

Living Word Fellowship Church

A Summary of Chapters 1-7

Pastor Paul Cannings, D.Phil.

A. An Overview Summary of Previous Chapters (Review Chart):

1. John leaves the Church of Ephesus and goes sixty miles to the Isle of Patmos where an angel greets him and provides him this prophecy.
2. Jesus appears to John and is described as *“and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash. His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.”* (Revelation 1:13-16; NASU)
3. Revelation begins with Christ's meticulous evaluation of the seven churches because the church is where the keys for the gates of Hades reside , He is the head of the church, and the church is His body (Colossians 1:18), and it is through Christ planned to impact the world (Ephesians 1:22-23) and resist the attacks of Satan [Ephesians 3:9-10; The world is now run by him (1 John 1:19 – writing the church he just lifts) , and lawlessness has increased].
4. **Only the churches of Smyrna and Philadelphia did well.**
5. Because the church failed and Satan is running rampant, Christ re-establishes His authority which is outlined in chapter 4.
 - a) This fulfills Philippians 2:8-11; *“Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus*

EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (NASU)

b) His throne is powerful, manifesting authority and dominance. This is critical because of the judgments that Christ will execute in chapters 6, 8 and 16:17.

c) *The four living creatures* - All nature is called on to declare the praises of God (Ps. 150), so God has designed the creatures nearest his throne to serve as constant reminders of this. ^[1]

d) *The seven lamps of fire, which are the seven Spirits of God* - These should be understood to represent the Holy Spirit rather than seven individual spirits or angels, with the concept of the sevenfold character of the Spirit (Isa. 11:2–3; cf. Rev. 1:4; 5:6). ^[2]

e) ‘...twenty-four elders...’ - The number 24 is the number of representation, illustrated in the fact that in the Law of Moses, there were 24 orders of the priesthood. (For further discussion of the identity of the 24 elders, see the comments on 5:8–10.) ^[3]

f) *So here “Holy,” as He “who was”; “Holy,” as He “who is”; “Holy,” as He “who is to come.”* He showed Himself an object of holy worship in the past creation of all things: more fully, He shows Himself so in governing all things: He will, in the highest degree, show Himself so in the consummation of all things. “Of (from) Him, through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever . Amen.” In Is 6:3, there is added, “the whole earth is full of His glory.” But in Revelation, this is deferred until the glory of the Lord fills *the earth*, His enemies having been destroyed [Bengel]. ^[4]

6. All of chapter 4 is an introduction to the main point of chapters 4-5, that is, to introduce the scroll with its seven seals. The symbolic presentation showed a scroll or a rolled-up parchment with seven seals affixed to the side in such a way that if unrolled, the seven seals would need to be broken one by one. (from Bible Knowledge Commentary/Old Testament Copyright © 1983, 2000 Cook Communications Ministries; Bible Knowledge Commentary/New Testament Copyright © 1983, 2000 Cook Communications Ministries. All rights reserved.)

a) The fact that the scroll is written on the inside and on the back indicates that there was a lot to say (cf. Ezek. 2:10). The drama of seeking a worthy opener heightens the importance of the sealed scroll. To break the seals was to open the scroll. The function of seals in the ancient world was to protect important documents for private and select viewing. ^[5]

b) "The prayers of God's people" (5:8) relate to the prayers for the end of evil and the beginning of God's kingdom. This is especially true of the prayers noted in the fifth seal (6:9–11). ^[6]

c) The Lion and the Lamb surely refer to Christ, with the Lamb referring to His first coming and His death and the Lion referring to His second coming and His sovereign judgment of the world. (from Bible Knowledge Commentary/Old Testament Copyright © 1983, 2000 Cook Communications Ministries; Bible Knowledge Commentary/New Testament Copyright © 1983, 2000 Cook Communications Ministries. All rights reserved.)

d) Since horns symbolize strength (1 Ki 22:11), the "seven horns" represent the authority and strength of a ruler (Da 7:24; Rv 13:1). The "seven eyes" are defined as the seven spirits of God (cf. Zec 3:9; 4:10) which symbolically represent the Holy Spirit (cf. Rv 1:4; 4:5). (from Bible Knowledge Commentary/Old Testament Copyright © 1983, 2000 Cook Communications Ministries; Bible Knowledge Commentary/New Testament Copyright © 1983, 2000 Cook Communications Ministries. All rights reserved.)

e) *'Myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands'* - "Ten thousand" was the largest single number used in Greek, so "ten thousands of ten thousand" (myriads of myriads) is the author's way of calling them innumerable. (from IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament by Craig S. Keener Copyright © 1993 by Craig S. Keener. Published by InterVarsity Press. All rights reserved.)

