

The Book of Revelation

Questions from Session 1: Orientation and Introduction

1. I don't understand:

7 churches	} Any and All time
7 seals	
7 trumpets	
7 bowls	



**In distinction from the Futurist/Pre-Millennial (see comparative diagram below) viewpoint and the Historic/Post-Millennial viewpoint (see below), this perspective looks to the applicability of the entire Book of Revelation for "any and all time" rather than confined solely to the distant future or only past historic events. Essentially, that the conditions of the 7 churches, and the resulting 7 seals, the 7 trumpets, etc. are a continual cycle of human history and God's actions in history, until the end of time, described in further detail as one reads further into the book. As a person ascending a spiral staircase in a column*



structure (such as the Astoria Column in Astoria, OR), the higher one climbs (reads through the Book of Revelation) the further out to the horizon (final judgement) one will see. Revelation repeats the same themes and gives more detailed descriptions the "higher" (further we read) of the struggle that will extend until the Final Day. This is the battle of Light vs. Darkness, the Church vs. the World, Jesus vs. Satan.

Futurist/Pre-Millennial



Historical/Post-Millennial



2. Is the Great Harlot/Prostitute the False Prophet?

*We will delve into the symbolism and identity of these characters as we progress through the study and approach the 2nd part of the book, chapters 12-22. In short, **no**, the false prophet and the harlot are separate & distinct. The false prophet is mentioned twice in the book (16:13 and 19:20) and introduced before the harlot, who appears in chapter 17. Of course, what these 2 have in common is their association with the Dragon (Satan) as his agents to spread false teaching and seduction (“lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life” 1 Jn. 2:16, 17) to distract and prevent the world from believing the Truth. Their FINAL DAY is coming!

3. What is the Greek word translated “dragon” and where did the concept of dragon come from?

*Again, more detail on this term as we enter part 2 of the Book of Revelation, but here are some “light” tidbits for now. 😊

The Greek word translated “dragon” in our English versions is δρᾶκων. So our English word is a *transliteration* of the Greek. (Example, like “baptism” transliterates the Greek term).

Kindle Interlinear Greek New Testament: “Probably from an alternate form of *derkomai* (δερκομαι) = “to look” “. The term occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, solely in the Book of Revelation 12 times beginning in chapter 12.

Definition from *Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, Walter Bauer, Editor.: “**Dragon, serpent, a figurative term for the devil.**” “**Sea Monster**” is also a meaning from antiquity (*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Gerhard Kittel, Ed.) The term appears in other Greek literature such as Appollon, the Hydra according to Alcaeus, Simonides, and others.

When we reach chapter 12, I will bring the reference materials I mention above to share more extensively the research behind this term, and it’s use in the Revelation.

4. What is the Heritage Christian Institute?

Thank you for asking. Heritage Christian Institute was an idea I had in 2005 (July 4th to be exact) for a learning institute or academy to advance Biblical and Historical Literacy among God’s people. You will find it referenced at the bottom of my handouts. It is exclusively virtual and has no walls or physical location. It “exists” wherever I am privileged to teach the Word of the Lord to encourage His people along their kingdom journey.

