



REVELATION 1–11

CHRIST'S COVENANT FULFILLED

Title: Revelation = Apocalypse

The title comes from the opening phrase: “a Revelation from Jesus Christ,” but the Greek word describes a specific type of revelation: “Apocalypses/*apokalupsis*/an unveiling, uncovering, revealing.”¹ In modern use, the word “revelation” is used to refer to all Divine inspiration in various forms. Yet, this book’s use of “apocalypses/unveiling,” has the limited meaning of uncovering the end of times.

Author: John the Beloved

John writes his “Revelation/Apocalypse/*apokalupsis*” from the “Island of Patmos” (Revelation 1:9, NIV). We date it at the end of the first century because Irenaeus, the Bishop of Lyon (AD 120–203), recorded that John wrote his Apocalypses “towards the end of Domitian’s reign,” which ended in AD 96. As a second historical witness, Tertullian (AD 155–240) also said John was forced to Rome and “plunged, unhurt into boiling oil and thence remitted to his island exile.”² When the cult of Emperor Worship was enforced, Christians found themselves banished or killed. But Caesar Domitian was not able to kill John, so the apostle was exiled to an island

APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE

A genre that prophesies about the end of time. It is highly symbolic and means: “something uncovered” or “revealed.” It includes prophetic visions that describe the supernatural and cataclysmic events (i.e. Isaiah 6, Ezekiel 37, the second half of Daniel, Apocalypse of Baruch, IV Enoch, and many more dating from 210 B.C. and 200 A.D.). It claims to record what the prophets saw in dreams or visions. It includes unusual images cloaked to inspire deep thinking to figure it out—like a riddle.



that was used as a prison. Patmos is 60 miles off the coast of Ephesus (the western coast of modern Turkey). It is a small rocky island 10 X 6 miles. In the fourth century, the historian Eusebius recorded that John resumed his residence in Ephesus after his exile on Patmos.

The other apostles had all been killed by this time.³ This was the blackest time in early Christian history. The book of Revelation was a great comfort and encouragement to the remaining Christians assuring them that Christ’s covenant would be fulfilled.

Audience

Apocalypse of John was written specifically to seven Christian churches around Ephesus (chapters 2 and 3). These seven are all off the main roads around Ephesus. These Christians knew about the ordinances and knew John as their ecclesiastical leader. Beyond these immediate seven churches, the revelation was written to testify to the world of Jesus as the Creator and Redeemer.

Synopsis

The Apocalypse of John describes a series of visions that symbolically depicted the history of the world. This is the only scripture that reveals the whole scope of the Lord’s

plan. We don’t have a full record yet (D&C 93:18). The record is filled with strange images and ideas to force the reader to deeply study in order to understand.

Many prophets received a vision of the history of the world: Adam, Enoch, the brother of Jared, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Isaiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, and Nephi. Yet God gave John the responsibility of having his record known to the world (1 Nephi 14:24, 18–27; Ether 4:16; etc.).

Historical Understanding

The Book of Revelation was accepted as scripture in the first century, questioned in the second, and canonized in the third. From approximately AD 300 to 1000 it was interpreted as an allegory of good and evil with evil being

destroyed when Satan is bound. During the Reformation, Revelation received a physical process-oriented interpretation. They felt missionary work would commence for 1000 years and then Christ would come.

It was not until the Restoration that the Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith that the book was the chronological history of the earth (D&C 77:6–7). Each seal is a period of approximately one thousand biblical years of history. The Prophet Joseph Smith also taught about the Book of Revelation and left many keys to help understand the symbolism: D&C 77; 88; 93:18; Ether 4:15–16; and the JST. Knowledge of the ancient Israelite temple rites or the modern temple endowment also helps one understand the symbols and events described in John’s Apocalypses. With these important keys, the book more accessible than it ever has been. We hold the responsibility of reading, understanding, recognizing and preparing for the last days.

Summary of Restored Keys to Interpretation

These keys help unlock the door, but once inside, the text must be explored. The vision was recorded for us to learn from.

- D&C 77 is God’s “explanation of the Revelation of St. John” (follow footnotes and Topical Guide parallels).⁴
- Look for the Plan of Salvation and pray for the Spirit of Revelation.
- Commit time and thought to understanding by reading with an ancient Near Eastern mind set looking for symbols.
- Identify symbolism and numerology only from ancient scripture and temple texts (see Symbolism chart below).
- Approach as an apocalyptic puzzle or riddle of the future that God wants us to understand.

Outline

VISION	SCRIPTURE REFERENCE	NUMBER OF VERSES
Throne of God	1, 4–5	36
Seven Churches	2–3	51
BC 4000–1000	6:1–11	11
AD 1000– AD 2000	6:12–7:3	14
AD 2000 Second Coming	8:1–19:2	201
Millennium 20XX–30XX	20:1–6	6
Final Scenes	20:7–15	9
Celestialized Earth	21:2–22:6	33

Chapter Organization

(mainly a chronological history of the earth with four interludes)

1	Intro and Vision of the Christ <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 24 Elders• 4 Beasts
2–3	Message to Seven Churches <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Description of Christ• Condemnation• Challenge• Promise
4–5	Throne Theophony—Vision of Heavenly Father in His Temple and Christ accepting His Call
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open 1st–6th SEALS: Unfold history of the earth depicted as• 6,000 years divided into six seals of the book• 4 horses one for each of the thousand years from Adam to Jesus’s birth
7	<i>Interlude</i> for a glimpse of the purified and exalted state of the noble saints—144,000
8–9	Open 7th SEAL including <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6 of the 7 angels/servants sound their trumpets• First woe
10	<i>Interlude</i> of John’s call
11	Continued 7th SEAL <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 Witnesses in Jerusalem• 2nd Woe Finished• 7th Angel sounds trumpet
12–14	Kingdom of God vs. Kingdom of Satan <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Woman as the Church of God appears• Premortal war with Lucifer continued on earth with Dragon or Serpent• Christ harvests His Righteous
15	<i>Interlude</i> of Heavenly Temple with 7 Angels with 7 Last Plagues
16	Final scenes of the world <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7 Angels Pour out Plagues• Battle of Armageddon
17–18	<i>Interlude</i> of Great and Abominable Organizations followed by the Fall of Wickedness/Babylon
19	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Marriage Supper of God and His Saints• The Conquering Christ Returns to Judge on a White Horse• Satan and His Devils are Cast Out
20	Millennium, and Afterward, the Final Scenes of the World <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Battle of God and Magog• Final Judgement
21–22	New Heaven and New Earth

Dealing with—

Symbolism⁵

GOD

Eyes	Light and Knowledge, Multiple Eyes is Omniscience
Cloud	Shekinah, God's Glory & Protection in the Wilderness
White raiment of Priests/Priestess	Robes of the High Priest (Ex 29:5; Dan 10:5)
Sword	God's Word: Command, Judgment
Bridegroom	Jesus the Messiah or Christ
Heavenly Things	
Angels	Heavenly Servants (JST)
Horns	Power and Strength, both Good and Bad
Wings	Power to Act
Incense	Ascending Prayers of the Righteous
Sun	Celestial Glory, the Son of God, Daily Reminder of Second Coming
Mountains	Temples, Patterned after the Heavenly Temple, Separation from the Word
Sea of Glass	Omniscience of Heaven or Celestialized Earth

MAN

Kings-Priests/Queens-Priestess	Heirs of God (Revelation 1:6; D&C 84:38)
Name	Personal Character, Authority, or New Name for the Initiated
Crown	Conqueror (laurel wreath in John's time)
Candlestick	Church (source of light is Christ)
Golden Sash and Bow	Clothing for Kings and Priests, respectively
Stars	Servants/Angels of God (i.e. church leaders)
Forehead	Desire, Thoughts (also associated with heart)
Sealing on forehead	Anointed with Calling and Election
Book eaten by John	Mission Call Internalized
Bride or Woman	God's Church Members or Covenant Israel

ANIMALS

4 Beasts	Individual Animals Representing their Classes in Heaven
Lamb and Sheep	Christ and His Disciples, Gentleness, Meekness, Humility, Submissiveness
Serpent or Snake	Originally a Symbol of Christ that was Usurped by Satan's Temptations
Horses	War Animal
Dragon	Evil, Destruction (in Greek snake and dragon are interchangeable)

NUMBERS

7 Seals	7,000-year History of Adam's Posterity on the Earth
1/3	Portion, Limited, Bounds Have Been Set
2	In Hebrew the Life Force, Creative Power, Male and Female, Witnesses
3	Godhead, Divine Involvement Related to Atonement (3 hours, 3 days, 3 crosses)
3 ½	Arrested Midway
4	Geographic Fullness, Totality, Four Quarters (not corners) of the Earth
6	Not Complete, Imperfect
7	Creation, Complete, Whole, Fullness, Perfection, Eternal Life (Egyptian)
8	Christian Sabbath, Rebirth, Covenant of Circumcision, and Baptism
12	Divine Order, Priesthood, Heavenly Order (12 months, etc.)
24	Fullness of Priesthood, Exaltation or One's Calling and Election Sure
40	Period of Purification, Trial, Testing, Probation, Mourning
144	Priesthood Power Perfected (any multiple of 12 speaks of God's order)
666	Trinity of Imperfection, Satan, Great and Abominable, Anti-Christ
1000	Large Number, Period of Time, Magnified Number, Length of Seal

COLORS

White	Victory, Purity, Righteousness, Spirit, Light, Revelation
Black	Sorrow, Grief, Mourning, Sin, Judgment, Darkness, Destruction
Red or Scarlet	Atonement, Mortality, Blood, Bloodshed, Sin, Violence
Brass	Judgment, Stability, Strength, Endurance, Permanence
Gold	Divine, Wealth, Celestial, or, Worldliness (depending on the context)
Pale	Impending Death, Cadaver
Green	Vegetation, Life

REVELATION 1

Prologue

Revelation 1:1–3

Revelation 1:1 “**The Revelation of John, a servant of God, which was given unto him of Jesus Christ, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass**” (JST) Joseph Smith felt inspired to make many changes to the first eight verses. The text speaks mainly of the future. The past is barely touched on, while the last days before Second Coming gets the most attention. The text was written for future readers—with keys to unlock it.

In the last phrase of this verse, John used the plural, “servants.” The Berean Bible (BSB) capitalizes “His servants” to clarify that it refers to servants of the Lord. We are the Lord’s servants when we do what the Master asks. Those who follow the promptings of the Spirit are the Lord’s servants. The Lord wants His servants to receive this information to help them prepare for the Second Coming. In that sense, the book is written to us. It will “shortly come to pass” in the sense that all is as one day with God” (Alma 40:8; also see D&C 63:53; 64:24).

