

UNDERSTANDING *the* BOOK of REVELATION



the
**VICTORIOUS
KINGDOM**

Dr. Richard Booker

DESTINY IMAGE BOOKS BY DR. RICHARD BOOKER

Discovering the Miracle of the Scarlet Thread in Every Book of the Bible

Celebrating Jesus in the Biblical Feasts

Radical Islam's War Against Israel, Christianity, and the West

Living in His Presence

The Miracle of the Scarlet Thread Revised

The Overcomers

The Lamb and the Seven-Sealed Scroll

UNDERSTANDING THE BOOK OF REVELATION SERIES

THE VICTORIOUS KINGDOM

UNDERSTANDING THE BOOK OF REVELATION BOOK 3

Dr. Richard Booker

© Copyright 2013–Dr. Richard Booker

All rights reserved. This book is protected by the copyright laws of the United States of America. This book may not be copied or reprinted for commercial gain or profit. The use of short quotations or occasional page copying for personal or group study is permitted and encouraged. Permission will be granted upon request. Unless otherwise identified, Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Scripture quotations marked NASB are taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE®, Copyright © 1960,1962,1963, 1968,1971,1972,1973,1975,1977,1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. All emphasis within Scripture quotations is the author's own. Please note that Destiny Image's publishing style capitalizes certain pronouns in Scripture that refer to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and may differ from some publishers' styles. Take note that the name satan and related names are not capitalized. We choose not to acknowledge him, even to the point of violating grammatical rules.

DESTINY IMAGE® PUBLISHERS, INC.
P.O. Box 310, Shippensburg, PA 17257-0310
"Promoting Inspired Lives."

This book and all other Destiny Image, Revival Press, MercyPlace, Fresh Bread, Destiny Image Fiction, and Treasure House books are available at Christian bookstores and distributors worldwide.

For a U.S. bookstore nearest you, call 1-800-722-6774.
For more information on foreign distributors, call 717-532-3040.
Reach us on the Internet: www.destinyimage.com.

ISBN 13 TP: 978-0-7684-4198-7
ISBN 13 Ebook: 978-0-7684-8750-3

For Worldwide Distribution, Printed in the U.S.A.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 / 17 16 15 14 13

Acknowledgments

TO Peggy, my wife and covenant partner of more than 45 years, who has faithfully served the Lord with me with unselfish love and support. Whatever I have been able to accomplish is because of her sacrifices and servant's heart. There are many great women in the world, but Peggy surpasses them all. She is the best Christian I know and a true overcomer who has her name written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

I also want to thank my friends at Destiny Image, especially Don Nori, for being faithful to his vision of "speaking to the purposes of God for this generation and for the generations to come."

I want to acknowledge two of my students, Angela James who gave so much of her time editing the manuscript and Mark Sessions who prepared the map and two charts for this series. Thank you both for your excellent work.

*Let us consider one another in order to stir up love
and good works, not forsaking the assembling of
ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but
exhorting one another, and so much the more as
you see the Day approaching.*

—Hebrews 10:24-25

Contents

	Preface	11
Chapter 1	The Anti-Messiah.....	19
Chapter 2	The False Prophet.....	41
Chapter 3	Preview of the End.....	55
Chapter 4	Preparing to Blow the Seventh Trumpet-Shofar	81
Chapter 5	The Seventh Trumpet-Shofar Judgment.....	95
Chapter 6	The Destruction of the World Religious System	115
Chapter 7	The Destruction of the World Political System	131
Chapter 8	The Second Coming of Messiah.....	143
Chapter 9	The Battle of Armageddon	167
Chapter 10	The Messianic Kingdom	185
Chapter 11	A New Heaven and New Earth.....	211
Chapter 12	Paradise Restored.....	241
	Bibliography	269

Preface

When John was on the island of Patmos, the Lord gave him a revelation of Jesus, the exalted Son of Man, and God's people overcoming satanic opposition before the throne of God. In spite of tremendous persecution, John saw "*in the Spirit*" (Rev. 1:10) that the faithful followers of the Lord were victorious. They overcame satan "*by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony*" (Rev. 12:11). Furthermore, John was given revelation to see spiritual warfare in Heaven that was being played out on the earth. He saw the outcome of this spiritual battle, as well as prophetic events that would take place in the endtimes before the coming of the Lord.

John saw that God would totally and completely destroy His enemies and resurrect His own people to live with Him forever in a new Heaven, a new Earth, and a New Jerusalem. Regardless of the trials and tribulations God's people must endure.

As His people, our destiny is certain. Jesus is returning, and we will rule and reign with Him in a world free of satan, sin, and death. In the challenging days ahead, we believers can joyfully commit our souls to God, who is faithful to keep His Word of promise.

As John wrote at the end of his vision, "I heard a loud voice from Heaven saying:

Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away (Revelation 21:3-4).

So the Book of Revelation is not a book of doom and gloom but a description of the victory of the Lamb and those who follow Him. The purpose of the Lord's revelation to John was to unveil or disclose to him what John could not know without divine assistance. The Lord gave John his vision to encourage and comfort his immediate readers, as well as believers throughout the ages. What eventually became the Book of Revelation was clearly intended to be understood by John and his first-century readers.

With the passage of time, however, this book that God intended for us to understand has become, without a doubt, the most mysterious book in the Bible. For almost 2,000 years, Christian scholars and everyday believers have tried to understand its message. Because the Book of Revelation is an apocalyptic vision filled with otherworldly symbols and descriptions of strange creatures, God's people have not always agreed on its meaning, leading to many differing interpretations of John's words.

Considering the number of books already written on John's Revelation, with so many differing interpretations, you might ask why I would feel burdened to add to the confusion. It was certainly not my intention to write a book on the Book of Revelation. With more than 38 books in print, I was ready to take a break. I wrote this book only because I saw an urgent need to explain John's revelation with the following four points of view that have not been adequately included in most commentaries.