The Book of Revelation

Questions from Session 2: Revelation Chapter 1

1. Is there a difference between the dead and those who have fallen asleep? (Verse 5)

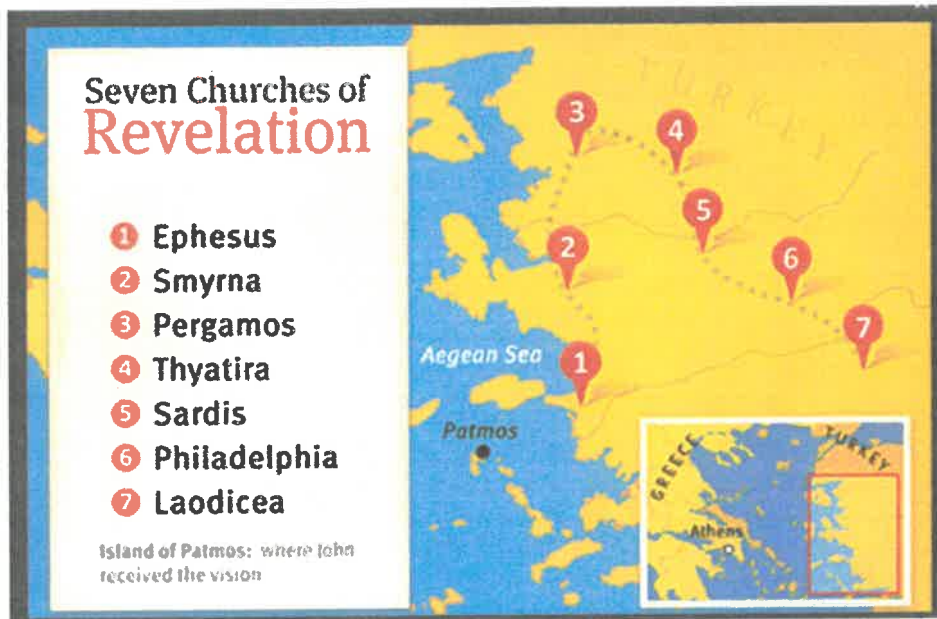
I had not considered this until this question brought it to light, but I find that in the New Testament the phrase “those who have fallen asleep” seems applied exclusively to believers, i.e., the saints. We see this in Matthew 27: 52; John 11:11-12 (of Lazarus); 1 Corinthians 15:6, 18 & 20; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-15. The “dead” can refer to all who have died unless accompanied by the phrase “in Christ” as in 1 Thessalonians 4:16. One can also translate the phrase “raised from the dead” in Greek as “raised from among/out of the *dead ones*” (ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν) referring to the dead *themselves* rather than to the *state of being dead*.

2. Do you believe there is any hope of salvation for loved ones who are block heads and have not come to Christ before the catching away? Revelation 14:6?

Certainly, wherever the gospel is preached, there is **hope** for those who have not yet believed. For our God desires “all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.” (1 Timothy 2:4). All of Scripture is consistent with this principle and Revelation is no exception. Without fast forwarding too deeply in our study to Revelation 14:6 (“an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth...”) I think your question had to do with the placement of this verse & events after what appears to be the “final gathering” of all believers in Revelation 14:1-5. We will dive into this more completely when we arrive at chapter 14, but I would consider a couple of points here: Note that the “angel” with this gospel in verse 6 is proclaiming it to those who “dwell on the earth” in the time *just before or on the cusp* of the judgment (verse 7). So, there must still be opportunity for these “earth dwellers” to respond because the judgment *has not yet come but is so imminent* and certain that it is announced as here, now. It can be easy to read 14:1-5 as *preceding in time or sequence* verses 6-13. However, I believe it to be more accurate to see the scene of the 144,000 as a somewhat ‘stand alone’ vision & representative of the security of *all the Lord’s redeemed from all time* in contrast to those who follow the beast & “man” (13:18). More to come when we get there!

3. Where is a good map like yours and what are current names of the 7 cities (churches of Revelation 2-3)? I find quite few visual resources just doing a Google search, such as for “Map of 7 churches of Revelation”. It came up with some great results. Example on the next page (over).

<https://ertungaecir.com/seven-churches-tour/>



On the **modern names of the 7 Biblical cities**, I found the article at the link below very informative. It was written by a woman who visited each city and will give you the ancient & modern name of the 7 cities, and/or closest city to the ruins of the Biblical city, as well as a summary with photos of each. (*Disclaimer: I do not endorse or recommend everything on the internet that comes up from a "Revelation" search. Consider the source and compare with Scripture always.)

<https://www.imb.org/2018/06/01/what-happened-to-the-seven-churches-of-revelation/>

*In short, here is a quick list:

- Ephesus-Selçuk
- Smyrna-Izmir
- Pergamum-Bergama
- Thyatira-Akhisar
- Sardis-Sart
- Philadelphia-Alaşehir
- Laodicea-Denizli

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Questions received from Session 3

- 1. “What is the significance of each of the 7 churches mentioned in Revelation 1:11? Why specifically these 7 churches?”**

It is hard sometimes for those of us in the 21st century so far removed from the cultures and times of the Bible to fully comprehend & see with our “mind’s eye” the world as it was in those days. These 7 cities in Asia Minor (now the country of Turkey) were some of the major cities of the Roman Empire at the time of the book’s writing (@ 95 A.D.) A few of them (Ephesus, Smyrna and Pergamum) rivaled one another and in some ways even Rome itself in terms of culture, religion, population density and historical significance. (Remember from our study of chapter 2 that we referred to Ephesus as the “New York City” of the Roman province of Asia. Geographically speaking, these cities were located along a major trade route of the time. Their locations are also in fairly close proximity to the island of Patmos where John received the revelation from Jesus (Ephesus is 99km/62 miles from Patmos; Laodicea is 100 miles from Ephesus). While some prominent teachers contend that the 7 churches represent 7 different and distinct ages of church history, this is not a universally accepted viewpoint. (I personally do not agree with it). I do agree with many scholars (past and present) who teach that each church and its respective letter expresses issues and situations that confront Christians in *every generation*, and so the letters are timeless in their applicability. Names of people, cities and countries change, and the calendar rolls on, but the Word of God stands forever and is always up to date.

