

Glossary of Terms

Book of Revelation Study compiled by, as researched by, catalogued by, and created by; but the terms are not uniquely originated by- Pastor Dave

Glossary of Terms – Book of Revelation

A

Abaddon / Apollyon

The angel of the abyss who rules over the demonic locust army released during the fifth trumpet judgment (Revelation 9:11). The name means “**destroyer.**”

Alpha and Omega

A title of God and Christ meaning **the beginning and the end**, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet (Revelation 1:8; 22:13).

Antichrist

A figure empowered by Satan who opposes Christ; often associated with the Beast from the Sea (Rev. 13; cf. 1 John 2:18).

Amen

A title for **Jesus Christ**, emphasizing His faithfulness and truth (Revelation 3:14).

Angel

A heavenly messenger who delivers judgments, announcements, and visions throughout Revelation.

Armageddon

The final gathering place of the armies of the world before Christ’s return (Revelation 16:16). The name comes from **Har-Megiddo**, meaning “Mount of Megiddo.”

B

Babylon the Great

A symbolic representation of the **global system of political, economic, and religious corruption opposed to God** (Revelation 17–18).

Beast

A powerful end-time ruler and empire empowered by Satan (Revelation 13). Often identified as the **Antichrist figure**. A symbolic figure representing oppressive political power opposed to God. Two beasts appear: one from the sea and one from the earth (Rev. 13).

Beast from the Earth

Also called the **False Prophet**, a religious leader who promotes worship of the first beast (Revelation 13:11).

Book of Life

A heavenly record containing the names of those who belong to God and receive eternal life (Revelation 20:12, 15).

Book (or Scroll) with Seven Seals

A divine document representing God's plan for judgment and redemption, opened only by the Lamb (Rev. 5).

C

Crown (Stephanos)

A victor's crown symbolizing reward or authority given to faithful believers.

Crown (Diadem)

A royal crown representing kingly authority, often worn by Christ or the dragon.

D

Dragon

A symbolic name for **Satan**, the ultimate adversary of God who empowers the Beast (Revelation 12:9).

E

Elders (Twenty-Four Elders)

Heavenly representatives seated around God's throne who worship and praise Him (Revelation 4:4).

F

False Prophet

The religious leader who performs miracles and causes the world to worship the Beast (Revelation 13; 19:20).

Four Horsemen

Symbols of conquest, war, famine, and death released by the opening of the first four seals (Rev. 6:1–8).

Four Living Creatures

Four powerful heavenly beings around God's throne who lead worship and announce judgments (Revelation 4).

G

Great Tribulation

A period of intense global suffering and judgment preceding Christ's return.

Gog/MaGog

In the Bible, Gog and Magog represent powerful, hostile forces allied against God and His people, appearing in [Ezekiel](#) as a prophesied leader (Gog) from a northern land (Magog) planning an attack, and in [Revelation](#) as symbolic names for nations deceived by Satan for a final battle against Jerusalem after the Millennium, all ultimately defeated by divine fire. While Ezekiel identifies them with specific (though debated) ancient peoples, Revelation uses them symbolically for all anti-God nations, representing the ultimate rebellion before final judgment.

In the Book of Ezekiel (Chapters 38-39)

- **Gog:** A powerful ruler or title, often associated with nations from "the far north".
- **Magog:** The land or people ruled by Gog, believed by some scholars to refer to ancient peoples from the region of modern-day Russia/Ukraine (Scythians).
- **Prophecy:** Gog will lead a vast confederation of nations (including Persia, Cush, Put, Gomer, Tubal, Meshech) to attack restored Israel, but God will intervene, destroying them to demonstrate His power and holiness.

In the Book of Revelation (Chapter 20)

- **Symbolic Figures:** Gog and Magog represent the nations of the world, rallied by Satan after his temporary release, for a final rebellion against God's saints in Jerusalem.
- **Final Battle:** This is the last great conflict before the final judgment, where God sends fire from heaven to consume them, just as He did in Ezekiel's prophecy.

Key Interpretations

- **Ezekiel's Gog:** A specific historical/prophetic enemy, possibly linked to northern tribes.
 - **Revelation's Gog & Magog:** A symbolic term for all nations opposing God at the end times, mirroring the rebellion described in Ezekiel.
 - **Common Theme:** Both passages depict a massive, final war where God's enemies, motivated by rebellion, are utterly destroyed by divine judgment.
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H

Hades

The realm of the dead, later thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:14).