First, almost all books written to explain the Book of Revelation are written with a Western cultural worldview rather than a biblical worldview. There are some exceptions. What I mean by this is that the writer interprets the Book of Revelation through Western eyes rather than the Hebraic eyes of a Middle Eastern person. John was not a Western theologian. He was a Jewish seer. This means he understood and wrote His Revelation in terms of his own history and culture—the Hebrew Bible or what Christians know as the Old Testament. In this book, I prefer to use the phrase *Hebrew Bible*.

In order to understand the Book of Revelation, we must read it through the eyes of a Jewish man rather than the eyes of a Western theologian. For example, when John sees Jesus in Heaven, he describes Him in Jewish terms, not Western Christian terms. To get the fullest meaning of John's vision of Jesus, we must know Jesus as the Jewish Son of Man. To John, Jesus is the "Cloud Man" of the Book of Daniel (see Dan. 7:13-14).

Second, since the Book of Revelation is the last book in the Bible, we must have a good understanding of all the previous books. We cannot understand the Book of Revelation if we do not have a good understanding of Genesis through Jude as well as some basic knowledge of the literature written between the testaments and of Greek mythology.

We must not read John's Revelation as if it were written in modern times and isolated from the rest of the Bible. The best way to understand the Book of Revelation is to begin with Genesis. For instance, in the last two chapters of the Book of Revelation, John explains the eternal home of believers, and assumes that his readers are familiar with the first two chapters of the Book of Genesis.

Third, in order to understand the Book of Revelation, we must be aware that it was written in an apocalyptic literary style. Apocalyptic literature flourished in the period in which John was writing, and it has certain characteristics that John's readers readily understood. I explain

these characteristics in chapter one. Because this is not a normal style of writing in our times, we may have difficulty interpreting it.

By that I mean Western readers often have a tendency to interpret apocalyptic literature as if it were a literal narrative written chronologically like a Western textbook. This can easily lead to wrong conclusions about John's statements. For example, when John says that he saw an open door into Heaven and heard a voice calling him to Heaven, he did not mean that he saw a literal door and was literally taken to Heaven. He meant that God opened his spiritual eyes so that he could see realities in Heaven that he would not have known otherwise. Physically speaking, John never left Patmos.

Fourth, to properly understand the Book of Revelation, we must know the historical context in which it was written. Jesus gave John letters for seven literal congregations that existed in the first century. Since the biblical meaning of the English word *church* means something different to modern readers than its biblical meaning, I have used the word *congregation*, which is more accurate. I could have used the words *assembly* or *community*. These congregations or communities were challenged daily to live out their new faith in a hostile environment—one in which their neighbors worshiped Greek gods and goddesses and Roman emperors, practiced gross immorality, and pressured them to compromise their faith and witness. Each day, they were faced with life-and-death decisions.

In addition, each of the cities where the seven congregations were located had their own unique physical circumstances that Jesus acknowledged in His letters to them. Without knowledge of their spiritual and physical circumstances, it is impossible to understand why Jesus said what He did to each congregation.

For instance, unless we know that Laodicea had a drinking problem (water, not alcohol), we cannot understand why Jesus preferred believers to be cold or hot rather than lukewarm (see Rev. 3:16).

I have the greatest appreciation for scholars and ministers who have spent years studying the Book of Revelation and have labored to help us understand its mysteries. While some of the views presented in this book may not be familiar to many ministers and everyday believers, my intention is not to be critical of what others have written or believe. We must all walk in love and humility and be gracious to one another, especially when we see things differently.

You may be challenged by some of my explanations, especially those that are contrary to your preconceived ideas and traditional teachings. It's OK if you don't agree with everything I have written. My desire is to glorify our Lord, encourage God's people to be steadfast and faithful as we face challenging days ahead, and provide a fresh, exciting, and more balanced understanding of the Book of Revelation. If I accomplish these goals, I will be most grateful to our Lord. May God's people be blessed and His name praised forever.

For ease of reading and understanding, the publisher has wisely organized my writing on the Book of Revelation into a three-volume series entitled *Understanding the Book of Revelation*. Volume 1 covers Revelation chapters 1 through 3, and is entitled *The Overcomers*. Its first three chapters contain information that I feel is necessary to understanding the historical events that prompted the Lord's letters to the seven congregations.

In order to properly understand the Book of Revelation, we must know the context in which it was written. I have also included a chapter on the literary style in which the book was written, as well as a survey of the book. I then explain the letters to the seven congregations within their historical, geographical, archeological, and Hebraic context and perspective, along with my view of their prophetic and personal significance. This background information is often missing or inadequately explained in books written about Revelation; but I feel it is critical to full and proper understanding.

Volume 2 is entitled *The Lamb and the Seven-Sealed Scroll*. This volume opens with John's vision of Heaven and the throne room of God. John witnesses the greatest drama in human history as he watches the Lamb of God take the seven-sealed scroll and open the seals. I explain the unfolding story including: the opening of the first six seals, God's seal of protection, Israelites and Jews, the multitude of the redeemed, the opening of the seventh seal, the mighty angel and the little book, the two witnesses, the proclamation of the Kingdom of God, and the war in Heaven and on Earth.

Volume 2 covers Revelation chapters 4 through 12. We learn along the way that the Book of Revelation actually ends with the close of chapter 11. The rest of the book is an "instant replay" giving more details and different views of the same information.

Volume 3 is entitled *The Victorious Kingdom*. This volume includes an explanation of the two false messiahs; a preview of the end; preparation for blowing the seventh trumpet-shofar; the blowing of the seventh trumpet-shofar; the destruction of the anti-God, one-world religious and political systems; the second coming of the true Messiah; the Battle of Armageddon; the Messianic Kingdom; the new Heaven and new Earth; and Paradise restored. Volume 3 covers Revelation chapters 13 through 22.

These volumes are designed to be read along with the Book of Revelation. Each discussion in the text is keyed to a specific chapter and verse in the Book of Revelation. To get the most from the text, first read from the Book of Revelation and then read my explanations and comments in the books.

