

Overview of the Book of Revelation

The Seven Seals (Seven 1,000-Year Periods of the Earth's Temporal Existence)



First Five Seals—from the Creation to John's Time

The first five seals described in the book of Revelation are dealt with in 11 verses (see Revelation 6:1–11; only 3 percent of the total verses in the book), while 281 verses (70 percent) deal with the sixth and seventh seals and the final glory of the earth. The Prophet Joseph Smith described this focus of the book of Revelation: “The things which John saw had no allusion to the scenes of the days of Adam, Enoch, Abraham or Jesus, only so far as is plainly represented by John. . . . John saw that only which was lying in futurity and which was shortly to come to pass” (in *History of the Church*, 5:341–42).

Last Two Seals—the Kingdom of God's Triumphant Destiny

It does not seem to have been the Lord's purpose to arrange every aspect of the book of Revelation in strict chronological order. Like a master teacher who digresses from his presentation with brief interludes to further clarify or expand what he teaches, even so the Lord appears to have included in Revelation several such interludes that interrupt the order of the presentation. These teaching interludes, labeled A–E in the chronology below, are discussed in the corresponding sections.

Chronology of the Events in the Last Two Seals, Including Teaching Interludes

6 Revelation 6:12–17 Great calamities and signs are shown on earth and in heaven.	7 Revelation 7:1–8 Destruction is held back while the righteous are sealed; the gospel is restored.	A 7 Revelation 8:1–13; 9:1–21 Fire, destruction, and war are unleashed.	B Revelation 11:1–14 Two special witnesses are slain in Jerusalem and then resurrected.	C Revelation 11:15–19 Voices in heaven announce the triumph of God's kingdom.	D Revelation 15:5–8; 16:1–21 Vials of judgment are poured out on the world; the wicked do not repent.	E Revelation 19:1–10 Voices in heaven praise God and announce the marriage supper of the Lamb.	Revelation 19:11–21 Christ comes as King of kings; the wicked are destroyed.	Revelation 20:1–3 Satan is bound at the beginning of the Millennium.	Revelation 20:4–6 The righteous are resurrected and reign with Christ during the Millennium.	Revelation 20:7–10 Satan is loosed after the Millennium and wages a final battle; he is defeated and cast out.	Revelation 20:11–15 The Great and Last Judgment takes place.	Revelation 21:1–27; 22:1–5 There is a new heaven and new earth; the world is celestialized.
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A John Sees Those Saved in God's Kingdom

Revelation 7:9–17
Just before the sounding of the seven trumpets of judgment, John is shown the multitude of those who have achieved salvation praising God and the Lamb in the celestial kingdom.

B The “Little Book” Interlude

Revelation 10:1–11
Between the sounding of the sixth trumpet and the vision of the two special witnesses in Jerusalem, an angel delivers a book to John and commands him to eat it. We know from latter-day revelation that this symbolized a special mission given to John to participate in the gathering of Israel (see D&C 77:14). Thus John is shown in vision his part in the great events of the future.

C The Triumph of the Kingdom of God over Satan

John sees in vision representations of the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. Though Satan's kingdom will make war against God's kingdom, the kingdom of God will ultimately triumph, and Satan and his followers will be overthrown.

Revelation 12:1–17 (The Kingdom of God)

- The Church (the ecclesiastical aspect of the kingdom) brings forth the kingdom over which Christ reigns as King (the political aspect of the kingdom).
- The Church and kingdom of God are opposed by the great dragon (Satan).
- The opposition actually began in the premortal existence and led to the War in Heaven.
- The Church of John's time would not bring forth the kingdom but would be driven into the wilderness (apostasy) by the dragon.

D John Sees Those Saved in God's Kingdom

Revelation 15:1–4
Just before the pouring out of the seven vials of judgment, John is shown the multitude of those who overcame the beast; these are praising God and the Lamb in the celestial kingdom.

E The Destruction of Satan's Kingdom

Revelation 17:1–18; 18:1–24
After the seven vials of judgment have been poured out, an angel explains the symbolism of the great whore and the beast. John is then shown the overthrow of the whore (symbolic representation of Satan's kingdom and the counterpart to the true Church—the bride of Christ). The world laments in great sorrow the fall of Satan's empire.

Revelation 13:1–18 (Satan's Kingdom)

- John sees the beast from the sea and is shown that Satan has power over the political aspects of his kingdom.
- John sees the beast from the earth spreading his evil influence through performing miracles.
- The followers of the beast are sealed in their foreheads to mark their allegiance.

Revelation 14:1–20 (Final Outcome)

- John sees the Lamb on Mount Zion with those who have been sealed in their foreheads by God (the 144,000).
- John sees heavenly messengers sent to restore the gospel, signaling the beginning of the end of Satan's dominion.
- John sees the great harvest.