

Revelation Study (Part 1)

Seven Letters Written to Seven Churches:

- the Revelation chart is divided into seven sections, each represented by a congregation
- each of these churches was addressed in the letters of Revelation
- each letter does not portray all aspects of the time period it represents
- each letter portrays a predominant, prevailing condition of that period
- it takes viewing all the series together to get the entire picture
- similar to using overlays in a textbook; each depicts a little different aspect, and not until all the pages are added to the overlay can one see the complete picture.
- congregations weren't chosen randomly (many congregations in John's day)
- they each serve as a type, based on their character, location, and spiritual qualities (or the lack thereof)

Ephesus (A.D. 33 – 270) – this box represents the beginning of the Gospel Day

- Ephesus was a very ancient city. At the time the Revelation was given, it was the capital of the provinces of Asia. It was a highly prosperous city known by the title Supreme Metropolis of Asia. It was a major commercial center where much business was transacted. Its soils were fertile and the city was watered and kept saturated by two rivers.
- From Ephesus, Paul launched his ministry into all of Asia Minor (1 Corinthians 16:8-9).
- The early church in Ephesus was led by Paul for at least three years (Acts 20:17, 31), probably Timothy (1 Timothy 1:3), and later John.
- Ephesus was a Gentile church (discuss what this means)
- Ephesus represents the first period of time when the morning-time church was in her pristine glory.
- History reveals that "Ephesus" was known as a free city. When this epistle was penned, the entire world was under Roman domination (Luke 2:1). Yet, the Romans had granted "Ephesus" the right of a self-government within its own limits. It never endured the indignity of having Roman troops compulsorily quartered within it.
- This congregation was chosen because in the early-morning time it was a thriving, spiritual congregation of approximately ten thousand people.

SYMBOLS OF THE EPHESIAN CHURCH ERA:

"unto the angel" (Greek word *aggelos* means "messenger." Not celestial beings, because churches don't have angels; they have ministers, or pastors. Christ was sending a message to those who were responsible for the congregation.)

- **"angel"** = messengers or pastors

"seven angels were given seven trumpets" (Revelation 8:2)

- **"seven angels"** = messengers or pastors throughout the seven periods of the Gospel Day
- **"seven trumpets"** = God's voice, or the preached Word of God ("lift up thy voice like a

trumpet"; Isaiah 58:1; "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm"; Joel 2:1; Paul spoke of trumpets giving "an uncertain sound" in 1 Corinthians 14:8).

Revelation 2:1-7 – Letter to Ephesus

In each of the seven letters, Christ chose a different attribute by which to identify Himself. To each era, Christ revealed the attribute needed to bring victory in that period of time.

"he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks" (Revelation 2:1)

- **"he"** = Jesus ("these things saith he" – the One sending the message to Ephesus)
- **"seven stars"** = stars are angels or pastors (**Key:** Revelation 1:20b – "The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches")
- **"his right hand"** = in Christ's control
- **"seven golden candlesticks"** = seven churches (**Key:** Revelation 1:20 – "the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches"); the church in each church age
- **"in the midst"** = Christ is in His church

Attributes of the Lamb

"a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth" (Revelation 5:6).

- **"Lamb"** = Jesus (**Key:** John 1:29 – Jesus' baptism)
- **"seven horns"** = (**Key:** Luke 1:69 – "And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David.")
horn = power of salvation; seven horns = one in each era
Note: power is determined by the force of the being behind the horn
- **"seven eyes"** = understanding of God's Word in each era (**Key:** Ephesians 1:18 – "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened")
- **"seven Spirits of God"** = (reference page 3 of worksheets) God's Spirit working in each era

The Woman of Revelation, Chapter 12

"a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child . . ." (Revelation 12:1-2).

- **"woman"** = church (**Key:** Galatians 4:26 – "But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all"); people who have put on the light (Revelation 19:7-8)
In Revelation 21:9 John was told "I will show you the bride"; then verse 10 calls her "holy Jerusalem."
More specifically, she is the morning-time church (look at her chart placement).
- **"moon"** = Old Testament Law
Key: The "moon" is the lesser light, and it "rules by night" (Psalm 136:9). The light of the "moon" is a reflection. It gets all of its light from the "sun." The "moon" does not have any light of its own. The Old Testament, the old law, was just a shadow, or a reflection, of the light that came from the New Testament (read Hebrews 10:1; discuss one's shadow versus the real).