I want to say one more time that the Book of Revelation is not about doom and gloom. While it may describe harsh realities and much suffering, it is first and foremost a book about God's faithfulness to Himself, His Word, and His people. It is about God defeating His enemies, and His people overcoming "*by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony*" (Rev. 12:11).

Preface

The outcome is certain and the victory is sure. As you read the Book of Revelation and this three-volume series, may the Lord encourage your heart that our God is sovereign over world conditions and uses them to move forward His awesome plan of redemption for His people. We will live with Him forever in the full manifestation of His blazing glory and dazzling beauty. We will look upon Him as He is for we shall be like Him.

Let us make the following prayer from Jude our own personal praise and worship to our God:

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling [falling], and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen (Jude 24-25).

Chapter 1

The Anti-Messiah

REVIEW OF VOLUME 2—*THE LAMB AND THE SEVEN-SEALED SCROLL*

IN Volume 2, we learned that the Lord opened a prophetic door for John to enter the throne room of God. He then called John to “*Come up here...*” (Rev. 4:1). John did not see a literal door nor was he literally caught up to Heaven. These are apocalyptic statements that refer to a spiritual vision the Lord gave him. While John was literally on the island of Patmos, spiritually he was able to observe realities and activities in Heaven that he would have otherwise been unable to see.

John saw the glory of God, the exalted Son of Man, the angels, and the redeemed of all ages around the throne of God. The Lord was showing John this heavenly scene so that he could write down what he saw and distribute his writings to persecuted believers in the seven congregations of the Roman province of Asia Minor. Reading John’s Revelation would encourage them to resist the temptations and pressures of emperor worship, idolatry, and immorality from which they had been saved.

While the Book of Revelation was written specifically to believers in the first century, John's prophetic vision is for all believers throughout history, including modern times. As the world becomes more and more anti-God and the West becomes post-Christian, believers today need the same encouragement the Lord gave to those first-century believers. God has a place of eternal glory in His presence for all of His people; therefore, we can have the faith and courage not to "fix our sandals"¹ before an increasing anti-God, one-world system.

Jesus has conquered the Caesars, Zeus, and all the false gods of the Greco-Roman world. Because of His victory, those who follow Him will also be victorious. Understanding that God has a place of glory for us in Heaven, gives us the faith and courage we need to overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony (see Rev. 12:11), even if that means being martyred for our faith.

The Lord then gave John further revelation, which he referred to as being "*in the Spirit*" (Rev. 1:10; 4:2). This is his human way of saying that the Lord opened his spiritual eyes to see additional prophetic activities in Heaven that would be manifested on the earth. When John said he saw things "*which must take place after this*" (Rev. 4:1), he did not mean that the rest of the Book of Revelation was chronological (although some of it is). He was referring to his next sequence of revelations.

John saw God holding a seven-sealed book containing information about prophetic events that would take place in his own time, as well as in the endtimes of history—or as the Bible calls them "the latter days." A powerful angel called for someone to take the scroll from God and open the seals. When no one was found worthy, John wept! (See Revelation 5:2-4).

Just when it seemed that the scroll would forever remain sealed, leaving prophecy unfulfilled, Jesus was recognized as One "*worthy to take the scroll*" (Rev. 5:9). Because Jesus lived a perfect life without sin and died as our innocent substitutionary sacrifice, He was the only Worthy One who could take the scroll and open it. At the same time,

He is the conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah and the sacrificial Lamb of God. When Jesus took the scroll, the 24 elders representing the company of the redeemed, the four archangels, and all the angels of Heaven gave glory to God and the Lamb.

In this heavenly scene, John sees Jesus opening the seven seals that reveal the judgments of God on the earth. The seventh seal opens the seven trumpet-shofar judgments, and the seventh trumpet-shofar judgment opens the final seven bowl judgments. Each judgment is progressively more severe. As God demonstrates His sovereign power through these judgments, He is destroying His enemies while offering mercy to those who choose to repent.

This is not a time of doom and gloom for believers. It is a time of victory. The judgments are God's answer to the prayers of His people as they plead for justice. They are not judgments against God's people but against those who oppose Him. While evil rulers persecute faithful believers, the Lord seals His own to protect them against His judgments.

The Lord then gives John further revelation by telling him to eat a book that contains additional information about future events. Of course, we should not think that John literally ate a book. It was an apocalyptic way of telling John to spiritually digest more of God's Word. (See Revelation 10.)

John learns about God's two powerful prophetic witnesses on the earth. The Lord gives these two witnesses the power to perform signs and wonders and prophesy for the last three-and-one-half years of the Great Tribulation. The Lord supernaturally protects these two witnesses until their ministry is finished. Satan is given permission to kill the two witnesses, but after three-and-a-half days, the Lord resurrects them and takes them to Heaven. (See Revelation 11.)

When the angel blows the seventh trumpet-shofar, loud voices in Heaven announce the final demise of the kingdoms of this world and the imminent coming of the Kingdom of God on the earth. With this declaration, John has a flashback and sees the spiritual warfare in

the heavens when lucifer rebelled against God. The fallen angel lucifer, now called satan, makes war on the earth against God's chosen people and His Messiah, the male Child born to the woman, Israel. (See Revelation 12.)

In his vain attempt to stop God's plan to redeem humankind, satan makes a bid to destroy Israel and kill the Messiah at His birth. But God protects the Messiah, resurrects Him, and establishes Him in a place of honor to await the time when He will return to earth and rule the nations with a rod of iron. His time is *now* as His Kingdom is announced.

As the Great Tribulation begins, John sees satan finally cast out of Heaven. In his rage, he makes one last attempt to destroy the Jews and the believers aligned with them. Satan is relentless in his pursuit of God's people, but God frustrates his efforts to destroy them. While there will be many martyred for their faith, God will preserve a remnant of believers. Whether believers live or die, they will be victorious through their faithful witness.

With this review, we now continue to read John's amazing revelation. May God's name (YHVH), the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, be praised forever.

