

Concise Theological Statements in Revelation

Although Revelation is a book full of symbols, which need to be interpreted carefully, it is also a book filled with precise theological statements interspersed throughout the text. These are clear and very descriptive, perhaps more powerful and concise than found elsewhere. For instance, a more powerful, simple and clear description of hell cannot be found other than in Rev 14. What follows is a selection of these.

Theological concepts about Christ

The Lordship of Christ

Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. ... 'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,' says the Lord, 'who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.' ... 'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last.' ... 'Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.' Rev 1:5, 8, 11, 17-18

The Lordship of Christ is first asserted in that he is the ruler over all earthly empires. He sets the bounds of the nations and appoints kings and governments to serve his purpose. Men only reign on earth as they comply with the eternal plan of God. This was spoken to John at the end of the first century and thus Jesus is king over the earth now. This accords with his statement that after the resurrection God gave him authority over all things as a man on the Throne (Matt 28:18). Those groups who claim that Christ is not Lord now (e.g. some Dispensationalists) are utterly wrong and dishonour the Lord.

Christ also affirms that he is the beginning and the end, the first and last. This means that he is the self-existent one, one of the fundamental attributes of God (called aseity). He is the Word that was with God when the world was made (Jn 1:1ff); he is the Creator and the Second Person of the Trinity. He is Lord because he is God.

He is the same person who died and was raised. He is Jesus Christ, who came to earth as God in human form, suffered as a man and died for the sins of men but was raised in glory and ascended to heaven.

He is the one who has the keys of Hades and death. What does this mean? Well the key-holder is the one who opens the door, the one who has power over what the keys lock. Anyone coming in or going out needs permission of the one who holds the key. Hades is the place of departed spirits; it is the realm where men go after death awaiting the Last Judgment when they will be sentenced to hell. The one with the key both locks those who are to be condemned in Hades after death and who releases those chosen from death by giving them resurrection life. Christ thus is Lord of life and death; he gives life to the elect, his chosen people, but seals the fate of the reprobate. Further, with this key he raises the reprobate to judgment in the flesh on the Last Day. They do not merely disappear after death in annihilation, but are raised to sustain an everlasting punishment.

Christ is thus Lord of all things. He is the eternal one, the creator, the one who always was, the one who died and was raised and the one in control of life and death. There is no greater Lord.

The salvific work of Christ

Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him *be* glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Rev 1:5-6

Jesus is, first, the faithful witness; that is, he brings us the truth about God from heaven. There were many previous witnesses, in the form of the OT prophets, who brought messages from God (Heb 1:1) but Christ is THE faithful witness, the Son of God, the Lord and Creator of the Earth, who brings the message of salvation to men. Since he is the faithful witness, it is vital that men must listen to him.

Then it is explained that the beginning of salvation is that God loves us. This is spoken to those who accept the witness of Christ; the elect. Christ does not love everyone or everyone would be saved; he loves the elect, his bride. If he loved others than his bride he would be guilty of adultery; thus Christ cannot love any other than the elect. For this reason he only prays for the elect (Jn 17:9) and his atonement is only effective for those he prays for. Salvation is as wide as God's love – to the elect alone. Since he loves us and since this love stems from eternity (Eph 1:4-5) he comes to bring salvation to those he loves. Those who are adopted as sons are those who were loved from eternity.

The Lord brings sanctification to those he loves. Forgiveness of sins is the result of washing in the blood of Christ; that is, being included in the atonement provided by Christ. Only the cross brings the grace that has the power to forgive sins, and this grace is given to the elect alone, those loved by Christ. Those loved by God have their sins washed away and benefit from the merits of Christ's death and resurrection.

Subsequent to receiving justification, pardon for sins and a new righteousness, believers are adopted as legal heirs in God's family with Christ. Now sons of God united with Christ, believers become new creatures not just forgiven old creatures. They thus become kings and priests to God the Father. This means that a) they are given delegated authority to share in the rulership of the world with Christ; b) that all believers are equal in justification and have a direct relationship to God the Father without any intermediary. Every Christian can pray, worship and have intimate fellowship with God by the Spirit as a result of the work of Christ.