“He sent and signified by his angel unto his servant John” The word “signified” is significant. John learned these things when an angel “gave a sign/*sémainó*/make known.”⁶ This means John was able to trust the angel as a servant of God because he recognized a divine “sign.” The Prophet Joseph Smith also warned that if we receive a spiritual visitor, we should ask them to shake hands to determine if they are from God or the devil (D&C 129:5 explains that if they are resurrected, they will shake hands with us). In this manner, the angel gave John some sort of a sign to identify himself as a divine messenger.

Revelation 1:3 “**Blessed are they who read, and they who hear and understand . . . and keep those things that are written**” (JST) John charges the saints with receiving this Apocalypse and seeking to understand it as a gift from God to prepare for His Coming. From the synagogue practice, the Christians read their sacred texts in their worship services. Joseph changed the text from “he who reads” to “they who read,” which opened the audience beyond the ancient initial audience.

Greeting to the Seven Churches

Revelation 1:4–8

Revelation 1:4–5a “**Now this is the testimony of John to the seven servants who are over the seven churches in Asia . . . who hath sent forth his angel from before his throne . . . Therefore, I, John, the faithful witness, bear record of the things which were delivered me of the angel, and from Jesus Christ**” (JST *italicized*) John testifies that he will accurately convey the Divine message that he received. The number seven is used 55 times in

the Apocalypses and represents whole, complete, or perfect. (In John's Gospel he also used seven symbolically, including only seven miracles and seven sermons of Jesus.)

Revelation 1:5b–6 “. . . Unto him who loved us, *be glory; who washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God*” (JST) John describes and honors our Redeemer by acknowledging several aspects of His atoning gift, including the potential to purify us to serve as priests to God.

Revelation 1:7 “*He cometh in the clouds with then thousands of his saints in the kingdom, clothed with the glory of his Father. And every eye shall see him. . . Amen*” (JST) Christ's triumphal entrance this time will be to earth in the clouds with God's glory. The children of Israel previously were blessed with a “cloud by day” (Numbers 14:14). When the Savior comes again, He will be the pillar of light along with the Divinely given clouds.

John's Vision of the Son of Man: A Throne Theophany

Revelation 1:9–11

Revelation 1:9–11 “**I, John, your brother . . . in the suffering . . . and patient endurance . . . was on the island of Patmos . . . on the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, which said: ‘Write on a scroll . . .’**” (NIV) John had suffered for his testimony of Jesus Christ. As a translated being, his body changed to lengthen his life and remove physical pain, but he still “suffered” emotional pain. We learn in the Book of Mormon, “ye shall not have pain while ye shall dwell in the flesh, neither sorrow save it be for the sins of the world (3 Nephi 28:9; also see John 21:20–23; D&C 7).⁷

Revelation 1:12–13 “**I saw seven golden lampstands. And in the middle of the lampstands saw one like the Son of Man, dressed in a long robe reaching to his feet, and he wore a gold sash around His chest**” (NTC).⁸ John sees the heavenly temple with the glorified Savior. The seven-branched candlestick or menorah stood near the veil in all Israelite temples. It represented the Tree of Life from the Garden of Eden, and the way back to the presence of God.⁹ Jesus identified Himself as the “light of the world” and “I am the light which ye shall hold up” (John 8:12; 3 Nephi 16:24). In this vision, there are seven, or a complete amount of light, surrounding the Son of Man “of Holiness” (Moses 6:57). They represent John's seven churches (Revelation 1:20).

Revelation 1:14–15 “**His hairs are white like wool . . . eyes are like a flame of fire . . . feet are like fine bronze . . . voice is like the voice of many waters**” (BLB) John's Throne Theophanies are similar to those found in Isaiah 1:18; 6:1:–8; Daniel 7:9; etc.

Revelation 1:16 “**He is holding in His right hand seven stars**” (BLB) The Lord's right, or covenant hand, held “complete” light which may include healing and omniscience. Just as He did with His parables, the Lord explains the meaning to John. The stars represent the seven “angels” or “servants” over the seven churches (1:20, JST).

Both mean messengers of the Lord.

“and a sharp two-edged sword is going forth out of His mouth; and His face is like the sun shining” (BLB) His piercing voice is likened to the strongest sword known, probably representing the strongest words known (Hebrews 4:12). By the power of His word, He created the earth (Jacob 4:9; Mormon 9:17). The “sun” represents celestial.

Revelation 1:17–19 “when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as though dead. And He placed His right hand upon me, saying, ‘Fear not. . . I have the keys of Death and of Hades”” (BLB) John is overwhelmed by the Lord’s grandeur. Jesus comforts John by touching him with His covenant hand and giving the assurance that he has nothing to fear, not even the pains of hell.

Revelation 1:19–20 “Write . . . the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter. The mystery . . .” When Jesus has to explain the images, we realize that John wrote what he saw. The strange figures and ideas require one to study to solve it.

Instruction to the Seven Churches

Revelation 2–3

Each of the seven churches receives a pattern of counsel.¹⁰ The following chart shows an abbreviated version of their message.

SEVEN CHURCHES

JESUS’ TITLE

CONDEMNATION

PROMISES

EPHESUS
(Revelation 2:1–7)

These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember. . . from whence thou art fallen, and repent

To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

SMYRNA
(Revelation 2:8–11)

These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not . . .

He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

PERGAMOS
(Revelation 2:12–17)

These things saith he
which hath the sharp
sword with two edges;

But I have a few things
against thee . . . to eat
things sacrificed unto
idols, and to commit
fornication. So hast thou.
. . the doctrine of the
Nicolaitans, which thing I
hate. Repent

To him that overcome will
I give to eat of the hidden
manna, and will give him
a white stone, and in the
stone a new name written
which no man know
saving he that receiveth it

THYATIRA
(Revelation 2:18–29)

These things saith the
Son of God, who hath
his eyes like unto a
flame of fire, and his feet
are like fine brass;

Notwithstanding I have a
few things against thee...
that woman Jezebel,
which calleth herself a
prophetess, to teach and
to seduce my servants to
commit fornication, and
to eat things sacrificed
unto idols

And he that overcometh,
and keepeth my works
unto the end, to him will
I give power over the
nations: And he shall rule
them ... even as I received
of my Father. And I will
give him the morning star.

SARDIS
(Revelation 3:1–6)

These things saith he
that hath the seven
Spirits of God, and the
seven stars;

I have not found thy
works perfect before God.
Remember ... how thou
hast received and heard,
and hold fast, and repent.
If therefore thou shalt not
watch, I will come on thee
as a thief

He that overcometh, the
same shall be clothed in
white raiment; and I will
not blot out his name out
of the book of life, but
I will confess his name
before my Father, and ...
angels.

PHILADELPHIA
(Revelation 3:7–13)

These things saith he
that is holy, he that is
true, he that hath the
key of David, he that
openeth, and no man
shutteth; the creation of
God; and shutteth and
no man openeth ... I
have set before thee an
open door

Behold, I will make them
of the synagogue of Satan,
which say they are Jews,
and are not, but do lie;
behold, I will make them
to come and worship
before thy feet, and to
know that I have loved
thee.

Him that overcometh will I
make a pillar in the temple
of my God, ... and I will
write upon him the name
of my God, and the name
of the city of my God,
which is new Jerusalem ...
and I will write upon him
my new name.

LAODICEA
(Revelation 3:14–21)

These things saith the
Amen, the faithful
and true witness,
the beginning of the
creation of God

Because thou sayest, I am
rich ...and have need of
nothing ... knowest not
that thou art wretch- ed,
miserable, and poor, and
blind, and naked.

To him that overcometh
will I grant to sit with me
in my throne, even as I
also overcame, and am set
down with my Father in
his throne

UNDERSTANDING MORE ABOUT THE SEVEN CITIES¹¹

Revelation 2:1–7 Ephesus

- Port city, largest city in Asia Minor (population 250,000), and fourth largest city in the Roman Empire.
- The beautiful Temple of Diana was claimed as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.
- Paul's third mission took him there for three years (Acts 19–20).
- Christians received God's love: "I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not and have found them false. You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name and have not grown weary" (Revelation 2:2–3, NIV).

Revelation 2:8–11 Smyrna

- Alexander the Great envisioned a newer bigger city as the region had great natural resources: the seacoast to the west and rich farmland to the east.
- As a port city, it flourished in trade, commerce, and the arts.
- The area was plagued with earthquakes.
- It was the western end of a major east-west Roman road. It was one of the earliest centers of emperor worship.
- Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna, was martyred there in about AD 155.
- Christians received only God's praise, "I know your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich!" (Revelation 2:9, NIV).

Revelation 2:12–17 Pergamos

- Beautiful wealthy city with the second largest library known in the ancient world containing 200,000 volumes.
- A center for the imperial cult or emperor worship in the region (with three temples dedicated to Caesar).
- City also had temples to Asclepius (Greek god of healing) and healing spas from natural springs.
- It was also the home to temples dedicated to Zeus or Jupiter, Athene, Apollo, etc.
- Manufacturing center for parchment in Asia Minor; "parchment" comes from the name of this city.
- City was also known for its silver mines, school of sculpture, woolen textiles, and agricultural abundance.
- The Lord told the Christians: "You remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith" (Revelation 2:13, NIV).

Revelation 2:18–29 Thyatira

- The city was famous for its many commercial and industrial guilds.
- It was well known for its wool dyeing industry (See Acts 16:14).
- Worshiped a sun god, *Tyrimnos* (also known as Helios and Apollo).
- Lydia, the seller of purple, and Paul's convert, was from Thyatira (Acts 16:14–15).
- It was the smallest and least significant of the seven cities mentioned in the Book of Revelation (but John wrote the longest message to them).
- Christians received the Lord's praise, "I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first" (Revelation 2:19, NIV).

Revelation 3:1–6 Sardis

- Regional capital of Lydia, a fertile agricultural area on the crossroads of major highways.
- A center for the imperial cult, or Emperor worship.
- Locals dressed in soft leather boots, turbans, and developed a seven-stringed lyre.
- The city was built on cliffs, so they assumed they did not need night guards, but foreigners took the city.
- The Christians were warned by God: "Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have found your deeds unfinished in the sight of my God" (Revelation 3:2, NIV).



Revelation 3:7–13 Philadelphia

- The name in Greek is translated as “City of Brotherly Love.”
- Called the “Gateway to the East.”
- The city was known for its agriculture, especially for grapes and wine production. It became the center for the worship of Bacchus, god of wine.
- The city was also famous for its production of leather goods and textiles.
- Christians received God’s empathy and praise: “I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (Revelation 3:8–11, NIV).

Revelation 3:14–21 Laodicea

- Prosperous commercial and banking city built on a plateau in the Lycus River valley in Asia Minor.
- Center of learning—including a famous medical school—as well as art and culture.
- They were known for their arrogance and self-sufficiency, as demonstrated by their refusal of Rome’s offer to help repair their city after an earthquake in AD 60.
- They had no water supply of their own in Laodicea, but an aqueduct brought water from the natural spring four miles away. By the time it got to the city it was lukewarm. The water was used in their textile mill.
- Christians received God’s warning: “I know your works . . . you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth . . . I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, *that* the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent” (Revelation 3:15–16, 18–19, NKJV).

