brought Israel safely out of Egypt while punishing the evil Egyptians.
- **Deuteronomy 32**—this is Israel’s “national anthem” which gives details on Israel’s punishment because of their unfaithfulness to God.



They are most likely singing Moses’ Exodus 15 song because God had saved them, just like He saved Israel, and God is punishing the wicked world, just as He had punished Egypt.

We aren’t sure what the song of the Lamb is but the lyrics are filled with praise for God’s justice, holiness and power.

Interestingly, these believers have just come out of the terrible time of the Tribulation, yet they are not singing about any of that. They are totally focused on singing about Yahweh! This shows that whatever troubles they had faced on this earth was nothing compared with seeing God in all His glory!

The seven bowls

Seven angels are carrying seven bowls filled with the boiling hot anger of God. This is so severe that John says the temple is filled with smoke from God’s glory and power. No one can even enter until all of God’s wrath in the bowls is poured out.



This ends the information that John is given about the background and preview of the future at this point in Revelation. After this, God shows John what happens on earth.

“Rewind and Show” – God explains the background behind what John has already been shown.

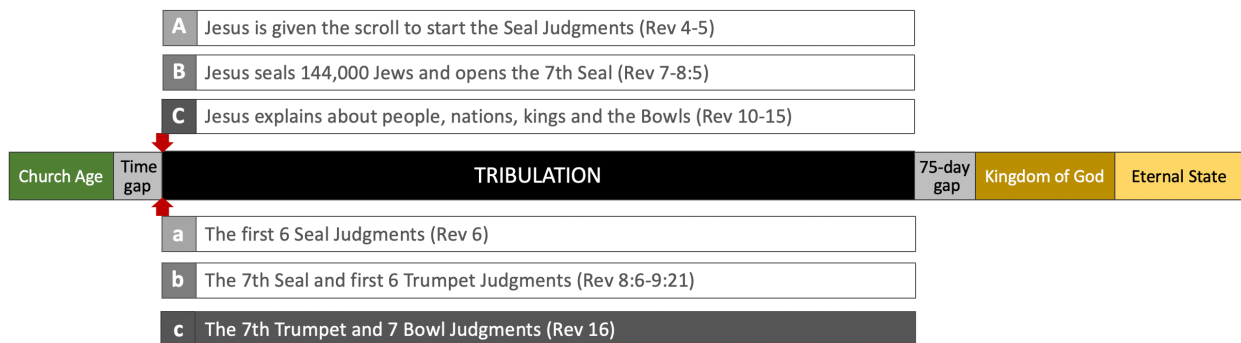


Looking Ahead – God tells John what is to come.



c. The 7th Trumpet and 7 Bowl Judgments

HEAVEN BIBLE EXPLAINS WHAT GOD IS DOING

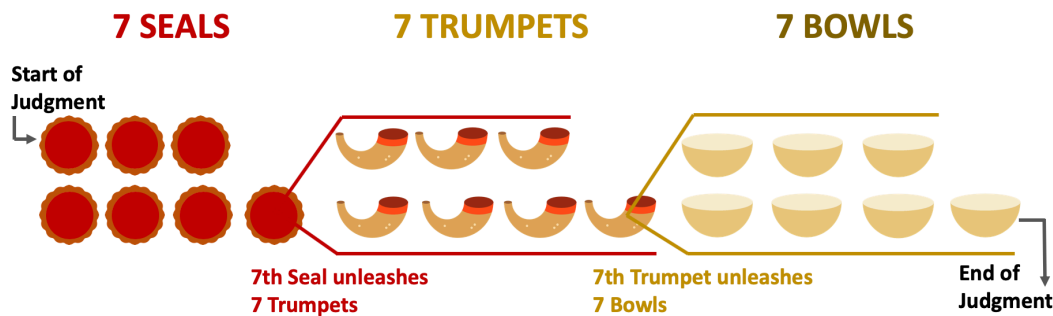


EARTH BIBLE DESCRIBES WHAT IS HAPPENING

John had earlier seen the seventh angel blow the seventh trumpet in heaven (Revelation 11:15). That was the third “woe” of the trumpet judgments. It announced the second coming of Jesus as well as the start of the final set of judgments: the bowl judgments.



At the completion of these bowl judgments, the seven-sealed scroll will be fully opened and Jesus will come back to earth to receive His inheritance.



