

## NOW & FOREVER: UNDERSTANDING

### “The REVELATION” FOR TODAY

A Lord’s Flock General Assembly Topic

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The “Book of Revelation” is the last part of the Bible. It is often misconstrued as referring to judgment day or the end of the world. However, the author, John the Apostle, meant it not only for the future, but also for the present situation. It is filled with specific symbols that connote spiritual truths. It reminds people to choose God, to do good and earn a place in the final home which is heaven. It is filled with hope that those who follow God will be rewarded with paradise.

#### The Symbols in the Book of Revelation:

1. **The Sevens.** It is a perfect number. God’s creation of the world took 7 days. Jesus taught about forgiveness 70 x 7 times (Matt. 18:22). It also symbolizes tragedies like the 7 Plagues of Egypt (Exo. 7-11).
2. **The Four Horsemen.** They represent conquest, war, famine and death. All of these were sufferings of the early church. Early Christians were being persecuted; they were conquered because they were deemed enemies of the state; they endured famine and many died (Rev. 6:1-7).
3. **The Dragon/Serpent.** The symbol of the ultimate enemy of God is the devil. He cannot win over God; thus, he attempted to win by alluring many souls to temptation and to commit sin. Thus, he prevented them from going to heaven. The Roman Empire, led by its emperor was used by the devil for persecution of the Church (Rev. 12:9).
4. **The Two Beasts.** These are the tools of the devil: one beast represents power and the other beast represents money. People easily opt for power and money over God. They procrastinate on their obligations such as hearing mass, confession, prayer. Instead, they prioritize their occupation/job and leisure activities. Some people allow themselves to be greedy in pursuit of power and forget their sense of moral values.

“You cannot serve two masters ... You cannot serve both God and money” (Matt. 6:24-26).

5. **666 on the Forehead.** Six is an imperfect number. This was the mark that the beast put on his followers’ forehead as a sign of total allegiance to him (Rev. 13:16). It represents Nero Caesar or the Beast in Hebrew. He chose the mark on the forehead because he based it on The Shema, which encouraged the Jews to bind the commandments on their foreheads as a reminder to devote all their thoughts and actions on God (Deut.6:4-8).
6. **The 144,000.** This number emanates from the twelve tribes of Israel in the Old Testament. There were 12,000 troops for each of the twelve tribes. But in the Revelation, they are not just the Israelites. The number represents the faithful from all over the world (Rev. 7:4).
7. **Armageddon.** This was a place in the north side of Israel where many battles were fought. It is a symbol of the final battle when the nations against God gathered to destroy the faithful ones, the Church (Rev. 16:16).
8. **The Slain Lamb/Jesus on Horse.** Jesus was mounted on a horse, and covered with His own blood, symbolizing His own sacrifice. To fight against Satan does not mean meeting force with force, hatred for hatred. Rather, it means love and surrender to God’s plan (Rev. 5).

#### Conclusion:

The battle is already won by Jesus thru His sacrificial love. He put Himself on the cross and in the hearts of faithful people who choose God despite the adversities in life. We must persevere and emulate the life of saints in this imperfect world.

**Reflection:** What are your beast/s? Is it money, power, gadgets, online games, etc? How do you keep them away from you and shift your focus on Jesus?

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