Summary of Temple Images

Revelation 1–3

The text is rich in symbolism from the Israelite temples. Earthly temples of God are patterned after the heavenly temple where God dwells in holiness. For example, in the first three chapters, John includes at least eight references to the Edenic and Creation themes from the temple sanctuary and the temple ritual. This pattern of temple symbols continues throughout the Apocalypse.

Left: Laodicea on the Lycus, Phrygia, Turkey. Photo by Carole Raddato via Flickr.

VERSES

- 1 Revelation 1:6 “made us kings and priests unto God and Levitical men to become his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever”
- 2 Revelation 1:12 “golden candlesticks”
- 3 Revelation 2:7 “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life”
- 4 Revelation 2:17 “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and [I] will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.”
- 5 Revelation 3:4–5 “not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life.”
- 6 Revelation 3:11 “hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown”
- 7 Revelation 3: 18 “I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.”
- 8 Revelation 3:20 “I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him”

TEMPLE REFERENCE

- Initiation rites of Aaronic and priests. King’s coronation took place at the temple.
- Represented the tree of life, close to the veil
- In Eden, Adam and Eve were forbidden to eat of the tree of immortality because they were in a sinful state. But with Jesus’ atonement and repentance in place, all may now partake and return to His presence as the high priest demonstrated (1 Nephi 11).
- Hidden manna was in the original “ark of the covenant” (which represented the throne of God). The Messiah was to restore manna, and Jesus did by feeding thousands. He also introduced Himself as the “bread of life.” At Passover, He did not hide the *afikoman* but said, “this is my body” (Matthew 26:26).
- Priests washed and dressed in sacred white linen clothes before their temple work to represent purity. God recorded the names of the righteous who were sealed to eternal life in the book of life (see Psalm 69:28, Ecclesiastes 9:8; Ezekiel 10:7).
- Kings’ coronations took place at the temple (2 Kings 11:12; Mosiah 2:30).
- Adam and Eve were covered from their nakedness in skin, and the at-one-ment. Baptism by fire purifies one to receive God’s gold or celestial blessings. All priests and holy things in the temple were anointed.
- On the Day of Atonement, the high priest prepared and then approached the veil before the Holy of Holies to enter His presence (Leviticus 16). The door was a wide inviting opening. Jesus taught “knock and the door will be opened to you” (Matthew 7:7).

REVELATION 4

Vision of God's Throne

Revelation 4:1 “I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard . . . said, ‘Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this’” (NIV) After God gave John messages for his ecclesiastical responsibilities over the seven churches, his vision continued. In language similar to Nephi’s dream of the Tree of Life, “the spirit said, “Look.” The open “door” that John sees is a wide welcoming door to the heavenly temple and throne of God. Our temples are patterned after God’s heavenly temple near Kolob which “is set nigh unto the throne of God” (Abraham 3:9).

Similar to Nephi, John had a guide through his visionary experience. The guide’s voice is as a trumpet—clear, profound, beautiful, penetrating, and inviting.

Revelation 4:2 “I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne” In the second part of John’s vision, his spirit saw into the heavens and saw the throne of God. Visions of the throne of God are called Throne Theophany, and were also recorded by Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Lehi, Nephi, Alma, Abraham, Joseph Smith, to name a few.¹² Seeing God’s throne is almost a rite of passage for prophets and other anointed ones.

Revelation 4:3 “the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and ruby. A rainbow that shone like an emerald encircled the throne” (NIV) The stones mentioned mean more than just lovely gems to beautify the throne. They are specific stones that are found as the first and last stone in the High Priest’s breastplate.¹³ The colors were significant—red and green. The red of blood and the green of life. They speak of the gifts of God to humanity. There was also one “rainbow” color around the throne, and also green for life and creation. Noah was told that the rainbow would be a sign of His covenant between God and mankind.

Symbols have many meanings, but here it may symbolize that the covenant is still intact.

Revelation 4:4 “Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clothed in white garments, with golden crowns on their heads” (ESV) The JST includes that these seats were in the “midst” of the throne. As mentioned earlier, a few numbers have special meaning in the Bible. When a special number was doubled or squared, it doubled in importance or even more than the initial special number. Twelve is used in scripture for God’s order. In the creation, He organized the rotation of the earth around twelve moons or months; He organized His people into twelve tribes and His leaders into twelve apostles. In the latter days, the twelfth year became the age to begin priesthood service.

The twenty-four elders wore white robes with gold crowns, referring to their roles and positions. The Lord explained to Joseph Smith that these specific twenty-four elders were the faithful deceased members of the seven churches who are now with God (D&C 77: 5).

Revelation 4:5 “from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God” (NKJV) John records that he observed by sight and sound, including a voice. The seven fiery lamps represent seven servants of God. Jesus asked His disciples to “let their light so shine” (Matthew 5:16). The symbol of a fiery light speaks of the light that accompanied the children of Israel every evening, later referred to as the *shekhinah* “dwelling.” The image was repeated in the Restoration with, “the Spirit of God like a fire is burning.” Servants of God are directed by, and work according to, the Spirit of God. The sanctifying work of the Spirit is the baptism by fire.

Revelation 4:6 “In front of the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal” (NIV) This is the first verse that Joseph asked about in D&C 77:1 “What is the sea of glass?” (Also see D&C 130:6–9). The “crystal” transparency may allow one to see into the past, present and future, like an Urim and Thummim. Later Joseph Smith taught: “Angels do not reside on a planet like this earth. But they reside in the presence of God—but on a Globe like a ‘sea of glass and fire’ where all things are manifest past, present, and to come—the place where God resides is a great Urim and Thummim.”¹⁴

“In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back” (NIV) The Prophet asked what the four beasts were (D&C77:2).¹⁵ They were the high form of each animal that represented classifications (not like the book of Daniel where they are figures of things on our earth).

Another symbol in this verse is the eyes that cover the four creatures. The Lord explained that these are filled with eyes to represent knowledge. They may have some degree of omniscience having the power to see things “before and behind” (KJV).

Revelation 4:7 “The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle” (NIV) John describes animals familiar to our planet.

D&C 77:1 “It is the earth, in its sanctified, immortal, and eternal state.”

D&C 77:2-3 “They are figurative expressions . . . describing heaven, the paradise of God, the happiness of man, and of beasts, and of creeping things, and of the fowls of the air; that which is spiritual being in the likeness of that which is temporal

D&C 77:4 “Their eyes are a representation of light and knowledge”

Yet, in their celestialized state they can speak and sing. Other visions of the throne of God include animals as well (i.e. Ezekiel's four creatures). Later the Prophet Joseph added "John heard the words of the beasts giving glory to God and understood them. God who made the beasts could understand every language spoken by them."¹⁶

Revelation 4:8 "The four animals each had six wings, and were filled with eyes all around on the inside. And day and night they never ceased saying "Holy, holy holy, Lord God Almighty" (NTC) John describes winged creatures. In Greco-Roman traditions, a few gods had wings adding speed to their travel.¹⁷ When the Prophet Joseph asked what the wings meant, he was told they are the power to move and act. Christian artists misunderstand the symbolism and portray heavenly beings incorrectly. When Isaiah sees the throne of God and describes angels with six wings, they, too, represent the power to move and act. The heavenly creatures praised God as He "who was and who is and who is coming."

Revelation 4:9–11 "whenever the living creatures give glory . . . the twenty-four elders fall down before the One seated on the throne, and they worship Him . . . They cast their crowns before the throne, saying: "You are worthy, our Lord and God" (BSB) The twenty-four elders joined with the creatures in worshipping God. These good saints are humbled and cast their crowns before the throne of God. They acknowledge Him as their creator. We know that all of God's work and glory is to "bring to pass the immortality and Eternal Life of man" (Moses 1:39).

REVELATION 5

The Lion and the Scroll of Destiny with Seven Seals

Revelation 5:1–5

Revelation 5:1 "I saw in the right hand of him who sits on the throne a scroll with writing on the inside and outside, sealed with seven seals" (NTC) It appears that Elohim sits on the throne (see 5:7 for Jehovah's location). The "book" was actually a scroll. It was customary to write on one side only, but this one is written on both

D&C 77:4 ". . . their wings are a representation of power, to move, to act, etc."

D&C 77:5 "These elders whom John saw, were elders who had been faithful in the work of the ministry and were dead; who belonged to the seven churches, and were then in the paradise of God.

D&C 77:6-7 "We are to understand that it contains the revealed will, mysteries and the works of God; the hidden things of his economy concerning this earth during the seven thousand years of its continuance, or its temporal existence. . . . the first seal contains the things of the first thousand years, and the second also of the second thousand years, and so on."

sides, possibly to represent that nothing was left out. Legal documents were sealed to prove authenticity. Documents were written in duplicate, with one of them closed and sealed, to be only opened by a Judge “if anyone challenged the content.”¹⁸ The witness wrapped string around the scroll, embedding it in clay or wax that was used to personalize the seal. Seven seals assured its safety.¹⁹ A judge (here Jesus) opened them when appropriate.

The Prophet Joseph learned that each of the seven seals stands for each millennial period of the earth’s human history (also D&C 88:108–110).

Revelation 5:2 “I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, ‘Who is worthy to open the scroll by breaking its seals?’” (NTC) Many angels are specifically pointed out in the Book of Revelation. John hears this “mighty” or “strong” (KJV) angel calling for someone worthy or who is prepared with authority to open the seals. The strong angel may represent one with authority, or “one of the noble and great ones” (Abraham 3:22–23). The phrase, “loud voice,” signifies the importance of the message, and is repeated eleven times in the text.

Revelation 5:3–4 “I wept bitterly, because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look into it” (NTC) Similar to the practice of the Roman Empire, only a judge with the correct authority—or if he were worthy and qualified to open them--could open the seals (and disclose or comprehend them). John saw that the mighty angel could not find anyone qualified. So, the search was made beyond the inhabitants of earth into the heavens, but no one was found. John sensed the significance of this, as if he knew the importance of the role of the judge of the world, and he cried.

Revelation 5:5 “And one of the elders said to me, ‘Do not weep. See, the Lion from the tribe of Judah, even the branch of David, has overcome so that he can open the scroll’” (NTC) One of the elders seated around the throne who belonged to one of the seven churches comforts John with the wonderful news that someone worthy has been found. Only He has the qualifications as Judge to open the scroll and to act as the legal judge to read and determine the outcome of history. Only Jesus has the power of history. Jesus is the Lion, the King of Beasts, or a conquering Messiah. When Patriarch Jacob (or Israel) gave his father’s blessing to Judah he felt inspired to say, “Judah is a lion’s whelp . . . The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come” (Genesis 49:9). The Lion of Judah was Jesus of Nazareth.