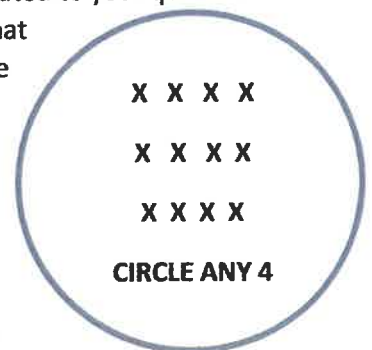
- 2. “In Revelation 2:5, does it mean they lose their salvation when it states: I will remove your lampstand out of its place?”**

While the words in this verse may suggest “losing one’s salvation”, I wouldn’t necessarily say it indicates these people would have their salvation “snatched away”. Truly, once a lampstand has lost its’ light (witness), or refuses to be a light-bearer, it no longer serves its’ sole purpose. Jesus indicates the only way to prevent this “removal” is repentance and a return to their first love and “first works”. If they repent, their light continues to shine forth, and they continue in relationship with Him. If they do not repent, they certainly no longer care at all about shining the light from their lampstand, and in essence, *have chosen for themselves to reject their salvation*. He removes their lampstand by their own choice. The Lord is clear He has no use for a lampstand that may look beautiful (keeps the rituals) and has been around for generations but who keeps a ‘form’ of religion but whose light is gone. But note, His heart’s desire is for His people to return. The deeper theological question of whether one can “lose” their salvation requires further discussion and a look at many Scriptures. Suffice it to say for now that calls to repentance all throughout Scripture assume that God’s people are in danger of losing their way, or have already lost it, and yet can return to Him provided they respond *in time and in His appointed way*. We make a choice to follow Him, and we can make a choice to deny Him, and he will then deny us. But if at times we are “faithless”, He remains faithful, “for He cannot deny Himself” (2 Tim. 2:11-13).

3. **“I have been wondering why prophetic books (of the Bible) are written using fantastic imagery and vague timing as to when the prophesied event will occur, and what the event actually is (what the prophecy is referencing)? In the OT and NT it seems God speaks very directly and explicitly to people, using common language. Jesus was very interactive and personal to those he called his disciples, or others he taught. What do you think?”**

I can very much appreciate this question. Prophetic language is indeed its own style and quite different from narrative language and straightforward preaching/teaching (as of Jesus and the apostles). Truly even the OT prophets themselves did a considerable amount of **forthtelling** (proclaiming/preaching God’s message to the people of the day) as well as **foretelling** (prophesying coming events). I personally believe that the extraordinary use of symbolism in prophetic language, OT & NT, is a favor from God. He knows we are visual people and realities of the heavenly realm simply cannot be fully expressed in standard human language alone. And so, He employs symbols, picture language, sometimes graphic images, and comparisons (such as the husband/wife imagery of much of the OT when speaking of the Lord and Israel, and Jesus Christ and the church in the NT). He does this *for our sake*.

Without going into too much detail here, I would refer you to one of the best sources I know of related to *Hermeneutics* (the science of interpretation), Interpreting the Bible, written by A. Berkeley Mickelsen, originally in 1963. (You can find the book on Amazon but the paperback version is now \$40! A used hardcover is \$6. Why? Who knows?!) His chapter on prophecy (beginning page 280) extensively covers the Role of the Prophet, Aspects of the Prophet’s Message, and especially Prophecy and History (pp. 289ff). I believe his statement here is directly related to your question above: “The other erroneous approach to prophecy consists in the belief that prophecy is history written beforehand. But this is also impossible, because prophecy never gives as complete a picture of an event as does an historian’s account.....Let us imagine that the circle below contains all the elements needed to give an adequate picture of a definite historical event. The elements will be represented by a number x’s. Some of the x’s are circled; these present factors in an historical event which were revealed beforehand to and by the prophet. It is obvious that these *alone* would give a very inadequate picture. But if prophecy were history written beforehand, all of the x’s would be circled and the enigmatic character of predictive prophecy would disappear.”(pp. 289-290)



