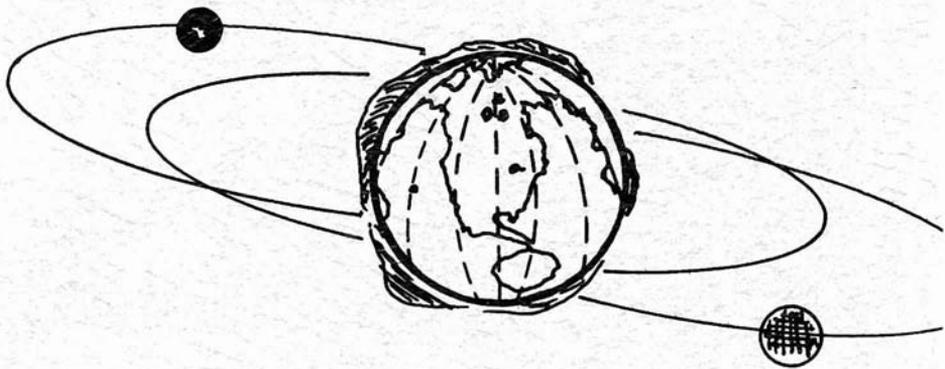


# **the great conflict**



**A Student's Outline  
of the BOOK  
of the REVELATION**

# **THE GREAT CONFLICT**

*by Vernon D. Anderson*

## **The Revelation of John**

Have you had difficulties with the book of Revelation? Do you find its contents difficult and impossible to understand? Isn't this book written for us to know and to enjoy? Are we not to study this book and be able to comprehend its message? Yes, we certainly are urged to know every book in the Bible! The one thing that has been missing for many years is the key to the book. Each home has its own key; each auto has an individual key by which it operates; and so it is with each book in the Bible. There is a key to each and every book. Without the proper key the book remains closed to the understanding of truth taught within its pages.

After much searching and testing we believe that the key to the Revelation is a simple one. For years a traditional key has been used over and over again, yet never really opening the content of its pages. The following is an attempt to pass on what we have found. We have tried the key. It does fit and opens for us the understanding of the Revelation of John.

## **THE KEY DIVISION**

Within the book a natural division exists which points us on our way. Strange as it may seem, the book divides by chapters equally: the first section contains the first eleven chapters; the second section includes the last eleven chapters. How do we know that this is a true division? First of all we are confronted with this problem. The eleventh chapter ends abruptly with the reigning of Jesus Christ; the twelfth chapter begins with the birth of Christ. How can this be? The first section (ch. 1-11) has ended its chronology and the twelfth chapter begins the chronology of the second section (ch. 12-22). Then the question is asked, "Why does God repeat in the second section the events found in the first section?" It is the old and familiar law of teaching, the law of repetition. In the first book of the Bible we learn this law. God gives us the story of creation in Genesis, chapter one. In chapter two much of the creation story is repeated, expanding some of the events and omitting others. The four records of the New Testament and many of the historical accounts in the Old Testament are also examples of this repetition.

The first section of Revelation starts its chronology with the preparation of the seven churches for the Tribulation and ends with the Davidic Kingdom restored. The second section begins with the birth of Christ and finishes with the new heavens and new earth. Aside from the parenthetical portion, 10:1-11: 14, the events in each section are in chronological order. Not seeing this division and the chronology of the two sections has been the reason for much of the failure to rightly understand the book. Once this truth is grasped, we can go into the book with a firm foundation on which to build our final outline.

## **TWO KEY EVENTS**

Before going to the outline that proves the above statements, we must see two great events and their relationship to each other. These two events are THE TRIBULATION and THE DAY OF THE LORD. It is the common teaching today that the Day of the Lord is an over-all period of God's judgment, beginning with the seven years of the Tribulation. All of the plagues and destructions prophesied for the

Tribulation are said to be brought about by God. The Great Tribulation is said to be the outpouring of God's wrath. As long as we hold this view, the book remains very confusing to our minds. We read that the ones who take the brunt of the Tribulation judgments are God's people. They will be killed for His name's sake and for the testimony which they hold; they will have to flee to the wilderness leaving behind all their belongings; unless they receive the mark of the beast they will not be able to buy or sell. The image of the beast will be deified in the Tribulation and will be worshipped as God. The two witnesses will be hunted down as animals and will be martyred for the testimony they have. The careful Bible student asks, "Is this the way God judges? Is this truly the Lord's Day?" He begins to realize that the Tribulation is possibly the culmination of MAN'S DAY and not the LORD'S DAY at all. He will then begin his search for the answer to this scriptural problem.

It is our purpose to find the truth about these events, and to see when they take place, what they include, and how they are related. We begin our study with Matt. 24:29:

Immediately AFTER the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven and the powers of the heaven shall be shaken.