This translation describes Jesus as a “branch of David,” derived from “netser.” Jesus is the Messianic branch of the House of David in Matthew 2:23, and Isaiah 11:1, “There shall come a rod out of the stem of Jesse and a *Branch* out of his roots.” This also fulfills other Old Testament prophecies, which describe a Messianic branch of the House of David.²⁰

The Worthy Lamb Slain

Revelation 5:6–7

Revelation 5:6 “in the midst of the throne . . . stood a Lamb as it had been slain” In this context, the Lion is also the Lamb who was slain with the marks of fatal wounds—the symbols are powerful. The names and symbols of the Lord teach us much about His roles. The name Jesus/*Yeshua* is a form of the word “save” or “Savior.” It is the lion who becomes the lamb who provides salvation. When John the Baptist introduced his cousin, Jesus, he said: “Behold the Lamb of God” (John 1:29, 36). Interestingly, none of the other Gospels use this title, but Paul refers to Jesus as our Passover lamb” (1 Corinthians 5:7, NIV, also see Acts 8:32). In the book of Revelation, John mentions “the Lamb” twenty-eight times. Jesus is the lamb taken to the slaughter, but here in Revelation the slain Lamb lives.

“having twelve horns and twelve eyes, which are the twelve servants of God sent forth into all the earth” (JST) The JST changes the *seven* horns and eyes to *twelve*. Symbolically, I like both—the Lamb is whole and perfect and also has God’s divine organization and priesthood power. Richard Draper and Michael Rhodes explain the twelve servants as apostles:

This seems to be a specific reference to the Twelve Apostles since the verb . . . “sent forth,” is cognate with the noun . . . “apostle” (literally “one who is sent forth”). In John’s day, the word carried more than one nuance. For the Greeks, the one sent was the one empowered or commissioned to act for the one doing the sending. For the Jews and Christians, the term designated anyone commissioned and empowered by God, one who had authority to speak His word and administer His ordinances.²¹

Another symbol used here are the “horns.” On each corner of the temple, the sacrificial alter horn represented power and salvation or cleansing power. The eyes have power to see giving them the symbol of omniscience. All these images may have other multiple meanings as well.

Revelation 5:7 “he came and took the scroll out of the right hand of him that sat on the throne” (NTC) Jesus, acting as the slain lamb, took the sealed scroll from Elohim who sits on the throne. Only our Savior had the preparation and power to implement all the terms of the Father’s plan. The heart or center of that plan in the history of the earth’s salvation is Jesus Christ.

The New Song

Revelation 5:8–14

Revelation 5:8 “when he took the scroll, the four animals and twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one having a harp, and golden bowls filled with incense, which are the prayers of saints” (NTC) When the Lord takes the book/scroll, those surrounding the throne prostrate themselves in worship. We learn that they

had made music with harps and had something to do with the saint's prayers—either transporting or delivering them to the throne. Incense was also used to represent prayers in the Old Testament temple (Psalm 141:2).

Revelation 5:9 “And they sang a new song changing, ‘You are worthy to take the scroll and open its seals, because you were slain and have purchased people for God by your blood . . .’” (NTC) Those around the throne sang a new song. (Other “new songs” are recorded in D&C 84:98; Psalms 33:3; 40:3 and Revelation 15:3–4.) The language of God includes music. The lyrics to this song powerfully praise the redemption made through the at-one-ment of Jesus Christ. He bought us back from being slaves to Satan and sin.

Revelation 5:10 “**You have made them a kingdom and priests to our God**” (NTC) The calling of a priest is to serve the Lord. By serving Him we can find freedom. The Prophet Joseph Smith restored the knowledge that this kingdom is also for priestesses.²² The Lamb's act of salvation not only saves us from our sins, but it also gives immortality to all on earth. By participating in the at-one-ment our Savior has also made it possible to become kings and queens, priests and priestesses, to reign under our Almighty God (Moses 1:39).

Revelation 5:11–12 “**Worthy is the Lamb that was slain . . .**” These two verses make up the lyrics of the new song mentioned above (and to Handel's Messiah). John's crying is turned into rejoicing as One worthy and willing is found to open the scrolls. The ancient numbers go up to one thousand and then are repeated. Literally, the vision describes ten with at least sixteen zeros, but it probably means a very large number of people all praising and honoring Jesus as the One slain for them.

Revelation 5:13 “**Every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb**” The third hymn of praise is sung by “every created thing” both humans and animals (WNT).²³

Revelation 5:14 “**Amen**” This portion of the vision closes with all creation offering praise, glory, and authority to God the Father and His Son. The Greek word, *amen*, means “truly/verily/so let it be.”²⁴ Only in John's Gospel does he repeat it, “Verily, verily,” (which we find in fifteen different verses, i.e. John 1:51; 3:3, 5, 11; etc.) It is used as an epithet for the Lord Jesus Christ in Revelation 3:14. Paul uses it as “all the promises of God in him *are* yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us” (2 Corinthians 1:20). In the Old Testament, it is found singly and sometimes doubly at the end of prayers (Psalms 41:13; 72:19; 89:52), to confirm the words and invoke the fulfillment of them. It is used in token of being bound by an oath (Numbers 5:22; Deuteronomy 27:15–26; Nehemiah 5:13; 8:6; 1 Chronicles 16:36).

REVELATION 6

Opening of the First Six Seals or Known History of the Earth

TIMELINE OF THE SEVEN THOUSAND YEARS OF SCRIPTURAL HISTORY

4,000 BC 3,000 BC 2,000 BC 1,000 BC 0 AD 1,000 AD 2,000
Adam Enoch Noah Jaredites Abraham Moses David Elijah Isaiah Lehi Daniel Christ Mormon Reformers Joseph Smith

The First Seal

Revelation 6:1–2

Revelation 6:1 “I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, “Come!” (NIV) Once the singing stops, the Lamb starts the work of opening the seals. The Lord revealed that the scroll represents 7,000 years (D&C 77:6). It leads us to assume that each seal represents another thousand years (also see D&C 88:108–109). As the Lamb or Christ opens the first seal, the sound of thunder suggests something momentous is happening. John’s guide encourages him to “Come,” nearly paralleling the invitation the Lord gave John after their first interaction, “Come and See” (John 1:39).

Revelation 6:2 “I looked, and there was a white horse, and he who was sitting on it had a bow, and he was given a crown, and he went forth conquering” (NTC) The first of the four Horsemen of the Apocalypse is white for victory. In our world, white often means purity, but at that time, white was the color worn by the winner of the Olympics, for the victorious Caesar Augustus and his wife, etc. This period was victorious, when Enoch established Zion. Enoch was victorious also when he “led the people of God, and their enemies came to battle against them ... and all nations feared greatly” (Moses 7:13).

A horse in the Roman world was a war animal. The bow was also a weapon of war. The person on the white horse represents a conqueror wearing a victor’s garland or crown. If he conquered worldliness and selfishness, then the conqueror was Enoch, “because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness, and there was no poor among them” (Moses 7:18).

The Second Seal

Revelation 6:3–4

Revelation 6:3–4 “When he opened the second seal, I heard the second animal saying, ‘Come’ And another horse, fiery-red, came . . . to take peace from the earth . . . and he was given a large sword” (NTC) The second seal represents a time of “death through violence and bloodshed,” from the time after Noah through the Jaredites, tower of Babel, and Abraham.²⁵

The Third Seal

Revelation 6:5–6

Revelation 6:5–6 “When the Lamb opened the third seal . . . there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand” (NIV) The third seal represents the approximate time of 2,000–1,000 BC, from Abraham to King David. The black horse and balances symbolize death and hunger. Something is out of balance. As often follows times of war, famines make the price of food go up. The text describes a starvation diet: “a quart of wheat for a day’s pay, and three quarts of barley for a day’s pay” (NTC). To work an entire day to only keep one person barely alive represents meager times. This period of the world’s history is known for the terrible famines that devastated the earth’s population. The famine in the big city of Ur was so severe that Abraham’s brother starved to death (Genesis 11:28; also, Abraham 2:17, 21). We all know of the seven-year famine during Joseph’s reign in Egypt, but it also plagued most of the world (Genesis 41:42–57). The children of Israel’s forty-years in the wilderness was a complete famine save for the manna (Exodus 16) and occasional water and birds. A touch of mercy is shown at the end of the verse when limits are set on the oil and wine—symbolic of many things.

The Fourth Seal

Revelation 6:7–8

Revelation 6:7–8 “When he opened the fourth seal . . . I looked, and there was a pale horse, and the name of him who was sitting on it was Death, and Hell followed after him, and they were given power over a quarter of the earth to kill with the sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth” (NTC) The period from approximately 1,000–0 BC was symbolized by two horsemen—death and hell—riding a pale or cadaverous-colored horse. These are the last of the horses mentioned with the seals. This is the time when the Lord’s covenant people went to war amongst themselves over and over. We read of famines that Elijah participated in.

It was also the time when conquering powers grew and traded hands every few generations. This is the time period of the captivity of both the northern ten tribes to Assyria, and of Judea to Babylon and Persia. It also includes the Macedonian- Greek triumph of Alexander the Great and the conquest of the Roman Empire. In the “new world” it spans from Alma to 3 Nephi. China also became a powerful nation during this time and Egypt fell. The great nations of the earth all tormented each other and killed each other off. The fourth part of the earth may represent a limited area, or possibly the Mediterranean world whose history the Bible records in part.

The Fifth Seal

Revelation 6:9–11

Revelation 6:9 “When the Lamb opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony they had upheld” The fifth seal represents the period from the

Lord's birth to 1000 AD, but no more symbolic horses accompany the account. Instead we see a symbol of an altar. This includes the death of our Savior who sacrificed Himself on a type of altar for us. The early Christian saints sacrificed their lives as martyrs. This period of martyrdoms includes the Muslim world conquering the Christians as they come into power.

Revelation 6:10–11 “**And they cried with a loud voice saying, ‘How long, Holy and True Master, until you judge and avenge our blood?’ . . . And each of them was given a white robe and they were told to rest**” (NTC) This represents John's time. The martyred saints cry out with their heart-breaking pleas for justice. While they are waiting for the judgement day, they are rewarded with robes of righteousness (Isaiah 61:10). White linen robes represent priesthood service in the Old Testament (Leviticus 16:23; 2 Chronicles 5:12; also, Alma 13:12–16). They are given “rest” which is “the fullness of his glory” (D&C 84:24). Alma often spoke of martyrs entering into the rest of the Lord (Alma 16:17; 60:13; etc.). A similar martyrdom happened to the righteous Nephites in the time before 400 AD (Moroni 1:2–3).