4. **“Are Gnosticism and Agnosticism related?”**

It would seem by the appearance of the words that these 2 beliefs or philosophies are related. However, the only real similarity is in the spelling. Gnosticism (from the Greek word γνῶσις/gnosis) refers to an early heresy among 1st century Christians (spoken of and against extensively in 1st John, as well as 2nd & 3rd John). The Gnostics believed all material substance (like the human body) was evil, and therefore reasoned that Jesus the Son of God/Messiah could not have come “in the flesh” and inhabited a human body. But John tells us that teaching is the very spirit of the antichrist (1 John 2:18-23; 4:2-3.) Agnostics (literally “no knowledge”) claim they *cannot know* for certain that there is a God, in distinction from atheists who will outright *deny* there is a God of any kind. An interesting note about the

development/adaptation of the term, "Agnosticism" in English. I searched Webster's original 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language, and the word does not appear. I also own a 1919 version of Websters New Internal Dictionary and found the following entry: "1. The doctrine that neither the nature nor the existence of God, nor the ultimate character of the universe (that is, whether it is material or ideal) is knowable. This doctrine was formulated by Huxley to distinguish his position especially from atheism, which positively rejects belief in God's existence. 2. Any doctrine which, while professing belief in God's existence, denies to a greater or less extent the knowableness of his nature." So somewhere between 1828 and 1919 (thanks to T.H. Huxley, British biologist, and champion of Darwinian evolution) the term was adapted into English.

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Questions received from Session 5

1. **"In chapter 4:3, where the One on the Throne is described, you said in the handout that the word translated "jasper" (ιασπιδ) could be "jasper or an opaque stone of crystal-clear splendor or brilliance, like a diamond." Which is it, since jasper is often red or another colors, not clear like crystal?"**

The word used and translated "jasper" (as above) is a *transliteration* of the actual Greek word, (ιασπιδ), pronounced "ee-aspis/ee-aspidos". According to the *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Christian Literature*, Walter Bauer, Ed., the actual definition of this word is as follows (and as you will see, can mean *both*): "jasper, a reddish, sometimes green.....brown, blue, yellow and white. In antiquity the name was not limited to the variety of quartz now called jasper, but could designate any opaque precious stone.....a stone of crystal-clear jasper Rev. 21:11....perhaps opal.....or according to some, the diamond". (pg. 368).

2. **"Are the names of Jesus in the letters to the churches related to/or allude to the church behaviors He is addressing?"**

Yes, I believe there is a direct and sometimes very clear correlation to Jesus' "self-designation" in each letter, with the conditions he is addressing. For example, in the letter to Smyrna, these are "the words of the first and the last, who died and came to life." This relates very clearly to the conditions of the Christians in that city who had endured very severe persecution and persevered (2:9-10). Note how the promise in 2:11 is also related to Jesus' words/title in 2:8: "Be faithful until death and I will give you the crown of life." We also see this kind of correlation in the letter to the Philadelphians (3:7-13) where Jesus calls Himself "the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David...." (3:7) because it relates to those in that city who were persecuting the Christians, i.e., Jews who thought *they* were the true and holy descendants of David (but were only deceiving themselves as they had rejected Jesus the Messiah) 3:9.

3. **"Do you think the millennial reign of Jesus could take place in or around the 7000th year of human history? Almost like the last day of a week or a Sabbath day. I think of 2 Peter 3:8 where it says with the Lord 'one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years is like a day'. Not date setting, just pondering."**

That is a very interesting thought and one I had not contemplated or heard until reading your question. Given the prominence of 7/seven in Revelation as well as other Biblical prophecy, your idea may have some merit. In terms of 2 Peter 3:8, we do need to keep that in its' context. I do not believe the 1,000 years referenced there should necessarily be taken literally (such as those who

wish to leverage this verse to explain the 7 days of Genesis as 1,000 years to defend a theology of “theistic evolution”.) Rather I believe Peter intends us to see that what may appear to us as a delay in the Lord’s coming or fulfilling his promise, is in reality His exercise of patience towards those who need to repent (2 Peter 3:9). One last thought, as concerns how one might calculate what would be 7,000 years of human history: it depends upon the starting point. Some have estimated that working backward to the Garden of Eden, following the Biblical timeline is a little more than 4-5,000 years. That would mean we have 2,000 more years to go as we await the 7,000-year mark. I’m not yet ready to embrace that view considering the ever-worsening conditions of our world. But then again, “no one knows the Day or the Hour; only the Father knows”, so the Lord may tarry much longer than any of us would wish, all to bring as many as possible to repentance.