THE TWO FALSE MESSIAHS (REVELATION 13:1-10)

In Revelation 13, John has an apocalyptic vision of two strange creatures. He calls the first one the Beast From the Sea and the second one the Beast From the Earth. At this time, satan has been cast out of Heaven. Knowing that his time of final judgment is near, he empowers two world leaders who will serve as his human agents on the earth.

As the Lord had two witnesses, so satan has his counterfeit witnesses through whom he hopes to fulfill his desire to be worshiped in the place of God. Most Bible scholars believe that the Beast From the Sea is the false political messiah known as the antichrist or anti-Messiah. He establishes himself as the leader of an anti-God, one-world *government*

system. So the person and the system are both thought of as “the Beast.” Scholars consider the Beast From the Earth to be the false religious messiah who heads up an anti-God, one-world *religious* system.

Whether knowingly or not, these two leaders will receive their power from satan and act on his behalf. They are the ultimate embodiment of evil. While their intentions may or may not be good, the results of their actions will only bring more death and destruction to the world.

As we will see, most of the world follows these two human beasts and their political and religious systems. The only exceptions are the worshipers of the One True God who follow Jesus and another group of people who have refused the Mark of the Beast but have yet to repent. These are the people who eventually repent and are judged as righteous when Jesus returns. (See Matthew 25:31-46.) Because God’s people refuse to acknowledge the Beasts, satan sees them as a threat to his plans and purposes. Working through his two false messiahs, satan attacks the believers. This action ushers in the final chaos on the earth that leads to the coming of Jesus. This is the time Jesus was speaking of when He said the following:

Then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened (Matthew 24:21-22).

THE BEAST FROM THE SEA (REVELATION 13:1-2)

In this chapter we will learn what John says about the first beast—the Beast From the Sea. We have previously noted in Volumes One and Two that Daniel also had an apocalyptic vision, but he did not understand it, so the Lord sent an angel to explain the vision to him. The angel

told Daniel that his vision was about prophetic events that would take place in the “*time of the end*” or “*latter days*” (Dan. 8:17; 2:28; 10:14).

The angel then told Daniel that the revelation of his vision would be a sealed or closed book until the endtimes (see Dan. 12:4,9). This means the actual occurrences and the understanding of what Daniel saw would not be revealed to us until the last days of history prior to the coming of Jesus. We are living in those last days.

The Book of Revelation describes and explains the opening of Daniel’s closed book or scroll. When Jesus took the seven-sealed scroll and loosened the seals, His action was the fulfillment of the prophecy given to Daniel. In other words, the seven-sealed scroll of the Book of Revelation is the same as Daniel’s closed book. Because Jesus is the Worthy Redeemer who is able to open the seals, its contents and actions are now made known.

In view of the fact that the seven-sealed scroll is the same revelation given to Daniel, we should expect to see a connection between Daniel’s vision and John’s. We are not disappointed. As we will soon realize, Daniel’s fourth beast (see Dan. 7:19-25) is the same as John’s Beast From the Sea. In fact, Daniel 7 and Revelation chapters 13, 17, and 18 refer to the same characters and events. While Daniel received a general outline of the prophecy, the Lord has given John the details.

Using apocalyptic symbolism, John sees a beast coming out of the sea. Ancient people, including John’s readers, were terribly frightened by the sea. To them, the sea was synonymous with the bottomless pit (see Rev. 11:7; 13:1; 17:8).

People living in Bible times did not understand that there was a bottom to the sea. When they dropped an anchor, it never reached bottom. When a ship sank, people believed it descended forever into a bottomless watery darkness. They were also frightened by Leviathan, a sea monster or beast that stirred up the ocean causing chaos and death (see Job 41).

In John's Greco-Roman world, the Greeks worshiped the mythical Poseidon as the god of the sea. He was a fierce god with a violent and vengeful temperament. He is depicted carrying a three-pronged spear called a trident.

A popular American movie called *The Poseidon Adventure* is about a luxury liner called the *Poseidon* that is caught in a great storm at sea. The movie gets its name from the ancient Greek god of the sea. It's also interesting to note that the United States Navy has a class of submarines called Trident submarines because they carry Trident ballistic missiles.

It was the practice of the Romans to adopt Greek gods and give them Roman names. The Roman name for Poseidon was *Neptune*. Before people went to sea, they made sacrifices to Poseidon/Neptune as a means of pacifying him and asking for a safe journey. In a similar way, today's believers ask the One True God for His traveling mercies when making long flights over the ocean.

When John says he saw a beast coming out of the sea, it was for his first-century readers, the most frightening symbolism he could possibly use. Like Poseidon/Neptune and Leviathan, the first false messiah empowered by satan will be a frightening figure who will cause great chaos and destruction on the earth. Speaking apocalyptically, he and the Beast From the Earth, will stir up the sea; that is the masses of people on the earth.

Revelation 17:15 confirms this as the correct interpretation. It reads: "*He said to me, 'The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.'*" Furthermore, his fierce and violent nature will take vengeance against the believers for not submitting to him.

John says this Beast From the Sea has seven heads, ten horns, and ten crowns on the ten horns. He also has a blasphemous name on his heads. We will study this further in Revelation 17. John observes that the Beast is like a leopard, his feet like a bear, and his mouth like a lion (see Rev. 13:2). So that God's people will not be deceived, John clearly

states that satan (the dragon of Revelation 12:3) is the one empowering this false messiah.

Daniel and John

Since Daniel and John had the same apocalyptic vision, we need to read what the Lord showed Daniel, as background for John's Revelation. As we review Daniel's dreams and visions, the connection to John's Revelation will be obvious.

Daniel's dream interpretation recorded in Daniel 2 is further clarified in Daniel 7, which in turn, is explained in detail in Revelation 12–20. Therefore, we can overlay Daniel 2 and 7 with Revelation 12–20. While we do not fully understand some of the details (and shouldn't argue over them), the overall picture connecting these two apocalyptic writings should be clear enough. Furthermore, it is OK that we don't understand all the details. God will help us “connect the dots” in His own time and way. It is more important to understand the function of the characters in the Book of Revelation (what they do) than it is to know everything about their form (what they look like).

