

Chapter forty-eight

The Prophetic Book

REVELATION	96 AD
<i>"Yes, I am coming soon." 22:20</i>	
Author: John Written From: Patmos Sent To: Seven churches of Asia	
Purpose: Reveal Jesus Christ and his final victory as he defeats his enemies and establishes his kingdom on earth and in eternity. Also, complete the prophetic theme that runs through Scripture.	
Theme: The glorified Jesus and the his coming kingdom	
Basic Outline: Chapter 1, The glorified Christ Chapters 2-3, Seven letters to seven churches in Asia Chapters 4-5, John taken to heaven Chapters 6-18, The Tribulation Chapter 19, Jesus returns Chapter 20, The Millennium Kingdom Chapters 21-22, The New Heaven and New Earth, the eternal state	

Greek Words:

- θλιψις – *thlipsis* – afflicted, pressure, anguish, burden, persecution, tribulation, trouble, 1:9; 2:9, 10, 22; 7:14.
- στεφανος – *stephanos* – crown, a prize in the public games, a symbol of achieved honor, refers to the wreath awarded to a victorious athlete or worn by a pagan priest or given to city officials when a dignitary arrived, 2:10; 3:11; 4:4,10; 6:2, 9:7; 12:1; 14:14.
- διαδημα – *diadema* – diadem, royal crown, crown worn by royalty, a symbol of political power or sovereign authority, 12:3; 13:1; 19:12.
- μεγας – *megas* – exceedingly high, great, mega, large, loud, mighty, used 87 times in Revelation including 1:10; 2:22; 5:2; 6:4; 7:2; 8:8; 9:2,14; 10:3; 11:13; 12:1,3; 17:5; 20:1,11; 21:12.
- ἄρμαγεδδων – *armageddon* – Armageddon, or Har-Megiddon, 16:16.
- νικαω – *nikao* – to be victorious, overcome, 2:7,11,17,26; 3:5,12,21; 5:5; 6:2; 11:7; 12:11; 13:7; 15:2; 17:14; 21:7.
- καινος – *kainos* – new, fresh, 2:17; 3:12; 5:9; 14:3; 21:1,2,5.
- ταχυ – *tachu* – without delay, soon, by surprise, suddenly, with ease and readily, lightly, quickly, 2:5, 16; 3:11, 11:14; 22:7, 12, 20.
- χαραγμα – *charagma* – brand, mark, a marking in the ancient world for a slave, a soldier or a worshiper, 13:16, 17; 14:9; 14:11; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4.

Healthy Doctrine:

- Eschatology
- Judgment
- Salvation
- Satan
- Angels

Memorable Verses:

"Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later." 1:19

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3: 6, 13, 22

"The voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, 'Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.'" 4:1

"Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals." 5:5

"Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel." 7:4

"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." 7:14

"I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets." 8:2

"The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss." 9:1

"I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth." 11:3

"A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head . . . Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads." 12:1, 3

"I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns." 13:1

"Then I saw another beast, coming out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon." 13:11

"He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name." 13:16,17

"Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads." 14:1

"I saw in heaven another great and marvelous sign: seven angels with the seven last plagues." 15:1

"Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed." 16:15

"Then they gathered the kings together to a place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon." 16:16

"The seven heads are the seven hills on which the woman sits. They are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come." 17:9,10

"Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!" 18:2

"After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting: 'Hallelujah!'" 19:1

"I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war." 19:11

"He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years." 20:2

"The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years." 20:6

"Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it." 20:11

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away." 21:1

"Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book." 22:7

In chapter one Jesus appears to John on the isle of Patmos and instructs him to write “what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later.”

In the next two chapters (chapter two and three) Jesus dictates seven letters to seven churches in Asia which John oversaw. The seven churches are: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

In chapter four the vision of the final seven years on earth begins when John is called up to heaven into the throne room of God. God is encircled by twenty-four elders and the four cherubim.

In chapter five God is holding a scroll of rolled-up parchment that is sealed with seven seals. The scroll is the will or the final testament of history which includes the completion of redemption and salvation. No one is worthy to open the scroll but Jesus, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, appears as a lamb that had been slain. He is the only one worthy of opening the scroll and finalizing the history of salvation on earth.

