

God Has Spoken
Tract Series

KEYS
TO THE REVELATION
OF JESUS CHRIST

The true name of the last book in the Bible is given in the first sentence. It is not the revelation of John, but of Jesus. Failure to recognize the place and purpose of the book can lead to confusion. It is the *last* of 66 books. It is understandable if we read it like the conclusion of a series. The theme may be stated in the words of Ecclesiastes 8:12. See Revelation 2:10. Help in interpretation begins in the first verse, and continues throughout.

1:1, 3 – This revelation is to His servants regarding what must shortly come to pass. He said, “the time is at hand.” The book is not written to the lost. It is not written to teach anyone how to be saved. It is not written to teach about our future.

1:20 – Regarding verses 12 and 13 the stars are (represent) angels, the candlesticks are (represent) churches. The Greek word “angels” is properly translated “messengers.” In the context, this is clearly a human who carried this letter to the church – possibly the preacher of each church. Jesus didn’t send from Heaven to John on earth a message for angels in Heaven!

4:5 – Seven lamps are seven spirits. This verse doesn’t identify the seven spirits. You have to read further to learn that. Be patient with the text; see Proverbs 18:13.

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds
(Hebrews 1:1-2).

5:6 – Seven horns and seven eyes are seven spirits. It doesn't mean that spirits look like the creature described. The creature is a visual representation of an invisible being. See Luke 24:39.

5:8 – Golden vials full of odours are the prayers of the saints. Prayers of saints coming to God are like golden bowls of fragrant flowers sent to a friend.

7:14 – The great multitude in white robes are they which came out of the great tribulation. The text does not speak of a literal 144,000 in Heaven as the Watchtower declares. Verses 4 & 9 make it clear that this is not a literal number. "The Great Tribulation" is not defined here. Scripture never describes it anywhere in terms that are common among today's popular religions. It doesn't refer to a period of years immediately before the return of Christ. See again chapter 1, verses 1 and 3.

10:7 – Words of the prophets declared the finishing of the mystery. "Mystery" is defined in Colossians 1:25-27. Compare Revelation 10:7 with 11:15

11:3-4 – Two olive trees and two candlesticks are two witnesses. The olive tree may represent peace – even today we say, "He extended the olive branch" to indicate that a person tried to make peace. The candlestick may represent light. The 1,260 days are equal to 3½ years, which amounts to half of 6. The symbolism of numbers is a subject for another study. It would require more space than we have here, but see the brief information at 13:18 and 14:4 later in this list.

11:8 – "The great city" & "Sodom" & "Egypt" all refer to Jerusalem. We still today give cities nicknames related to other cities. Atlantic City is called "Las Vegas East," Birmingham is called "The Pittsburgh of the South," Nashville is called "The Athens of the South."

12:9 – The dragon is the devil and Satan, who was the serpent in the old time. It doesn't say that the devil is a dragon. He isn't a snake, either, but appeared that way to Eve. What a dragon would do to the saints physically, Satan does spiritually.

12:17 – The remnant of the woman’s seed are those who keep the commandments of God – faithful Christians.

13:10 – Persecution is the patience of the saints. See Ecclesiastes 8:12. Refer again to Revelation 2:10.

13:18 – The number of the beast is the number of a man. A brief explanation of symbolic numerology is necessary here. To the Jews the number 7 referred to God, and 6 to man. Symbolic numerology is man’s invention, not God’s. God uses it to communicate with man as He uses other languages. God didn’t invent Hebrew, Aramaic & Greek, but He used them to communicate. What is credited to the beast is actually done by/to man. The beast is a symbol of man.

14:4 – The 144,000 are those who have not prostituted the faith, but follow the Lamb wherever He goes. Here is symbolic numerology again – with factors (operators). The squaring and cubing of a number, and the multiplying of numbers indicate intensifying the meaning of the number. Thus, 6^2 (6x6) means truly, or wholly, human. Twelve squared times ten cubed [(12x12) x (10x10x10)] is 144,000. Twelve = 6x2 (the number of man twice - i.e. doubled for emphasis). 10 is a number indicating perfection. Thus, 144,000 merely represents the whole total number of souls in Heaven. The message is clear – every word of God means exactly what it says. That is not to say that every word is literal. Some of these things the Bible doesn’t “say” literally, but says symbolically or figuratively.

14:12 – The patience of the saints is keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. In chapter 13, verse 10 Persecution is Patience. In chapter 14, verse 12 Patience is Keeping Commandments. Thus He said in 2:10 – keep the faith even if death is the only alternative.

16:13-14 – Unclean spirits like frogs are spirits of devils working miracles. Remember 1:1, 3 – “at hand – shortly come to pass.” The age of miracles is now past. We don’t live in an age of miracles, but they did. For a short time devils/demons were given miracle powers: indwelling/possession, blindness, deafness, palsy, etc. See II

Corinthians 11:14. When people do amazing things, don't listen – it doesn't mean they're from God. See Deuteronomy 18:9-12.

17:9 – The seven heads of the beast are seven mountains. Rome was built on seven hills, and is sometimes referred to in ancient literature as “the city of seven hills.”

17:10 – Counting Roman rulers (emperors) pinpoints the time about which the prophecy speaks. The first nine emperors were Julius Caesar, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, Galba (a usurper whose reign was short-lived), Otho, Vespasian. The sixth emperor – “one is” – was Nero, who reigned A.D. 54-68. Persecution of the church began in A.D. 66. Thus, we conclude that this book was written between A.D. 66 and 68.

17:11 – The beast that was and is not, is the 8th Roman ruler: Otho. In his days was the fulfillment of these “things which must shortly come to pass.” The senate called Vespasian home in 69 to replace Otho as emperor & end the civil war.

17:12 – The 10 horns of the beast are 10 kings yet without kingdoms.

17:15 – The waters upon which the great whore sits are nations.

17:18 – The woman is the great city that reigns over kings: Rome, the capital of the empire. See verse 5 – “Babylon” is a figurative reference to Rome.

19:8 – The fine linen is the righteousness of the saints.

20:2 – (same as 12:9) The dragon is the serpent, the devil, Satan.

21:8 – The lake of fire & brimstone is the second death. Physical death is one thing – this is a lot more serious. See Revelation 2:11. We see in 20:6 that the second death has no power over those of the first resurrection.

21:9-10 – The lamb's wife is holy Jerusalem descending – the church, which came from God. See Ephesians 1:3-4.

If this book has such a simple meaning, why was it written thus? The purpose was that Rome wouldn't understand it and therefore increase the persecution of the church. But if that was the purpose, why put the keys in the book to explain it? Couldn't Rome find the keys and unlock the meaning? Did you? The vast majority of religious leaders of this modern age haven't understood it. There are two prerequisites to understanding the Revelation: [1] knowledge of the preceding portion of the Bible (this is the conclusion of a series of 66 books); [2] careful reading. God wrote his book so people would understand it & be saved (1:3), but it has to be read fully and carefully before it can be understood. The first recipients understood the revelation of Jesus Christ. You can understand God's message of salvation. Most of the Bible is not written in signs and symbols. Read the Bible. Understand it. Believe it. Obey it. -A. L. Parr

a publication of Confirming the Churches

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Skyway Publishing

P. O. Box 662

Lincoln, IL 62656-0662

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