We should not get frustrated in trying to figure it all out. Neither should we learn just for the sake of showing our acquaintances how much we know. We should study as an act of worship out of reverence for God. More important than having knowledge is living in right relationship with our Lord and each other so that we might remain faithful and overcome in these difficult times.

Daniel's Dream Interpretation (Daniel 2)

In Daniel 2, the empires of history are seen from man's view as being great and glorious. In Daniel 7, the Lord gives His view of these same empires but calls them “beasts” just like John does in the Book of Revelation. To better understand John's vision, it would be most helpful for you to pause now and read Daniel 2 before continuing with John's Revelation. Then after a brief explanation, we will pause and read Daniel 7.

(For a quick visual presentation of Daniel's dream and its connection to John's vision, please review the chart at the end of this chapter.)

Bible students will recall that Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem in 606 B.C., at which time Daniel was deported to Babylon. Shortly thereafter, Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that troubled him. He would not describe his dream to his advisors because he knew they would fabricate an interpretation. However, the Lord showed Daniel the dream and gave him the interpretation as well. Now that you have read Daniel 2, let's review the dream and the interpretation. This will be a short summary as we will only review enough to help us overlay Daniel with John.²

First, Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar that the God of Heaven has revealed the dream to him (Daniel), and then he describes what the king saw. Nebuchadnezzar saw a great and glorious image. (This is how world leaders view themselves, their rule, and their power.) The head of the image was fine gold, its chest and arms were silver, its belly and thighs were bronze, its legs were iron, and its feet were partly iron and partly clay. Then, according to Daniel, the king saw a stone strike the image on its feet and destroy it. Daniel says the king saw that the stone was cut out without hands, meaning the image was destroyed by a sovereign act of God, bringing an end to man's empires and vain attempts to rule without Him.

After that, Daniel provides the interpretation. He explains to Nebuchadnezzar that the image represents four successive kingdoms or empires with a fifth empire—the Kingdom of God—coming to the earth.

The head of gold represents King Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Empire (606–536 B.C.). Ancient Babylon is modern Iraq. The chest and arms of silver represent the Medo-Persian Empire (536–333 B.C.) which succeeded Babylon.

While Daniel does not specifically mention the Medes and Persians at this time, he does identify them in Daniel 5:22-31; 8:1-7,20; and 11:1-2. As a side note, the Persians became more powerful than the

Medes and basically displaced them as the next empire. (Ancient Persia is modern Iran.)

The belly and thighs of bronze represent the third empire of Alexander the Great and Greece (333–323 B.C.), which succeeded the Persians. Daniel identifies this empire in Daniel 8:1-7,21 and 11:3. The legs of iron represent a fourth kingdom or empire that Daniel does not identify. However, we know from history that this fourth empire was Rome (30 B.C.–A.D. 364).

Daniel explains that Rome, the fourth kingdom represented by legs of iron, will be divided as indicated by the feet of iron and clay. Rome was divided in A.D. 364 into the western and eastern divisions. Rome was the capital of the western division and Constantinople was the capital of the eastern division. The western division fell to the Mongol invaders in the middle of the fifth century. The eastern division lasted another 1,000 years until the Muslim Turks conquered Constantinople in A.D. 1453.

Because the Roman Empire was divided before it fell, some scholars believe it will be revived in some form in the endtimes as a United States of Europe, which we see today as the European Union. They see this as the Beast system of Revelation 12–18 ruled over by the anti-Messiah. Others believe that a revived Islam led by the Mahdi will be the end-time power because it was the Muslim Turks who conquered Constantinople. Still other scholars believe Revelation chapters 12 through 18 describe the anti-God, one-world political, economic, military, and religious system united against the One True God and His people. We also see this today in the European Union. Since the Bible does not clearly identify the end-time world power, it is best not to be dogmatic in stating our views. God will show us in His own time. I believe He is doing this now. As previously mentioned, it is better to emphasize the function (world domination) than it is the form (the *who* and *what* of the structure).

The feet with their ten toes represent a world empire that will be ruling the nations when God smashes it with the smiting stone, which is His own Kingdom coming to the earth. The ten toes are the same as the ten horns. The destruction of the ten toes/ten horns empire is the prophetic symbolism fulfilled when the seventh trumpet-shofar is blown to announce that the “*kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ [Messiah]*,” which John mentions in Revelation 11:15.

Daniel’s Dream in Chapter 7

With this brief summary, let’s now connect Daniel’s dream interpretation in Daniel 2 with God’s perspective of these same kingdoms, which is recorded in Daniel 7. Before proceeding with this study, pause and read Daniel 7, noticing how both chapters talk about the same empires. Notice also that Daniel’s dream is recorded in 7:1-14 and the interpretation is recorded in 7:15-28.

In Daniel 7, we learn that Belshazzar is the king of Babylon. During his reign, Daniel has an apocalyptic revelation through a dream and vision. He sees the same empires he saw in chapter 2, but now he sees them from God’s point of view. To humankind, the empires are glorious, but to God they are beasts and their beastly descriptions characterize the empires.

Notice in Daniel 7:2-3 that Daniel, like John, sees a stirring or chaos in the Great Sea with four great beasts coming out of the water. Remember that this is an apocalyptic way of saying that the four empires or kingdoms will be inspired by and controlled by evil spirits coming out of the bottomless pit, which is synonymous with the sea. They are anti-God, world empires, which is why God refers to them as *beast* empires. While the beasts are said to arise out of the sea, the rulers or empires themselves are said to arise out of the earth (see Dan. 7:17). This means they are human agents of the beasts from the sea.

In the next few verses, Daniel and John use the same words to describe these beast empires. John adds that in the endtimes these former empires become united as one Beast empire (see Rev. 13:2) under the control of the dragon (satan).