The outcome of all this is that believers alone truly worship God. They have the privilege of being called to worship God for all eternity in harmony of fellowship in a restored and purified world where God dwells. Thus the praise to God for his great salvation begins even now, 'to Him *be* glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen'.

This summary of Christ's work of grace shows that the foundation is the particular love of God for the elect and it ends in the genuine worship of God by his purified saints.

The Return of Christ

Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Rev 1:7

This is a very uncomplicated statement about the Second Coming, yet one which immediately dispenses with many forms of complex eschatology. What does it tell us?

First, that Christ is coming with the clouds, which was affirmed when he ascended to heaven in the same way.

'Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory' (Matt 24:30).

A cloud is always associated with the glory of God, such as the cloud that hid God on Mt Sinai, or the cloud associated with the voice of God during the Transfiguration (Matt 17:5). The glory of God seen in the cloud cannot be hid but is one of shocking glory, known to the Jews as the Shekinah glory. There is no secret appearing here, but a glorious return involving unusual and mysterious cloud formations, which alone would alarm men.

Then there is no mention of any subsequent appearing. There is only one return and that is a glorious return involving the majesty of heaven. This eradicates any idea of a secret rapture.

Then we are told that every eye will see him. This means that the appearance of Christ in a cloud of glory will be a global event, despite the apparent physical problems that this would cause since the earth is a globe with one half in darkness when the other is in light. By God's power Christ appears to the whole Earth and all men see him. This is a world-shaking event before anything else occurs.

But we are then told that when all eyes see him; this includes the dead. Even those Roman soldiers involved in the crucifixion will be raised up to witness this earth-shattering cataclysm. The whole race of men from all time is resurrected on this last day to witness the glorious appearing of Christ.

Finally all the tribes of earth will mourn when they witness this. At this point all men will realise that the Bible was true, the Christian Gospel was genuine and that they no longer have any time to repent and believe. They realise that the witness of Scripture that hell is real and that sin must be paid for are both true and that they now face imminent judgment. The one that they had cursed for many years is now shown to be the Lord of Glory; the one they had derided is now seen in terrifying majesty, and they wail on account of their coming eternal ruin.

This one simple verse teaches all these things very clearly. Huge complicated books on the Second Coming are not necessary if you believe this verse. All you need to know is here.

Theological concepts about God's decree

And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?' And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it. So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. But one of the elders said to me, 'Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.' ... And they sang a new song, saying: 'You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals'. Rev 5:1-5, 9

In a sense all of Revelation is an unfolding of God's decree. The decree, or God's eternal counsel and purpose, is centred in the doctrines of creation, salvation and providence. These are the components of what is necessary to achieve God's plan to have a corporate people as his sons that are spiritual, holy and righteous and thus able to reflect the glory and wisdom of God.

In symbolic terms the decree is identified as the scroll that only Jesus can open. But every aspect of the opened scroll, in judgments on the wicked and blessings on the saints, is an outworking of the decree.

God's people established

To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him *be* glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Rev 1:5-6

You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth. Rev 5:9-10

They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. Rev 20:6

The church of the elect, even before the establishment of the new heaven and Earth, are placed in Christ and thus have authority as the sons of God. As a result of redemption, adoption, justification and sanctification, we are stewards under God in Christ to serve God.

God's people in communion with Christ

Notice the intense closeness of fellowship between Christ and his people; there is true unity here. Though Christ is infinite and different from us, in his grace he condescends to share his life with us. The NT letters explain this didactically, but Revelation explains it symbolically. We can summarise thus:¹

Christ	The church
3:12 Jesus receives a new name.	He writes that name on the foreheads of the redeemed
14:1 Jesus is symbolically pictured standing on Mt Zion.	We immediately read that the 144,000 (the elect) were standing there with him
14:14 Jesus had a golden crown on his head,	14:4 the 24 elders (the church of the OT and NT: 12 patriarchs, 12 apostles) also had golden crowns on their heads
19:11 and 14 Christ is the rider on the white horse.	Immediately we see that his servants followed him on white horses.
20:4 we read that Jesus is living and reigning.	20:4 Christians in heaven live and reign with him. In 3:21 we sit with him on his throne.