The New Testament was based on the morals, laws, precepts, and principles in the OT. Even in Creation the evening came first "the evening & the morning were the first day."

- "sun" = New Testament

Key: "Sun of righteousness" (Mal. 4:2); "day star" (2 Peter 1:19); bright and morning star is Jesus (Revelation 22:16). Christ is the greater light, and He gave us the New Testament (His rule & testament for this Gospel Day).

She is clothed w/the sun = she put on the light of the New Testament (Christ)

- "upon her head a crown of twelve stars" = stars are the ministry; the time setting (morning-time) helps define these stars as the twelve Apostles (most elevated ministry at the time) All the light-giving agents have been used here. All the light (truth) is in Mount Zion.
- "man child" = (**Key:** Isaiah 66:7-8 – *"Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children."*)
 man child = nation born at once
 Acts 2:41 – "about three thousand souls" (morning)
 Acts 4:4 – "the number of the men was about five thousand" (afternoon)
 man child = new converts

The Mountain & the Dragon

"And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God" (Rev. 21:10).

- "mountain" = Stone grew into a mountain
- "mountain of the Lord . . . Zion" (**Key:** Isaiah 2:2-4); other terms= new Jerusalem, church

"a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads" (Revelation 12:3).

(we can define who the dragon is by his characteristics)

- "heads" = represent government (Isaiah 9:6; Ephesians 5:23)
- "seven heads" = pagan Rome had seven heads of government
- "crowns" = power to rule (2 Chronicles 23:11)
- "ten horns" = same as the 4th beast in Daniel's vision (ten minor kingdoms that make up the Roman Empire)
- "great red dragon" = pagan Rome
- **Discuss:** why is the dragon all throughout the chart? Why is it sometimes under the water & sometimes above the water?

The White Horse & Its Rider

"And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer" (Revelation 6:2).

- "horse" = horses represent spirits (Zechariah 6:1-5) that are working to control men's souls; the horse's color lets us know what the spirit is
- "white" = purity (Isaiah 1:18 – "though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as

snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool")

- "white horse" = Holy Spirit (pure spirit)

Who is the rider of the white horse?

- rider = "he that sat upon him . . . Faithful and True" (Revelation 19:11) = Jesus, according to Revelation 3:14 – "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness"
- **Chart Placement:** Jesus wasn't here in His earthly body at this time; He had ascended to Heaven.
- **Who is Christ's body?** "So we, being many, are one body in Christ" (Romans 12:5); "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ" (1 Cor. 12:12).
- rider = the church or the saints (those who make up the body of Christ)

The Red Horse & Its Rider

"And when he had opened the second seal . . . there went out another horse that was red . . . and there was given unto him a great sword" (Revelation 6:3-4).

- "second seal" = this was the second time Christ gave understanding (Luke 24:45)
- immediately there was opposition
- Horse's color lets us know what kind of spirit it is.
- "red" = red (scarlet) represents sin (**Key:** Isaiah 1:18); Literary reference: *The Scarlet Letter*
- more specific, the sin of unbelief (the cardinal sin)
- this is the opposition the morning-time church faced
- "red horse" = spirit of unbelief
- rider = Roman Empire (in its persecution phase)
- "great sword" = sword of the state (power from the government to kill)
- horses are spirits; riders are flesh-and-blood representatives of that spirit

Other Symbols:

- woman in scarlet = (**Key:** Isaiah 4:1) false religion working in every church age
- **Discuss:**
 - future lessons we'll talk about the cup in her hand; what is happening to the cup?
- open book = (**Key:** Revelation 5:5) Jesus opened the book, bringing understanding
 - why is the book open, closed, and in various stages of being open in other church eras?

The Bow

"And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer" (Revelation 6:2).

- We have identified the white horse (Holy Spirit) and its rider (Christ's body—the church), and the time setting is the beginning of the Gospel Day.
- Look at the bow in the rider's hand
- (1) "bow" = weapon of warfare (**Key:** Zechariah 10:3-4) – "for the Lord of hosts hath visited his flock the house of Judah, and hath made them as his goodly horse in the battle. . . . Out of him came forth . . . the battle bow."

Because the bow is pictured with the horse (symbol of militancy), we see that it has a dual meaning. It is not only portraying the new covenant, but it is portraying the fact that these ones who embraced the new covenant came forth with a militancy. People who got saved wanted to see others get saved. They weren't "ho-hum" about their salvation.

