

SESSION 3 – THE FIRST FEW YEARS

The Throne Room

John is taken up to the throne room where he not only observes, but he interacts, weeps, learns, and writes down as the vision unveils.

Revelation chapters 4 and 5 describes the most vivid throne room scene in the Bible.

In attendance

- God the Father on the throne
- 24 elders
- Seven flaming torches / Seven spirits of God
- Sea of glass
- Four living creatures
 - o Like a lion
 - o Like an ox
 - o Like a man's face
 - o Like an eagle
- Jesus as both the Lion of the tribe of Judah and the Lamb that had conquered
- 100M angels

The Seals

A full search is made to determine who could open the seals. The search included heaven, earth, and under the earth. Only one was worthy!

J. Webb Mealy construes the seven-sealed scroll as a **certificate of debenture**, which symbolizes a legal document that accounts for one's indebtedness to another.

Mealy explains:

In Revelation 5, which sets the stage for the ‘judgments’ of the seven seals, Christ receives, on the basis of his sacrificial death, the authority from God to reveal in the heavenly courtroom the contents of the seven-sealed document. It is arguable that the concept of judgment functions no differently in this context than it does in the seven letters. In other words, from ch. 5 on in Revelation, judgment is still to be understood primarily in the sense of proving someone guilty by revealing the facts of the case, as opposed to the sense of punishing someone for a crime. . . . The central theme of Revelation 5–6, that judgment is God’s sovereign activity of bringing into the open (through Christ) the true character and disposition of human beings, clearly stands as common ground between Revelation and the Fourth Gospel (cf. Jn 3.19, 9.39). The presence of this theme also tends to corroborate Roller’s thesis that the seven-sealed scroll is intended as a certificate of debenture. Christ, the Son of Man and the Redeeming Lamb, has the unique right to make public the truth about mankind which is contained in the scroll. For as the Son of Man, he is a firsthand witness of humanity’s debt of sin, and as the sacrificial Lamb, he has paid that debt in full on the cross.¹

If this is correct, the seals are not expressions of divine punishment but judicial evidence that establishes *why* God will punish the wicked. Through the deeds of the seals, humanity accumulates and reveals its sin until the debt reaches its limit when the scroll is opened, unleashing the series of trumpet and bowl judgments in order to recompense and punish humanity for their deeds.²

The narrative of the first six seals (Rev 6:1-17, 8:1-5)

Not told when they start. We can infer that it’s in the first 3 ½ years but we don’t know for certain.

See chart on page 16

The Abomination of Desolation

Daniel 9:27 (NIV) He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the

temple he will set up an **abomination that causes desolation**, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.

Daniel 11:31 His forces will rise up and profane the fortified sanctuary, stopping the daily sacrifice. In its place they will set up the **abomination that causes desolation**.

Daniel 12:11 From the time that the daily sacrifice is removed and the **abomination that causes desolation** is set in place, there are 1,290 days.

Matthew 24:15 So when you see the **abomination of desolation**—spoken about by Daniel the prophet—standing in the holy place” (let the reader understand)

2 Thessalonians 2:4 He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, and as a result he takes his seat in God’s temple, displaying himself as God.

1. A future ruler will make a treaty with the people of Israel.
2. The terms of this treaty will be for a “week”—which we take to be a period of seven years.
3. Midway through this time, the ruler will gather his troops and put an end to the sacrifices and offerings in the temple.
4. At that time the ruler will desecrate the temple, setting up some type of sacrilegious object.
5. The desecration of the temple will continue until the judgment of God is finally meted out on the ruler and his followers, 1,290 days (3½ years and 1 month) later.³

Daniel’s prophecies about the abomination of desolation seemed to have at least a partial fulfillment in 167 BC when a Greek ruler by the name of Antiochus IV desecrated the temple in Jerusalem. Antiochus called himself “Epiphanies” (“illustrious one” or “god manifest”). He set up an altar to Zeus over the altar of burnt offering, and he sacrificed a pig on the altar. Antiochus went even further in his atrocities, slaughtering a great number of the Jews and selling others into slavery. And he issued decrees forbidding circumcision and requiring Jews to sacrifice to pagan gods and eat pig meat.³

Abomination.