In chapter six the Lamb opens six of the seven seals which begin a series of events on the earth that lead history as we know it to its final hour. The first releases a leader bent on conquest. The second releases great war. The third brings famine and economic imbalance. The fourth brings death to a quarter of the earth's population by sword, famine, plague and wild beasts. The fifth reveals the martyrs of this time in heaven waiting for vengeance. The sixth causes catastrophic events on the physical earth.

In chapter seven John sees 144,000 Jews from each of the twelve tribes of Israel being sealed before the great distresses begin on earth. The result of the evangelism of the 144,000 from the tribes of Israel is seen in heaven as a great multitude of saved people gathered around the throne of God having come out of the Great Tribulation on the earth from every nation, tribe, people and language.

Chapter eight reveals the results of the opening of the seventh seal. When the seventh seal is opened seven angels appear with seven trumpets used to call forth seven more distresses on the earth. But before they begin, the answers to the prayers of the saints are cast down in judgment on the earth. The first trumpet produces hail and fire mixed with blood that burns up a third of the earth. The second trumpet calls forth a huge mass all ablaze that lands in the sea producing a tsunami that destroys a third of seas. The third trumpet produces a great, blazing meteor shower that contaminates a third of the fresh water. The fourth trumpet causes the loss of one third of twenty-four hours of light including a third of the light from both the sun and the stars. These are all natural disasters.

Chapter nine reveals the last three trumpets, but they are all supernatural attacks and are introduced at the end of chapter eight with an announcement of “Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts” of the last three angels. The fifth trumpet brings the first “Woe” when the angel that had been given the key to the Abyss releases from the Abyss some kind of demonic beings that torment men. The sixth trumpet releases the four angels bound at the Euphrates Rivers and their angelic army of two hundred million to kill a third of mankind.

Based on the earth's current population of 6,750,000,000, the deaths caused by this sixth trumpet combined with the death of a quarter of mankind resulting from the fourth seal, means the death of approximately 3,358,125,000 people in a three year period. This leaves 3,391,875,000 people – a little over a half of the current population – alive midway through the Tribulation.

It is estimated that 32% of the people alive today claim to be of the Christian faith. If we assume that half of that 32% (1,080,000,000 people) are actually true believers who get taken in the rapture of the church before the Great Tribulation begins, the total world population would go from 6,750,000,000

- To 5,670,000,000 after the rapture
- Then be reduced by a fourth down to 4,252,500,000 after the fourth seal
- And then be reduced by a further third, down to 2,849,175,000 after the sixth trumpet

That means the total loss would be 3,900,825,000 people from earth's population in a 36 to 48 month period. Realize we are just in chapter nine of the book, and what is known as the Great Tribulation is yet to come on the earth in the next few chapters.

In chapter ten John is given a little scroll by a mighty angel and told to eat the scroll. After John has eaten it and the words on it he is told, “You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages and kings.”

Chapter eleven introduces two men who will oppose ungodliness and call forth many signs and wonders including plagues, famine and miracles. They will prophecy for the final 1,260 days (42 months, or three and a half years) of the tribulation (11:2, 3). When the seventh trumpet sounds, loud voices from heaven say, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ.” The temple in heaven is opened and the Ark of the Covenant is seen.

In chapter twelve John sees a vision that includes a woman and a dragon. This vision captures the battle between God's promises and Satan's opposition from the beginning to its final conflict.

Chapter thirteen introduces the beast from the sea (anti-christ) and the beast from the earth (false prophet). The false prophet will cause the whole world to worship the anti-christ and receive the mark on their right hand or forehead in order to buy and sell on the earth.

In chapter fourteen the 144,000 marked with the Father's name are seen on Mount Zion with the Lamb. Mt. Zion is in Jerusalem and this vision indicates that the 144,000 will endure through the tribulation and meet Jesus in Jerusalem upon his return to the earth. This chapter includes the announcement that the center of the world's economy, Babylon, has fallen. There are also two references to the harvest of the earth: reaping grain and harvesting grapes.

