## **How to Study Revelation**

## Week 8: The Cycles of Sevens pt. 2

**Seven Trumpets Cont.**

* Interlude –Thunder, Scroll, and the Two Witnesses
  + When John is about to write down the seven thunders, he is instructed not to write down the seven thunders
  + The Scroll
  + John receives instructions to eat the scroll (Ezek 3:1-4)
    - It will taste sweet but be bitter in his stomach
    - Most likely, the same scroll the Lamb opens, revealing God's plan (Rev 5-8).
    - This leads to the next phase of prophecy
  + The Temple and the Two Witnesses
    - The Temple
      * John receives instructions to measure the temple where the martyrs are.
        + This is an image of protection (Zech 2)
      * The outer courts are excluded from the measurement and are destroyed by the nations
        + Two Views:

The destruction is the literal destruction of Jerusalem, either historically or yet to come. (F., Pr.,)

The New Temple is a symbol of God's New Covenant People. There will be persecution by the nations, but external defeat, even to the point death cannot take away victory through the Lamb (1 Cor 3:16; Heb 3:6; 1 Peter 2:4-5) (I., H., Pa.)

* + - The Two Witnesses
      * They were appointed to call out sin and call people to repentance.
      * They are killed by a beast, and the nations celebrate their death (Dan 7, Rev 13)
      * They are resurrected after three days
      * People actually do turn back to God after their resurrection in conjunction with divine judgment
      * Who are they? – Two Views
        + Two Prophets, potentially previous future individuals - (F., Pr.)
        + The Church serving as witness to the Lamb (I., H., Pa.)
* The Final Trumpet
  + The Seventh Trumpet
    - Depiction of the Day of the Lord
    - There is a contrast between servants, prophets and saints, and the nations (Rev 11:18)
    - The temple opened, revealing the Ark of the Covenant
    - The Ark is a symbol of God's presence and was taken into battle (Josh 6:13).
      * For the repentant, this is a sign of God's favor and promises; for opposing nations, it is a symbol of Judgment.
      * This is the very center of the Book of Revelation.

### **The Cosmic Interlude**

* Interrupts the cycles of seven.
* Begins Act II (specifically if the focus is on a spiral timeline)
* It tells a linear story out of time but inclusive of other portions of Revelation, including the cycles of divine judgment.
* There are several parallels with historic Asia Minor (Pr., I., H., Pa.)

### **The Cosmic War (Rev 12)**

* The woman, child, and Dragon
  + A woman clothed in the cosmos is pregnant and pursued by a dragon with symbols of a false deity,
    - The woman is the people of God (Rev 4:4; 10; Gen 3; Isa 66:7-10; Mich 4:10
    - The Dragon is Satan (and his forces) (Rev 13; Gen 3; Isa 14:12-5; Jude 6; Isa 27:1)
    - The Child is Jesus (Rev 5, Psalm 2, 2 Cor 12:2)
  + When the Dragon pursues and tries to devour the child, the child rules and is enthroned with God (Rev 5, Philippians 2)
* Michael and the battle against the Dragon
  + Michael is the angelic "prince" that defeats the powers that oppose Israel and is the protector of God's people (Dan 10:13, 12:1)
  + Those who understand that Michael fights for God's people will assume that an agent of God fights for them.
  + The defeat of Satan limits him, banishing him from heaven and focusing his attention on the earth.
  + The timespan that the mother and child are protected can be interpreted as the time of the Church before the tribulation (F.).
* The Dragon on Earth
  + Not being able to find the woman who has gone into the wilderness, the Dragon becomes furious and focuses his retribution on the woman's other offspring.
    - Other offspring – those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus (Rev 12:17).
* Parallels mythological story of Python and Leto
  + The Myth
    - Python was the Dragon; Leto was pregnant by Zeus.
    - Python pursued and tried to kill Leto and the child.
    - Leto found refuge on the island of Delos and gave birth to Apollo and Artemis
    - Four days late, Apollo pursued and killed Python to avenge his mother.
  + Roman Popularity
    - Roman Emperors used the myth in popular culture.
    - Emperors associated themselves with Apollo and Roma (the Roman goddess) as Leto.
    - The Roman Emperor overcame the evil forces of the earth, ushering in Roman Peace (Pax Romana) for the world.
    - Nero often depicted himself as Apollo, even including Apolloesque beams of radiance on Roman coins.
  + Christian readers would have known the myth and seen the following reversals
    - Leto is the people of God (Israel), not a pagan goddess
    - Apollo is the Lamb (Jesus), not the Emperor
    - Python represents the forces opposing Christianity, including Satan, Rome, Nero, and Domitian.