Harlot/Prostitute

A symbolic woman representing corrupt spiritual and economic systems associated with Babylon (Revelation 17). A metaphor for spiritual unfaithfulness and corrupt alliance with worldly power.

Hermeneutics: *the art or science of interpretation.* With the Word of God there is a gap between the writer and the reader (the gap grows wider with time). The critical rule of hermeneutics says that unless the Bible can transcend time and culture, it is irrelevant; it is useless. Hermeneutics bridges that gap; for instance, if what John had written in Revelation was just for 1st century churches, it would be irrelevant for us today.

L

Lamb

A title for **Jesus Christ**, emphasizing His sacrificial death and victorious authority. Jesus Christ, portrayed as sacrificed yet victorious—the central figure of redemption (Rev. 5:6).

Lake of Fire

The final place of eternal punishment for Satan, the Beast, the False Prophet, and all who reject God (Revelation 20:10–15).

M

Mark of the Beast

A mark placed on the hand or forehead signifying allegiance to the Beast's system. A sign of allegiance to the Beast, symbolizing loyalty to anti-God systems, probably a literal mark, but could be symbolic, however scripture indicates, that there is no buying or selling without the mark. This leads us to believe that it is seen. (Revelation 13:16–18).

Millennium

A 1,000-year reign of Christ described in Revelation 20.

N

New Heaven and New Earth

The renewed creation God establishes after the final judgment, where sin, death, and suffering are eliminated. (Revelation 21).

New Jerusalem

The heavenly city where God dwells with His people forever (Revelation 21–22).

S

Seven Churches

Seven historical churches in Asia Minor that receive messages from Christ. Actual first-century churches in Asia Minor that also represent types of churches throughout history. (Revelation 2–3).

- Ephesus
- Smyrna
- Pergamum
- Thyatira

- Sardis
- Philadelphia
- Laodicea

Seven Seals

The first series of judgments opened by the Lamb, also a series of judgments that initiate the unfolding of God's end-time plan (Revelation 6–8).

Seven Trumpets

A second series of divine judgments affecting the earth and announcing divine warnings and partial judgments upon the earth (Revelation 8–11).

Seven Bowls (Vials)

The final and most severe judgments poured out on the earth expressing God's wrath against evil. (Revelation 16).

Son of Man

A messianic title for Jesus, drawn from Daniel 7, emphasizing His authority and glory (Rev. 1:13).

T

Temple of God

The heavenly sanctuary from which God's judgments proceed.

Throne of God

The central symbol of divine authority and sovereignty in Revelation. (Rev.4)

Two Witnesses

Two prophetic figures who testify during the tribulation and are later resurrected (Revelation 11).

Tribulation

A period of intense suffering and judgment preceding the final victory of God (Rev. 6–18).

W

White Horse

Symbol of conquest. Appears both in the first seal judgment and when Christ returns as a conquering king (Revelation 6; 19).

White Throne Judgment

The final judgment of all humanity before God (Rev. 20:11–15).

Woman Clothed with the Sun

A symbolic figure representing God's covenant people from whom the Messiah comes (Revelation 12).

Z

Zion

The place where the Lamb stands with the 144,000 redeemed followers (Revelation 14:1).

Key Numerical Symbols in Revelation

Number Meaning

3½	Period of tribulation
4	Creation or the world
7	Completion or divine perfection
12	God's people (tribes/apostles)
24	Heavenly representation of God's people
144,000	Symbolic or literal number of sealed servants

Symbol Glossary – Book of Revelation

A

Altar

Represents the place of sacrifice and prayer before God. In Revelation 6 the martyrs are seen **under the altar**, symbolizing their sacrificial death for God.

Ark (Heavenly Ark)

Appears in Revelation 11:19. Symbolizes God's covenant faithfulness and the heavenly reality behind the earthly tabernacle.

B

Bowls (Vials)

Seven bowls represent the **final outpouring of God's wrath** on the earth (Revelation 16). They symbolize complete and final judgment.

C

Candlesticks / Lampstands

Seven lampstands symbolize the **seven churches** (Revelation 1:20). Lampstands represent churches shining God's light in the world.

Crowns

Two types appear:

- **Stephanos** – victor's crown (reward for believers)
 - **Diadem** – royal crown (authority and rulership)
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D

Dragon

Symbolizes **Satan**, the spiritual enemy of God and humanity (Revelation 12:9).