In chapters fifteen and sixteen seven angels are given seven bowls with the final seven plagues of God's wrath on the earth. There can only be a matter of weeks left before Jesus returns at this point, since these plagues would result in the extinction of man and life on earth if something did not interrupt them. These plagues are focused on the anti-christ's kingdom and include:

- Painful skin ulcers
- The destruction of the rest of the salt water seas leaving the earth to corrupt in its own filth
- The loss of all fresh water or drinking water
- The scorching of men by the sun
- A spiritual darkness leaving men hopeless
- A military invasion from the east which sets up the last battle centered in the middle east and Armageddon
- The final attack on the climate, geography and atmosphere of earth which includes lightning, thunder, one-hundred-pound hailstones and an earthquake unlike anything that has occurred on earth since man was created.

Chapter seventeen is a behind-the-scenes look at the spiritual dimension of the anti-christ's kingdom and the authority of Satan that has been handed through the ages from empire to empire including Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome and the kingdom of the anti-christ.

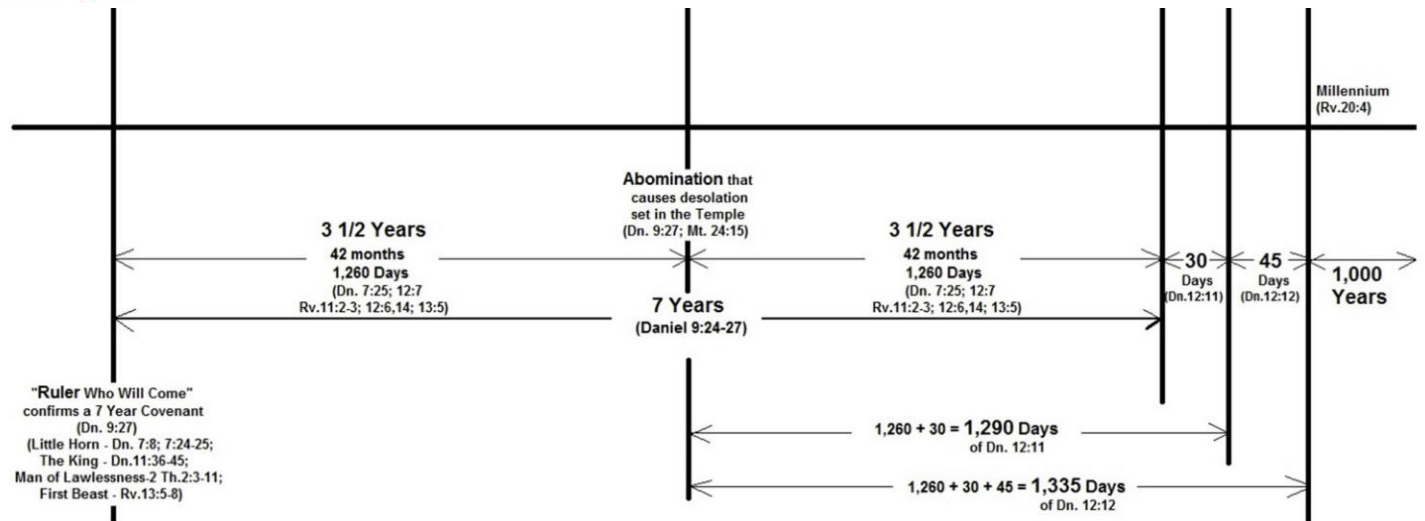
Chapter eighteen describes the fall of Babylon, the center of the world commerce in the final days.

Chapter nineteen begins in heaven with the church having been made ready. Then heaven is opened and Jesus, the rider on the white horse moves out for battle. He defeats the armies of the world.

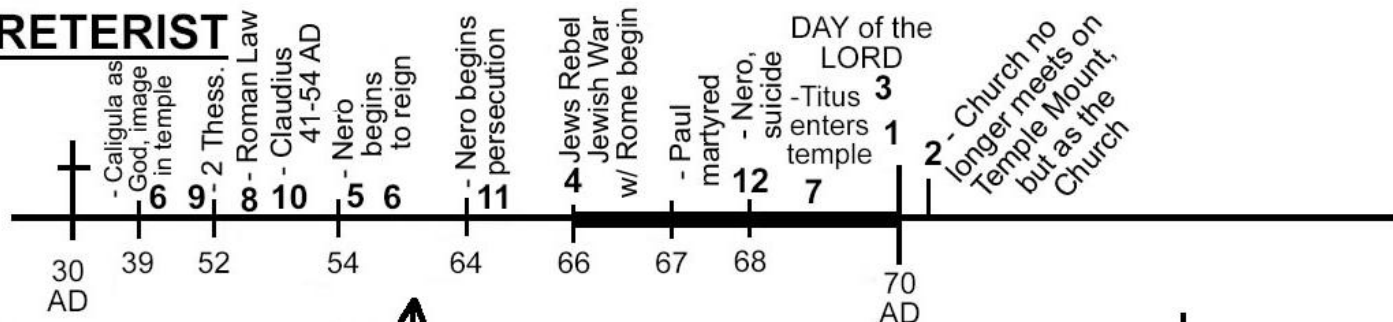
Chapter twenty shows the binding of Satan for a thousand years and the establishment on earth of the millennial kingdom. Then, at the end of the thousand years Satan is released and leads a final rebellion. This is followed by the Great White Throne Judgment which involves only those whose names are not in the Lamb's book of life. Death, Hades, and all the lost are thrown into the Lake of Fire.