The Sixth Seal

Revelation 6:12–17

Revelation 6:12–13 “**When he opened the sixth seal . . . there was a great earthquake, and the sun turned black as sackcloth made of hair, and the entire moon was like blood. And the stars of the sky fell to earth . . .**” (NTC) John gives us more details from the sixth seal, which covers from approximately AD 1,000 to 2,000. This time was associated with natural disasters, including a great earthquake that affected mountains and islands (the first of three mentioned in Revelation). In Revelation 16:18, earthquakes represent the judgment of God. The “point seems to be that humankind cannot sin without influencing heaven and earth.”²⁶ The sun and moon (and creation) are out of kilter in spiritual mourning. The scriptures are full of signs of the times, including the sun turning red and stars falling.²⁷

Revelation 6:14 “**The heavens *opened* as a scroll *is opened* when it is rolled together**” (JST) The JST changes accurately reflect the Greek, which speaks of the heavens “apochórizó/to separate, part asunder/split apart.” When scrolls are unrolled, they disclose what is written inside. This may be another natural disaster, or perhaps the heavens were opened at Joseph Smith's First Vision through the restoration of the Gospel.

“**and every mountain and island *was* moved out of *its* places**” The mountains and islands are moved out of their places after this opening of the scroll. The word choice of “every” may refer to all, or everyone known. In D&C 133:21–24, we read of a time when the land will connect, or “the islands shall become one land.”

Revelation 6:15–16 “**Then the kings of the earth . . . the rich, the mighty . . . both slave and free, hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called . . . ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits**

on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!” (NIV) All humans who have not repented will be frightened to meet God. But their hiding places will not remove them from His judgments. Famous, bond, and free people of the earth will be ashamed or afraid and hide themselves from all the calamities and troubles. They will rather hide their sins than face their Creator.

Revelation 6:17 “The great day of their anger is come; and who is able to stand?” (NTC) This translation identifies God’s wrath in the plural, “thus show the reference is to both God and Christ.”²⁸ From what we understand of God, emotions of wrath or vengeance belong more to humanity, awhile God’s justice will be carried out with love for the righteous and for justice.

According to the Puritans, we need to live in fear of it in order to avoid it; then, we can live beyond the fear and enter into the love and rest of the Lord. It is the “great and terrible” day of the Lord. Who will find it a great day and be able to stand in the presence of the Lord is answered in Revelation 7:14?

REVELATION 7

Those Sealed and 1st Interlude

This chapter begins as a continuation of the sixth seal. This portion describes the winding up scenes of the earth’s history—our day. But as we approach the climactic point right before the opening of the seventh seal, we are transported to the heavenly throne of God. This becomes the first of five “interludes” in the Book of Revelation. We see the “sealed 144,000” purified saints who have been gathered at the throne of God (Revelation 7:4, NIV). From this point on, the word “seal” takes on a double meaning: 1) the seals on the scroll and 2) God’s seal on the righteous. John provides a vivid description of those saints who have prepare in righteousness to be sealed prior to the Second Coming of Christ.

Revelation 7:1 “I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth restraining the winds . . .” (NTC) When the Bible refers to the four corners of the earth it usually means a geographic fullness, or the whole earth. The Lord explained to the Prophet Joseph Smith that these four angels had four roles. They each had special power:

1. to save or destroy life
2. to preside over the missionary work throughout the world
3. to shut up the heavens
4. to seal unto life or cast one into darkness

These angels spread the gospel as well as destruction. (A similar outcome was seen by Nephi in the vision of the Tree of Life, see 1 Nephi 13:9; 14:10–14).

“the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree” The angel stopping the wind may refer to stopping dangerous gusts up to hurricane levels, or possibly, a figurative use of holding back the *anemos*’ as empty doctrines.”²⁹

Revelation 7:2 “I saw another angel ascending from the east holding the seal of the living God, and he shouted with a loud voice to the four angels who had been appointed to damage the earth and the sea, saying . . .” In D&C 77:9, we learn that the angel from the east (or “from the rising of the sun,” ESV), is Elias. He has authority from “the living God” to direct other angels. He also has the assignment to gather the tribes of Israel. The name Elias is used for several different people, and also as a title.³⁰ With the help of modern revelation, it appears that in this book/scroll that Elias refers to John the Beloved. In chapter ten he receives the mission to “gather the tribes of Israel . . . and to restore all things” (D&C 77:14).

Revelation 7:3 “Do not damage the earth or the sea or the trees, until we seal the servants of our God on their foreheads” (NTC) Before the destructions of the seventh seal, and the work of the four angels who will damage the earth, the angel from the East, Elias, must make sure that the righteous are sealed and protected against harm. The timing is consistent with the surge in temple building over a few decades to allow this work to happen.

Anciently, putting a mark on the forehead had several implications. Some in the Greco-Roman world marked their foreheads with the god they worshiped for divine protection. Slave owners branded their slaves with a mark on their foreheads, forearm, or right palm. This came from the practice of slaves for life being

D&C 77:8 Q. What are we to understand by the four angels? **A.** We are to understand that they are four angels sent forth from God, to whom is given power over the four parts of the earth, to save life and to destroy; these are they who have the everlasting gospel to commit to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people; having power to shut up the heavens, to seal up unto life, or to cast down to the regions of darkness.

D&C 77:9 A. We are to understand that the angel ascending from the east is he to whom is given the seal of the living God over the twelve tribes of Israel wherefore, he crieth unto the four angels having the everlasting gospel, saying: Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And, if you will receive it, this is Elias which was to come to gather together the tribes of Israel and restore all things.

D&C 77:10 Q. What time are the things spoken? **A.** They are to be accomplished in the six-thousand years, or the opening of the sixth seal.

marked by their owners in order to identify runaways. Later Christians were tattooed for their beliefs.³¹

Yet, in the context of the sixth seal, the sealing is not a visible tattoo. In Revelation 14:1 we learn that the saints had the “Father’s name written on their foreheads.” The Prophet Joseph taught that the sealing on the forehead identified them.³²

D&C 77:11. Q. What are we to understand by sealing . . . twelve thousand out of every tribe?

A. We are to understand that those who are sealed are high priests, ordained unto the holy order of God, to administer the everlasting gospel; for they are they who are ordained out of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, by the angels to whom is given power over the nations of the earth, to bring as many as will come to the church of the Firstborn.

144,000 Sealed

Revelation 7:4 “Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel” (NIV) The number of souls who are sealed is symbolically significant. In scripture, twelve depicts God’s order or organization (i.e. twelve rotations of the moon around the sun every year, twelve tribes, apostles, and in the modern church, the twelfth year is the age to begin service in the priesthood). Any number squared has even more significance. By adding one thousand it represents perfection.³³ Thus 144,000 speaks of God’s complete or whole organization.

In D&C 77:11 we learn that those sealed are not the number saved, but representatives, like missionaries of the church of the First Born. Joseph Smith taught: “There will be 144,000 saviors on Mount Zion, and with them an innumerable host that no man can number. Oh, I beseech you to go forward, go forward and make your calling and your election sure!” Those endowed saints are on the right path, as the second anointings can be received in the life hereafter.

Revelation 7:5–8 “From the tribe of . . .” The Lord’s organization lists His covenant people into the traditional twelve tribes of Israel. Often in the Old Testament, Ruben or Simeon are missing. The heir Joseph (who was the first born of the queen wife) receives a “double portion” for Ephraim and Manasseh (Deuteronomy 21:17). In this list, Dan is missing, possibly because of an idolatrous temple set up in his land (Judges 18:30; 1 Kings 12:29). Also, there was a tradition that claimed the anti-Christ came from Dan.³⁴

The Lord’s explanation in D&C 77:11, says they are ordained high priests from “every nation” to build the kingdom or spread the gospel. In the Restoration we also believe this may include endowed women.³⁵

Revelation 7:9–10 “I looked, and there was a great crowd of every nation and tribe . . . standing in front of the throne and in front of the Lamb dressed in white robes and they had palm leaves in their hands” (NTC)

The innumerable group (far larger than the 144,000) of purified people praised God shouting, “Salvation belongs to our God and the Lamb” (RSV). Draper and Rhodes’ translation chose or “Victory belongs to our God” (NTC), because the palms and white dress symbolized a double symbol of victory in the Greco-Roman world. (Alma 5:21–24 also alludes to this grand experience too.)

Revelation 7:11–12 “All the angels . . . elders. . . four animals . . . fell before the throne on their faces and worshipped God, saying ‘Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks. . .’” (NTC) Those standing around the throne fall down in worship, and become a choir praising God. Their song includes seven attributes of God.

Revelation 7:13–14 “One of the elders asked me, ‘These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?’ . . . he said, ‘These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb’” (NIV) The elder basically asks John, “Who will be able to stand the calamities of the last days?” Then the elder answers, “those who have been sealed.” Those in the white robes are defined as those who have applied the atoning sacrifice of the Son to their lives to be cleansed from the world and have endured through great tribulation to be accepted and thereby purified. The ancient priests are dressed in a similar fashion as a type of those heavenly purified saints (also see D&C 138:13).

Revelation 7:15 “They . . . serve him day and night in his temple . . . They shall hunger no more . . . For the Lamb . . . shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes” These are those who have repented, accepted Jesus’ at-one-ment, and have been valiant in their testimonies and service to God. (Jesus taught the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well about these promises in John 4:10, 17; and again, in Capernaum in John 6:35; they are also described in D&C 76:70–79.) These saints serve God both in life and death. But, in heaven there is no hunger, excessive heat, no need for light, and God will comfort all sorrows (also see D&C 88:6–13; 97:21–16).

REVELATION 8

The Seventh Seal

Revelation 8:1–5

Revelation 8:1 “When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour” (NIV) The interlude is over, and we return to the opening of the last seal (following chapter 6). When Christ opens the seventh seal “silence” follows.

Similarly, God rested on the seventh day in His creation periods. Thus, again there is silence for a period after the seventh thousand year. (We see the same prophecy in D&C 88:95; 38:11–12; 77:12.) If one day is 1,000 years,

xsthen literally, 30- minutes is 21-years, but I do not think that is what the Apocalypse meant. In ancient world, time was measured with sundials, so thirty-minutes was just an approximate length of time. All we know is that we live in the last days, so this refers to our future. As the silence is in heaven, it may refer to a silence of revelation or the Spirit. It may refer to a period before God unleashes His wrath (Zephaniah 1:7,-18; Zechariah 2:13; Habakkuk 2:20; D&C 38:11-12). During the silence, angels are waiting to gather the wheat from the tares. This time is needed to complete the sanctification, judgment, redemption, and the putting of God's power in place through the sealing of His elect prior to His Second Coming.

D&C 77:12 “We are to understand that as God made the world in six days, and on the seventh day he finished his work, and sanctified it, and also formed man out of the dust of the earth, even so, in the beginning of the seventh thousand years will the Lord God sanctify the earth, and complete the salvation of man, and judge all things, and shall redeem all things, except that which he hath not put into his power, when he shall have sealed all things, unto the end of all things; and the sounding of the trumpets of the seven angels are the preparing and finishing of his work, in the beginning of the seventh thousand years— the preparing of the way before the time of his coming.”