In the Old Testament, the word translated “abomination” is shiqquwts.
“The Hebrew root for abomination is shaqats, [which means] ‘to be filthy,’

‘to loath,’ ‘to abhor’” (“Abomination of Desolation,” International Standard Bible Encyclopedia). It is most often used to describe idolatrous worship practices, especially those most offensive to a sense of decency and morality.

The New Testament equivalent is bdelygma, which means “a foul thing (loathsome on account of its stench), a detestable thing” (Thayer’s Greek Lexicon).

So an abomination is something that is abhorrent and detestable to God and His people.

Desolation.

In the Old Testament, the word translated “desolation” (or “that which makes desolate”) is shamem, and means “to destroy, lay waste, devastate; to be astonished ... something so horrible that it can leave a person speechless” (The Complete Word Study Old Testament, p. 2376).

In the New Testament the word is erēmōsis and essentially means the same thing, “a making desolate” (Thayer’s Greek Lexicon).

Thus, biblically, desolation involves destroying and desecrating and leaving something in such a horrible condition that it an onlooker speechless is left speechless.⁴

The Mark of the Beast

Revelation 13:16-18 He also caused everyone (small and great, rich and poor, free and slave) to obtain a mark on their right hand or on their forehead. Thus no one was allowed to buy or sell things unless he bore the mark of the beast—that is, his name or his number. This calls for wisdom: Let the one who has insight calculate the beast’s number, for it is man’s number, and his number is 666.

This tells us the following:

1. Everyone will be forced to take the mark, or they can’t buy or sell. It will be a one-world currency exchange, and all other currencies will be abolished.
2. Will require a one-world financial system and database.
3. It will be installed on the right hand or forehead.
4. “This calls for wisdom” suggests that it won’t be immediately obvious, but that it is possible to confirm this.

5. It's the beast's number, and man's number.
6. It will be associated with 666.

Lots of interesting proposals have been made. Some are far-fetched, but some may be foreshadowing of the final mark.

Computer Acrostic

Someone has used an acrostic to show 666 in "Computer"

Assign a number to each letter of the alphabet, incrementing by 6.

- | | | |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| • A 6 | • N 84 | • C - 18 |
| • B 12 | • O 90 | • O - 90 |
| • C 18 | • P 96 | • M - 78 |
| • D 24 | • Q 102 | • P - 96 |
| • E 30 | • R 108 | • U - 126 |
| • F 36 | • S 114 | • T - 120 |
| • G 42 | • T 120 | • E - 30 |
| • H 48 | • U 126 | • R - 108 |
| • I 54 | • V 132 | |
| • J 60 | • W 138 | |
| • K 66 | • X 144 | |
| • L 72 | • Y 150 | |
| • M 78 | • Z 156 | |