Chapter twenty-one begins with the present universe and earth having been removed or destroyed. A new universe and a new earth have been created for life in the eternal state. The New Jerusalem, heaven, the city of God, descends into this universe and this is the eternal state of mankind and the eternal God.

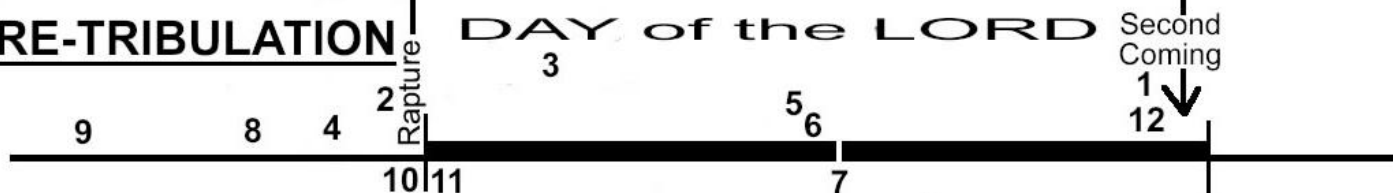
In chapter twenty-two Jesus says he is coming soon and John testifies that he has written down truthfully all he was shown. Jesus repeats several times he is coming soon and the free gift of salvation is offered as a free drink of the water of life to any who will accept it.