In Daniel 7:4, Babylon, represented by the head of gold, is referred to as a lion with eagle's wings, which is the ancient symbol of Babylon. In Daniel 7:5, Medo-Persia, represented by the chest and arms of silver, is likened to a bear. Later, in Daniel 8:3-4, it is likened to a ram with two horns (Medes and Persians). The one horn that is higher represents the Persians displacing the Medes.

In Daniel 7:6, Alexander and Greece, the belly and thighs of brass, are referred to as a leopard with four wings and four heads. In Daniel 8:5-7 they are seen as a goat with a large horn (Alexander) that destroyed the ram. In Daniel 11:3-4 Alexander is called "*a mighty king.*" Without getting bogged down in details, let us say that when Alexander died his kingdom was divided between his four generals. They are represented by the four heads on the leopard and four horns on the goat.

In Daniel 7:7, Rome (the legs of iron) is represented by the fourth beast that was fiercer than the others and devoured or conquered all the previous empires. This certainly describes the Roman Empire.

In Daniel 7:7-8, Daniel explains further that this fourth beast is different from the other beasts in that it has ten horns (rulers or governments). Daniel then sees a little horn (ruler) coming out of the ten horns. This little horn disposes of three of the ten horns. This may explain why John's Beast has only seven heads with ten horns. He is more powerful than the other horns and persecutes God's people for three-and-one-half years until God Himself destroys him. At this time, God establishes His literal Kingdom on the earth with His people ruling with Him over a restored Israel and the nations of the world.

As I just noted, the ten toes of the image in Daniel 2 correspond to the ten horns in Daniel 7. They represent the end-time world government under the control of the anti-Messiah (the little horn) who is

persecuting God's people as described in Revelation 12–18. The smiting stone from Daniel 2 is clearly the same as the vision of the Ancient of Days and the Son of Man mentioned in Daniel 7:9-14 and 26-28. This connects to John's vision in Revelation 19–20.

Two years after his dream recorded in chapter 7, Daniel has a further apocalyptic dream of the same revelation, which is recorded in Daniel 8. In this dream, he is given more details and mentions a little horn that comes out of the four horns on the goat. Remember that the four horns represent the four generals who inherit Alexander's empire. Historically, this little horn is different from the little horn that comes out of the ten horns. However, prophetically, they seem to merge as the same person—the anti-Messiah described in the Book of Revelation.

Many scholars understand this little horn to represent Antiochus Epiphanes who came from the Syrian horn (general) of the four. Antiochus represented himself as a manifestation of Zeus. He issued coins with an image of Zeus, but it was his picture on the coins. Antiochus fulfilled much of the prophecy in Daniel 8. He forbade the Jews to practice their ancient faith or in any way worship the One True God.

Antiochus went on a rampage against the Jews. From 167–164 B.C., Antiochus stopped the Temple rituals and ordered the burning of the Torah. In the Temple, he erected a statute of Zeus bearing his own image. He built a new altar, dedicated to Zeus, on which he offered a sacrificial pig. He then poured the pig's blood over the Torah.

Antiochus erected shrines and altars throughout Israel and forced the people to make sacrifices to the Greek gods. Those who disobeyed were tortured, killed, or both. This period of time was one of the most gruesome in the long, sad history of the persecution of the Jewish people. Without God's intervention, they would have surely perished from the earth. The festival of Hanukkah celebrates the defeat of Antiochus.³

These actions of Antiochus Epiphanes certainly are a fulfillment of the Abomination of Desolation Daniel writes about in Daniel 9:27.

However, in His summary of end-time events, Jesus points to a later and final fulfillment at the beginning of the Great Tribulation:

“When you see the ‘abomination of desolation’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whosoever reads, let him understand),... “For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened” (Matthew 24:15, 21-22).

To John’s readers, the Beast with its many heads and horns and crowns and blasphemous names clearly symbolized the anti-God Roman Empire and the Roman emperors who were persecuting the believers in the seven congregations. They understood what and who John meant by these apocalyptic symbols. This is why some scholars believe the Book of Revelation was written only about Rome and events that took place in the first century. But with the passing of time and history, John’s meaning has become less clear. Over the centuries, Christian leaders have tried to connect these symbols to world leaders who seemed to fulfill these prophetic visions, but they have all been proven wrong.

While we may not clearly understand the historical references of the first century, it is clear that what Daniel and John saw reached far beyond anything that happened in the first century or any other period in world history. They were also looking to the endtimes of history prior to the coming of the Son of Man, who will judge those who oppose God, vindicate God’s people who have suffered for their faith, and fully establish God’s Kingdom on the earth.

When we compare what Daniel says about the little horn with what John says about the anti-Messiah, we certainly get the impression that they are talking about the same person and the same terrible events

during the last three-and-one-half years of the Great Tribulation. This is humankind's last desperate attempt to rule the world without God. While this ruler and his coalition of nations empowered by satan think they are achieving their goals, their attempts are futile as God destroys them with the coming of His Kingdom on the earth. May His name be praised forever!

Since the rest of the Book of Revelation provides the details of Daniel's dreams and visions, we will examine this further in the next chapters. For now, let's continue with our study of Revelation 13. Once again, remember that function is more important than form. Let's do our best not to get bogged down in the details but focus on the bigger picture of *what* rather than *whom*. As the author, I am also seeking this balance in what I am writing.

THE DRAGON AND THE BEAST (REVELATION 13:3-10)

In his attempts to deceive the world, the Beast appears to be resurrected from a mortal wound to one of his heads. Since satan does not have the ability to resurrect people from the dead, this is clearly a deception.

Throughout history, scholars and historians have tried in vain to identify this person or empire. Some believe John was referring to Nero or one of the other Roman emperors. There were always rumors, particularly regarding Nero.

In times past, whenever a powerful, charismatic world leader died, students of the Bible watched carefully to see if the person or the empire he ruled would miraculously recover. For example, when President Kennedy died of a head wound, Bible prophecy students wondered if he might somehow survive causing people to consider his recovery a miracle.