So now, John is seeing the bowl judgments being poured out on earth.



These are the most severe of God's judgments and they are only poured out at the end of the Tribulation. However, unlike the trumpet judgments which were sent out one at a time, all seven angels holding the seven bowls are told to pour them all out rapidly right before Jesus' second coming!











Revelation 16:1

¹ Then I heard a mighty voice from the Temple say to the seven angels, "Go your ways and pour out on the earth the seven bowls containing God's wrath."

The seven bowls and the Exodus plagues

The bowl judgments are similar to the Exodus plague judgments. At the Exodus, Yahweh brought in the Kingdom through a series of supernatural judgments.

Now at the end times, He brings back the Kingdom, also through a series of supernatural judgments! In a sense, we can think of the Exodus judgment as a picture of this final judgment.

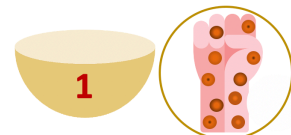
	Exodus Plagues	Bowl Judgments
Who is ruling?	Pharaoh as god 	Antichrist as god 
Yahweh shows He is the real God through	10 plague judgments on the rebellious 	7 bowl judgments on the rebellious 
Type of Judgments	Specific, targeted, affects Egypt 	Specific, targeted, affects the world 
Result	Pharaoh is destroyed. Yahweh wins.  	Antichrist is destroyed. Yahweh wins.  

1st Bowl: Sores on the worshippers of the Antichrist

Revelation 16:2

So the first angel left the Temple and poured out his bowl on the earth, and horrible, malignant sores broke out on everyone who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his statue.

This judgment is laser-targeted. It only affects people who have the mark of the beast and who worship his image. God is once again showing He is able to precisely separate whom to judge and whom to save.

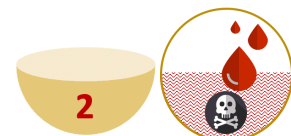


2nd Bowl: Blood into the sea

Revelation 16:3

Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became like the blood of a corpse. And everything in the sea died.

Everything in the all the oceans and seas of the world dies!



3rd Bowl: **Blood** into all the fresh water

Revelation 16:4–7

⁴ Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs, and they became blood. ⁵ And I heard the angel who had authority over all water saying,

“You are just, O Holy One, who is and who always was, because you have sent these judgments.”

⁶ Since they shed the blood of your holy people and your prophets, you have given them blood to drink. It is their just reward.”

⁷ And I heard a voice from the altar, saying,

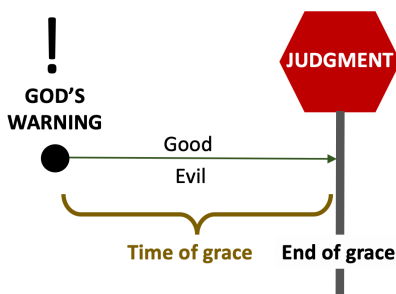
“Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, your judgments are true and just.”



God now destroys all sources of fresh water, making them stink with the smell of death. People will have no water to drink. God Himself is destroying the environment and ecology.

But notice what the third angel says. He says that God is just to bring about these judgments. Why? Because evil mankind had persecuted and murdered believers, so now God is sending them the righteous punishment that they deserve!

At the time of the Exodus, God gave evil Pharaoh and the rebellious Egyptians a grace period before He judged them. But that grace period came to an end. Likewise, the grace period is now over for all the rebellious, God-hating people.

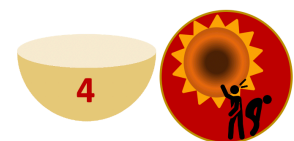


4th Bowl: **Scorching sun** on people

Revelation 16:8–9

⁸ Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, causing it to scorch everyone with its fire.

⁹ Everyone was burned by this blast of heat, and they cursed the name of God, who had control over all these plagues. They did not repent of their sins and turn to God and give him glory.



God causes the sun to become so intense that it torments people with its heat.

The evil people on earth know that it is Yahweh who is causing these things to happen, yet, the Bible tells us that they stubbornly refuse to repent and turn to Him. Instead, they harden their hearts and they curse God.

5th Bowl: **Darkness** on the Antichrist's kingdom

Revelation 16:10–11

¹⁰ Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom was plunged into darkness. His subjects ground their teeth in anguish, ¹¹ and they cursed the God of heaven for their pains and sores. But they did not repent of their evil deeds and turn to God.