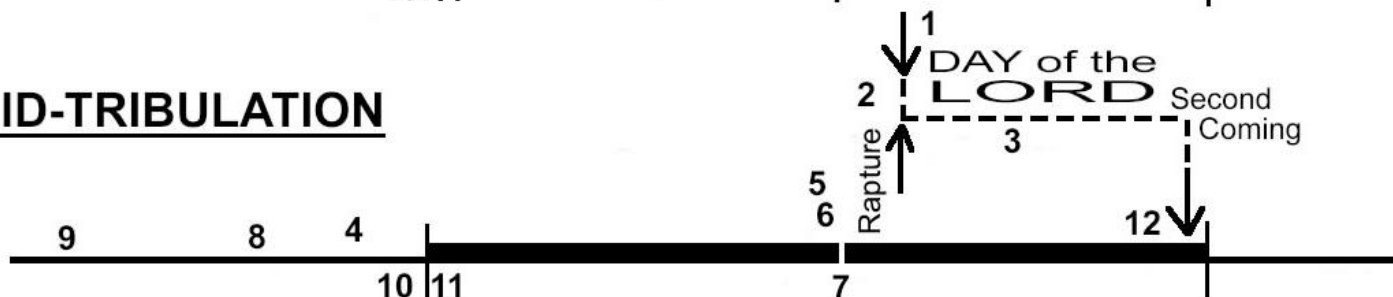
PRETERIST



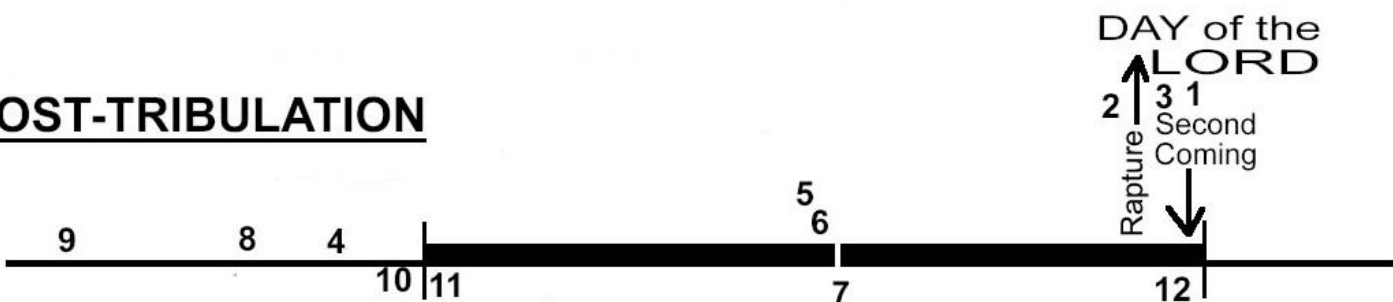
PRE-TRIBULATION



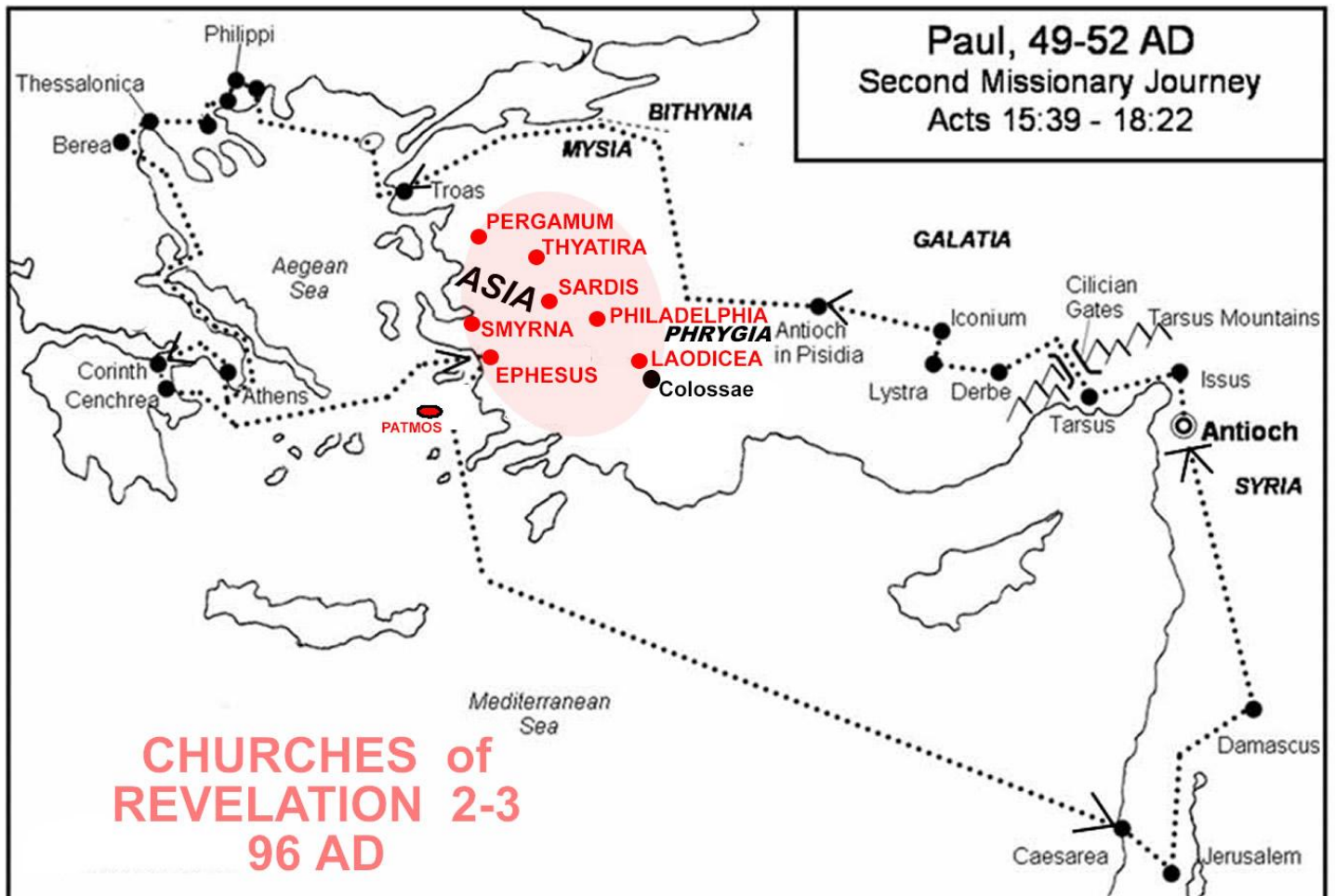
MID-TRIBULATION



POST-TRIBULATION

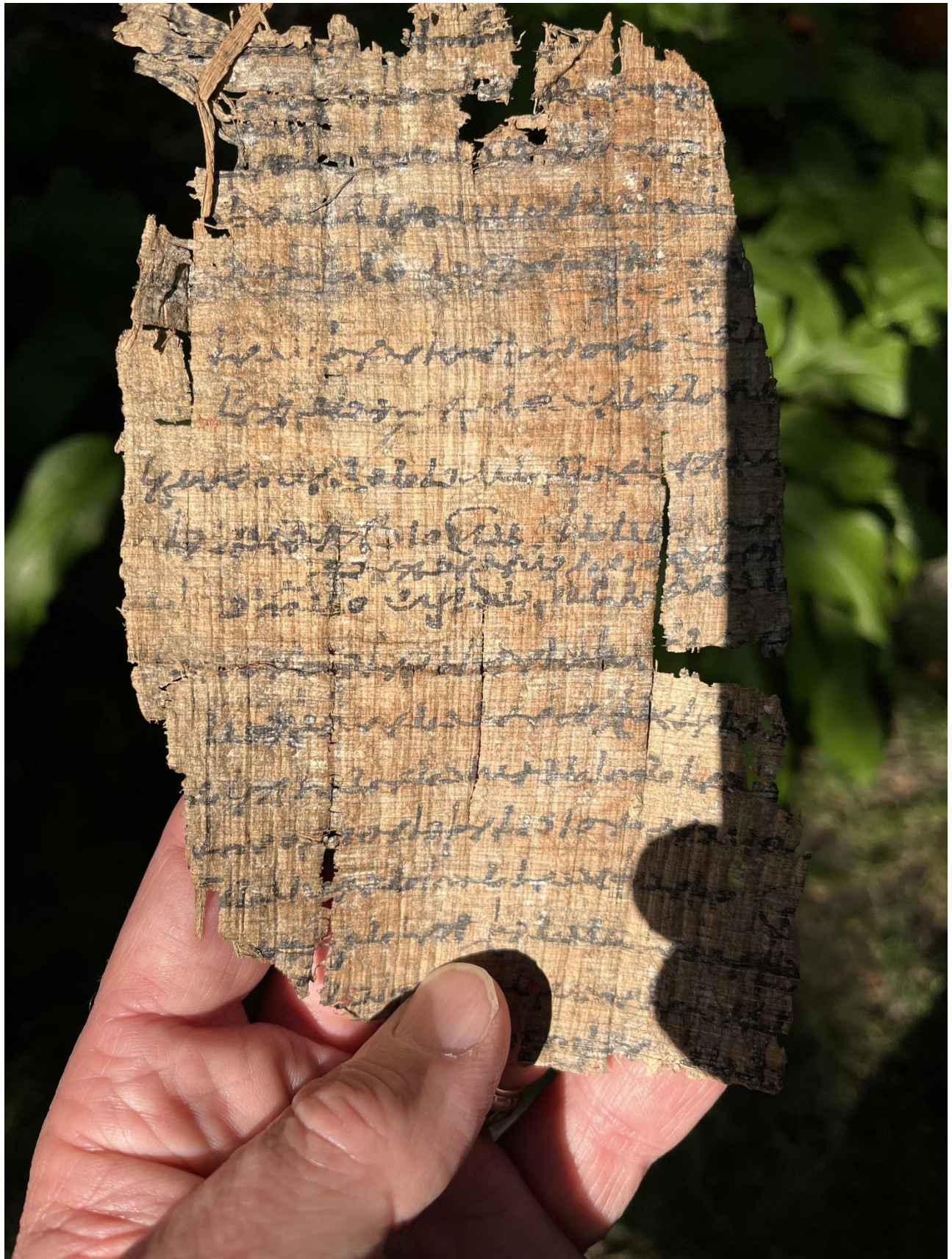


1. "coming (*parousia*) of the Lord"
2. "of us being gathered (*episunagogas*) to him"
3. "that is come (*enestaken*) the Day of the Lord"
4. "unless comes (*elthe*) the apostasy (*apostasias*) first"
5. "and revealed (*apokaluphthe*) the man of lawlessness"
6. "setting against and exalting himself over everything called god"
7. "him in the shrine of God (*naon tou theou*) to sit"
8. "now the thing restraining (*katechon*) him from being revealed (*apokaluphtheiai*)"
9. "mystery of lawlessness already operates (*energeitai*)"
10. "now the one restraining (*katechon*) until out of the midst it comes"
11. "then will be revealed (*apokaluphthesetai*) the lawless one"
12. "whom the Lord Jesus will destroy by the spirit of his mouth and bring to nothing by the outshining (*epithaneia*) of the presence (*parousia*)"





Modern piece of rolled papyrus with seven clay seals



Papyrus from 200 BC



Roman Clay Seal from document from 10-190 AD



Roman ring for sealing a document

Roman Emperors:

Augustus (27 BC - AD 14)

Tiberius (AD 14 - 37)

Caligula (AD 37 - 41)

