

The Case of the Missing Saints
(A Biblical Investigation into the Mystery of the Rapture)
Rockey Jackson - November 24, 1999
Section 9 of 13

Navigating through the book of Revelation

So far we've gathered our facts about the Rapture from the teachings of the Apostles as recorded in the Epistles and the testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospels. Next we will look in Revelation to see if we can definitively find the Rapture in the events of the Apocalypse. Whenever we're about to go into unfamiliar territory, it is a good idea to consult a map and develop a feel for the country. In this section I've included some explanatory comments and an outline of Revelation to help us navigate through what for most students is indeed unfamiliar territory.

I don't pretend to understand all of the mysteries contained in the book of Revelation. I do, however, believe that a basic understanding of the structure of the book will help everyone navigate through it more easily. If Revelation were to be written today, it would be formatted like a newspaper or magazine. There would be several articles and several sidebars.

A sidebar is a short item that goes with, but is not part of a major article. It adds additional information on some person, place, thing, or event contained in the article it's attached to. Anyone may write a sidebar. It doesn't have to be written by the author of the article it is attached to. Sidebars are placed in any convenient location near the major article.

I've outlined Revelation showing its major articles and its sidebars. The sidebars are italicized in the outline and are labeled with an "S" preceding their number. If you've had trouble getting lost in Revelation, try reading with the outline. Skip over the sidebars. The narrative should now read smoothly. Later, go back and pick up the information in the sidebars. Remember that they are placed in proximity to the part of the story they relate to. They may look backward, forward, or be concurrent with the narrative around them.

Outline of the Revelation of Jesus Christ

- I. Prologue/Vision of the Risen Christ (1:1-20)
- II. Letters to the Seven Churches (2:1-3:22)
- III. Vision of Heaven and the Lamb (4:1-5:14)
- IV. Redemption of the Earth (6:1-16:21)
 - A. First Seal, White Horse – Conqueror (6:1,2)
 - B. Second Seal, Red Horse – War (6:3,4)
 - C. Third Seal, Black Horse – Scales (6:5,6)
 - D. Fourth Seal, Gray Horse – Death (6:7,8)
 - E. Fifth Seal, Martyrs (6:9-11)
 - F. Sixth Seal, Great Earthquake (6:12-17)
 - S1. Sealing of the 144,000 (7:1-8)*
 - S2. The Unnumbered Multitude (7:9-17)*
 - G. Seventh Seal, the Seven Trumpets (8:1-16:21)
 - 1. First Trumpet, Third of Vegetation Destroyed (8:7)
 - 2. Second Trumpet, Third of Sea Destroyed (8:8,9)
 - 3. Third Trumpet, Third of Fresh Water Made Bitter (8:10,11)
 - 4. Fourth Trumpet, Third of Light Darkened (8:12)

5. Fifth Trumpet, Demonic Locusts (9:1-12)
6. Sixth Trumpet, Third of Mankind Killed – No Repentance (9:13-21)
 - S1. *The Little Book – Seven Thunders* (10:1-11)
 - S2. *Measuring the Temple* (11:1-2)
 - S3. *The Two Witnesses* (11:3-13)
7. Seventh Trumpet, the Seven Bowls (11:14-16:21)
 - S1. *The Woman, the Dragon, and the Man Child* (12:1-6)
 - S2. *War in Heaven, Satan Cast Down to Earth* (12:7-17)
 - S3. *The Two Beasts/Desolating Sacrilege* (13:1-18)
 - S4. *The Lamb and His Followers* (14:1-5)
 - S5. *The Angelic Announcements* (14:6-13)
 - S6. *The Two Harvests* (14:14-20)
 - S7. *Seven Angels with the Seven Last Plagues* (15:1-16:1)
 - a. First Bowl, Sores on People with the Mark (16:2)
 - b. Second Bowl, Sea Turns to Blood (16:3)
 - c. Third Bowl, Fresh Water Turns to Blood (16:4-7)
 - d. Fourth Bowl, Intense Heat – No Repentance (16:8,9)
 - e. Fifth Bowl, Darkness – No Repentance (16:10,11)
 - f. Sixth Bowl, Armies Gathered for Armageddon (16:12-16)
 - g. Seventh Bowl, Earthquake and Hail (16:17-21)
 - S13. *The Woman on the Beast* (17:1-18)
 - S14. *Fall of Babylon* (18:1-24)
- V. Jesus Christ Reigns One Thousand Years (19:1-20:15)
 - A. Marriage Supper of the Lamb (19:1-10)
 - B. Vision of the King of Kings (19:11-16)
 - C. Battle of Armageddon (19:17-21)
 - D. Satan Bound for a Thousand Years (20:1-3)
 - E. Judgment of the Nations (20:4-6)
 - F. Satan Released/Final Rebellion (20:7-10)
 - G. Resurrection and Judgment of the Dead (20:11-15)
- VI. New Heavens and New Earth (21:1-22:5)
- VII. Christ's Call/Epilogue (22:6-21)

My outline of Revelation contains forty-nine items, five sets of seven items and one set of fourteen items. Forty-nine is equal to seven times seven. Now before anyone gets too excited about this very perfect number, let me confess that I arbitrarily made it that way. When I surveyed my draft outline I noticed that there were already several sets of seven and that the total was close to forty-nine items. I just liked the idea of the outline equaling seven squared. So, I revisited the text containing the sets that did not equal a multiple of seven to see if they could logically be divided to fit my desired scheme. To my satisfaction, I found that I could easily do it with a clear conscience that I had not damaged the logical integrity of the outline. This still leaves the question of whether or not my arbitrary choice was inspired? I leave it to you the reader and the still small voice to decide. After all, I never said that it was my intent to remove all of the mystery from our faith but only to see what the Bible has to say about the timing of the Rapture.

Referring again to our analogy of a magazine, Revelation may be divided into seven distinct articles: the vision of the risen Christ, the letters to the seven churches, the vision of heaven and the Lamb, the redemption of the earth, the millennial reign of Christ, the new heavens and earth, and finally Christ's call to come to Him. The redemption of the earth is the largest article. It is divided into the seven seals. The seventh seal contains the seven trumpets and the seventh trumpet contains the seven bowls. This article also contains the entire set of fourteen sidebar articles. I subdivided only one other article. The millennial reign of Christ contains: the marriage supper of the Lamb, a vision of the King of Kings, the battle of Armageddon, the binding of Satan for one thousand years, the judgment of the nations, Satan's release and final rebellion, and the resurrection and judgment of the dead. Now that we know our way around the book of Revelation, our crime scene if you will, let's get out our magnifying glasses and see what we can find.