(Note: AFTER the tribulation, the signs appear.) It is clear in this passage that the Tribulation precedes the signs. Using the signs as our common denominator, we shall attempt to see where the Day of the Lord stands in relationship to these signs. Acts 2:19-20 will serve as a proof text:

And I will show wonders in the heaven above, and in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, BEFORE that great and notable day of the Lord come.

This passage definitely states that the signs appear BEFORE the Day of the Lord. Joel 2:30-31 reveals the same truth:

And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, BEFORE the great and the terrible day of the Lord come.

Now let us see what we have found. The following brief outline will give us the order of events:

- |                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| 1. The Tribulation     | "Immediately AFTER the tribulation" but  |
| 2. The Signs           | "BEFORE the great and notable day of the |
| 3. The Day of the Lord | Lord."                                   |

With this outline in mind we can plainly see that the Tribulation and the Day of the Lord cannot be the same period of time. The Tribulation is followed by signs in the heavens and these same signs precede the Day of the Lord into the same period of time is to make confusion out of God's perfect order.

When we apply this pattern to the book of Revelation, the truth is further magnified. Revelation 6 is made clear and easy to understand. Rev. 6:1-11 speaks

plainly of the Tribulation and is comparable to Matt. 24:4-28. Rev. 6:12-14 repeats the signs of Matt. 24:29-30. The signs are then followed by the Day of the Lord beginning in Rev. 6:15-17, again the perfect order of events is carried out.

## TWO KEY VERSES

There are two verses which vividly describe the character of these two events.

Rev. 12:12 — THE TRIBULATION — SATAN'S WRATH. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

Rev. 6:16-17 — THE DAY OF THE LORD — GOD'S WRATH. And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

The clue to the judgments of the Revelation is found in these verses. Often the Tribulation judgments in the Revelation are considered the instruments of God, but the Tribulation is concerned with the judgments (wrath) of Satan in direct contrast to those judgments which God brings to pass in the Day of the Lord. The judgments that come upon the Lord's people in the Tribulation are allowed by God — but most certainly are not sent from God! The following contrasts will help us to see more clearly the character of the two periods.

### TRIBULATION

1. Satan seals his people.  
Rev. 13:16, 17
2. The beast worshipped.  
Rev. 13:4, 8
3. God's people persecuted.  
Matt. 24:4-26
4. Horses used by Satan.  
Rev. 6:1-8
5. False Christ on white horse.  
Rev. 6:2
6. No deliverance at Jerusalem.  
Matt. 24:15-22
7. Satan's wrath.  
Rev. 12:12
8. Before Signs.  
Matt. 24:29

### DAY OF THE LORD

1. The Lord seals His people.  
Rev. 7:2, 3
2. The Lord alone worshipped.  
Isa. 2:11 12
3. Satan's people persecuted.  
Rev. 9:3, 4
4. Angels used by God.  
Rev. 8:2-6
5. Real Christ on white horse.  
Rev. 19:11-16
6. Deliverance at Jerusalem.  
Joel 2:31, 32
7. God's wrath.  
Rev. 6:16, 17
8. After signs.  
Acts 2:19, 20

The contrasts between the sealing of the two peoples is especially interesting. Satan seals his people with the mark of the beast so that when he manifests his great wrath, his people will not be afflicted. This is the sealing which takes place during the Tribulation, not the sealing of God's people. God's elect are not sealed until the wrath of the Lord is about to be poured out after the Tribulation — Rev. 7:2-8; Rev.

14:1-5. At the time God wants to protect His people, He then seals them to save them from torment when His wrath is poured out. The sealing of this elect remnant is found only in the above two references, both of which fall between the Tribulation and the Day of the Lord. God's perfect order of events is maintained.

A further profitable study is to compare each one of the contrasts with all the other scriptures connected to this subject. This research will give the Bible student a tremendous tool in understanding the future dealings of God with His holy people, Israel.

### THREE KEY STUDY RULES

There are key rules that must be applied to the study of the Revelation. Perhaps the greatest rule is to see where the book fits dispensationally. It has already been stated that the interpretation of the book belongs to the future. It is concerned with those events which take place after the Body of Christ is caught away. The book is definitely related to the prophets in the Old Testament and the book of Matthew in the New Testament. It looks forward to the King and the kingdom. The events of Matt. 24 and 25 are correlated with the events in the book of Revelation. As in Matthew there is no pre-tribulation return of Christ in the Revelation. To make Rev. 4:1 the rapture of the Body of Christ is to completely ignore every rule of Bible interpretation. No group of believers is caught up into Heaven in Rev. 4; only John is caught up and he is not a type of the Body.