We don't know if John is referring to the anti-Messiah himself or the resurrection of the ancient Beast system of Babylon/Rome in the form of an anti-God, one-world system. The Beast system seems to be personified in the Beast person, the anti-Messiah. As world leaders represent their governments, the anti-Messiah and the system he leads merge as one. Satan uses this deception as a counterfeit of the true resurrection of Jesus and the two witnesses.

The way the world responds to this counterfeit miracle is self-condemning. When the Beast kills the two witnesses, those who oppose God celebrate (see Rev. 11:10). When they are resurrected, the people are frightened but do not turn to God. However, when the people believe the Beast has been resurrected, they marvel at the supposed miracle and follow him. The people not only follow the Beast, they worship him saying, *"Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war against him?"* (Rev. 13:4).

This adoration of the Beast is in direct contrast to the worship of the One True God expressed in the Song of Moses: *"Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?"* (Exod. 15:11).

Instead of glorifying God, the people glorify the Beast. John notes that by worshiping the Beast, the people are actually worshiping the dragon (satan) who gives power to the Beast. It is at this time that satan believes he has finally dethroned God. He is killing the believers while at the same time deceiving the world into worshiping him. In his mind, this is his ultimate triumphant over God and the Lamb.

This supposed victory by satan takes us back to when he tempted Jesus in the desert. In that story, satan showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and offered them to Him if He would bypass the cross and worship him (satan) instead. Jesus rebuked satan by quoting the Scripture that says only the One True God is to be worshiped. (See Matthew 4:8-11; Deuteronomy 6:13.)

In the Book of Revelation, satan believes he has accomplished through the anti-Messiah what he failed to accomplish with Jesus, the true Messiah. But satan, the master of deceit, is deceived himself as his apparent victory is short-lived.

At this time in history, satan's agent, the anti-Messiah, embodies the ultimate in ego, arrogance, self-deception, and self-exaltation. Inspired by satan, he really does believe he is the true messiah who will solve the world's problems. To further his own worship in place of God, satan fills the anti-Messiah with hatred for the One True God. With his heart and soul controlled by satan, the anti-Messiah speaks blasphemous words against God, God's name, God's abode in Heaven, and God's people in Heaven who worship the One True God.

The apostle Paul seems to be speaking of this end-time anti-Messiah in Second Thessalonians 2:1-12. Paul calls him the lawless man of sin who exalts himself even above God. He is empowered by satan to perform counterfeit miracles and deceives those who reject the truth of God's Word.

Daniel's visions were probably partially fulfilled in historical personalities such as Antiochus Epiphanes and later in the Roman emperors of John's time. But this anti-Messiah is the final prophetic manifestation of Daniel's little horn who also speaks great words of blasphemy, as we learn in Daniel 7 (verses 8,11,20,25).

John adds, for our understanding, that satan's efforts to be worshiped and rule over humankind through his anti-Messiah lasts for 42 months, or three-and-one-half years. This is the same amount of time that the Gentiles occupy Jerusalem, that the two witnesses prophesy, and that God protects the woman from satan (see Rev. 11:2-3; 12:6,14). This is when satan is cast out of Heaven, which begins the last three-and-one-half years of the Great Tribulation leading up to the coming of Jesus.

Since satan has now been denied access to Heaven, he works through the anti-Messiah to kill God's people on the earth, as we learned in

Revelation 12. We might say that this is his “jihad” against true believers. While the One True God providentially protects Israel and believers who identify with the Jewish people, the anti-Messiah attacks any and all believers he can find. (See Revelation 12:17; 13:7.)

Although satan working through the anti-Messiah is able to overcome many believers and kill them, the believers are the real overcomers. While satan can kill their bodies, he cannot kill their souls, which John has already seen in Heaven before the throne of God.

Jesus gave the following words of encouragement to believers being persecuted for their faith: *“Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell”* (Matt. 10:28).

To further confirm that Daniel’s little horn is ultimately fulfilled in John’s anti-Messiah, Daniel was told that the little horn he saw would also persecute and overcome God’s people for three-and-one half years until he is destroyed at the coming of the Son of Man. (See Daniel 7:25, where three-and-one-half-years are referred to as *“a time and times and half a time.”*)

Tragically, satan’s deception is worldwide. Everyone worships the anti-Messiah except believers (those whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life) and a remnant of independent-minded survivalists. So it seems there are three groups distinguished during this time. Those who have the mark of God, those who have the Mark of the Beast, and as Gordon Ladd explains: “There is a third group ‘who had not worshiped the Beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands’”⁴ Many in this third group will survive the tribulation and be alive when the Lord returns. Jesus will rule over them in His Messianic Kingdom.

To review the earlier explanation of the Lamb’s Book of Life, see the chapter in Volume 1 on the Lord’s letter to the congregation at Sardis. God’s Word is clear. Everyone living at this time will sooner or later have to choose whether to worship satan through the anti-Messiah or

the One True God through the real Messiah, the exalted Son of Man, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Jesus of Nazareth.

John concludes this part of his vision by exhorting people to hear (which includes to heed) his words. He warns those who are persecuting God's people that they will pay the same consequences for their evil actions. God is sovereign. He will judge satan, his false messiahs, and those who follow and worship the Beast. Just as God's judgments are sure and true, so are His promises to His people. Believers can persevere in faith knowing that they will overcome "*by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony*" (Rev. 12:11). Amen!