Claudius (AD 41 - 54)

Nero (AD 54 - 68)

Galba (AD 68 - 69)

Otho (AD 69)

Vitellius (AD 69).

Vespasian (AD 69 - 79)

Titus (AD 79 - 81)

Domitian (AD 81 - 96)

Nerva (AD 96 - 98)

Trajan (AD 98 - 117)

Hadrian (AD 117 - 138)

Antoninus Pius (AD 138 - 161)

Marcus Aurelius (AD 161 - 180)



Nero



Vespasian



Domitian



The Anti-Christ

First John 2:18-23 –

“Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us. But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth. Who is the liar? It is whoever **denies that Jesus is the Christ**. Such a person is the antichrist—**denying the Father and the Son**. No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.”

First John 4:2-3 -

“This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that **does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God**. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard **is coming** and even **now is already** in the world.”

Forerunner of Antichrist	Opposed God	Oppressed People of God	Desecrated Temple of God	Abomination of Desolation in Temple of God	Roman Origin
Pharaoh	✓-Ex. 5:2	✓-Ex. 5:1:11,22			
Nebuchadnezzar	✓-Hab.1:6-11	✓-2 Kg.24:14	✓-2 Kg.24:13		
Antiochus IV Epiphanes	✓-Dan.11:36	✓-Dan.11:41	✓-Dan.11:31	✓-Dan.11:31	
Titus (w/Pilate)	✓-Jn.19:7-16	✓-Dan.9:26	✓-Dan.9:26; Mt.24:2;Lk.21:6	✓-Dan.9:26; Lk.21:20-24	✓-Dan.9:26 Jn.11:48
