

God dealing with sinners in the world			God dealing with the unseen powers behind the world			God victorious
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7 Churches	7 Seals (Events)	7 Trumpets (Warnings)	7 Signs	7 Vials (Punishments)	Babylon's End	All Things New
Jesus Christ as Lord of the churches <i>1:1 - 1:20</i>	Jesus Christ as Lord of the events of history <i>4:1 - 5:14</i>	Jesus Christ warning the world by means of partial catastrophes which affect	Temple of God opened in heaven. Lightnings, voices, thunders, earthquake, and great hail <i>11:19</i>	Tabernacle of the testimony in heaven is opened <i>15:5 - 15:8</i>	In the wilderness now, John sees... <i>17:1 - 17:2</i>	I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren which have the testimony of Jesus <i>19:11</i>
1st Church Ephesus (the apostolic church) Rebuked (Capital city of Asia; main centre of worship of Artemis/Mary) <i>2:1 - 2:7</i>	1st Seal Rider on White Horse goes forth conquering, and to conquer <i>6:1 - 6:2</i>	1st Trumpet ...the land <i>8:7</i>	1st Sign Woman brings forth the man child who shall rule all nations <i>12:1 - 12:2</i>	1st Vial ...the land <i>16:1 - 16:2</i>	...a woman arrayed in purple and scarlet, sitting upon... <i>17:3</i>	Rider on White Horse goes forth to make war and to rule the nations <i>19:11 - 19:21</i>
2nd Church Smyrna (the persecuted church) No rebuke (Smyrna means Myrrh) Be thou faithful unto death <i>2:8 - 2:11</i>	2nd Seal Rider on Red Horse takes peace from the earth, that they should kill one another <i>6:3 - 6:4</i>	2nd Trumpet ...the sea <i>8:8 - 8:9</i>	2nd Sign Great Red Dragon 7 heads & 10 horns <i>12:3 - 12:6</i> Michael & his angels fight against satan & his angels Satan is cast down to the earth <i>12:7 - 12:17</i>	2nd Vial ...the sea <i>16:3</i>	...a scarlet beast with 7 heads and 10 horns, The woman is drunken with the blood of saints <i>17:3 - 17:7</i>	Satan cast into the abyss 1000 years. 1st resurrection and 1000 year reign with Christ <i>20:1 - 20:6</i> Satan cast into the fire. <i>20:7 - 20:10</i> 2nd resurrection and last judgment <i>20:11 - 20:15</i> ...no more sea.. <i>21:1</i>
3rd Church Pergamos (the married church) Rebuked (Invention of parchment & world publishing) Satan's seat. false doctrines <i>2:12 - 2:17</i>	3rd Seal Rider on Black Horse inflated food prices which hurt the poor <i>6:5 - 6:6</i>	3rd Trumpet ...the rivers <i>8:10 - 8:11</i>	3rd Sign ? Beast from the sea, 7 heads, 10 horns, has a deadly wound yet lives. The dragon gives it power and seat and great authority <i>13:1 - 13:10</i>	3rd Vial ...the rivers <i>16:4 - 16:7</i>	the beast with 7 heads and 10 horns was, and is not, and is.. Kings give it power <i>17:8 - 17:18</i>	New Jerusalem comes down from God <i>21:2 - 21:27</i> The River of Life gives healing to the nations <i>22:1 - 22:3</i>
4th Church Thyatira (the mediaeval church) Rebuked (Imperial Purple) Woman Jezebel teaches, and seduces church <i>2:18 - 2:29</i>	4th Seal Rider on Green Horse War, hunger, death, and pestilence <i>6:7 - 6:8</i>	4th Trumpet ...the Sun <i>8:12 - 8:13</i>	4th Sign ? Beast from the land (the false prophet) Lamb-like horns Dragon-like speech (Christ & Satan mixed) <i>13:11 - 13:12</i>	4th Vial ...the Sun <i>16:8 - 16:9</i>	Babylon is fallen! She shall be judged for her fornication with the nations and kings and merchants of the earth. <i>18:1 - 18:8</i>	Sun no longer needed for God is their light <i>22:4 - 22:7</i>
5th Church Sardis (denominational church) Rebuked (often taken by invaders) Reputedly alive but dead <i>3:1 - 3:6</i>	5th Seal Martyrs cry out to God for justice <i>6:9 - 6:11</i>	5th Trumpet Locusts from the pit torment those who have not the seal of God in their foreheads <i>9:1 - 9:12</i>	5th Sign ? Wonders (signs) done by the 2nd beast. Brings fire from heaven, and gives life to the image of the 1st beast. <i>13:13 - 13:15</i>	5th Vial ...the seat of the beast. Darkness, pain, and sores <i>16:10 - 16:11</i>	World trade collapses <i>18:9 - 18:20</i>	I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets <i>22:8 - 22:9</i>
6th Church Philadelphia (the missionary church) No rebuke (Brotherly love) <i>3:7 - 3:13</i>	6th Seal Cosmic powers shaken <i>6:12 - 6:17</i> "Hurt not the earth, sea, or trees..." 144,000 sealed <i>7:1 - 7:17</i>	6th Trumpet ...the Euphrates <i>9:13 - 9:21</i> seven sealed thunders <i>10:1 - 10:11</i> Two witnesses prophesy in Jerusalem <i>11:1 - 11:14</i> (3½ years)	6th Sign The mark (sign) of the beast is 666 (3½ years) <i>13:16 - 13:18</i> 144,000 have the Name of God Babylon is fallen <i>14:1 - 14:20</i>	6th Vial ...the Euphrates. Drought, unclean spirits. Battle of Armageddon <i>16:12 - 16:16</i> Blessed is he who watches, <i>16:15</i>	Babylon (on the Euphrates) silence and darkness.... <i>18:21 - 18:24</i>	Seal not the sayings <i>22:10 - 22:13</i>
7th Church Laodicea (the apostate church) Rebuked (Rights of the People) If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in... <i>3:14 - 3:22</i>	7th Seal The calm before the coming storm <i>8:1 - 8:6</i>	7th Trumpet Kingdom of God announced <i>11:15 - 11:19</i>	7th Sign 7 angels having 7 last plagues. The victorious saints sing the song of Moses <i>15:1 - 15:4</i>	7th Vial ...the air. Mighty earthquake, very great hail. Massive destruction <i>16:17 - 16:21</i>	Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb <i>19:1 - 19:9</i>	Blessed are they which do his commandments <i>22:14 - 22:15</i> Even so, come Lord Jesus <i>22:16 - 22:21</i>