Revelation 8:2 “**And I saw the seven angels which stand before God, and they were given seven trumpets**” (NTC) The sounding of the seven trumpets (a *shofar* or war horn) announces the last preparations before God finishes His work (D&C 77:12). Trumpets also announce the beginning of God's judgment. Each trumpet calls another calamity. In the Old Testament, seven priests blew trumpets before the battle of Jericho, and to announce notable events (Joshua 6:1-20; 1 Chronicles 15:24).

The positioning of the angels speaks of their importance. They serve God under His priesthood power. Because there are “seven angels,” it may refer to a figurative whole or perfect group of “all angels.”

Revelation 8:3-4 “**Another angel came and stood at the altar having a gold incense burner; and he was given a great quantity of incense, to offer for the prayers of all the saints upon the gold altar that was before the throne. And the smoke . . . arose from the hand of the angel before God**” (NTC) Through the Old Testament and much of the New Testament, incense is symbolic of prayer because it ascends heavenward with a sweet fragrance. In this model, the amount of incense given may correlate with the many prayers offered by the righteous saints. Perhaps it represents angelic assignments to fulfill the saints' request made in prayers.

The location before the throne is consistent with the incense altar in the temple just before the veil. The prayers were made symbolically from the incense altar directly in front of the Holy of Holies or throne of God. In modern temples, prayers are also offered right in front of the veil where one prepares to enter into the Lord's presence. The pattern of earthly temples are taken from the heaven temple.³⁶

Revelation 8:5 “The angel took the incense burner, and filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth, and there were peals of thunder and rumblings and lightnings flashes and an earthquake” (NTC) When heavenly fire is cast onto the earth, the quiet time is over. The martyrs’ prayer of “How long, Lord” will be answered soon (Revelation 6:10). Three forms of natural calamities may describe God’s intentional signs.

Revelation 8:6–12 “The seven angels who held the seven trumpets got ready to blow them” (NTC) Each of the seven angels has things to prepare to be ready to blow their trumpets. They each will bring different plagues as “a last-ditch effort to soften the hearts of the wicked.”³⁷ The earth will soon be in constant turmoil. (The amount of 1/3 represented a limited portion, or that God has set bounds to the destructions.)

Angel #1	Revelation 8:7	Hail and fire mingled with blood burn 1/3 of vegetation
Angel #2	Revelation 8:9–10	A fiery mountain falls into the sea killing 1/3 of sea life, ships/commerce/the god of worldliness
Angel #3	Revelation 8:10–11	A falling star poisons fresh waters named, wormwood/bitter, 1/3 of the water supply contaminated
Angel #4	Revelation 8:12–13	The sun, moon, and stars darkened, 1/3 less light seen
Angel #5	Revelation 9:1–2	Bottomless pit opened, Satan darkens humans like a scorpion, but not the vegetation nor the sealed
Angel #6	Revelation 9:13–19	Four angels loosed in the Euphrates/bottomless pit (JST), for a time when 1/3 humans killed
Angel #7	Revelation 11:15–19 Revelation 16:17–21	The kingdoms of the world become the Kingdoms of God, but not until after Armageddon Largest earthquake, islands and mountains move, nations collapsed, a plague of hail

The plagues at the end of time are described as some of the plagues the Lord commanded Moses to release on Egypt. At both times they were given to encourage repentance, but if they don’t repent, the plagues continue.

1	Hail fire	Moses’ 7th plague (Exodus 9:22–26).
2	Water turns to blood	Moses’ 3rd plague (Exodus 19:25)
3	Wormwood/bitter	Moses’ 6th plague (Exodus 9:8–12) “fine dust . . . festering boils”
4	Darkness, dims sun	Moses’ 9th plague (Exodus 10:21–29)
5	Bottomless pit—death	Moses’ 10th plague (Exodus 11:4–9) “death of the firstborn”

Revelation 8:13 “I heard an eagle as it flew in the midst of the sky crying with a loud voice, “Woe, owe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth because of the remaining trumpet blasts of the three angels that are about to sound” (NTC) The KJV speaks of an “angel” flying, but most of the Greek manuscripts use “eagle”/*etos* “bird of prey.”³⁸ The eagle/angel’s message is a divine warning, “it is going to get worse!” The wicked who remain are so

hardened that God will send His full indignation (D&C 101:11). This is in preparation for the Battle of Armageddon.

REVELATION 9

The Fifth Angel's Trumpet Call

Revelation 9:1–2

Revelation 9:1 “The fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to *the angel* was given the key of the bottomless pit” (JST *italicized*). The half hour of heavenly silence must have ended as the next trumpet rallies attention (Revelation 8:1). Satan is the fallen star. He was divine before he fell, “Lucifer”/ *helel* “a shining one,”³⁹ and a “son of the morning” (Isaiah 14:12, 2 Nephi 14:12; D&C 76:26). In a sermon, the Prophet Joseph Smith explained, “When Lucifer was hurled from Heaven the decree was that he should not obtain a tabernacle and not those that were with him.”⁴⁰ The JST clarifies that God allows the angel to use the key to hell, but God is still in control. The “bottomless pit” means it has no foundation, and in Greek reads, “the unfathomably deep, shaft of the abyss.”⁴¹

Revelation 9:2 “he opened the abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke” The metaphor of the mists of darkness arising from hell may represent spiritual blindness as Satan and his devils are allowed to tempt mankind. The smoke of darkness or temptation blinds the judgment and hearts of humans (1 Nephi 12:7). The devils’ “realm is now unleashed upon those whose lives have made a hell of the earth.”⁴²

The Locusts

Revelation 9:3–11

Revelation 9:3–4 “out of the smoke, locusts descended on the earth, and they were given power like that of the scorpions” (BSB) Out of this smoke from hell came a plague worse than the Egyptian’s locusts because it affected humans as severely as a scorpion bite (Moses 8th plague in Ex 10:1–20). The symbolism of a scorpion speaks of a sting that brings excruciating pain, but not death. The hordes of locusts or evil ones are compared to armies. This may be a physical or a religious war.

Yet, in God’s plan, all of the plagues have their limits (as in Job 2:6). They destroy only certain things. These locusts don’t eat

D&C 77:13

Q. When are the things to be accomplished, which are written in the 9th chapter of Revelation?

A. They are to be accomplished after the opening of the seventh seal, before the coming of Christ.

plant life, but are to work on those not sealed to God. Again, we hear of the image of God's people having a seal on their foreheads.

Revelation 9:5–6 “They were not permitted to kill them, but to torture them for five months . . . people will seek for death and will not find it” (NTC) The locusts have power to torment people for a set time. Five months is the life span of a locust, so it may represent a life span. The pain of a scorpion bite is horrific and may represent spiritual torment (which is more eternally damaging than physical pain). The scorpion is used to represent danger and pain (also vs 10).

Revelation 9:7–8 “The locusts looked like horses ready for battle, and on their heads they seemed to have crowns of gold, and their faces were like human faces. . . hair like a woman . . . teeth were like a lion's” (NTC) The agents of Satan or “locusts” are fighting a grievous war for the souls of humanity. They aim to conquer and claim strength, beauty, and destructive intents.

Their crowns are the type that athletic winners, not royalty, wear.⁴³ The devil's sinister motives are destructive; he wants to cause pain and destroy humanity.

Revelation 9:9–11 “They had breastplates like . . . iron, and the sound of their wings was like the thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle. They had tails with stingers . . . to torment people for five months. They had as king . . . whose name . . . in Greek is Apollyon (that is, Destroyer)” (NIV) These locusts are far more destructive than the Egyptians are who have great armor and power (wings are the power to act, D&C 77:4). The weapons cause torment, probably in the form of physical, mental, and spiritual suffering. This may describe fighter aircraft, flame throwers, or missiles, but I fear Satan's war also uses subtle means to conquer, such as with pornography, addictions, greed, and anger. Satan's noise also drowns out the soft whisperings of the Spirit. Not surprising, the king of the locusts is Satan.

The Sixth Angel's Trumpet Call

Revelation 9:12–19

Revelation 9:12 “One woe is past; but there are still two woes coming” (NTC) Three woes are mentioned in Revelation 8:13. This entire, miserable, locust-scorpion war made up only the first of the three woes. Alonzo Gaskill sees symbolism in these numbers: “The

#4 implies everyone will be affected. The #3 implies that this is being sent by God as a punishment or warning. The #7 suggests that these plagues are a fullness of God's wrath and a completion of the day of repentance.”⁴⁴

Revelation 9:13–15 “The sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar . . . Loose the four angels which are bound in the *bottomless pit*. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour . . . a year, for to slay the third part of men” (JST italicized). Now the sixth angel is summoned from the voices or prayers associated with the power of God (from the symbolism of the altar horns). Four represents the earth’s cardinal direction or the fullness of the earth. These four who fill the earth are not from the “Euphrates” (KJV), but from “the bottomless pit” (JST). God appointed time carefully. The Jerusalem Bible reads, “this hour, of this day of this month of this year.” They have prepared to become destroying angels and attack a portion (a third) of humanity.

Revelation 9:16 “The number of cavalry troops was two hundred million” (NTC) The number in Greek is, “two myriads of myriads” indicating an incomprehensible number. (In comparison to 200 million warriors, there were 70 million combined Allied and Axis forces in WWII.) This number might represent demons or even epidemics or other pestilences that the devilish army brings. Note JST changes “heard,” to “saw.”

Revelation 9:17 “I saw the horses in the vision and their riders, who had breastplates the color of fire and sapphire and sulfur, and the horses’ heads were like lions, and out of their mouths came fire, and smoke, and sulfur” (NTC) The warriors—with lion-like heads, horse-like bodies and with snake-like tails—had armor empowered to destroy akin to fire and brimstone. John describes a picture of their diabolical ferocious intents in groups of three colors, body parts, and plagues.

Revelation 9:18–19 “From these three plagues, a third of mankind was killed, by the fire . . . smoke . . . sulfur . . . For the power . . . was in their mouths and . . . tails” (NTC) These three plagues kill a portion of “mankind” (NIV). Both ends of the demonic destruction were violent and lethal. This may refer to human’s spiritual, not physical, death.

Revelation 9:20–21 “The rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands . . . idols of gold . . . murders, magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts” (NIV). This is the greatest tragedy. All the wicked are not killed, but they continue to worship the things of this world. Seeking material possessions and personal pleasure is the idolatry of our day. The rest of John’s list has sins such as seeking for personal gain or pleasure by breaking the law. John includes that they are guilty of breaking five of the Ten Commandments. “Sorcery” (KJV) or “witchcraft” (NTC) in Greek is: *pharmakos* / “a poisoner” or potions also referring to drug users. The KJV uses “Adultery” / *porneia*, but it refers to all forms of “sexual immorality” including pornography. Those who worship God will be spared from these plagues.