H

Horns

A symbol of **power and authority**, often representing kings or kingdoms.
Example: the Beast with **ten horns** symbolizes ten rulers.

L

Lamp

Represents God's illuminating truth. In the New Jerusalem, the Lamb Himself is the lamp.

M

Mount Zion

Symbol of God's kingdom and the place of divine rule.

R

Rainbow Around the Throne

Represents God's covenant mercy and faithfulness (Revelation 4).

S

Scroll with Seven Seals

Symbolizes God's sovereign plan for judgment and redemption that only the Lamb can open (Revelation 5).

Sea of Glass

Represents God's holiness, purity, and separation from chaos (Revelation 4:6).

Stars

Often represent **angels or spiritual leaders** (Revelation 1:20).

Sword from Christ's Mouth

Represents the **power of Christ's word and judgment**.

T

Temple

Symbolizes God's presence and the heavenly dwelling place of God.

Throne

The central symbol of **God's authority and sovereignty over creation**.

Trumpets

Seven trumpets symbolize warnings and escalating judgments from God (Revelation 8–11).

W

White Robes

Symbolize **purity, victory, and righteousness** given to believers.

White Stone

Represents acceptance, vindication, or acquittal (Revelation 2:17).

Winepress of Wrath

Symbolizes the final judgment of the wicked (Revelation 14:19–20).

Animal Symbols

Lamb

Symbol of **entity references for Jesus removed per user request? Wait entity rules require usage. But user asked text without graphics earlier not entities. Entities not requested removal now but safe maybe keep. However instruction says use entities whenever possible.** We'll include entity.

Symbol of **Jesus Christ** as the sacrificial Savior and victorious King.

Beast

Represents oppressive political power opposed to God.

Locusts

Symbolize demonic forces released during judgment (Revelation 9).

Frog-like spirits

Symbolize deceptive demonic influences gathering nations for war (Revelation 16).

Color Symbols

Color	Meaning
White	Purity, victory, righteousness
Red	War and bloodshed
Black	Famine and economic hardship
Pale / Green	Death and decay
Purple & Scarlet	Wealth, luxury, and corruption

These appear prominently in the **four horsemen** and the description of Babylon.

Number Symbols

Revelation uses numbers symbolically.

Number Symbolism

3½	Limited period of tribulation
4	Creation or the world
6	Human imperfection
7	Divine completeness
10	Political power or kingdoms
12	God's people
24	Heavenly representation of redeemed people
1,000	Large or complete period

Cosmic Signs

Earthquakes

Symbolize divine intervention and the shaking of earthly powers.

Darkened Sun / Blood Moon

Represent cosmic disturbances and the Day of the Lord.

Falling Stars

Often symbolize the fall of rulers or angels.

Water Imagery

Waters

Symbolize **nations and peoples** (Revelation 17:15).

River of Life

Represents eternal life flowing from God in the New Jerusalem.

Warfare Symbols

Armor and Weapons

Represent spiritual conflict and divine judgment.

Battle of Armageddon

Symbolizes the final confrontation between God's kingdom and the forces of evil.

Cities

Babylon

Symbol of corrupt worldly power.

New Jerusalem

Symbol of the eternal dwelling place of God's people.

✓ Helpful interpretation principle

Most symbols in Revelation fall into three categories:

1. **Old Testament imagery** (Daniel, Ezekiel, Zechariah)
 2. **Temple symbolism**
 3. **Cosmic imagery describing spiritual conflict**
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The Symbol Map of Revelation

Tabernacle → Throne Room → Judgments

OLD TESTAMENT TABERNACLE



HEAVENLY THRONE ROOM



JUDGMENTS RELEASED ON EARTH

Revelation reveals the **heavenly reality behind the earthly tabernacle.**

1. The Throne Room (Revelation 4–5)

This is the **control center of the entire book.**

Everything that happens on earth originates from here.

Throne Room Elements

Throne Room Symbol Meaning

Throne	God's sovereign authority
24 Elders	Representation of redeemed people
Four Living Creatures	Heavenly worship leaders
Lightning / thunder	Divine power and judgment
Sea of Glass	God's holiness and transcendence
Scroll with seven seals	God's redemptive plan
The Lamb	Christ who alone can open the scroll

The Lamb (Christ) takes the scroll and **initiates the events of history**.