4. “When Revelation speaks of ‘the One who is, who was and who is to come’, is the order of those terms ever changed?”

Yes, we see Him referred to as the one “who is, who was, and is to come” in Revelation chapter 1 as the book begins, but then in chapter 4, in the song of the living creatures, they cry “who was, who is, who is to come”. So chapter 1 seems to focus on His immediacy in the present first (who is), but out of sequential order, and the song in chapter 4 spans all of history noting the past first (who was). Either way, the clear meaning is that our God is Lord of Time, and outside of time.

The Book of Revelation

Special “mid-way” Question Session (Chapters 1-13)

1. **“Chapter 12: The Lady giving birth? Who does she represent? Not the church because the church did not give birth to Christ, Christ gave birth to the church. I suggest she represents Israel (out of Israel came Christ)—ever since (there has been) persecution.”**

I would begin by saying, yes, it was of course out of Israel according to the flesh (Romans 9:4) that Messiah came. It was always Yahweh the Father’s intention that His Son emerge from His chosen people/redeemed community. That happened in the days of Augustus Caesar when Mary gave birth to Jesus our Lord. If you consult my notes from Chapter 12, page 1, you’ll see that I state that the woman represents the “Redeemed community (ecclayseeeya/εκκλησια) of all ages, one family, one vineyard, one race, one holy nation.” Further, in Revelation, the old and new “chosen people/community” is ever portrayed as ONE. This view, which doesn’t confine the “woman” symbol of chapter 12 to *only* the nation of Israel, is I believe in greater harmony with the entire text and history of redemption from OT to NT. The 2 strongest arguments in favor of this view are 1) the ‘woman’ is pursued by the dragon & then nourished in the wilderness for *1260 days* (12:6), which is the same calculation of time as in other passages for the entire gospel area (Jesus’ Ascension to His return), and most convincingly, 2) we are told that this woman’s children (“the rest of her offspring” 12:17), are “those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.” That would not be a description of the nation of Israel or modern Israel since they rejected the Messiah (and continue to do so as a people) even though He came *from* them (John 1:10-11). I also see problems with an interpretation that sends the dragon only after the physical nation of Israel and not all of God’s chosen throughout this dispensation as that is exactly the context of the book, i.e., the pursuit of the Chosen, the Bride of Christ, the entire community of faith, by the dragon and his beasts. It would have meant much more to the original Gentile readers of this book to understand that the dragon was pursuing *them* as the “heirs according to the promise” and the “New Israel” (Gal. 6:16) than a reference restricted only to the nation of Israel.

If I have given the impression that “the Church gave birth to Christ”, in some sort of official, institutional way, it wasn’t my intent. Certainly not “the CHURCH” as so many people think of it, as an organization or institution. There is an enormous problem, or more accurately, an enormous **gap** when viewing “the CHURCH” as an *institution* in the New Testament, as that concept simply cannot be found in the pages of Scripture. Any kind of man-made or contrived hyper-institutional, “officious” or legalistic structure of ‘church’ (εκκλησια) is not a biblical concept. And such an institution could never “give birth” to Christ nor is it seen here in chapter 12. I *do believe* it is a true *parallel* that when the Gospel is preached, we are “giving birth” to a new community of Jesus as King to each new people group and those

people are no doubt to be pursued by the dragon who hates them and all who call upon His Name. In conclusion, that we see Israel reflected in the woman imagery of chapter 12 is indeed true; I simply don't believe it is the *entire or total* picture of the language here in chapter 12.

