

New Hope Chapel
Sunday, September 9, 2012

Apocalypse Now? Interpreting Biblical Prophecy - Part 3

Some Principles of Biblical Prophecy

- God has a plan and it will be accomplished
- We are not given the full picture of the future--some prophetic pieces are missing
- Prophecies are often used in hindsight--as confirmation rather than to control events
- Begin by assuming the text is literal and use symbolic interpretation only when forced to by standard rules of literature, context, history, or in comparison with other scriptures
- Christ's coming is imminent--it may occur anytime
- Be alert so that no one deceives you about Christ's coming or future events (Matt 24:4)

John writes that these things will "soon take place." Why has it been so long?

- _____

Why did God give us these prophecies if we cannot have the full picture?

- _____

Shifting Scenes of Revelation	
Earth	Revelation 1-3
Heaven	Revelation 4-5
Earth	Revelation 6:1-8
Heaven	Revelation 6:9-11
Earth	Revelation 6:12-16
Heaven	Revelation 7:1-8:6
Earth	Revelation 8:7-11:14
Heaven	Revelation 11:15-12:4
Earth	Revelation 12:5-14:20
Heaven	Revelation 15:1-8
Earth	Revelation 16-18
Heaven	Revelation 19:1-10
Earth	Revelation 19:11-20:10
Heaven	Revelation 20:11-22:21

Brief Summary of Revelation

Rev	Summary
1-3	Messages to the seven churches in Asia
4-5	--Scene of worship in heaven --Scroll with seven seals no one was worthy to open --Lion of the tribe of Judah [pictured as a slain lamb] is worthy to open the scroll
6	<u>Seven Seals</u> 1. Rider on a white horse--generally regarded as the antichrist 2. Rider on a red horse--refers to war 3. Rider on a black horse--generally regarded as famine 4. Rider on a pale horse--death for one-quarter of the world 5. Martyrs cry out to be avenged 6. Earthquake, sun blackened, moon the color of blood, stars fall to earth
7	<u>144,000 from Israel and a huge group from all nations sealed by God</u>
8-9	<u>Seventh Seal</u> 7. Silence in heaven for half an hour and angels with seven trumpets <u>Seven Trumpets</u> A. Hail and fire, mixed with blood, burns up one third of the earth B. Large burning mountain thrown into the ocean--destroys one third of sea life C. Star called Wormwood falls to earth--poisons one third of fresh water sources D. All heavenly bodies were "struck" and one third of each is "turned dark" E. (First woe) The Abyss is opened and, for five months, locusts with the power to sting like scorpions torment those not protected by God F. (Second woe) Four angels release horses and riders that kill one third of humankind with fire, smoke, and sulphur <u>People refuse to turn to God</u>
10-11	--The angel with the "little scroll" --The two witnesses --"42 months" mentioned* --"1260 days" mentioned* <u>Seventh Trumpet</u> G. (Third woe) Announcement of God's judgment; God's temple opened
12	--The great sign of the pregnant woman clothed with the sun and the enormous red beast ready to devour the child; she gave birth and flees to the desert --"Time, times, and half a time" mentioned* --"1260 days" mentioned* --The archangel fights against the red beast
13	--A beast with ten horns and seven heads comes out of the sea; the whole world follows the beast (identified as the antichrist) --Another beast (identified as the false prophet) comes out of the earth who performs miraculous signs, like causing fire to come down from heaven; makes people worship the first beast and forces everyone to get the mark of the beast on the forehead or right hand
14	-- <u>An angel flying in mid-air proclaims the gospel to all nations</u> --Second angel flies proclaiming judgment on the world system --Third angel flies to warn against the beast and accepting the beast's mark --Pronouncement in heaven to reap because "the harvest of the earth is ripe"