Just as it was during the Exodus, God sends a supernatural darkness over the beast and his kingdom. By this time, people all over the world will be worshipping the beast and so the planet will be in darkness.

Darkness normally produces fear in people, but even this darkness and fear do not cause evil people to repent. They continue to curse God.

6th Bowl: **Drying up of the Euphrates**

Revelation 16:12–16

¹² Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great Euphrates River, and it dried up so that the kings from the east could march their armies toward the west without hindrance.



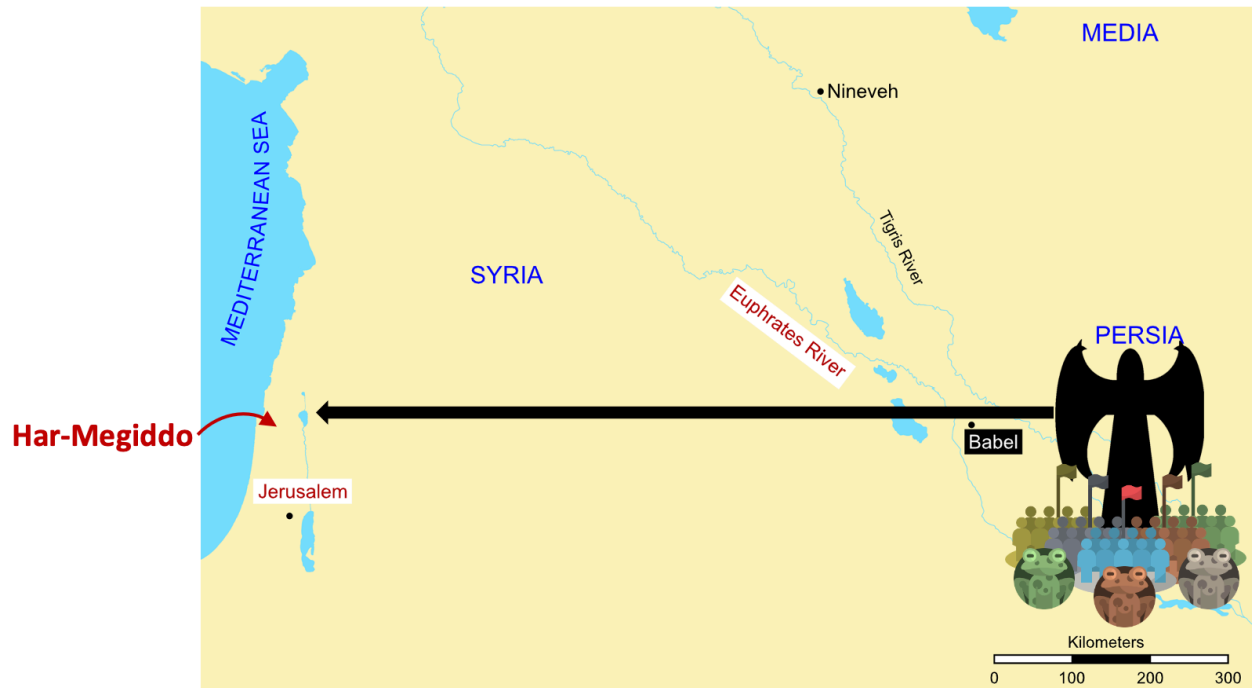
¹³ And I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs leap from the mouths of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. ¹⁴ They are demonic spirits who work miracles and go out to all the rulers of the world to gather them for battle against the Lord on that great judgment day of God the Almighty.

¹⁵ “Look, I will come as unexpectedly as a thief! Blessed are all who are watching for me, who keep their clothing ready so they will not have to walk around naked and ashamed.”

¹⁶ And the demonic spirits gathered all the rulers and their armies to a place with the Hebrew name Armageddon.

The Bible doesn't say who these enemy kings and nations are, but John is told they come from the east.

In Hebrew, “Armageddon” is the word Har-Magedōn or Har-Megiddo. “Har” is Hebrew for hill or mountain, so the war will be centred at the flat-topped hill of Megiddo. It is an area north of Jerusalem, about 25 km in width and 35 km in length (15.5 x 21.75 miles).