2. **“Satan—Beast—False Prophet: Real beings or representative of a group or movement?”**

Satan, “that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world”, is absolutely a real being created by God with a free will and who chose to rebel (and actively leads a rebellion) against the Creator of the Universe. I do not believe or teach that “Satan” is only an idea, allegory, or symbol. His origins are not immediately addressed in Scripture, although in short, we know he is likely a “fallen angel” who in his rebellion wants to take as many with him as he can. (Isaiah 14:12 & following is frequently pointed to as a reference to Satan’s demise, although that passage first concerns the fall of the king of Babylon.) Satan is the Enemy and Father of Lies, and Jesus Himself encountered him in a real time & place (Matthew 4) and taught so (Luke 10:18; John 8:44). So, Satan is a real being whose “time is short”! The “beast out of the sea” and the “beast out of the earth” (Revelation chapter 13), I believe to be *representative symbols* of any and all anti-Christian, anti-God governments and false religions that will manifest themselves in different forms through history (the 1260 days, 3 ½ years) until Jesus returns again. Further, the “composite” 1st beast of Revelation 13 (combination of the 4 beasts of Daniel 7) can also be considered as the whole *anti-Christian power* in all of its forms throughout the ages, not simply residing in human governments but also in any possible vehicle or human institution that raises itself up against the message of the Gospel, Jesus as King and His people. So certainly, the *spirit* of the beast can possess a group or movement of people who are determined to cancel, stamp out and silence the ‘children of the woman’, whatever it takes to “conquer” them (13:7). I simply think that confining this imagery to one person or one government in history that we must figure out is too small an interpretation of the language and intent here. This is a vision for the ages, as long as His people are on earth. The “false prophet” (19:20) we are told is the same as the 2nd beast (“beast rising out of the earth”) of 13:11. This beast serves the interests of the 1st beast, works wondrous signs and is the source of idolatry for all to be seduced into worshipping the first beast, which = worshipping the Dragon. In the Apostle John’s Day, the Roman government & power (first beast) was wedded to Roman religion (emperor worship) and did it’s bidding. One had to burn incense (worship) to the “beast” (emperor) as divine in order to buy, sell, live in peace, etc. That was a manifestation of the Dragon for *that day*; he manifests himself *today* in many other governments, movements, people, media, and false religion. He is the “prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2) and we see his rebellion reflected in every newspaper and type of media imaginable. But remember, he is desperate and has been “thrown down” (Revelation 12:9-12)!

3. “Do you think if someone is “deceived” by Satan that it is their “fault” if they are worshipping the beast?”

There is no question that the Scriptures places responsibility for each person’s belief and actions squarely upon the shoulders of the individual (see especially Ezekiel 18:1-4 and the entire chapter for a superior commentary to this point, and don’t forget to dwell on verse 32.) We are also enlightened in the answer to this question by considering 2 Corinthians 4:3-4 where Paul tells us that the Enemy, “the god of this world” has “blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” He does this by every tactic imaginable as so graphically outlined in Revelation chapter 13 (governmental powers and intimidation, fear and persecution, prohibiting the buying and selling of necessities for those who stand against his ‘idols’). But that deception only holds its power *until* the Gospel is preached and the “light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” breaks through to the darkened heart (2 Corinthians 4:5-6) and the “veil is removed” (2 Corinthians 3:14-16). So those who are deceived, ‘worship the image of the beast’, are “all in” and identified by his mark (Rev. 13:16,17) are still not without hope *unless* they die in that condition or wait until it’s too late, i.e., that last moment of the “final (7th) trumpet” when they will have no choice but to be “terrified and give glory to the God of heaven” (Revelation 11:13). That is not repentance, but submission (Philippians 2:10-11). The spirit of Jesus and His Father until the final Day is, “For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord God, so turn, and live.” (Ezekiel 18:32).

4. “Do you think maybe 1 aspect of “worshipping the beast” is the same thing as endorsing or promoting others toward or in sin? Also, can a person who calls himself a Christian worship the beast “a little bit”?

I believe we can gain insight here from 2 major passages of Scripture, one from Joshua, the other from Romans. First, Joshua 24: 14 and following teaches us that there is no room in our worship of the Lord to include anyone or anything else: “Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt and serve the Lord. And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. **But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.**” Read this entire chapter. Joshua tells the people that they *won’t* be able to serve the Lord, and has them deal directly with their own weakness, and to be certain they know what this really means. Note the culmination of the account: 24:24-27. This tells me there is no “middle ground” in our worship of the Lord, and now worshipping other gods “a little bit”. All or nothing. At the same time, the Lord has compassion on His children, and He knows our weakness, “he is mindful that we are but dust” (Psalm 103:13-14) and knows that this side of heaven there is no such thing as perfect

human obedience. This is far from tolerating “all in” idolatry and worship of the beast and should not be confused with permissiveness. One’s walk with the Lord will include trials, temptations, and failures (intentional and unintentional). But were one turns his allegiance from the King of Kings to the Dragon (“gods your fathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites”), we have to expect to share in his judgement.