$$18 + 90 + 78 + 96 + 126 + 120 + 30 + 108 = 666$$

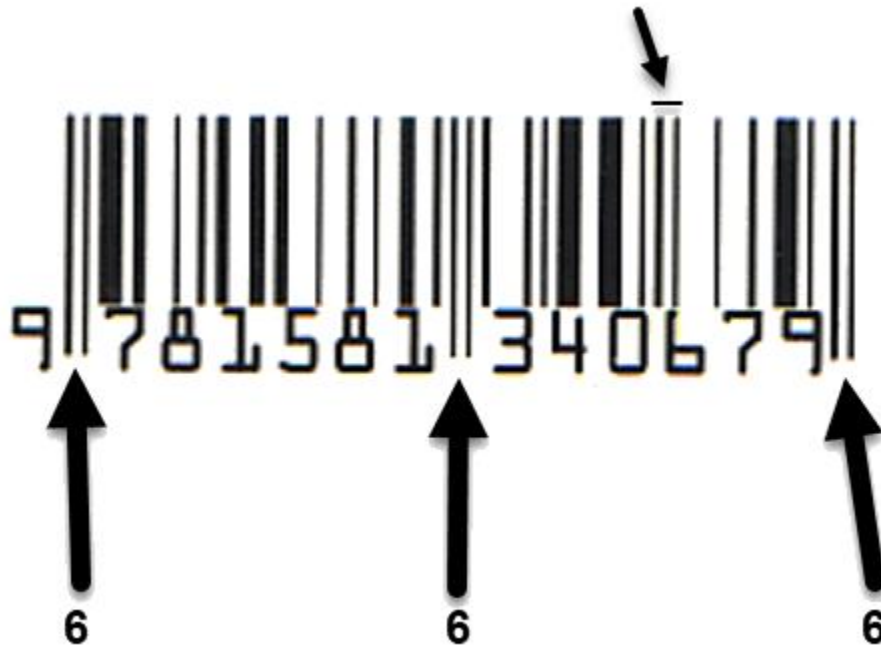
$$C \quad O \quad M \quad P \quad U \quad T \quad E \quad R \quad = 666$$

Others have found acrostics in the name Nero Caesar, and many other names and objects.

Most or all of these aren't the final intention, but it's interesting to see the outcome of some of these calculations.

Barcodes

The barcodes that we use for commerce today is delineated by 666.



Modern Day Mark options

Technology is quickly making prior options obsolete. Here are some current options.

Physical mark

With insight we receive from modern technology, we now consider it old thinking to have a physical unsightly mark.

RFID (Radio Frequency ID)

Widely used today in retail, and there has been successful testing on humans. Slightly intrusive for the forehead but it shows how a technology like this would work.

Nanotech

How large?

- A nanometer is 1/1,000,000,000 the size of a meter (approx 3.3 feet)
- It is about 1/80,000 of the diameter of a human hair
- There are 25,400,000 nanometers in an inch
- A sheet of newspaper is about 100,000 nanometers thick
- On a comparative scale, if a marble were a nanometer, then one meter would be the size of the Earth

Technology exists to manipulate individual atoms how you want.

"Nano-robots" made from the chips could be injected into the body to seek out and cure disease. They could also be used to make intelligent bridges, buildings and armored vehicles that repair themselves.

Widely used today, and extensive research is being carried out in the public and private sectors.

SkinMarks from Google

Another interesting technology to watch is SkinMarks. Google is experimenting with SkinMarks which are temporary tattoos which let you manipulate computers through touch and movement. It's a steppingstone that will open many other options.

Worshiping the image of the beast

2 Thess 2:11 (NIV) For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie.

Revelation 13:14a-15 He told those who live on the earth to make an image to the beast who had been wounded by the sword, but still lived. 15 The second beast was empowered to **give life to the image of the first beast so that it could**

speak, and could cause all those who did not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

At the beginning of the Day of the Lord, men will throw these idols into the caves to try to escape the Lord's wrath.

Isaiah 2:19-21 They will go into caves in the rocky cliffs and into holes in the ground trying to escape the dreadful judgment of the Lord and his royal splendor, when he rises up to terrify the earth. At that time men will throw their **silver and gold idols, which they made for themselves to worship**, into the caves where rodents and bats live, so they themselves can go into the crevices of the rocky cliffs and the openings under the rocky overhangs, trying to escape the dreadful judgment of the Lord and his royal splendor, when he rises up to terrify the earth.

Is there forgiveness for taking the mark?