All the way through the Scriptures, the bow and arrows represent militancy, aggression, and warfare.

"arrow" = truth (Key: Psalm 45:4-6 "arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies"; Zechariah 9:14 "arrow shall go forth as the lightning")
thunder & lightning go together (hearing truth & receiving or understanding truth)

- The bow is a dual symbol.
– like looking through a kaleidoscope

(2) "bow" = a covenant (Key: Genesis 9:13-15); When Christ came, He brought a new covenant = the New Testament. The bow is a figure of the covenant.

“Reading without meditating is like taking one glance through the kaleidoscope without turning it. So many colorful and beautiful patterns of truth remain undiscovered simply because we think we’ve seen everything there is to see when we haven’t seen anything yet.” –Mark Batterson, “Primal”

Bible verses are beautiful at first glance, but as we turn it (meditate on it), it reveals so much more. Most of us Christians have experienced a verse of Scripture that speaks to us one way, and then at a different time under different circumstances, it reveals something deeper or completely different that blesses us just the way we need. Just as a kaleidoscope has so many different, yet beautiful, designs.

The Rainbow

A rainbow consists of seven colors, the biblical number for perfection, or completeness. Every time a rainbow is formed, it will have the same seven colors, and they will appear in the same order. These seven prismatic colors are the colors from which all others are formed. Each of these seven colors represents a part of the covenant, a divine attribute of the covenant, and also symbolizes one of the seven periods of the Gospel Day.

White light, when passed through a prism, will separate into the seven colors of the bow. Also, if you run the seven prismatic colors back through the prism, they combine to produce pure white light. These colors represent attributes necessary for the saints to have holiness—a pure white experience.

Seven colors are:

- in the stones in the high priest's breastplate (Exodus 28:17-21)
- described in the foundations of the wall of the city (Revelation 21:19-20)

RED:

- "sardius" (Exodus 28:17; Revelation 21:20)
- tribe of Judah ("praise"); speaking of Judah (Isaiah 11:12), Isaiah 12:3 says, "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."

- "sardine stone" (Revelation 4:3 – throne scene)
- blood red in color = one must come through the blood of Jesus first (outermost color)
- represents 1st church period (Ephesus) = that was when Jesus' blood was shed

ORANGE:

- **"onyx"** (Exodus 28:20 – breastplate stone, representing tribe of Asher, which means "blessed")
- **"sardonyx"** (Revelation 21:20)
- (The stones referred to in that day were not necessarily as they are today. In ancient times, the onyx was a fire-like orange color. Today most "black onyx" on the market is artificially colored.)
- fire-like color = Holy Spirit (symbolized by fire in Acts 2:3-4)
- sun is orange when surrounded by darkness (dawn)
- when the sun arose (dawn), it was surrounded by a gathering darkness (apostasy)
- people who held true to Christ in the era of apostasy were truly blessed
- represents 2nd church period (Smyrna) = when apostasy was beginning

YELLOW:

- **"beryl stone"** (Exodus 28:20 – breastplate stone, representing tribe of Dan, which means "judgment" or "he that judges")
- represents 3rd church period (Pergamos) = no public message, the Dark Ages
- Why bright yellow during the dark night? When it is dark on one side of the earth, it is light on the other. Although, there was no public message, there was still light (truth). 50 to 60 million martyrs saw this light. (If no one saw the light, there would have been no martyrs.)
- People who can see light when darkness is all around are a blessed people. This shows the persistence and preciousness of light and truth and the strength it provides to God's people.

GREEN:

- **"emerald"** (Exodus 28:18; Revelation 21:19)
- tribe = Reuben ("see a son")
- this color is in the middle of the rainbow (centermost of the covenant)
- this color represents the central doctrine of Christianity
- Revelation 4:3 – when John saw the "rainbow about the throne" he saw something new = "an emerald"
- What did this new covenant have that the old covenant didn't?
- In the Old Testament they "died without mercy" (Hebrews 10:28)
- The New Testament declares, "God . . . is rich in mercy" (Ephesians 2:4).
- Nine Beatitudes (central beatitude = mercy)
- because of mercy, people were able to see Christ ("see a son")
- represents 4th church age – Thyatira (or the Lutheran era)
- During the Dark Ages, the prevailing condition was one of harshness, persecution, and martyrdom, but the message of the Lutheran era was a message of mercy. Salvation by faith (Romans 1:17; Ephesians 2:8-9) was put back in the midst of the people in a public manner. This era restored the vision of Christ as a Savior ("see a son").