Is going along, saying nothing, passively endorsing, or getting chummy and comfortable with ‘beast followers/those who dwell on the earth’ allowable or a way to “win them over”? In one sense Christians must of course live in the world but not be “of the world”, Jesus said. Romans 14 has much to say regarding opinions/issues about which Christians may disagree. In Paul’s day it was meat sacrificed to idols and sold in the markets; in our day the issues may be different (worship styles/preferences for example). Occasionally this passage is used to justify tolerance among believers who hold contrasting views on clear biblical truths such as marriage, infanticide, euthanasia, sexual identity, etc. This is not the correct interpretation of that chapter. Where God has clearly spoken (chapter and verse) on such issues (and He has) we do not have room for “alternative truth” if we claim to follow Him. That is uncomfortable, I know. But in our individual walk with the Lord if we seek His wisdom in situations where we are confronted with clear contradictions to His natural order and truth, He promises to guide and bless (James 1:5-6; 3:13-18). He will show us a clear path how to love another and share the Truth without endorsing the error (beast worship) that our loved one or neighbor may be involved with.

5. “Are the events (of Revelation) chronological?”

Those who subscribe to a “premillennial” point of view, i.e., that the seals, trumpets and bowls of Revelation have yet to occur, would definitely say that the events or circumstances described in each are a chronological series of specific events that will occur once in the future. According to this interpretation, nothing beyond the 3rd, 4th or 5th chapters of Revelation has occurred yet in human history; the entire book is a “history written beforehand” and the events depicted are confined to the “last days”, which they interpret as the final years of the earth. I’ve shared during the course of our study that I do not personally believe or endorse that view of Revelation, for many reasons that I won’t repeat here. Suffice it to say that our Lord’s intent in giving this “Revelation of Jesus Christ to John” was to benefit the Christians of *his* day, and all succeeding generations who will undergo the trials, temptations, persecutions *and* victories described in the book. A ‘history written beforehand’ of events thousands of years in the future would benefit only the last Christian generation. I refer you to my very first handout on “My Approach” and to the quote from William Hendriksen of 1939 (page 2 of the handout).

While I don’t endorse a view that sees the seals, trumpets and bowls of wrath as a type of “calendar of events” succeeding each other, there is a yet a sense of progression and growing intensity as each seal is opened, trumpet is blown, and bowl is poured out. I try to remember that seals are “opened” or “broken” to give Christians the insight of heaven on our trials, trumpets are blown to *warn* and call to repentance, and bowls of wrath are finally “poured out” on a rebellious world that will not

heed the first 6 trumpet blasts, respond to the Gospel and repent. Chronologically, yes, the “bowls of wrath” (chapters 15-16) are “the last (plagues), for with them the wrath of God is finished.”

6. “Brian, could you share a few books on Revelation that support your view or symbolism, 2 witnesses, etc.”?

I’ve found the following sources very helpful as I have conducted my own study of Revelation. Please know first that I do my own study of the Greek New Testament text by using a lexicon (Greek dictionary), Parsing Guide (for determining tenses, declensions, and root words), and several extensive Greek word study dictionaries (NIDNTT and TDNT). My study of Greek began in college, and my approach developed over time. When “digging deeply” into any passage of Scripture I always study the text itself first and let it speak. I don’t want to approach the Word hearing or reading someone else’s viewpoint before I have dealt with the text myself, alone. I developed a “worksheet” method of translating the Greek text that begins by focusing on key words in the verse in question. I will share more about this in class.

Of those below, I do not entirely agree with every conclusion or specific viewpoint, but overall find these to be reliable, well-researched and “non-sensationalized” commentaries that abide by proven principles of biblical interpretation:

More than Conquerors: An Interpretation of the Book of Revelation, W. Hendriksen; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1939.

The Interpretation of St. John’s Revelation, R.C.H. Lenski; Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1943.

Opening the Book of the Seven Seals or Twenty-two Plain Sermons on the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, Ashley S. Johnson; College Press, Joplin, Missouri, (no date, but published in late 19th/early 20th century).

The Seer, The Savior and The Saved, James D. Strauss; College Press, Joplin, Missouri, 1963.