2. Tabernacle Parallels

Many scholars notice that the **heavenly throne room mirrors the Old Testament tabernacle pattern**.

Tabernacle Item	Throne Room Equivalent
Ark of the Covenant	Throne of God
Cherubim over the ark	Four Living Creatures
Seven-branched menorah	Seven Spirits of God
Bronze laver (water basin)	Sea of Glass
Priests	24 Elders
Holy of Holies	Throne room itself

This shows that **the tabernacle was a shadow of heaven**.

3. Judgments Flow From the Throne

After the Lamb opens the scroll, three major cycles of judgment unfold.

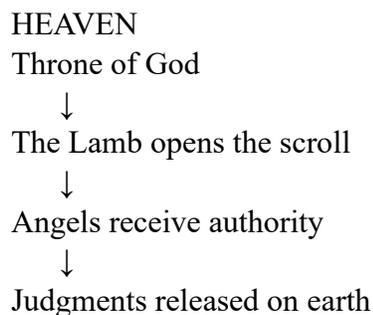
The Three Judgment Series

Judgment Cycle Chapters	Description
Seven Seals	Revelation 6–8 Beginning of tribulation
Seven Trumpets	Revelation 8–11 Intensifying judgment
Seven Bowls	Revelation 16 Final wrath of God

These judgments increase in intensity.
SEALS → TRUMPETS → BOWLS

4. How the Throne Releases Judgment

The pattern looks like this:



Each cycle **begins in heaven** before affecting the earth.

5. The Heavenly Temple Appears Repeatedly

Throughout Revelation the **temple in heaven opens**.

Examples:

Passage	Event
Revelation 8	Incense altar and prayers
Revelation 11	Ark revealed
Revelation 15	Bowl judgments prepared

This reinforces the idea that **earthly events originate from heavenly worship and authority**.

6. Spiritual Conflict Layer

While judgments come from the throne, another layer shows **cosmic conflict**.

Evil Force	Role
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Dragon	Satan
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Beast	Antichrist political power
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False Prophet	Religious deception
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Babylon	Corrupt world system
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These oppose God's kingdom until the return of **Jesus Christ**.

7. Final Restoration

The symbol map ends with **creation restored**.

Symbol	Meaning
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New Jerusalem	God's eternal dwelling
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River of Life	Eternal life
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Tree of Life	Restoration of Eden
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No temple needed God Himself dwells with humanity

The Entire Revelation Structure (Simplified)

1–3 Letters to the Churches

4–5 Throne Room of Heaven

6–18 Judgments and Tribulation

19 Return of Christ

20 Millennium and Final Judgment

21–22 New Heaven and New Earth

Revelation Glossary by Interpretive Framework

Four Major Interpretive Views of Revelation

1. Preterist View

Definition:

The Preterist view holds that most or all of the prophecies in Revelation were fulfilled in the first century, particularly in events surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 and the persecution of Christians under the Roman Empire.

Key Ideas:

- Revelation primarily addressed the immediate situation of early Christians.
- Many symbols refer to Rome and its emperors.
- The Beast is often interpreted as a Roman emperor such as Nero or Domitian.
- Babylon represents Rome.

Purpose of Revelation in this view:

To encourage first-century believers suffering persecution by showing that God would soon judge their oppressors.

Variations:

- Partial Preterism – Some prophecies remain future (such as Christ's final return).
- Full Preterism – Nearly all prophecy, including Christ's return, is seen as fulfilled in the first century.

2. Futurist View

Definition:

The Futurist view teaches that most of Revelation (especially chapters 4–22) describes events that will occur shortly before the return of Christ.

Key Ideas:

- The seals, trumpets, and bowls describe a future tribulation period.
- The Beast is a future global ruler (Antichrist).
- Babylon represents a future global political or economic system.

- The millennium in Revelation 20 is a future reign of Christ on earth.

Purpose of Revelation in this view:

To reveal future events leading to Christ's return and the final establishment of God's kingdom.

This is the view most common among:

- Evangelical scholars
 - Dispensational theology
 - Many prophecy teachers
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3. Historicist View

Definition:

The Historicist view sees Revelation as a symbolic panorama of church history from the time of the apostles until the second coming of Christ.

Key Ideas:

- The visions represent major historical events throughout the centuries.
- Different symbols correspond to specific periods in history.
- The Beast is often identified with a corrupt religious or political power that developed over time.
- The seals, trumpets, and bowls represent successive historical developments affecting the church and the world.