On the preceding page is a matrix of the book of Revelation. Starting at the top left hand corner the book reads continuously down the first vertical column, then goes to the top of column two and proceeds down that, then to column three and so on, ending at the bottom of column seven in the lower right hand corner.

The chunks of text are not of the same length (although there may be mathematical factors in common), but are arranged into cellular divisions on the basis of their subject matter. It will be seen at once that there is a remarkable pattern of sevens stamped through the book. Not only are there seven Churches, seven Seals, seven Trumpets, seven Signs, and seven Vials, but the whole book's matrix falls into seven sections of seven sections, each having a short introduction..

My understanding of this is that the whole book is God giving ONE message of seven parts seven times, or rather perhaps, seven aspects of one and the same message, and that message is a setting forth of the Kingdom of God as it applies on seven different levels. Some of them are clearly earth-bound and temporal; others are equally clearly heavenly and eternal. Some events run serially, some concurrently.

There is mystery here, and that man is a fool who thinks he has it all sewn up. To think that such a timeless book must apply only to us here and now is stupid and egocentric in the extreme. Revelation began to apply to the believers in 1st century Ephesus, it was of profound significance to the Reformers in the 15th and 16th centuries, and has captured the close attention of Christians in each century since. God has no favourites, and certainly not us!

The book tells us what's going on behind the scenes. It tells us what God is doing, and how He is running His Kingdom. Here we see God's ways of dealing with firstly the Church, then with the sinners outside the Church, and finally with Satan. There is indeed a working-out of events in time, but the principles which are being thus worked out are eternal. As God is unchanging, so His victory is unchanging.

If we read each column vertically we see a chronological sequence in each case, but with many strong echoes horizontally between the columns. This suggests to me that we have here a record of the events of history seen on seven different levels, with events in one column having their counterparts in other columns as events in heaven affect events on earth, and vice versa. The whole tapestry is a telling of the Great Cosmic War (or at least of that part of it which is revealed to us here, for it is **A** revelation ('apocalypse' or unveiling), not **THE** revelation; there is no definite article at the start of the book in the Greek.)

I don't pretend to understand it all - or even much of it - and the matrix offered here is certainly not definitive and the seventh column is particularly problematic. Suggestions for improvement are welcome! The book is evidently heavily symbolic but I don't believe it to be allegorical. Neither does its strong symbolism hinder it from being simultaneously and specifically factual. Many commentators have advanced theories of the significance of the number seven, and doubtless it has great significance; but whilst we may ponder the profound spiritual meaning of the number we should not overlook its numerical specificity. John was commanded to write exactly seven letters, not six or eight, and we can scarcely doubt that precisely seven letters therefore he actually wrote. Likewise when the text speaks of there being seven spirits of God, exactly seven spirits there doubtless are, whether we think so or not.

But the Apocalypse has to be read with the heart. As Tozer put it:- "Faith alone can enter the Holy of Holies; let reason kneel reverently in worship outside the door."

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