### **The Two Beasts (Rev 13)**

* Two beasts arise, one from the sea and one from the land.
* The most widely accepted view is that this chapter depicts the Antichrist and False Prophet either as a singular figure (F.), a historical figure (Pr., I., H., Pa.), or a recurring individual who abuses power to hurt the people of God. (I., H., Pa.).
* Antichrist In the NT
  + The word antichrist comes from the Greek ἀντίχριστος (*antichristos).*
  + The term antichrist exclusively occurs in 1 John 2:18, 22, 4:3, and 2 John 1:7.
    - John uses the term to combat heresies and perverted doctrine.
    - He uses the terms to describe people who opposed Jesus and doctrines concerning Jesus as God.
  + The Synoptic Gospels (Matt, Mark, Luke)
    - All three Gospels warn against following those proclaiming to be Christ (Matt 24:4–5; Mark 13:5–6; Luke 21:8)
      * Mark notes the rise of 'false Christs and false prophets" who possess the power to perform "signs and wonders" to device people (Mark 13:2, 24:24)
      * False Christs is used in the same way as antichrist in the synoptic Gospels[[1]](#footnote-1)
    - Letter of Paul
      * Paul references a "man of lawlessness" and "son of destruction" whose coming will signify the leading of a rebellion. (2 Thess 2:3).
    - Revelation
      * Political Antichrist – Beast from the sea (Rev 13:2)
      * Religious Antichrist – Beast from the land (Rev 13:13-14)
* The Mark of the Beast 666
  + One of the most mysterious passages of Revelation.
  + The mark is a parody of perfection, 777.
  + The mark of the beast parallels the believer's seal (Rev 7:3; Gal 6:7).
  + The mark also parodies Exodus 13:16
    - The mark on the hand and forehead in exodus symbolized redemption and God's strength to protect his people.
    - The mark of the beast is forced authority, not divine protection.
  + Readers are told: (Rev 13:18)
    - understanding the mark requires wisdom.
    - calculate the number of the beast; only if you possess understanding
    - it is the number of a man
  + Most scholars believe the mark of the beast is a reference to Nero
    - nerōn kaisar (Latin for Nero Caesar) transliterates in NRWN QSR. The corresponding numbers add up to 666.
  + Others who have been identified as the antichrist by connections to the mark of the beast
    - Adolf Hitler if a = 100, b = 101, c = 102
    - Henry Kissinger, whose name in Hebrew allegedly has the value of 111 multiplied by 6, is 666.
    - Ronald Wilson Regan had six letters in each of his names and also lived at the street address 666
    - Bill Clinton, whose name added up to 666 through a mixture of Greek and Hebrew
    - John F. Kennedy received 666 votes at the 1956 Democratic Convention.
    - The office of the papacy and many individual Popes, including Leo X and Benedict XVI
    - Napoleon
    - Emperor Constantine

References:

The Bible Project Podcast – On the 5 Interpretive Methods and an example of interpreting using the rest of scripture <https://open.spotify.com/episode/4KINFggH5sm8FEhdAP2K1b?si=CVS3PNnvQRi78tYlsmEltA&context=spotify%3Aepisode%3A4KINFggH5sm8FEhdAP2K1b> – Pastoral Prophetic

1. Daniel I. Morrison, “Antichrist,” ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)