The ANTICHRIST	✓-Dn.8:25; 11:36-39; 2Th.2:4; Rv.13:6	✓-Dan.9:27; Dan.11:41; Rev.13:7	✓-Dn.9:27; 2 Th.2:4	✓-Dan.9:27; Mt.24:15; Mk.13:14; Rev.13:14-15	✓-Dan.7:23; Dan.9:27

Nero?

(from <https://petergoeman.com/does-666-refer-to-nero-in-revelation-1318/>)

Gematria and the Mark of the Beast.

Gematria is a process by which letters in a name are given numerical values or vice versa.

The Mark of the Beast and Nero

Many scholars identify 666 with Nero either directly or by allusion. The typical understanding is to take Nero's name and title in Greek (Nero Caesar), and transliterate it into Hebrew (נְרוֹסַרְסָר), and then take the numerical value. It would look like this:

ן	ו	ר	נ	ר	ס	ק
50	6	200	50	200	60	100
Total: 666						

This looks good at first, but as I have written before, [Bible codes are very unwieldy](#). Although the above technically qualifies, there are at least five arguments to make us rethink Nero's identification with the mark of the beast.

1. For Nero to fit with 666, his title must be used.

For the mark of the beast to be equated with Nero, the full title "Nero Caesar" must be used in exactly that order. There are many names and titles that could be chosen to identify Nero, but this is the combination that must be utilized.