God's eternal purpose fulfilled in a new heaven and Earth

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. ... '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.' Rev 21:1-3

God's plan is described in pure simplicity, and yet fully. God's decree is to build a new world where heaven and earth are united, the material and the spiritual conjoined. Here God will dwell with men; only figuratively pictured in the Tabernacle and Temple; only spiritually in the church, but now in material reality. The church is the people of God and he moves amongst them.

¹ I am indebted to suggestions in an article by William Hendriksen here.

The bride (church) is a city

Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And 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*'. Rev 21:2-3

Of course none of the descriptions of the heavenly city in chapter 21 and 22 are to be taken literally (unlike the wild interpretations of Dispensationalists). Apart from any thing else, the city is a perfect cube 1,500 miles wide, long and high. All the details about the city must be interpreted symbolically. This is not the place to put comments of two chapter's worth of symbolism, such as being made of pure gold means it is divine, heavenly.

The city is the bride, the bride is the church; God's elect people; the church in glory. The throne in the centre emphasises that God is the centre of our salvation; the river of grace flows out from him.

The benefits of heavenly life

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. Rev 21:4

The new man in a new body in the new Earth has no more pain. All the taint of sin has gone since the old nature is now removed from the believer and sanctification is complete. In addition, the saint has uninterrupted fellowship in the flesh with God. Consequently, none of the painful things associated with life now occurs – no death, no sorrow, no crying, no pain, but eternal life, complete joy, happiness, elation, blessedness.

Summary of the Gospel: the doorway into life

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. Rev 21:6

The Gospel is predicated on knowing the one who is the Alpha and Omega, the one who has existed by his own power from the beginning, i.e. God in the person of Christ. He gives eternal life, it is not something that can be found or worked for, it must be given. This presupposes that Christ gives this life to those he chooses since not all have life and the life is a gift. Eternal life is given to those who thirst, and this thirst is only found in those who have been made thirsty by God, who have been drawn by him. Natural man is not thirsty for the things of God. Finally, eternal life is given freely, without price. It is by the grace of God alone that men are saved. Grace is a gift that cannot be worked for and is not gained by fulfilling certain conditions, but is a free gift. Those who do not thirst for this life are not true believers. Someone who claims to be a believer but has no thirst for God is not saved.

Theological concepts about sin and its consequences

Human accountability

The guilt of a lack of love

I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love. Rev 2:4

The guilt of accepting false doctrine

I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, ... you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. Rev 2:14-15

The guilt of accepting false teachers / leaders

I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. Rev 2:20

The guilt of hypocrisy

I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. Rev 3:1

The guilt of a lack of zeal

I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Rev 3:15-16

The guilt of sinful acts

They did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts. Rev 9:21

The guilt of succumbing to deception and idolatry

And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. Rev 13:14

If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives *his* mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God. Rev 14:9-10

The guilt of blasphemy

They blasphemed the God of heaven. Rev 16:11

The guilt of worldliness and hedonism

Babylon [the idolatrous world] the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury. ... her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works. Rev 18:2-3, 5, 6

Sin accounted for

And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. Rev 20:12-15

But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. Rev 21:8

A doctrine pervading Revelation is the concept of accountability for sin.

Revelation holds up a picture of the viewpoint of God on the world and human affairs. It gives us a spiritual, heavenly perspective on history. In our world we often see wickedness unpunished. Evil people do iniquitous things and get away with it. Indeed, evil men boast about this. The truth is that God is keeping accounts and every action, even every wicked word (Matt 12:36), every blasphemy (Jude 1:15), every secret sin (Rm 2:16) and every idle

thought (Eccles 12:14) is recorded and will be called to account and then punished by degree.