15-16	<p>--The seven bowls to complete God's wrath:</p> <p>Seven Bowls</p> <p>(1) Foul, painful sores on those with the mark of the beast</p> <p>(2) Seas and oceans become blood killing everything in them</p> <p>(3) Rivers and springs turn to blood</p> <p>(4) Sun scorches the earth with fire</p> <p>People curse God and refuse to turn to him</p> <p>(5) Thick darkness covers the land</p> <p>People curse God and refuse to turn to him</p> <p>(6) The river Euphrates dries up (so that the kings of the east can cross to battle); they gather at "Armageddon"</p> <p>(7) Pronouncement from heaven, "It is done!"; global earthquake; terrible plague of hailstones</p> <p>People curse God</p>
17-18	<p>--A woman ("Babylon the Great") who sits on a beast and is drunk with the blood of the saints</p> <p>--The fall of "Babylon"</p> <p>(Seems to be describing the antichrist's religious, political, and commercial systems)</p>
19	<p>--The wedding supper of the Lamb</p> <p>--The coming of Christ to defeat the armies of the earth</p> <p>--The beast and the false prophet are thrown into the fiery lake</p>
20	<p>--Satan seized, bound with chains, and thrown into the Abyss for one thousand years</p> <p>--Christ reigns for one thousand years</p> <p>--Satan is released and again deceives the nations to march against God's people; fire from heaven devours them</p> <p>--Satan thrown into the lake of fire with the beast and false prophet</p> <p>--The dead are judged; those not in the book of life are thrown into the lake of fire</p>
21	<p>--New heaven and new earth</p> <p>--New Jerusalem where God will live with humankind</p>
22	<p>--River of life flows out of Jerusalem; God reigns forever; there is no more curse</p> <p>--Final words: Jesus' promise to come back; warning to the ungodly; promise of life to whoever wishes it</p>

***Specific Time Periods Mentioned in Prophetic Literature**

Time, times, and half a time	Daniel 7:25; 12:7; Revelation 12:14
42 months	Revelation 11:2
1260 days	Revelation 11:3; 12:6
1290 days	Daniel 12:11
1335 days	Daniel 12:12
2300 "evenings and mornings"	Daniel 8:14
70 "sevens"	Daniel 9:24-27
1000 years	Revelation 20

[Note that three and one-half years = 42 months = 1260 days (30-day months)]

Some Related Old Testament Prophecies

The Throne of God (Rev 4:1-1)

The Throne of God is portrayed in detail in three places:

(Isa 6:1-5 NIV) In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. {2} Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. {3} And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." {4} At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. {5} "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty."

(Ezek 1:4-20 NIV) I looked, and I saw a windstorm coming out of the north--an immense cloud with flashing lightning and surrounded by brilliant light. The center of the fire looked like glowing metal, {5} and in the fire was what looked like four living creatures. In appearance their form was that of a man, {6} but each of them had four faces and four wings. {7} Their legs were straight; their feet were like those of a calf and gleamed like burnished bronze. {8} Under their wings on their four sides they had the hands of a man. All four of them had faces and wings, {9} and their wings touched one another. Each one went straight ahead; they did not turn as they moved. {10} Their faces looked like this: Each of the four had the face of a man, and on the right side each had the face of a lion, and on the left the face of an ox; each also had the face of an eagle. {11} Such were their faces. Their wings were spread out upward; each had two wings, one touching the wing of another creature on either side, and two wings covering its body. {12} Each one went straight ahead. Wherever the spirit would go, they would go, without turning as they went. {13} The appearance of the living creatures was like burning coals of fire or like torches. Fire moved back and forth among the creatures; it was bright, and lightning flashed out of it. {14} The creatures sped back and forth like flashes of lightning. {15} As I looked at the living creatures, I saw a wheel on the ground beside each creature with its four faces. {16} This was the appearance and structure of the wheels: They sparkled like chrysolite, and all four looked alike. Each appeared to be made like a wheel intersecting a wheel. {17} As they moved, they would go in any one of the four directions the creatures faced; the wheels did not turn about as the creatures went. {18} Their rims were high and awesome, and all four rims were full of eyes all around. {19} When the living creatures moved, the wheels beside them moved; and when the living creatures rose from the ground, the wheels also rose. {20} Wherever the spirit would go, they would go, and the wheels would rise along with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.

Babylon (Rev 17:1-5)

Throughout the Scripture Babylon -- whether the real city or figurative -- has stood for the city of evil.

(Isa 13:19-20 NIV) Babylon, the jewel of kingdoms, the glory of the Babylonians' pride, will be overthrown by God like Sodom and Gomorrah. {20} She will never be inhabited or lived in through all generations; no Arab will pitch his tent there, no shepherd will rest his flocks there.

But shortly thereafter, in a passage clearly relating to Satan (and very much in tune with Revelation) we see this:

(Isa 14:12-15 NIV) How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! {13} You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. {14} I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." {15} But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit.

New Heaven and Earth (Rev 21:1-4)

(Isa 65:17-25 NIV) "Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. {18} But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. {19} I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more. {20} "Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed. {21} They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. {22} No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands. {23} They will not toil in vain or bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the LORD, they and their descendants with them. {24} Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear. {25} The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, but dust will be the serpent's food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain," says the LORD.