

The Book of Revelation

To interpret Scripture correctly, we must:

“ . . . carefully search out the meaning which the sacred author really had in mind, that meaning which God had thought well to manifest through the medium of their words.

. . . attention must be paid to literary forms for the fact is that truth is differently presented and expressed in the various types of historical writing, in prophetic and poetical texts, and in other forms of literary expression”

[and]

“Since Sacred Scripture must be read and interpreted with its divine authorship in mind, **no less attention** must be devoted to:

- 1)the content and unity of the whole of Scripture,
- 2)taking into account the Tradition of the entire Church
- 3)and the analogy of faith,

if we are to derive their true meaning from the sacred texts”

*(Constitution on Divine Revelation, 12).*¹

¹ Flannery, Austin, *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, (Northport, New York: Costello Publishing Company, 1992), p.758.

Revelation's inclusion in the Canon of Scripture²

Key
 The final column indicates whether the author proposed a New Testament Canon or was simply commenting on the books in question.
 “+” indicates an addition to today’s New Testament “-” indicates that this book was not yet recognized

Year	Author	Location	Work in which information is found	Canon or Comments
155 – 200 A.D.	Unknown	Unknown, possibly Rome	<i>The Muratorian Fragment</i>	<i>Canon</i> + Wisdom + Apocalypse of Peter – Hebrews –James –3 John –1 Peter –2 Peter
190 – 210 A.D.	St. Clement, director of the school of catechumens	Alexandria, Egypt	<i>Sketches</i>	<i>Canon</i> + Epistle of Barnabas +Apocalypse of Peter
300 – 325 A.D.	Eusebius Pamphilus, Bishop of Caesarea	Palestine	<i>History of the Church, Book III</i>	Labels <i>Apocalypse of John</i> “spurious”
343 – 381 A.D.	Council of Laodicea (Local council, NOT an infallible statement)	Phrygia, Asia Minor	<i>Canons [or Rulings] of Laodicea</i>	<i>Canon</i> –Apocalypse of John
350 A.D.	St. Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem	Palestine	<i>Catechetical Lectures</i>	<i>Canon</i> –Apocalypse of John
367 A.D.	St. Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria	Alexandria, Egypt	<i>Thirty-Ninth Festal Letter</i>	CURRENT CANON
380 A.D.	St. Ampholichius of Iconium, Bishop	Iconium (Present day Turkey)	<i>Iambic Letter to Seleucus</i>	Comment “the Apocalypse of John some accept, but most will call it spurious. . .”
382 A.D.	St. Damasus I, Pope	Rome, Italy	<i>The Decrees of Damasus³</i>	<i>CURRENT CANON</i>
383 – 389 A.D.	St. Gregory of Nazianz, Bishop	Arianz, Eastern Asia Minor	<i>Collected Poems</i>	<i>Canon</i> – Apocalypse of John
393 A.D.	Council of Hippo	Hippo, Africa	<i>Canons of the Council of Hippo</i>	<i>CURRENT CANON</i>
397 A.D.	St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo	Hippo, Africa	<i>Christian Instruction</i>	<i>CURRENT CANON</i>
405 A.D.	Innocent I, Pope	Rome, Italy	<i>Letter to Exsuperius, (Bishop of Toulouse)</i>	<i>CURRENT CANON</i>
419 A.D.	Council of Carthage -local council, but because minutes approved by Pope, most Christians felt bound by its decision	Carthage, Africa	<i>Canons of the Council of Carthage</i>	<i>CURRENT CANON</i>

² Chart adapted from Shane Kapler’s *The God Who is Love: Explaining Christianity From Its Center* (2009), pp.221-224

³ *The Decree of Damasus* appears to have originally been part of the Decrees of the Council of Rome (a local council, not an Ecumenical). As such it is not considered an infallible statement.