This is a warning to wicked people who may yet receive the truth and repent. It is also a warning to the unrepentant that every evil deed will meet divine wrath on the Last Day. The book of revelation thus gives comfort to those who seek justice; it will be forthcoming in the Final Judgment. Wicked people do not get away with their iniquity; there is a reckoning.

God's warning judgments

A large part of Revelation is taken up with the theme of God's judgments. These are particularly centred in the seals, trumpets and bowls.

The purpose of God's judgments in the Earth is to wake men up to the reality of their sin and the danger of eternal damnation so that they may repent. For example, Martin Luther was very affected by the death of a friend from a lightning strike and was converted afterwards.

Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place -- unless you repent. Rev 2:5

Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth. Rev 2:16

And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. Rev 2:21-22

Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Rev 3:3

Be zealous and repent. Rev 3:19

But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts. Rev 9:20-21

And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory. ... They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds. Rev 16:9, 11

The word 'repent' appears in the English translation of Revelation 12 times. 12 is the number of divine government or covenant. In his governmental and providential judgment, God gives mankind a perfect opportunity to repent – but, apart from a remnant, mankind ignores these warnings. However, the elect do listen and receive God as a Covenant Redeemer.

The Devil brings about death, famine, warfare, violence etc., which are used by God to warn men about their rebellion. In times of war, for example, many men who formerly ignored their spiritual condition, turned to God and became Christians. In some wars, such as the American Civil War, the numbers of converts was very large, constituting a genuine revival, especially in the Southern armies.

Revelation explains the purpose and nature of these judgments, which finalise in divine wrath.

Hell

If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives *his* mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name. Rev 14:9-11

It does not need significant tools of interpretation to identify the power behind the beast. All schools of thought agree that it is the devil who lies behind whatever the beast is and John confirms it (Rev 13:2, 4 with 12:9 and 20:2). So, we can say that what is in view here is worshipping Satan or supporting the devil. Those who are punished are those who are not of God but are of the devil.

Clearly the mark on the hand and forehead simply refer to thinking and doing. This is sin of mind and deed. What is punishable are the acts of sin and the root of sin in the heart. The punishment is wrath, divine anger unloosed against sin. There is no escaping the fact that God is angry with sin and expresses wrath against it. His indignation is poured out in fulness of wrath on unrepentant sinners. This is pictured as being wine, something that has taken a long time to ferment and concentrate. It is concentrated wrath.

Now regarding the details of the punishment in heaven, we can leave aside speculating on what fire and brimstone represent, but what we can be certain of is that the punishment is a torment. Twice torment is mentioned to emphasise this and the word can be translated as 'torture'. This punishment is done in the presence of angels and Christ. Finally the punishment is eternal; it is clearly stated as being 'forever and ever'. It is also continual in duration, since there is no rest day and night.

A more powerful and terrifying statement about hell will be hard to find.

Theological concepts about the source of opposition to God

The persecution of Christians

Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw *some* of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Rev 2:10

The beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. Rev 11:7

The dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. Rev 12:17

It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. Rev 13:7

This is featured throughout Revelation and it is a symptom of the rebellion of the world against God. Because the world is evil and controlled by Satan, it afflicts believers.

Note that when human rulers put Christians in prison, Revelation says that it is the Devil doing this.

The character of nations can be truly seen in how it treats Christians and Christian principles. When rulers wage war against Christians, either literally (as in many Eastern nations) or figuratively (western Cultural Marxism), it indicates that the Devil is controlling these nations. Note that the current cultural attack on Christian principles in

Britain, going back many years, proves that various UK governments are satanically inspired.

The dragon

And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. Rev 12:3-4

And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. Rev 12:7-9

There is no doubt who this is as Revelation tells us clearly that it is the Devil, Satan (Rev 12:9, 20:2). He is the source of the power in the other forms of opposition to God.