Purpose of Revelation in this view:

To show how God's sovereignty unfolds throughout the entire history of the church.

Historically held by:

- Many Protestant Reformers
 - Some early commentators after the Reformation
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4. Idealist View

Definition:

The Idealist view interprets Revelation as a symbolic portrayal of the ongoing spiritual struggle between good and evil, rather than as specific historical events.

Key Ideas:

- Revelation describes timeless spiritual realities.

- The Beast represents any oppressive political power opposed to God.
- Babylon symbolizes worldly corruption and rebellion against God.
- The judgments portray God’s ongoing victory over evil.

Purpose of Revelation in this view:

To encourage believers by showing that Christ ultimately triumphs over evil in every generation.

Comparison of the Four Views

View	Main Idea	Timing of Fulfillment
Preterist	Prophecy fulfilled in the first century	Mostly past
Futurist	Prophecy describes future end-time events	Mostly future
Historicist	Revelation outlines church history	Fulfilled progressively through history
Idealist	Revelation symbolizes spiritual conflict	Timeless principles

A Helpful Way to Think About Them

Question	Each View’s Answer
When does Revelation happen?	
Preterist	Mostly already happened
Futurist	Mostly still to come
Historicist	Happening throughout history
Idealist	Always happening spiritually

Important Note

Many scholars today combine aspects of these views. For example, some believe:

- Revelation addressed first-century believers (Preterist element)
- while also pointing to future events (Futurist element)
- and revealing timeless spiritual truths (Idealist element).

Supplement to the Views:

1. Preterist Interpretation

(Revelation primarily fulfilled in the 1st century, especially AD 66–70)

Term	Preterist Understanding
Babylon the Great	Jerusalem (or Rome), judged for covenant unfaithfulness
Beast	Roman imperial power, often Nero Caesar
Mark of the Beast (666)	Allegiance to Rome; gematria for “Nero Caesar”
Tribulation	Jewish War and destruction of Jerusalem
Seven Churches	Literal first-century churches facing imminent persecution
Antichrist	Any first-century opponent of Christ (esp. imperial figures)
Millennium	Symbolic reign of Christ begun after Jerusalem’s fall
Lake of Fire	Final covenantal judgment, not primarily geopolitical
Second Coming imagery	Symbolic “coming in judgment,” not bodily return

2. Futurist Interpretation

(Revelation largely awaits future fulfillment before Christ’s return)

Term	Futurist Understanding
Babylon the Great	Future global political/economic system
Beast	A future world ruler (the Antichrist)
Mark of the Beast	Literal or technological mark required for commerce
Tribulation	A future 7-year global period of judgment
Seven Churches	Historical churches + prophetic “church ages”
Antichrist	A single end-times individual
Millennium	Literal 1,000-year earthly reign of Christ

Term	Futurist Understanding
Lake of Fire	Eternal conscious punishment
Second Coming	Literal, visible, bodily return of Christ

3. Historicist Interpretation

(Revelation unfolds progressively throughout church history)

Term	Historicist Understanding
Babylon the Great	Long-term corrupt religious/political systems
Beast	Papal or imperial systems over centuries
Mark of the Beast	Submission to corrupt religious authority
Tribulation	Extended periods of persecution across history
Seven Churches	Seven chronological eras of church history
Antichrist	Institutional, not merely individual
Millennium	Future golden age of gospel influence
Lake of Fire	Final judgment at history's end
Second Coming	Literal, after historical fulfillment completes

4. Idealist (Symbolic / Theological) Interpretation

(Revelation portrays timeless spiritual realities)

Term	Idealist Understanding
Babylon the Great	Any culture or system opposing God
Beast	Recurrent political power demanding worship
Mark of the Beast	Spiritual allegiance to anti-God systems
Tribulation	Ongoing suffering of God's people in every age
Seven Churches	Types of churches across all eras

Term	Idealist Understanding
Antichrist	Any force or ideology opposing Christ
Millennium	Symbolic reign of Christ now
Lake of Fire	Ultimate defeat of evil
Second Coming	Final, decisive victory of Christ

One-Term Example Across All Views

“The Beast”

- **Preterist:** Nero / Roman Empire
- **Futurist:** Future Antichrist
- **Historicist:** Long-standing corrupt power
- **Idealist:** Any state demanding ultimate loyalty