REVELATION 10

2nd Interlude—John’s Personal Assignment: Gather Israel

Another Mighty Angel

Revelation 10:1–7

Revelation 10:1 “I saw another mighty angel descending from the sky enveloped in a cloud. There was the rainbow on his head and his face was like the sun, legs were like columns of fire” (NTC) An interlude interrupts the horrors of the last days. In contrast to the destroying devils, we see a glorious being of light, covered with a halo or light, or a sign reassuring him that the covenant is intact (God’s message from the sign of the rainbow from Genesis 9:13). John describes the angel as he described the throne of God (Revelation 4:3). John often contrasts with opposites to emphasize that there are only two ways in life—we follow God, or we do not.

Revelation 10:2 “He held a small, open scroll in his hand. He put his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the earth” (NTC) Metaphorically, the angel stood on the sea and earth—communicating that he had authority over land and sea. This might symbolize the breadth of his influence or message, too. The little scroll or “book” (KJV), included John’s mission to gather the tribes of Israel, according to D&C 77:14.

Revelation 10:3–4 “He shouted with a loud voice like a lion roaring . . . the seven thunders spoke with their own voices . . . I was about to write, and I hear a voice from heaven saying, ‘Seal up the things . . . do not write them’” (NTC) The voice of God is often described as the voice of thunder, so it is appropriate that the messengers that utter His message should do the same (Revelation 6:1). In the Jewish world of the time, “the thunders” referred to the thunders of Sinai, which a later rabbi recorded as “the seven voices” of God (Exodus 19:16–19).⁴⁵ As seven represents complete or whole, the message probably had something to do with the completion of the perfection of the earth. We will have to wait to learn what was actually said.

Revelation 10:5–6 “The angel . . . raised his right hand to heaven . . . and swore by him who lives forever . . . that there will be no further delay” (NTC) The angel lifted his *right* hand (BSB, NIV, ESV, etc.) to heaven or to God using several beautiful names for God, and swore or *omnuó!* “promised with an oath”—as if he were making a covenant. The oath was that there would be no more delay; time was up (only the KJV refers to “time no longer,” even the NKJV changes it to “delay”). This answers the martyrs’ cry, “How long O Lord?” (Revelation 6:10).

Revelation 10:7 “In the days of the voice of the seventh angel . . . the mystery of God will be fulfilled” The seventh angel will be introduced in Revelation 11:15, when the “mystery” or work of God will be made known and finished. John is told, just as Amos 3:7 promised, that God will proclaim His works first “to His servants, the prophets.” Until then, we have John’s commission to cover in this chapter-long interlude.

The Little Scroll/Book

Revelation 10:8-11

Revelation 10:8-9 “Come take the open scroll in the hand of the angel . . . and I went up to the angel . . . He said to me, ‘Take and eat it, and it will be bitter in your stomach, but in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey’” (NTC) John was commanded to eat, or take the mission that was described in verse two. (Jeremiah and Ezekiel were also given a book to eat in Jeremiah 15:16; Ezekiel 2:6-10, 3:1-3.) The imagery speaks of internalizing his assignment and fully taking his calling into his life.

D&C 77:14 “The little book . . . Was a mission, and an ordinance, for him to gather the tribes of Israel; behold, this is Elias, who, as it is written, must come and restore all things.”

The Lord revealed to Joseph Smith that John’s mission was the call of Elias, “to restore all things.” We read more in D&C 27:6, “Elias, to whom I have committed the keys of bringing to pass the restoration of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began, concerning the last days.” This is a new mission call and title given to John (and possibly a new name). D&C 77: 9 and 14 describe Elias as the one responsible for the gathering of Israel. Later, in the Kirtland Temple Joseph recorded an experience when, “Elias appeared, and committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham, saying that in us and our seed all generations after us should be blessed” (D&C 110:12). This may be John, as the calling sounds similar. (However, there was another man named Elias who appeared on the Matthew of Transfiguration, Matthew 17:3; D&C 138:45.)

John’s new mission was received as sweet news, but the assignment became difficult and even bitter over time. Perhaps the bitterness is sorrow from seeing those who reject the message of God.

Revelation 10:10-11 “I took the little scroll . . . and it was sweet as honey . . . they then said to me, ‘You must again prophesy about many peoples’” (NTC) Early in the Apocalypses, we read of the Savior taking the large scroll, and now John follows His example and takes his little scroll that revealed his next calling. He will prophecy to many inhabitants of the world across nations and languages. His assignment was partially fulfilled in writing his Gospel, letters and this Book of Revelation. His new assignment is still in progress.

One of Joseph Smith’s scribes recorded that he spoke on this topic in June of 1831:

The Spirit of the Lord fell upon Joseph in an unusual manner, and he prophesied that John the Revelator was then among the Ten Tribes of Israel who had been led away by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, to prepare them for their return from their long dispersion, to again possess the land of their fathers. He prophesied many more things that I have not written.”⁴⁶

REVELATION 11

Second Woe and Two Prophets in Jerusalem

This interlude of John's call explains why in the following chapters, he is no longer an observer, but a participant. We return from the interlude, to examine the second woe mentioned in Revelation 9:13–21. The seventh Angel is still waiting to trumpet the final call, following the testimony and martyrdom of the two witnesses.

Revelation 11:1–2 “I was given a reed like a stick and was told, ‘Come and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship in it. But omit the outer courtyard . . .’” (NTC) John used a measuring reed or rod (which grows about 15–20 feet) to scope out the size of a visionary temple and worshipers. (Titus had destroyed Herod's Temple over twenty years earlier in AD 70.) John measures the worshipers, the altars of sacrifice, and incense, as well as the sanctuary, which included the Holy Place and Holy of Holies. The message suggests that everything in the temple proper is safe, but not in the court of the Gentiles.

We learn that the “holy city” or the city of Jerusalem, will be trampled by gentiles for 42 months before God intervenes. The timing of three and a half years becomes significant in the Apocalypse. Three-and-a-half-years is half of seven or 1,260 days. This number is also found in Daniel 7:25. It is also the approximate length of Jesus' ministry. This number is repeated over and over in this section.

Revelation 11:3 “I will appoint my two witnesses to prophesy one thousand two hundred sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.” Consistent with Old Testament scripture, the Lord gives two witnesses (Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15). These two witnesses are mentioned in several scriptures and in religious speculation (i.e. D&C 77:15; 2 Nephi 8:19–20; and Isaiah 51:19–20, JST). Elder Parley P. Pratt thought they were Jewish prophets. Bruce R. McConkie thought they would be members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.⁴⁷ In the Bible, though, a prophet is one who testifies of Christ, and not necessarily an Apostle.

D&C 77:15 “The two witnesses. . . are two prophets that are to be raised up to the Jewish nation in the last days, at the time of the restoration, and to prophesy to the Jews after they are gathered and have built the city of Jerusalem in the land of their fathers.”

John records much about what happens during those 1,265 days. Their clothing is described as the coarse and uncomfortable camels' hair clothing that was worn at times of mourning. This may describe the prophets' heavy burden they carry, or the rejection they will receive. The sack cloth may represent the hardship of their message—repent. They will prophesy of the distress, grief, and sorrow that will come if the Jews do not turn to the Lord.

Revelation 11:4 “They are ‘the two olive trees’ and the two lampstands, and ‘they stand before the Lord of the earth” (NIV) John’s account cites the prophet Zechariah’s text of these symbols, but leaves out that they also “are two anointed ones” (Zechariah 4:14; also see 4:3, 11). These two witnesses have been close to God and are referred to as two candlesticks. Symbolically, candlesticks hold light. As God is the source of light, the olive oil burns to make light. Olive oil is also used for healing, nourishment, and anointing. Other prophets have compared godly men to an olive tree (Judges 9:8–9; Psalms 52:8; 128:3).

Revelation 11:5 “If anyone wants to harm them, fire comes out of their mouth and consumes their enemies” (NTC) The witnesses cannot be physically harmed during their 3½ year mission. According to John’s Gospel, the Lord’s mission was also 3½ years.⁴⁸ All servants of God who have been sealed by Him, will not die until their missions are complete. The torture devised to harm them will be reversed and kill the wicked designer.

Revelation 11:7–8 “When they have completed their testifying, the beast that came out of the abyss will . . . kill them” (NTC) After their mission is complete, like the Lord, they will be killed. The prophets who join the martyrs have their testimonies sealed with their blood. The offensive war that their enemies have raged for 42 months will end abruptly when they are killed.

Revelation 11:8–10 “Their corpses will lie in the main street of . . . spiritually Sodom and Egypt where also the Lord was crucified. . . for three and a half days . . . the inhabitants of the earth will gloat” (NTC) While their dead bodies lie in Jerusalem for 3½ days, the wicked city will rejoice and celebrate their deaths. Nations will look at their corpses—possibly on the evening news or on satellite internet coverage. The parallel time period testifies of Christ again.⁴⁹

Revelation 11:11–12 “After three and a half days, the spirit of life from God entered into them . . . they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, ‘Come up here’ And they went up into the sky in a cloud” (NTC) Their resurrection is patterned after the Lord’s three days and three nights in a tomb, and their ascension as His 40-day ministry (Acts 1:19). The lives of the prophets typify of the Savior before and after His resurrection (Hosea 12:10; 2 Kings 2:11). Those celebrating will all see the error of their judgement, but they will not have long to ponder before the next event.

Revelation 11:13–14 “At that very hour there was a severe earthquake and a tenth of the city collapsed. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the survivors were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven. The second woe has passed” (NIV) The third great earthquake arrives in Jerusalem and kills one tenth or a tithe of the city’s inhabitants. Seven thousand may be symbolical as a tithe of a portion of the greater whole. It speaks symbolically of all the wicked being killed, especially as those who are saved “gave glory to God,” suggesting the possibility of their conversion, too.⁵⁰ They learn to trust in the Lord’s hand and glorify God. “For

the first time in Revelation, we have a people who actually respond positively to the punitive judgments meted out by God.”⁵¹

Revelation 11:14 “The second woe is finished. Now the third woe comes quickly” (NTC) Two woes are complete with good overcoming evil. The third woe is announced, but not explained.

The Seventh Angel’s Trumpet Call and Third Woe

Revelation 11:15–19

Revelation 11:15 “The seventh angel blew his trumpet. And there were loud voices in heaven saying, ‘The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord’” (NTC) The trump and angel now announce the imminent return of Christ. The angelic praise is sung in Handel’s Messiah and will be on the lips of the heavenly choirs at that time. All kingdoms will bow to the Savior as He reigns in righteousness.

Revelation 11:16–18 “The twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God.” (NIV) The same 24 elders from John’s seven Churches of Asia (who may represent all exalted beings), rejoice with the purification of the earth and worship God. They acknowledge God’s power and praise Him for His imminent righteous reign. They sang or chanted a beautiful poem thanking God for His judgment—for punishing the wicked and rewarding the righteous.