The Bible calls this war the “battle against the Lord on that great judgment day of God the Almighty”. Other names for Armageddon in the Bible include:

- “the day of the LORD’S revenge” (Isaiah 34:8)
- the “winepress” of God (Isaiah 63:3; Joel 3:13; Revelation 14:19–20)
- “that great and terrible day of the LORD” (Joel 2:31)
- “the harvest” (Joel 3:13; Revelation 14:15–16)
- “the great and dreadful day of the LORD” (Malachi 4:5).

Armageddon is a great war that will happen at the end of the Tribulation when the armies of the world gather to finally get rid of Israel and the Jews. This is how the psalmist describes it:

Psalm 2:1–3

- 1 Why are the nations so angry?
Why do they waste their time with futile plans?
- 2 The kings of the earth prepare for battle;
the rulers plot together
against the LORD
and against his anointed one.
- 3 “Let us break their chains,” they cry,
“and free ourselves from slavery to God.”

But then Jesus Himself will return at His second coming to destroy the enemy armies!

Zechariah 14:1–2a, 3–5

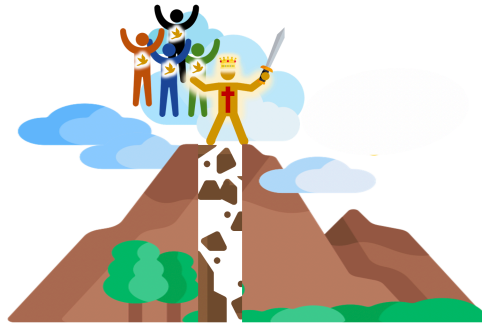
¹ Watch, for the day of the LORD is coming when your possessions will be plundered right in front of you! ² I will gather all the nations to fight against Jerusalem.

³ Then the LORD will go out to fight against those nations, as he has fought in times past.

⁴ On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem. And the Mount of Olives will split apart, making a wide valley running from east to west. Half the mountain will move toward the north and half toward the south.

⁵ You will flee through this valley, for it will reach across to Azal. Yes, you will flee as you did from the earthquake in the days of King Uzziah of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all his holy ones with him.

Jesus will win this great war at Armageddon! We will study the details later.



7th Bowl: Great earthquake and hailstorm over the earth

Revelation 16:17–21 (NIV)

¹⁷ The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and out of the temple came a loud voice from the throne, saying, "It is done!"



¹⁸ Then there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a severe earthquake. No earthquake like it has ever occurred since mankind has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake. ¹⁹ The great city split into three parts, and the cities of the nations collapsed. God remembered Babylon the Great and gave her the cup filled with the wine of the fury of his wrath. ²⁰ Every island fled away and the mountains could not be found.

²¹ From the sky huge hailstones, each weighing about a hundred pounds, fell on people. And they cursed God on account of the plague of hail, because the plague was so terrible.

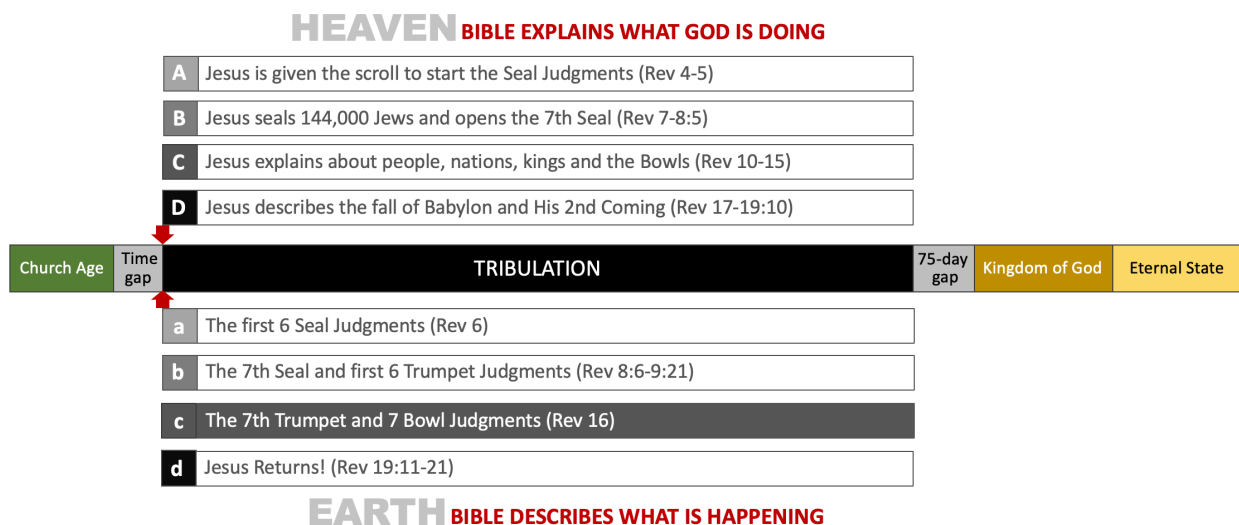
Earlier (in Lesson 48), we saw how the sixth seal judgment began reshaping the earth. Now this seventh bowl judgment seems to continue the transformation of the earth by unleashing the greatest earthquake that has ever occurred in history. It appears that all the islands disappear