Daniel's Visions - Four Earthly Kingdoms and the Establishment of God's Kingdom

Daniel 2 – An enormous statue	Kingdom Represented	Daniel 7 – Four Beasts coming out of the sea
Head (Gold)	<i>BABYLONIAN</i>	Winged Lion
Chest (Silver)	<i>MEDO-PERSIAN</i>	Bear with three tusks in mouth
Belly & Thighs (Bronze)	<i>GREEK</i>	Leopard with four heads and four wings (Alexander the Great)
Legs (Iron) & Feet (Part Iron, Part Baked Clay)	<i>ROMAN</i>	Beast with iron teeth and ten horns - A little horn sprouts, and uproots three. The horn spoke blasphemies
A rock, not cut by human hands struck the feet and smashed the statue. Rock became a mountain filling the entire earth.	<i>GOD'S KINGDOM</i>	“One like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven . . . approached the Ancient of Days . . . He was given glory, authority, and sovereign power; all peoples worshiped him.”

Daniel 9 – “Seventy weeks are decreed for your people and your holy city: to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophecy . . . an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing, and the troops of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and sanctuary. . .he shall make sacrifices and offerings cease; and in their place shall be an abomination that desolates, until the decreed end is poured out upon the desolator.”

Persecutions in Acts of the Apostles

4:1-22 Peter and John arrested and censured by Sanhedrin.

5:17-40 Sanhedrin had all of the Apostles imprisoned overnight, beaten, threatened, and released.

7:8-60 Stephen, one of first seven deacons, hauled before Sanhedrin, and stoned to death

8:1-3 "Great persecution" of Church in **Jerusalem**. All but the Apostles fled to Judea and Samaria. "Saul laid waste the church, entering house after, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison."

9:1-2 High priest gave Saul letters to the synagogues in **Damascus**, authorizing him to arrest Christians and transport to Jerusalem.

9:23-25 Saul/Paul preaching in the synagogues of Damascus within days of his conversion. Sparked a plot to kill him, in which even the governor of the city was involved (Gal.1:17-18)

12:1-5 Herod Agrippa I (ruler of Palestine **41-44 A.D.**) **beheaded Apostle James**. When he "saw it pleased the Jews" he had Peter imprisoned – but he was freed by an angel.

13:42-52 Paul and Barnabas driven out of **Antioch of Pisidia** after synagogue leaders incited Gentile authorities against

14:4-6 In **Iconium**, conversions sparks a Jewish-Gentile plot to stone Paul & Barnabas.

14:19 Hostile Jews from Antioch and Iconium arrive in **Lystra**, stone Paul and leave him for dead.

16:19-24 In **Philippi**, Gentiles have Paul and Silas dragged before the magistrate, beaten with rods, and imprisoned.

17:1-9 Paul makes convert of the synagogue ruler in **Thessalonica**. Hostile Jews raid the ruler's home, haul him and others before the city magistrate who releases them on bail. Charge: "They are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king, Jesus."

17:10-15 Jews from Thessalonica arrive in **Beroea**, incite a crowd, and force Paul to leave the city for Athens.

18:1-4 **Claudius Caesar expelled all Jews from Rome in 49 A.D.** Historian Seutonius recorded it being in response to disturbances instigated by a certain "Chrestus" – most probably a reference to Christ and the uproar that often accompanied the proclamation of the Gospel in the synagogues.

18:12-17 Jews near **Corinth** brought Paul before proconsul Gallio, for "persuading men to worship God contrary to the law." Gallio dismissed. Christian synagogue ruler beaten by mob. (If Christians disassociated from Jews, religion not recognized or approved by Rome – Christians lose exemption from emperor worship.)