“We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty,
the One who is and who was,
because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign.
The nations were angry, and your wrath has come.
The time has come for judging the dead,
and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your people who revere your name,
both great and small—
and for destroying those who destroy the earth.”

Revelation 11:19 “The temple of God in heaven opened, and the ark of his covenant appeared in his temple” (NTC) John sees the heavenly temple again, but this time, it is opened to reveal the Ark of the Covenant. This ancient golden throne, with its lid as the golden mercy seat, had been missing since the destruction of Solomon’s Temple (2 Samuel 6:15; also see Exodus 25:16; 40:20; Numbers 7:89). It represents God’s authority, justice, mercy, nurturing, and law all returning to the earth. By so doing, the earth will return to its paradisiacal state. The verse ends with God’s cosmic earthquakes, lightening, and hail closing the telestial history and opening the next era.

Header Image: The Apocalypse of Saint John the Evangelist on the Island of Patmos by Jan Matsys, 1563.

ENDNOTES

1. Strong's #602, <https://biblehub.com/greek/602.htm> (accessed 11/18/19)
2. Tertullian, *The Sacred Writings of Tertullian, Annotated Edition* (North Charleston, SC: CreateSpace, 2017), Chapter 36. Available on Google Books. (accessed 11/17/19)
3. Peter was crucified upside down, Andrew, Philip, Thaddeus (Jude), and Simon “the Canaanite” were all crucified, Bartholomew was skinned, Thomas and Matthew were run through with spears, James, son of Zebedee executed with a sword, Judas took his own life after betraying Jesus, and Paul was beheaded.
4. The information in D&C 77, was first published in the Nauvoo Newspaper, *Times and Seasons*, under the title: “A Key to Understanding the Revelations of St. John, in a Series of Questions and Answers.” From there it was later collected with the writings in the Pearl of Great Price, and finally placed chronologically in the Doctrine and Covenants. See Richard D. Draper and Michael D. Rhodes, *Brigham Young University, New Testament Commentary: The Revelation of John the Apostle* (Provo, UT: BYU Studies, 2016), 33.
5. Alonzo L. Gaskill, *The Lost Language of Symbolism*, Deseret Book, 2003, adapted.
6. Strong's, #4591, https://biblehub.com/greek/ese_manen_4591.htm (accessed 11/18/19).
7. For more on “translated beings” see Ludlow, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4.1485–6.
8. Draper and Rhodes, *BYU New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, 104. This translation is abbreviated NTC.
9. Welch, *Allegory of the Olive Tree*, 427–428.
10. Welch and Hall, *Charting the New Testament*, 17–2. The seven areas include: Divine Commission, Recognition, Criticism, Admonition, Descriptive Statement about Jesus Christ, Call to Hear, Sacred Promises. The chart above is adapted from this source.
11. Sources for this information came from the NIV, Paul J. Achtemeier, *Harper Collin' Bible Dictionary* (1996), Alonzo Gaskill, *Commentary on Revelation*, unpublished, and xx
12. Isaiah 6, Ezekiel 1:1–28; 1 Kings 22:19; Daniel 7, 10; 1 Nephi 1:6–14; D&C 76:21; 137:3; etc. Look at the similarities between Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon record of the vision of the degrees of glory. „We beheld the glory of the Son, on the right hand of the Father, and received of his fulness; and saw the holy angels, and them who are sanctified before his throne, worshipping God, and the Lamb, who worship him forever and ever“ (D&C 76:20–21).
13. The high priest wore one stone for each of the tribes of Israel. The “ruby” (NIV) is also translated as also “sardine” (KJV) and “carnelian” (BSB). He also wore two stones known as “Urim and Thummim” or “lights and perfections” in Hebrew (see Exodus 28:30; Leviticus 8:8; Numbers 27:21; Deuteronomy 33:8; 1 Samuel 28:6; Ezra 2:63; Nehemiah 7:65; JS-H 1:35.)
14. Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 171. The quote continues: “This earth in its sanctified and immortal state will be a Urim and Thummim for all things below it in the scale of creation, but not above it.” Given, April 2, 1843, in a General Conference sermon in Nauvoo, IL.
15. See also Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith (TPJS)*, 287–294.

16. Ibid., 291–92.
17. Hermes, Mercury, and Cupid.
18. Draper and Rhodes, *BYU New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, 225.
19. Ibid., 226. “One such type of covenant was the Roman will that also bore seven seals. Such testaments could not be administered until all the seals were broken. Only a person of authority could legally break the seals and execute the will.”
20. In considering the Messianic impact of *netser*/branch, there are many scriptures with the same idea. For example, in Jeremiah 23:5 the Lord says, “I shall raise up a righteous shoot for David; as king he will reign and govern wisely.” The Suffering Servant Song of Isaiah 53:2 compares the servant to a “sapling” and a “root.” At the time of the New Testament, the Jews in Qumran used “branch” or *netser* in an eschatological sense of God’s plan of salvation. The Dead Sea Scroll community described itself as “an everlasting planting” (Dead Sea Scrolls (1QH vi 15, vii 19, vii 6,8,10). This is probably an echo of Isaiah 60:21, “a branch of His planting.” Thus a secondary connection of Nazorean comes from applying Jesus to the prophetic “branch of David” passages in Revelation 5:6. For more see Raymond Brown, *Birth of the Messiah*, 211–212.
21. Draper and Rhodes, *BYU New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, 232.
22. “Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book,” p. 22, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed November 20, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/nauvoo-relief-society-minute-book/19>.
23. Also see D&C 128:23; Smith, *TPJS*, 291–292.
24. Strong’s, #281, <https://biblehub.com/greek/281.htm> (accessed 11-20-19).
25. Draper and Rhodes, *BYU New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, 252.
26. Ibid., 274.
27. Also see: D&C 88:87–91; 29:14–21; 34:9; 43:23–26; Isaiah 2:19; 13:9–11; 34:4; Matthew 24:29–30; Haggis 2:6–7.
28. Draper and Rhodes, *BYU New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, 273.
29. Strong’s #417, <https://biblehub.com/greek/417.htm> (accessed 11-21-19).
30. Elias is used in scripture most often as the Greek name for prophet Elijah (Matthew 11:14; 16:14; 17:3; etc.); but also, Elias visited *Zacharias* (D&C 27:7); a title used for John the Baptist (Matthew 17:12; Luke 1:17;); someone to gather Israel and restore all things (D&C 77:9, 14); carried keys for “the dispensation of Abraham” (D&C 110:12); etc.
31. Draper and Rhodes, *BYU New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, 287.
32. Smith, *TPJS*, 321.
33. Draper and Rhodes, *BYU New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, 292.
34. Draper and Rhodes, *BYU New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, 291.
35. M. Russell Ballard, “This Is My Work and Glory,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 19. “In the eternal perspective, both the procreative power and the priesthood power are shared by husband and wife.” Also see D&C 124:25–30; and 131:1–4.
36. Donald Parry, *Temples in the Ancient World* (SLC, UT: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1994), 443.
37. Alonzo Gaskill, *Commentary on the Book of Revelation*, 104.
38. Strong’s #105, <https://biblehub.com/greek/105.htm> (accessed 11-21-19).

39. Strong's #1966, <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/1966.htm> (accessed 11-21-19)
40. Joseph Smith, "Discourse, 21 May 1843, as Reported by Howard Coray," p. [42], The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed November 22, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/discourse-21-may-1843-as-reported-by-howard-coray/7> The quote continued, "but go abroad upon the earth exposed to the anger of the elements naked & bare, but oftentimes he lays hold upon men binds up their Spirits enters their habitations laughs [sic] at the decree of God, and rejoices in that he hath a house to dwell in."
41. Strong's #12, <https://biblehub.com/greek/12.htm> (accessed 11-21-19)
42. Draper and Rhodes, *BYU New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, 335.
43. *Ibid.*, 346.
44. Alonzo Gaskill, *Revelation*, 114.
45. Draper and Rhodes, *BYU New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, 371.
46. Smith, *History of the Church*, 1:176.
47. Bruce R. McConkie, *The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man* (SLC, UT: Deseret Book, 1982), 390. "The word that comes from the Lord is: 'I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and three score days, clothed in sackcloth.' Who are these witnesses, and when will they prophesy? "They are two prophets that are to be raised up to the Jewish nation in the last days, at the time of the restoration, and to prophesy to the Jews after they are gathered and have built the city of Jerusalem in the land of their fathers." (D&C 77:15.) Their ministry will take place after the latter-day temple has been built in Old Jerusalem, after some of the Jews who dwell there have been converted, and just before Armageddon and the return of the Lord Jesus. How long will they minister in Jerusalem and in the Holy Land? For three and a half years, the precise time spent by the Lord in his ministry to the ancient Jews. The Jews, as an assembled people, will hear again the testimony of legal administrators bearing record that salvation is in Christ and in his gospel. Who will these witnesses be? We do not know, except that they will be followers of Joseph Smith; they will hold the holy Melchizedek Priesthood; they will be members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is reasonable to suppose, knowing how the Lord has always dealt with his people in all ages, that they will be two members of the Council of the Twelve or of the First Presidency of the Church."
48. Jesus' mission was 3½ years as John records in his Gospel. It begins several months before Passover (including His baptism, gathering disciples, the wedding at Cana, and time in Capernaum before Passover John 2:13), and ends at the third Passover (John 4:45; 6:4; 12:1–18:28). The other Gospels telescope everything into only one year, with one Passover.
49. For the 3½ days to parallel Jesus' body lying in the tomb, we need to use the timing from John's Gospel, where Jesus was in the tomb three days and three nights. John claims Jesus' Last Supper was the evening before Passover, so that He is killed on Passover, and laid the tomb that Passover afternoon, then night one is Thursday night, night two, their Sabbath on Friday night, and night three, Saturday before His resurrection early before sunrise on Sunday morning "the first day of the week" (John 20:1). This, then, was actually 3 ½ days in the tomb, just as these prophets who typify Him will.
50. Truman G. Madsen, *The Radiant Life* (SLC, UT: Deseret Book, 1994), 109. "A Jewish apocalyptic tradition says that those two prophets who are to one day testify in the streets of Jerusalem to prepare the hearts of the Jews to be turned to the prophets (see D&C 98:16–17), and are then to literally be killed and lie in the streets—martyrs just prior to the coming

of the Messiah— are Elijah and Enoch. Elijah has been patient through millennia awaiting the opportunity to bring earth and heaven back together, to tie together the old and new worlds, to take the estranged and the alienated and the embittered and somehow transform their hearts, and to prepare all of the family who will to be family, welding them indissolubly in order to greet the Christ.”

51. Draper and Rhodes, *BYU New Testament Commentary: Revelation*, 413.