The Bible describes harsh and seemingly unforgiving judgment for those worshipping the beast and taking the mark:

Rev 14:9-12 A third angel followed the first two, declaring in a loud voice: **"If anyone worships the beast and his image, and takes the mark on his forehead or his hand**, 10 that person will also drink of the wine of God's anger that has been mixed undiluted in the cup of his wrath, and he will be tortured with fire and sulfur in front of the holy angels and in front of the Lamb. 11 And the smoke from their torture will go up forever and ever, and those who worship the beast and his image will have no rest day or night, along with anyone who receives the mark of his name." 12 This requires the steadfast endurance of the saints—those who obey God's commandments and hold to their faith in Jesus.

Rev 20:4 Then I saw thrones and seated on them were those who had been given authority to judge. I also saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. **These had not worshiped the beast or his image and had refused to receive his mark on their forehead or hand.** They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Worshipping the beast's image is directly related to taking the mark:

Revelation 19:20 Now the beast was seized, and along with him the false prophet who had performed the signs on his behalf—signs by which he deceived those

who had received the mark of the beast **and those who worshiped his image**. Both of them were thrown alive into the lake of fire burning with sulfur.

The Antichrist

Read: Daniel 7:7-8; 19-25 – The fourth beast described

Read: Revelation 13:11-18 – The beast out of the earth...666

Daniel 9:26 Now after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one will be cut off and have nothing. As for the city and the sanctuary, **the people of the coming prince will destroy them**. But his end will come speedily like a flood. Until the end of the war that has been decreed there will be destruction.

Daniel 11: Then the king will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every deity, and he will utter presumptuous things against the God of gods. He will succeed until the time of wrath is completed, for what has been decreed must occur. He will not respect the **gods of his fathers**—not even the god loved by women. He will not respect any god; he will elevate himself above them all. What he will honor is a god of fortresses—a god his fathers did not acknowledge he will honor with gold, silver, valuable stones, and treasured commodities. He will attack mighty fortresses, aided by a foreign deity. To those who recognize him he will grant considerable honor. He will place them in authority over many people, and he will parcel out land for a price.

Ezekiel 28:2-3 “Son of man, turn toward Gog, **of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal**. Prophecy against him and say: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Look, I am against you, Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal.

2 Thess 2:1-12 – Sets himself up as god

Rev 17:9-14 – The beast that the women sits on

Revelation 19:19-21 ... thrown alive into the lake of fire burning with sulfur.

The Great Tribulation

Matt 24:9–28

- vv. 9–14 There will be a cluster of trials and temptations believers will face.
- vv. 15–28 The great tribulation *developed*. This second section does not chronologically follow verses 9–14. Instead, verses 15–28 thematically develops verses 9–14 on the tribulation, persecution, and spiritual action the believer is to take.
- v. 22 The great tribulation is “cut short”
- vv. 23–26 False signs of false christs
- v. 27 The authentic sign to the authentic Christ

Daniel 12:1b There will be a time of distress unlike any other from the nation’s beginning up to that time.

Matthew 24:21 For then there will be great suffering unlike anything that has happened from the beginning of the world until now, or ever will happen.

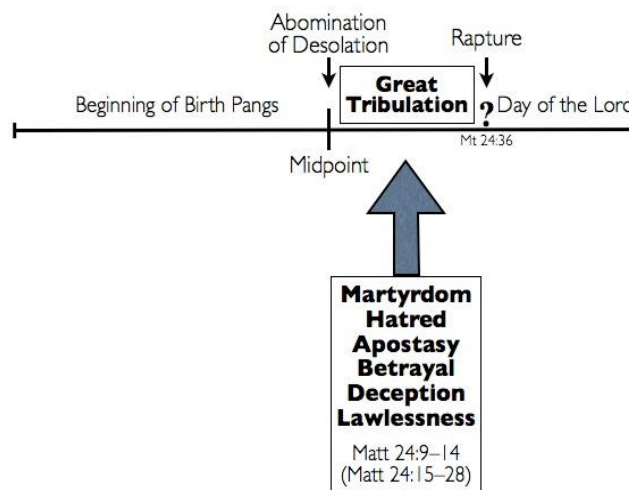
Corrie Ten Boom, the Rapture, and Persecution

"The world is deathly ill. It is dying. The Great Physician has already signed the death certificate. Yet there is still a great work for Christians to do. They are to be streams of living water, channels of mercy to those who are still in the world. It is possible for them to do this because they are overcomers.