and all the mountains are flattened. These geophysical movements will cause the earth to change dramatically. Perhaps God is returning the earth to a more friendly environment in preparation for the start of the coming Kingdom.

This seventh bowl ends the Tribulation judgments on the earth. It is finally finished! With all evil mankind judged, Jesus will then bring in the physical Kingdom of God on earth.



With this, God finished revealing what happens on earth with the seven bowl judgments (“c”).



But God’s revelation isn’t complete yet. We’ll see what Jesus shows John next in the following lesson:

- (“D”) **In heaven:** Jesus explains to John more about what has been happening in the spiritual world regarding the Antichrist and the great prostitute, Babylon.
- (“d”) **On earth:** John is shown more details about Jesus’ second coming!

Why won't evil mankind bow to Yahweh, the Creator-God of the universe?

Some of us may be horrified at the response of the people of the world to the bowl judgments. If the world is being destroyed and billions of people are being killed, we would think those still left alive would repent!

But the Bible tells us that even though they know it is the one true God who is sending these judgments, they continue to rebel right to their eternal doom.



Revelation 16:9, 11, 21

⁹ Everyone was burned by this blast of heat, and they cursed the name of God, who had control over all these plagues. They did not repent of their sins and turn to God and give him glory.

¹¹ and they cursed the God of heaven for their pains and sores. But they did not repent of their evil deeds and turn to God.

²¹ There was a terrible hailstorm, and hailstones weighing as much as seventy-five pounds fell from the sky onto the people below. They cursed God because of the terrible plague of the hailstorm.

The response of these rebellious unbelievers shows us that there is no such thing as real atheists (people who truly believe there is no god). There are just people who try very hard to suppress their inborn knowledge of God. This is God's perspective as shared by Paul.

Romans 1:18–23

¹⁸ But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness. ¹⁹ They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them. ²⁰ For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.

²¹ Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. ²² Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools. ²³ And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles.

It is not that God is completely unknown or unknowable to the people of the world. Yahweh's perspective is that every person instinctively knows He exists but many work hard to convince themselves there is no god! (This reminds us that our efforts to tell people about God are not really about convincing them that God exists but about getting them to admit what they already know in their hearts—that there is a Creator-God whom they are answerable to.)

These bowl judgments reveal the actual state of man's heart. It is utterly wicked!

Jeremiah 17:9

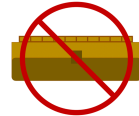
“The human heart is the most deceitful of all things,
and desperately wicked.

Who really knows how bad it is?



God alone knows how bad it is. But He allowed us to understand a little. In the Old Testament, He showed us that even though deadly judgment was coming, people refused to repent:

- **In the global Flood**, the rebellious unbelievers refused to repent right up till the time the flood arrived and killed them all.
- **At the Exodus**, Pharaoh and most of Egypt refused to acknowledge the one true God, Yahweh, despite the devastation that fell upon Egypt. Every Egyptian family was judged, the army was destroyed and Pharaoh himself was killed.



And now Yahweh allows us to see more in the events of Revelation. Even with great warnings of what He will do to the wicked, even then, they will refuse to turn to Him. Mankind's heart has not changed since the beginning!

Sometimes, we think that if only people know about Jesus, they would come to believe in Him. Yet, God shows that even when they do know, many will reject Him. There is no way that mankind during the events of Revelation can claim they never heard about Yahweh or they had no warning.

At Jesus' first coming, He told the account of the unbelieving rich man who died and was being tormented in Hades.