REVIEW QUESTIONS

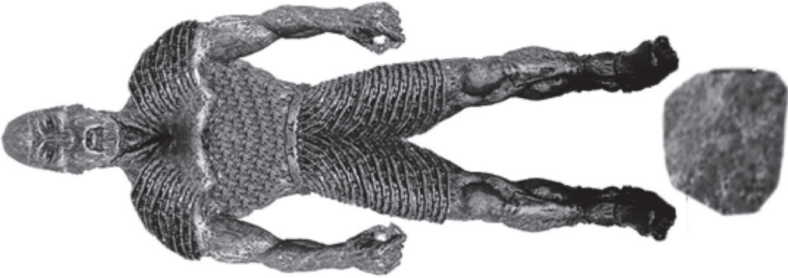
1. Write a summary of what you have learned in this lesson. Write the summary in clear, concise words as if you were going to present it to another person.
2. Describe how you can apply what you have learned in this lesson to your life.
3. Share what you have learned with your family, friends, and members of your study group.

NOTES

1. "...Citizens of Ephesus were required to bow in worship to the image of Domitian as lord god. Those who refused were either exiled or put to death. Some believers hoped to pretend to bow...by bending over to fix their sandals when they got to the front of the statue....They didn't want to bow to the image but did not have the courage not to." From Dr. Richard Booker, *The Overcomers* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2011), 41.

2. For more information on this subject, you can order my book, *The End of All Things Is at Hand: Are You Ready?* (Alachua, FL: Bridge-Logos, 2008). It is available at my online bookstore at www.rbooker.com.
3. If you want to learn more about Hanukkah and all the Feasts of the Lord, you can order my book, *Celebrating Jesus in the Biblical Feasts* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2009). It is available at my online bookstore at www.rbooker.com.
4. George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1993), 679.

THE KINGDOMS

IMAGE	KINGDOM	MAN'S VIEWPOINT (DANIEL 2)	GOD'S VIEWPOINT (DANIEL 7)
	BABYLON 606-536	HEAD OF GOLD (DAN. 2:36-38)	LION WITH EAGLES WINGS (DAN. 7:4)
	MEDO-PERSIA 536-333	CHEST OF SILVER (DAN. 2:39; 5:22-31; 8:1-7, 20; 11: 1-2)	BEAR (DAN. 7:5)
	GREECE 333-323	BELLY & THIGH OF BRASS (DAN. 2:39; 8:1-7, 20; 11: 1-2)	LEOPARD (DAN. 7:6)
	ROME 30-364	LEGS OF IRON (DAN. 2:40; 9:26)	BEAST (DAN. 7:7)
	ANTI-MESSIAH	10 TOES OF IRON & CLAY (DAN. 2:41-43; 9:27)	10 HORNS - LITTLE HORN (DAN. 7:8; MATT. 24:15; 2 THESS. 2:1 - 4; REV. 13:1-8)
	JESUS	SMITING STONE (DAN. 2:44-45)	KING OF KINGS (DAN. 7:9 - 14; MATT. 25:31; MATT. 26:64; REV. 19: 11-21)

Bibliography

- Booker, Richard. *The End of All Things Is at Hand: Are You Ready?* Alachua, FL: Bridge-Logos, 2008.
- Booker, Richard. *The Shofar: Ancient Sound of the Messiah*. Houston, TX: Sounds of the Trumpet Inc., 1999.
- Booker, Richard. *Here Comes the Bride: Ancient Jewish Wedding Customs and the Messiah*. Houston, TX: Sounds of the Trumpet Inc., 1995.
- Booker, Richard. *Ancient Jewish Prayers and the Messiah*. Houston, TX: Sounds of the Trumpet Inc., 2003.
- Charlesworth, James, editor. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Apocalyptic Literature & Testaments Volume 1*. New York: Doubleday, 1983.
- Fleming, Jim. *Understanding the Revelation*. Bellaire, TX: Biblical Resources, 1999.
- Hemer, Colin J. *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Their Local Setting*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001.
- Ladd, George Eldon. *A Theology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993.

- Online Sources: Numerous well-researched articles on Greek mythology and the history, geography and archaeology of the seven cities in Asia Minor.
- Osborne, Grant, general editor. *Life Application Bible Commentary: Revelation*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2000.
- Tenney, Merrill. *Interpreting Revelation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1970.
- Stern, David H. *Jewish New Testament Commentary*. Clarksville, MD: Jewish New Testament Publications, 1992.
- Varner, William. *Jacob's Dozen: A Prophetic Look at the Tribes of Israel*. Bellmawr, NJ: The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1987.
- Walters, Brent. *Ante-Nicene Christianity: The First Three Centuries*. San Jose, CA: The Ante-Nicene Archive, 1993.
- Wilson, Mark, and Clinton Arnold, editor. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Revelation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002.

About the Author

Dr. Richard Booker, MBA, PhD, is an ordained Christian minister, President of Sounds of the Trumpet, Inc., and the Founder/Director of the Institute for Hebraic-Christian Studies. Prior to entering the ministry, he had a successful business career. He is the author of 38 books, numerous Bible courses and study materials used by churches and Bible schools around the world.

Dr. Booker has traveled extensively for over 30 years, teaching in churches and at conferences on various aspects of the Christian life as well as Bible prophecy, Israel, and the Hebraic roots of Christianity. He and his wife Peggy, have led yearly tour groups to Israel for more than 25 years, where for 18 years, Dr. Booker was a speaker at the Christian celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem. This gathering is attended by 5,000 Christians from 100 nations.

In 1997, Dr. Booker and his wife, Peggy, founded the Institute for Hebraic-Christian Studies (IHCS) as a ministry to educate Christians in the Hebraic culture and background of the Bible, build relationships between Christians and Jews, and give comfort and support to the people of Israel. Their tireless work on behalf of Christians and Jews has been recognized around the world as well as by the Knesset Christian Allies Caucus in Jerusalem.

Dr. Booker is considered a pioneer, spiritual father, and prophetic voice in respect to teaching on Bible prophecy, radical Islam, Israel, Jewish-Christian relations, and the biblical Hebraic roots of Christianity. He has made more than 500 television programs, which can be seen worldwide on God's Learning Channel. To learn more about his ministry, Dr. Booker invites you to visit his Web site and online bookstore at www.rbooker.com. If you want to invite Dr. Booker to speak to your congregation or conference, you can contact him at www.shofarprb@aol.com.