Christians are ambassadors for Christ. They are representatives from Heaven to this dying world. And because of our presence here, things will change.

My sister, Betsy, and I were in the Nazi concentration camp at Ravensbruck because we committed the crime of

The Great Tribulation



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loving Jews. Seven hundred of us from Holland, France, Russia, Poland and Belgium were herded into a room built for two hundred. As far as I knew, Betsy and I were the only two representatives of Heaven in that room.

We may have been the Lord's only representatives in that place of hatred, yet because of our presence there, things changed. Jesus said, "In the world you shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." We too, are to be overcomers - bringing the light of Jesus into a world filled with darkness and hate.

Sometimes I get frightened as I read the Bible, and as I look in this world and see all of the tribulation and persecution promised by the Bible coming true. Now I can tell you, though, if you too are afraid, that I have just read the last pages. I can now come to shouting "Hallelujah! Hallelujah!" for I have found where it is written that Jesus said, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things: and I will be His God, and he shall be My son." This is the future and hope of this world. Not that the world will survive - but that we shall be overcomers in the midst of a dying world.

Betsy and I, in the concentration camp, prayed that God would heal Betsy who was so weak and sick. "Yes, the Lord will heal me," Betsy said with confidence. She died the next day and I could not understand it. They laid her thin body on the concrete floor along with all the other corpses of the women who died that day.

It was hard for me to understand, to believe that God had a purpose for all that. Yet because of Betsy's death, today I am traveling all over the world telling people about Jesus.

There are some among us teaching there will be no tribulation, that the Christians will be able to escape all this. These are the false teachers that Jesus was warning us to expect in the latter days. Most of them have little knowledge of what is already going on across the world. I have been in countries where the saints are already suffering terrible persecution.

In China, the Christians were told, "Don't worry, before the tribulation comes you will be translated - raptured." Then came a terrible persecution. Millions of Christians were tortured to death. Later I heard a Bishop from China say, sadly,

"We have failed. We should have made the people strong for persecution rather than telling them Jesus would come first. Tell the people how to be strong in times of persecution, how to stand when the tribulation comes, - to stand and not faint." "I feel I have a divine mandate to go and tell the people of this world that it is possible to be strong in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are in training for the tribulation, but more than sixty percent of the Body of Christ across the world has already entered into the tribulation. There is no way to escape it. We are next.

Since I have already gone through prison for Jesus' sake, and since I met the Bishop in China, now every time I read a good Bible text I think, "Hey, I can use that in the time of tribulation." Then I write it down and learn it by heart.

When I was in the concentration camp, a camp where only twenty percent of the women came out alive, we tried to cheer each other up by saying, "Nothing could be any worse than today." But we would find the next day was even worse. During this time a Bible verse that I had committed to memory gave me great hope and joy.

"If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you; on their part evil is spoken of, but on your part He is glorified." (I Peter 3:14)

I found myself saying, "Hallelujah! Because I am suffering, Jesus is glorified!" In America, the churches sing, "Let the congregation escape tribulation", but in China and Africa the tribulation has already arrived. This last year alone more than two hundred thousand Christians were martyred in Africa. Now things like that never get into the newspapers because they cause bad political relations. But I know. I have been there. We need to think about that when we sit down in our nice houses with our nice clothes to eat our steak dinners. Many, many members of the Body of Christ are being tortured to death at this very moment, yet we continue right on as though we are all going to escape the tribulation.