This flexibility in using titles with Nero seems a little too convenient. In fact, if there are no rules about what names and titles are allowed to be used, both Domitian and Vespasian also can be numbered as 666. Moreover, there is even archaeological evidence for Domitian's abbreviated title found on coins. It reads as follows: A KAI ΔOMET ΣΕΒ ΓΕ.

A	K	A	I	Δ	O	M	E	T	Σ	E	B	Γ	E
1	20	1	10	4	70	40	5	300	200	5	2	3	5
Total: 666													

When such wide parameters are used with adding convenient titles, it becomes less persuasive.

2. Revelation 13:17-18 specifies only the name, not the title.

This point coincides with the previous point. [Revelation 13:17](#) specifies the link between the name and number. If titles are allowed, that goes beyond the purview of the text, and it also allows too much flexibility. So, we should expect Nero to be used by itself. By way of illustration, when we think of the name of the President of the United States, we do not say, "His name is President Abraham Lincoln." We would say, "His name is Abraham Lincoln."

It should also be noted at this point that Irenaeus (ca. 180 AD) was the first one who attempted to use gematria to find the referent for 666, and the names he hypothesized did not include titles (*Adv. Haer.* 5.30.3; *Evanthas*, *Lateinos*, and *Teitan*). Nor did he mention Nero as being a possible fulfillment.

3. For Nero to fit with 666, a *Hebrew* transliteration is required.

The numerical value of Caesar Nero in Greek is 1005. This is [identified explicitly by Suetonius \(ca. 121 AD\)](#), who wrote that the value of Nero's name is the same as the phrase, "He killed his own mother" (Suetonius, *Nero*, 39.2). Revelation was written to a Greek-speaking audience, and it is widely acknowledged that the knowledge of Hebrew was not as prevalent during this time (Aramaic was far more common for the Jewish audience). So, utilizing the values of gematria for Hebrew while writing Greek to a Greek-speaking audience makes little sense.

4. For Nero to fit with 666, a defective shortened spelling is required.

This is one of the most important points to make. For the gematria value of Caesar Nero to equal 666, the Hebrew transliteration must be used (קסר נרון). However, this is a defective spelling for קסר, which is normally spelled קסיר (with a י in the middle). This would equal 676 instead of 666. There is only one Judean scroll fragment found at *Murabba'at*, which might have a defective spelling (although it is debated whether that's actually what it says). Although I have not personally viewed the fragment, in his dissertation, Hitchcock notes that the fragment is missing the letters following the ק. Although the damaged scroll does not have space for the full spelling (קסיר), it is also not indisputable that the missing letters are סר. Therefore, there is no clear testimony of Hebrew spelling Caesar as קסר. At the same time, as Hitchcock notes, in the Talmuds, Mishnah, Tosephta, and Tannaitic Midraishim, the spelling is full (קסיר). To put it plainly then, the 666 reading for Nero relies on a conjecture which has little to no evidence.

It should also be noted that the O-class vowel in Nero (ו in נרון) has the potential to be defective and drop out. The fact that preterists assume Nero is spelled in its full letter form seems to be an example of selective bias.

5. The early church did not understand 666 to be a reference to Nero.

We have already mentioned how Irenaeus, who was a disciple of Polycarp (who was a disciple of John) did not understand 666 to be a reference to Nero. Additionally, there is a textual variant in [Revelation 13:18](#) where some manuscripts read 616. Irenaeus knew of this variant and called it an inferior reading, and said it was probably due to a copyist error (*Adv. Haer.* 5.30.1). It would be a rather simple copyist error, confusing ι for ξ (which in handwritten manuscripts would be an easy mistake to make. Notably, at least one other Greek manuscript reads 665. These variants show that there was not a unified understanding of the referent of this number, and therefore Nero was not recognized as the intended referent.

Some preterists try to take the 616 variant reading as further evidence for Nero, since the Latin form of Nero's title translated into Hebrew equals 616. However, we have the same problems as defined in the previous points. This is demonstrated by the fact that other scholars have identified the 616 variant with Caligula. And it can also be associated with Titus. Besides the logical and methodological problems, this textual variant can easily be explained as a copyist error.

In commenting on this issue, Beale quotes Salmon:

"First, if the proper name by itself will not yield it, add a title; secondly, if the sum cannot be found in Greek, try Hebrew, or even Latin; thirdly, do not be too particular about the spelling.... We cannot infer much from the fact that a key fits the lock if it is