Luke 16:27–31

²⁷ “Then the rich man said, ‘Please, Father Abraham, at least send him to my father's home. ²⁸ For I have five brothers, and I want him to warn them so they don't end up in this place of torment.’

²⁹ “But Abraham said, ‘Moses and the prophets have warned them. Your brothers can read what they wrote.’

³⁰ “The rich man replied, ‘No, Father Abraham! But if someone is sent to them from the dead, then they will repent of their sins and turn to God.’

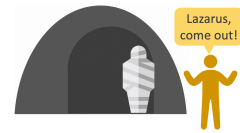
³¹ “But Abraham said, ‘If they won't listen to Moses and the prophets, they won't be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.’”

Jesus was warning His listeners that there are those who will ignore the Bible even if they have it.



And there will be those who will not turn to worship God even if someone is raised from the dead. In fact:

- Jesus Himself did raise Mary and Martha’s brother, Lazarus, from the dead (John 11:1–44). But instead of coming to faith, some stubborn unbelievers tried to kill Lazarus to “get rid of the evidence” that he had been raised (John 12:10–11).
- Jesus Himself resurrected and showed Himself to many people (1 Corinthians 15:6). But even then, the nation of Israel as a whole rejected Him.



What then can be done? As believers, does this mean we just give up and not share the gospel with our loved ones? No.

Even though we need to be prepared for negative responses, Jesus’ command for us is to be His witnesses. This is our job.

Matthew 28:19–20a

¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you.

We must share the gospel with our loved ones and others whom God puts in our lives. Awkwardness and embarrassment on our part, or even the threat of broken relationship is nothing compared to the finality of the eternal judgment that they will experience.

But there is more we can do. We can pray and intercede for them. Abraham is one of the best models of how to intercede for others (Genesis 18:16–33). God deliberately invited Abraham to pray for Sodom and Gomorrah by telling him that He was going to destroy both cities. And God allowed Abraham to “negotiate” with Him to save the cities. Abraham was humble and reverent in his attitude towards God.

For example:

Genesis 18:27, 30a, 32a

²⁷ Then Abraham spoke again. “Since I have begun, let me speak further to my Lord, even though I am but dust and ashes.”

³⁰ “Please don’t be angry, my Lord,” Abraham pleaded. “Let me speak—suppose only thirty righteous people are found?”

³² Finally, Abraham said, “Lord, please don’t be angry with me if I speak one more time. Suppose only ten are found there?”

God intentionally encouraged Abraham to pray and intercede for the two wicked cities. We can learn from this that God also wants us to intercede compassionately for those who are lost.

Only God knows when the eternal destiny of each person is finalised. We don't. Therefore, He does want us to intercede for unbelievers because it might be that He will save an unbeliever through our intercession for them!

Just as Yahweh told Abraham about Sodom and Gomorrah to invite him to intercede, God has now told us about the end times, and He does want us to intercede for unbelievers.

Let us humbly pray and respectfully beg the sovereign God of the universe to have mercy towards the lost and to soften their hearts towards Him. Let us pray that many more will come to accept Jesus as their Saviour. Let us pray that they will not experience the eternal judgment that will certainly come upon all who refuse to believe. And may we not grow weary in doing this. But in the end, let us also recognise that another person's final acceptance or rejection of Jesus is between them and God.



Discussion Questions

Discuss the following questions as a group or use them for personal reflection.

1. As we get deeper and deeper into Revelation, we see God's intimate and detailed control over the events on earth. He controls good and evil forces, both human and spirit being. How does that make you feel? What do you think of God's sovereignty? What do you think of God's sovereignty over your life?
2. In these chapters, we see the tribulation believers in heaven. If they're in heaven, this means they've been killed for their faith in Christ! Notice the lyrics of the songs they sing. Thinking of how awful their lives will be during the Tribulation, how does their singing help you think about your own struggles in life?
3. While God desires that everyone comes to faith in His Saviour Jesus Christ and be saved, Scripture shows time and again that for people who keep refusing and rejecting God, there is a point of no return. We see that in people we know and we see this in the events of Revelation. How does that make you feel about your own salvation? How did you come to faith in Christ? And how does this affect your thinking about the people you care about who have up till now, rejected Christ?



Pre-reading for next lesson: Revelation 17:1–20:4