Another key rule to follow is to make a proper interpretation of symbolical language. Unless the symbols found in Revelation are self-explained or explained elsewhere by the Word of God, we must leave their explanation as a yet unrevealed mystery. We must closely follow this rule or we will have as many interpretations as we have interpreters. Where the language is not symbolized, we have no right to make symbols out of a truth. A good example of this error is to make the seven churches of Revelation 2 and 3 a symbol of seven ages. There is absolutely no foundation for such Bible interpretation. One makes the churches to be symbols of seven periods of Old Testament history, while another makes them symbols of seven periods of New Testament history. This confusion would never exist if these seven churches were left as seven churches, no more and no less. We already have symbols, the seven candlesticks, which represent the seven churches. Are we going to make one symbol represent another symbol? Yet this is what has been done and has caused no small amount of confusion. When God speaks of these churches, He is not speaking of symbols and certainly the language is not symbolical. These Jewish churches or synagogues (Rev. 2:9, 3:9) were just as real in the time of John as they will be in the Tribulation.

The reason John writes to these seven churches is to prepare them for the seven years of Tribulation. The phrase, "He that overcometh," used in the letters to all seven churches and comparable to Matt. 24:13: "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved," definitely ties these letters to the Tribulation period. In the letter to Smyrna John writes, Rev. 2:10:

Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

This letter warns of the Tribulation to come and tells that the saints will be killed. And this is exactly what takes place during the Tribulation. Rev. 6:9:

And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.

The promise of the white raiment in Rev. 3:5, "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment," is again related to Tribulation saints in Rev. 7:13, 14:

And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, what are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

The truth is made very plain when we take a literal interpretation of His Word. Let us not fall into the same error of symbolizing away the Word of God as many are doing today and as past generations have done.

It has already been stated that a pattern or outline of the book must be sought out. Someone has said that there is no definite pattern to Revelation, but that the succession of events is completely lost and there is no orderly chronology at all. We are certain that the following outline will show that we are given a wonderful chronology of events and that the fulfillment of prophecy unfolds in definite order. It is now possible to take all the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the 'last day' and put them into their proper sequence.

# THE OUTLINE — THE KEY TO THE REVELATION

## Section One

**I.** Introduction. Ch. 1 “Write the things which thou hast seen, and things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.” v. 19.

**II.** Preparation of the seven churches for the great Tribulation. Ch. 2 & 3. “To him that overcometh.” “I know thy works.”

- A. Ephesus — Repent. 2:1-7.
- B. Smyrna — Be thou faithful. 2:8-11.
- C. Pergamos — Repent. 2:12-17.
- D. Thyatira — Hold fast. 2:18-29.
- E. Sardis — Repent. 3:1-6.
- F. Philadelphia — Hold fast. 3:7-13.
- G. Laodicea — Repent. 3:14-22.

**III.** Opening of the seven sealed books of prophecy. Ch. 4-11. “Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof.” 5:9.

## BEGINNING OF THE GREAT TRIBULATION

- |                                     |                   |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| A. 1st seal — False messiah. 6:1, 2 | cf. Matt. 24:4, 5 |
| B. 2nd seal — Wars. 6:3, 4          | cf. Matt. 24:6, 7 |
| C. 3rd seal — Famines. 6:5, 6       | cf. Matt. 24:7    |
| D. 4th seal — Pestilence. 6:7, 8    | cf. Matt. 24:7    |
| E. 5th seal — Martyrdom. 6:9-11     | cf. Matt. 24:8-28 |

## END OF THE GREAT TRIBULATION

F. 6th seal — Announcing the Day of the Lord.

- |                             |                     |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Signs in heaven 6:12-17  | cf. Matt. 24:29, 30 |
| 2. Sealing of 144,000 7:1-8 | cf. Matt. 24:31     |
| 3. Martyrs rewarded 7:9-17  |                     |

## BEGINNING OF DAY OF THE LORD

- G. 7th seal — God's wrath 8, 9, 10, 11      cf. Matt. 24:33-51
1. 1st Trumpet — 8:7  
Earth judged.      cf. 1st Vial 16:2
  2. 2nd Trumpet — 8:8, 9  
Sea judged.      cf. 2nd Vial 16:3
  3. 3rd Trumpet — 8:10, 11  
Rivers & lakes judged.      cf. 3rd Vial 16:4-7
  4. 4th Trumpet — 8:12, 13  
Heavenly bodies judged.      cf. 4th Vial 16:8, 9
  5. 5th Trumpet — 9:1-12  
Unbelievers judged.      cf. 5th Vial 16:10, 11
  6. 6th Trumpet — 9:13-21  
Euphrates judged.      cf. 6th Vial 16:12-16
  7. Parenthetical Portion. 10:1-11:14.
    - a. The little book kept secret. 10:1-11
    - b. Testimony of the two witnesses.  
Reason for God's wrath. 11:1-14
  8. 7th Trumpet — The Grand Finale.      cf. 7th Vial 16:17-21  
The Battle of Armageddon. 11:15-19