Several years ago I was in Africa in a nation where a new government had come into power. The first night I was there some of the Christians were commanded to come to the police station to register. When they arrived they were

arrested and that same night they were executed. The next day the same thing happened with other Christians. The third day it was the same. All the Christians in the district were being systematically murdered.

The fourth day I was to speak in a little church. The people came, but they were filled with fear and tension. All during the service they were looking at each other, their eyes asking, "Will this one I am sitting beside be the next one killed? Will I be the next one?"

The room was hot and stuffy with insects that came through the screenless windows and swirled around the naked bulbs over the bare wooden benches. I told them a story out of my childhood.

"When I was a little girl, " I said, "I went to my father and said,

"Daddy, I am afraid that I will never be strong enough to be a martyr for Jesus Christ."

"Tell me," said Father, "When you take a train trip to Amsterdam, when do I give you the money for the ticket? Three weeks before?"

"No, Daddy, you give me the money for the ticket just before we get on the train."

"That is right," my father said, "and so it is with God's strength. Our Father in Heaven knows when you will need the strength to be a martyr for Jesus Christ. He will supply all you need - just in time."

My African friends were nodding and smiling. Suddenly a spirit of joy descended upon that church and the people began singing, " In the sweet, by and by, we shall meet on that beautiful shore."

Later that week, half the congregation of that church was executed. I heard later that the other half was killed some months ago. But I must tell you something. I was so happy that the Lord used me to encourage these people, for unlike many of their leaders, I had the word of God. I had been to the Bible and discovered that Jesus said He had not only overcome the world, but to all those who remained faithful to the end, He would give a crown of life.

How can we get ready for the persecution? First we need to feed on the word of God, digest it, make it a part of our being. This will mean disciplined Bible study each day as we not only memorize long passages of scripture, but put the principles to work in our lives.

Next we need to develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Not just the Jesus of yesterday, the Jesus of History, but the life-changing Jesus of today who is still alive and sitting at the right hand of God.

We must be filled with the Holy Spirit. This is no optional command of the Bible, it is absolutely necessary. Those earthly disciples could never have stood up under the persecution of the Jews and Romans had they not waited for Pentecost. Each of us needs our own personal Pentecost, the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We will never be able to stand in the tribulation without it.

In the coming persecution we must be ready to help each other and encourage each other. But we must not wait until the tribulation comes before starting. The fruit of the Spirit should be the dominant force of every Christian's life.

Many are fearful of the coming tribulation, they want to run. I, too, and a little bit afraid when I think that after all my eighty years, including the horrible nazi concentration camp, that I might have to go through the tribulation also. But then I read the Bible and I am glad.

When I am weak, then I shall be strong, the Bible says. Betsy and I were prisoners for the Lord, we were so weak, but we got power because the Holy Spirit was on us. That mighty inner strengthening of the Holy Spirit helped us through. No, you will not be strong in yourself when the tribulation comes. Rather, you will be strong in the power of Him who will not forsake you. For seventy-six years I have known the Lord Jesus and not once has He ever left me, or let me down.

"Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him", for I know that to all who overcome, He shall give the crown of life. Hallelujah!

-Corrie Ten Boom-1974

The faithful church is provided a unique promise in Revelation 3:10-11. While I don't currently know who is included in this, I do know that we are to encourage each other and know that God is faithful to keep us strong and faithful whether we are kept from the hour, or we have the privilege of giving our lives for Christ.

Revelation 3:10-11 Because you have kept my admonition to endure steadfastly, I will also keep you from the hour of testing that is about to come on the whole world to test those who live on the earth. I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have so that no one can take away your crown.

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1. J. Webb Mealy. *After the Thousand Years: Resurrection and Judgment in Revelation 20*. JSNTSup 70 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 66–68.
 2. Alan Kurschner The Basics of the Prewrath Rapture Study Guide
 3. <https://www.gotquestions.org/abomination-desolation.html>
 4. <https://lifehopeandtruth.com/prophecy/understanding-the-book-of-daniel/abomination-of-desolation/>