7. The breaking of the six of the seven seals is explained in chapter 6:

- a) Taken as a whole, chapter 6 is one of the most important and pivotal chapters in the entire book. It describes the first six seals and also introduces the seventh seal, which consists of and introduces the seven trumpets and the seven bowls of the wrath of God in chapters 8-9; 16.
- b) The contents of chapter 6 should put to rest the false teachings that God, being a God of love, could not judge a wicked world. It also raises the important question contained in the closing words of verse 17: **Who can stand?** Only those who have availed themselves of the grace of God before the time of judgment will be able to stand when God deals with the earth in this final period of great distress. Those who will be saved in the Great Tribulation are described in the next chapter.
- c) Only six seals are opened in this chapter; the seventh is not opened until the trumpet judgments are about to be announced (8:1). Of these six seals, the first four form a group; the fifth and sixth stand by themselves. Each of the first four is introduced with a rider on a horse, from which derives the famous phrase, used in many ways in numerous forms of literature, “the four horsemen of the Apocalypse.”^[7]
- d) When the seven seals are broken, the judgments of God are poured out on the earth (cf. 6:1).^[8]

An Expository Explanation of Revelation Chapter 7 – Part I

B. General Description:

Though the chapters of Revelation are not all in chronological sequence, chapter 7 depicts a scene in heaven that precedes the second coming of Christ to the earth. Those seen in heaven were said to “come out of the Great Tribulation” (v. 14). The chapter accordingly indicates how they will be marvelously blessed in heaven after their trials on earth. The 144,000 will appear again (14:1–5), and the multitude of martyrs who were killed for refusing to worship the beast appear again at the time of the resurrection in 20:4. That they are not millennial saints should be evident from the fact that they will be in heaven before God’s throne, and will have been resurrected.^[9]

Before the final devastation is unleashed, God sets apart 144,000 sealed ones (7:1–8).

Revelation 7 records a parenthesis between the sixth and seventh seals.

From the severity of the judgments, it would appear that not a single person could be delivered (6:17). The question was, “Who will be able to survive?” (6:17). But the God of wrath is also the God of mercy. Revelation 7 records the manifestation of God’s grace in the face of his wrath by giving two visions of the sealed and the slain. This vision is between the breaking of the sixth and seventh seals, a pattern repeated between the sixth and seventh trumpets (10:1–11:13). For the “four winds” (7:1), see Daniel 7:2 and Jeremiah 49:36. There is a direct relationship between the sealing of these “servants” (7:3) and their safety. They are sealed for faithfulness and safety (cf. 9:4). The “seal” is a mark of ownership. It does not have to be visible to be real (Eph. 4:30). The 144,000 (7:4) are identified as coming from the twelve tribes of Israel. The tribe of Dan is missing, and Joseph is included instead of Ephraim. The important thing is that they are drawn from twelve groups. Since John did not reveal the function of the 144,000, any view concerning their role is conjectural. The point is that they and a great multitude will be kept through the Tribulation and will make it safely into the eternal kingdom (7:15–17). This may relate to the prophecy of Joel 2:3 (cf. 14:1, 3–4). [\[10\]](#)

Rev. 7:1–8 explains how believers are sealed so that they can persevere through the first four tribulations enumerated in ch. 6. The vision in 7:9–17 reveals the heavenly reward for those who do persevere. It amplifies the brief picture of the saints in 6:9–11, who have finally entered into God’s presence after having successfully completed their course of suffering (see esp. 7:13–15). 7:9–17 also describes the kind of rest that the exalted saints were told to enjoy (6:11) “until the number of their fellow servants” who must endure yet further sufferings “should be completed.” This section also expands on when and how God will begin to vindicate Christians from the wrong verdict rendered against them by the world, a theme likewise introduced in 6:9–11. Saints who suffer in the tribulation are encouraged to persevere as they reflect on the divine protection they have through God’s sealing of them and as they recall the promise of their future heavenly reward. [\[11\]](#)

It seems evident that these “who have come out of the Great Tribulation” have been martyred and were then safe in heaven. They were given the special privilege of being before God’s **throne** and serving **Him day and night in His temple**. They were

protected by God Himself, and never again would they experience hunger ... thirst, or scorching heat, with the implication that this was their experience of suffering on earth. They were under the special shepherd-care of **the Lamb** and were drinking from **springs of living water**. The narration concludes with the comforting truth that all their tears will be wiped away.^[12]