## THE END OF SECTION ONE OF THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION

### Section Two

- I. The First Coming of Christ. 12:1-5.
- II. The Wrath of Satan.
  - A. Israel flees to the wilderness. 12:6  
Rev. 6:1-11
  - B. Satan cast out of Heaven 12:7-12  
cf.
  - C. The Great Tribulation. 12:13-13:18  
Matt. 24:4-28
- III. The Wrath of God.
  - A. The 144,000 sealed. 14:1-5.
  - B. The announcement of God's judgment. 14:6-13.
  - C. God's judgment. 14:14-18:24.  
cf. 1st Trumpet 8:7

Introduction: 14:14-15:8.

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. 1st Vial — On the earth.<br>16:2  | cf. 1st Trumpet 8:7      |
| 2. 2nd Vial — On the sea.<br>16:3  | cf. 2nd Trumpet 8:8, 9   |
| 3. 3rd Vial — On the river & lakes.<br>16:4-7  | cf. 3rd Trumpet 8:10, 11 |
| 4. 4th Vial — On heavenly bodies.<br>16:8, 9   | cf. 4th Trumpet 8:12, 13 |
| 5. 5th Vial — On unbelievers.<br>16:10, 11   | cf. 5th Trumpet 9:1-12   |
| 6. 6th Vial — On Euphrates.<br>16:12-16  | 6th Trumpet 9:13-21      |
| 7. 7th Vial — Grand Finale.<br>16:17-21<br>Battle of Armageddon.<br>Doom of Babylon. 17, 18. | cf. 7th Trumpet 11:15-19 |

#### IV. The Second Coming of Christ.

- A. Marriage of the Lamb. 19:1-10.
- B. Return to earth to reign. 19:11-19      cf. Rev. 11:15-19.
- 1. Final judgment of the beast. 19:20-21.
- 2. Satan bound for 1,000 years. 20:1-3.
- 3. Resurrection of the saints to judge on earth. 20:4-6.

#### V. Concluding judgment.

- A. Satan's release to test the millennial people. 20:7-9.
- B. Satan's final judgment. 20:10.
- C. The unbeliever's final judgment. 20:11-15.

#### VI. New Beginning.

- A. New heaven replacing old heaven.
- B. New earth replacing old earth. 21:1-22:7.
- C. New Jerusalem replacing old Jerusalem.

#### VII. John's Conclusion. 22:8-21. "I am the beginning and the end, the first and last."

"I come quickly."

THE END OF SECTION TWO OF THE BOOK OF  
THE REVELATION

Section One of the outline fits into the central portion of Section Two. The seven trumpets of Section One then become identical with the seven vials of Section Two. We have noted this in the outline by giving the comparable verses in each section. Not all the events in the first section are repeated in the second section, but enough are repeated to prove how the two patterns consist. By fitting the two sections together, we have the following outline of events in chronological order:

1. Preparation for the Tribulation — Signs on Earth.
  - a. Flight from Jerusalem.
  - b. Sealing with mark of the beast.
  - c. Wrath of Satan.
2. Preparation for the Day of the Lord — Signs in Heaven.
  - a. Flight to Jerusalem.
  - b. Sealing with mark of God.
  - c. Wrath of God.
3. Preparation for the Millennium — David's Throne.
  - a. Satan bound.
  - b. 1st resurrection — of the just.
  - c. 1,000 year Kingdom upon earth.
4. Preparation for the New Universe — Great White Throne.
  - a. Satan loosed.
  - b. 2nd resurrection — of unjust.
  - c. Eternal new heaven and earth.

A study of the numbers used in Revelation is one that needs special attention, which is not our purpose in this brief summary of the book. It is interesting though to see that the number seven is used approximately fifty-three times, which most definitely stamps a completeness on the book. The number twelve is used twenty-two times showing that God is dealing with His earthly people, Israel. There are more references to the Old Testament in Revelation than any other New Testament book including Matthew and Hebrews.

The culmination of truth in the book as a whole is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ to earth. As it was given to John to record the events which preceded, included and followed the first coming of our Saviour, so it was given to him to prophesy the events preceding, including and following the second coming of our Savior. If the book of John were attached to the Revelation we would have a complete history covering the announcement of Christ's first coming through the second, of course, this prophetic history excludes the period of the Mystery, the age in which we are now living. It was given to John to record what Jesus began to do and what the exalted Jesus will do.