19:21-41 Riot in **Ephesus** caused by the revenue loss to silversmiths (idol makers)

Note the parallels with Jesus' prophecy of Jerusalem's fall:⁴

<u>Seal #</u>	<u>Gospel According to Matthew</u>
1) Conquering power (6:1-2)	“You will hear of <i>wars and rumors of wars</i> . Do not be alarmed
2) War (6:3-4)	such things are bound to happen, but that is not yet the end. <i>Nation</i>
3) Famine (6:5-6)	<i>will rise against nation</i> , one kingdom against another. There will
4) Pestilence / Death (6:7-8)	be <i>famine</i> and <i>pestilence</i> and <i>earthquakes</i> in many places. These
5) Martyrs cry out for justice (6:9-11)	are the early stages of the birth pangs. They will hand you over to
6) Earthquakes (6:12-17)	<i>torture and kill you.</i> ” (Matt.24:6-9)
7) Seven trumpets (8:1-6)	“The [Son of Man] will dispatch his angels with a <i>mighty trumpet</i>
	<i>blast</i> , and they will assemble his chosen from the four winds, from
	one end of the heavens to the other.” (Matt.24:31)

⁴ Scott Hahn's CD series, *The End* (2003, Saint Joseph Communications, Inc).

Revelation 12

The Woman is:

- a) Mary – she who bore the Messiah
- b) the faithful of Israel – the people from whom Messiah sprang
- c) the Church - the continuation of Israel, giving Jesus to the world in its preaching and sacraments

The dragon is:

- a) the devil
- b) the dynasty of King Herod
- c) pagan Rome

Consider the following: King Herod was not a Jew; he was from the land of Edom. “Edom” in Hebrew means “red,” the color of the dragon.

Seven Heads ⁵

(1) Herod the Great [calls self King of the Jews; tried to have Jesus slaughtered as an infant]

(2) Herod Antipas
[killed John the Baptist and wanted to kill Jesus]

(3) Philip

(4) Archelaus

(5) Arostobus

(6) Agrippa I [killed the Apostle James and imprisoned Peter]

(7) Agrippa II [Paul on trial before]

Horns were a symbol of power. Where did the Herodian dynasty's power come from?

Ten Horns – (possibly?) 10 Caesars

(1) Julie Caesar (2) Augustus (3) Tiberius (4) Caligula (5) Claudius (6) Nero [1st persecutor of Church; martyred Peter & Paul]
(7) Galba (8) Otho (9) Vitellius (10) Vespasian [Jerusalem destroyed]

⁵ For this interpretation of the “seven heads” and “ten horns,” I am indebted to Scott Hahn's CD series, *The End* (2003, Saint Joseph Communications, Inc).

What is the meaning of 666, the Number of the Beast?⁶

A Jewish-Christian, using gematria, would have easily arrived at:

Hebrew Form of Name: "Neron Caesar"	Hebrew Letter	Numerical Value
N	נ	50
R	ר	200
W	ו	6
N	נ	50
Q	ק	100
S	ס	60
R	ר	200
	Total	666

But why do some early manuscripts have 616?

Gentile Christians would likely have checked the number value of the Hebrew letters, but used the Latin form of the name, which lacked an "n":

Latin Form: "Nero Caesar"	Hebrew Letter	Numerical Value
N	נ	50
R	ר	200
W	ו	6
Q	ק	100
S	ס	60
R	ר	200
	Total	616

⁶ Chart adapted from R.C. Sproul's *The Last Days According to Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), p.188.

“The Rapture” is a popular subject in many circles today.
But it is a Misinterpretation of Scripture

- 1) 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 (Talking about the Second Coming)
- 2) Matthew 24:37-41 (The ones who are “left” are the ones saved!)

The idea that the Church will be spared the final tribulation is completely foreign to Scripture!

So what can we expect before “The End”?

The Catechism of the Catholic Church lists three main points (670-682):

- 1) Antichrist will appear to deceive the world
- 2) Church will pass through Antichrist's great persecution
- 3) Our Jewish brothers and sisters will come to recognize Jesus as Messiah (see Romans, chp.11, especially vs.26)

Where does the Bible speak of the “antichrist”?

The term is found only in 1 John 2:18 and 4:1-4

St. Paul however, wrote of the “lawless one, a “son of perdition,” in 2 Thess.2:1-12