BLUE:

- "sapphire" (Exodus 28:18; Revelation 21:19)
- tribe = Simeon ("hearing with acceptance")
- represents 5th church age – Sardis (or the Wesleyan era); sanctification or holiness
- the message of holiness and purity was being restored
- the sapphire is second only to the diamond in hardness; it takes "hardness" or firmness to maintain spiritual purity

INDIGO:

- "jasper" (Exodus 28:20; Revelation 21:19)
- tribe = Naphtali ("my wrestling")
- two varieties of this stone = violet & bluish gray (combination of colors)
- represents the 6th church period – Philadelphia
- not a single message, as other eras, but a combination of the truth of them all (justification by faith, holiness, and unity of God's people)
- a great "wrestling" over the message to "come out of her" (Revelation 18:4)

VIOLET:

- "amethyst" (Exodus 28:19; Revelation 21:20)
- tribe = Benjamin ("son of the right hand" and "reigning")
- represents 7th church period – Laodicea
- victorious people (reigning)
- great "multitude" comprised of "all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues" (Revelation 7:9); God is gathering all His people together under the leadership of Christ

All seven colors:

- are the attributes of our salvation: (1) blood of Jesus, or salvation; (2) Holy Spirit; (3) understanding of truth; (4) salvation by faith, or mercy; (5) holiness; (6) unity; (7) victory
- need all seven to produce "white"; (white = robe of the saints, righteousness; Revelation 19:8)
- are the seven attributes of the seven eras, which together form the purity of the evening-time church and portray the completeness of the message
- cannot be seen in darkness (spiritual Babylon)

It was this new covenant and the attributes that it consists of that God ordained to use as the vehicle to get light and glory from God to man. It enabled them to share in common those divine elements that make fellowship possible between God and His people.

Jesus' message to Ephesus:

- **Praise** (Revelation 2:2-3) *"I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted."*
- **Correction** (Revelation 2:4) *"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."*

Read the following:

Ephesus was the city of the great heathen goddess Diana. Though initially the church stood for truth, over time they became affected and infected. History reveals this once thriving congregation began to let go and became relaxed (just as the name Ephesus implies). They permitted things that they should never have allowed. As Revelation 2:4 says, they had "left thy first love." These people did not **lose** their "first love," but they "**left**" it. When one leaves truth but continues to profess and practice religion, that is apostasy.

History tells us that this once thriving congregation began to be influenced by their pagan surroundings, and four things occurred. **First**, they began to eat food offered to idols, which was a violation of Acts 15:20 and 29. **Second**, they began to mix idol worship in with supposedly Christian worship. Second Corinthians 6:14-16 clearly prohibits this. **Third**, they eventually denied God as their Creator, again fulfilling Romans 1:25. **Fourth**, due to the influence of the immorality of women associated with the temple, the women became adulteresses.

This is a picture representative of not only the Ephesian congregation, but also of the entire first period of the Gospel Day. It is a portrait of the morning-time apostasy. What had started out as pure Christianity, became diluted with paganism. They gradually started mixing pagan practices to such an extent that Jesus said in Revelation 2:5, "Thou art fallen." One sad thing is that they once hated "the deeds of the Nicolaitanes," (*Ni`co*la"*i*tans*) – Revelation 2:6. This was a sect formed by Nicolas, who was a proselyte of Antioch (Acts 6:5). The Nicolaitanes advocated loose living and loose sexual morality; yet they professed to be Christians. Over time, the Ephesian church and that church age became just like them.

- Revelation 2:5 – *"Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."*

Not only did Ephesus cease to be an important city, it ceased to be a port! The silt from a local river pouring out over time has actually removed Ephesus a distance of 4-5 miles from the ocean. Currently, Ephesus itself is now just a bunch of partially excavated ancient ruins with two large parking lots, some souvenir stands, and apparently one camel for tourists to take pictures of. It no longer has any prominence, other than biblical and historical.

The end of this period is defined in Wickersham's *A History of the Church*, page 104, which says, "Another great event that marks the close of this period of time, A.D. 270, is the division and decline of the Roman Empire."