An Expository Explanation of Revelation Chapter 7 – Part II

A. General Background Information:

1. Like documents or merchandise sealed and stamped to guarantee their contents and prevent tampering, God's servants were to be marked off as His (cf. Is 44:5). God had previously protected his people in Goshen during the plagues (Ex 8:28; 9:4; 11:7; see comment on Rev 5:6); the idea of a protecting sign is also an Old Testament image (Gen 4:15; Is 66:19). Here it is taken directly from Ezekiel 9:4–6, where judgment could not begin until the foreheads of the righteous (those who mourned over the sin of their land) were marked. The forehead and the hand (Ex 13:9, 16; 28:38; Deut 6:8; 11:18) were the most natural and obvious parts of the body for this marking because they were most directly exposed to view.^[13]

2. Therefore, the sealing of the saints explains further how Christ will “keep them from the hour of trial,” which is “to test the earth-dwellers” who have persecuted them (cf. 6:10; see on 3:10 and 7:14 for the Dan. 12:1 background concerning the tribulation). All these connections concern matters that precede the final judgment and reward, so ch. 7 must function as an interlude or parenthesis in its placement after ch. 6. Yet the chapter also has a future aspect, especially toward the end (vv 15–17). From this perspective, the chapter is also an answer to the concluding question of 6:17, “who is able to stand” before God and not suffer the wrath of the last judgment? This is the definitive answer to 6:17 and the main point toward which the visionary narrative of 7:9ff. drives.^[14]

3. In this respect, the “great multitude ... standing before the throne” may be an explicit answer to the question of 6:17. This is so because (1) 6:17 and 7:9 are close to

each other, and both use ἵστημι (“stand”); (2) both refer to people standing before the throne and the Lamb; (3) the picture of the Lamb “standing” before the throne in 5:6 is closely associated with his resurrection existence, suggesting that those “standing” before the throne in 7:9 (who are called “sheep” in 7:17) are the resurrected saints; and (4) that the saints are said to stand “on the sea of glass” close to a later mention of the “Lamb” (15:2–3) also reflects the Lamb’s resurrection existence from 5:6. ἵστημι (“stand”) could refer to resurrection elsewhere with regard to Christ (10:5, 8; 14:1), saints (11:11), and all of humanity (20:12).^[15]

^[1] Easley, K. H. (1998). [Revelation](#) (Vol. 12, p. 77). Broadman & Holman Publishers.

^[2] Walvoord, J. F. (1985). [Revelation](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 943). Victor Books.

^[3] Walvoord, J. F. (1985). [Revelation](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 943). Victor Books.

^[4] Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). [Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible](#) (Vol. 2, p. 565). Logos Research Systems, Inc.

^[5] Hughes, R. B., & Laney, J. C. (2001). [Tyndale concise Bible commentary](#) (pp. 740–741). Tyndale House Publishers.

^[6] Hughes, R. B., & Laney, J. C. (2001). [Tyndale concise Bible commentary](#) (p. 741). Tyndale House Publishers.

^[7] Pfeiffer, C. F., & Harrison, E. F., eds. (1962). [The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: New Testament](#) (Re 5:8). Moody Press.

^[8] Hughes, R. B., & Laney, J. C. (2001). [Tyndale concise Bible commentary](#) (pp. 740–741). Tyndale House Publishers.

^[9] Walvoord, J. F. (1985). [Revelation](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 950). Victor Books.

[10] Hughes, R. B., & Laney, J. C. (2001). [*Tyndale concise Bible commentary*](#) (p. 742). Tyndale House Publishers.

[11] Beale, G. K. (1999). [*The book of Revelation: a commentary on the Greek text*](#) (pp. 404–405). W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.

[12] Walvoord, J. F. (1985). [*Revelation*](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 950). Victor Books.

[13] Keener, C. S. (1993). [*The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament*](#) (Re 7:3). InterVarsity Press.

[14] Beale, G. K. (1999). [*The book of Revelation: a commentary on the Greek text*](#) (p. 405). W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.

[15] Beale, G. K. (1999). [*The book of Revelation: a commentary on the Greek text*](#) (p. 405). W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.

Revelation

Focus	<i>“Things Which You Have Seen”</i> 1:1 1:20		<i>“Things Which Are”</i> 2:1 3:22		<i>“Things Which Will Take Place”</i> 4:1 22:21								
<i>Divisions</i>	<i>The Lord Jesus Christ</i>		<i>The Seven Churches</i>		<i>The Judge</i>	<i>The Tribulation</i>		<i>The Second Coming</i>		<i>The Millennium</i>		<i>The Eternal State</i>	
<i>Topics</i>	<i>Vision of Christ</i>				<i>Vision of Consummation</i>								
	<i>Theophany</i>		<i>Talks</i>		<i>Tribuations</i>		<i>Trumpets</i>		<i>Together</i>				
<i>Place</i>	<i>Written on the Island of Patmos</i>												
<i>Time</i>	<i>C. A.D. 95-96</i>												