The great enemy of God and the saints is the Devil and he is behind all the evil that goes on in the world. The perpetrators of wickedness are just pawns in the hands of Satan. The root problem is satanic, not just people in power.²

The dragon is fiery; that is, angry, vengeful.³

Seven heads and ten horns refer to consolidated kingly power ('horn' is a symbol of strength and power; 'ten' equals completeness). The heads refer to kingdoms (Rev 17:9; mountains refers to kingdoms). 'Diadem' was originally a band on a turban representing kingly power; it equals a crown. All this speaks of a world government; ruling power.

His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth.

This refers to the war in heaven whereby Satan convinced a third of the angels to join with his insurrection against God. The victory of Jesus at the cross cast them out of heaven on to the atmosphere of Earth (Eph 2:2; Col 2:15).

This is then amplified in Rev 12:7-9.

And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. Rev 12:3-4

This refers to the Old Testament when the OT church (woman) was persecuted by Satan and sought to kill the Messiah when he was born (cf. the murder of the innocents by King Herod).

So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

The centre of the Devil's power is deception; everything he does is by deceit. This is very important to understand. Frequently people go off on wild goose chases because they forgot this concept. Note that the whole world will be deceived by Satan.

² Cf. Eph 6:11-12, 'Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.'

³ Cf. 1 Pt 5:8, 'the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.'

The beast from the sea

I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. Rev 13:1

Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like *the feet of a bear*, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. And *I saw* one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marvelled and followed the beast. So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, 'Who *is* like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?' And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Rev 13:2-8

I am not going to go into detail in interpreting these things, this is not the place (I have done that elsewhere). I will try to show the underlying concepts.

Note that the seven heads and ten horns repeats the power of the dragon. This is the outworking of the dragon's power. In fact this is plainly stated, 'The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority'. 'Sea' refers to arising from uncivilised nations (which it did throughout history).

Note that central to the beast is blasphemy [*on his heads a blasphemous name*'].

'Leopard' refers to the speed of his reign. 'Bear' refers to raging, wrathful strength. 'Lion' speaks of violent kingly authority. Peter pictures the Devil as a lion.

The mortal wound is variously interpreted; most likely it refers to pagan power that Victorian society thought was fully overcome but today is rampant everywhere. Civilisation was thought to be supreme in the world by the 20th century, centred on Christianity. Today people are mostly atheists and all forms of pagan nonsense are being practised everywhere, from witchcraft to necromancy to kundalini yoga to Theosophy and so on.

What is clear is that, 'all the world marvelled and followed the beast. So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast'. This is the end time global government where all mankind follows and worships the beast, and thus worships Satan by proxy. World governments become fully satanic at the end.

For God has put it into their hearts [the ten kings] to fulfil His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth. Rev 17:17-18

The final world government is a satanic conspiracy, which all world rulers will submit to forming a cabal dominated by the Devil through submission to an evil political system.

The character of the beast is blasphemy [*he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, ... Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name*'].

The centre of this blasphemy is accepting worship from the non-Christian world [*All who dwell on the earth will worship him*']. The characteristic of the final world empire is the old sin

going back to the Garden of Eden – the sin of man trying to be a god, or claiming to be God.⁴

And he was given authority to continue for forty-two months.

This refers to the Gospel Age, the time from the cross to the end. 42 months is variously represented in Revelation (e.g. a time, times and half a time). This beast has had power for centuries but it comes to a head in the end times.

Another characteristic is persecution of the saints [*It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them.*].

Note the scope of his power, *‘authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation’*. The beast conquers the whole world. Throughout history he tried to do this but at the end he achieves it – global dominion.

What is the beast?

It is world political power subjected to Satan.

The characteristics, therefore, of this political power are:

- Complete sovereignty; world government.
- Centred in paganism.
- Based upon submission to Satan.
- Full of blasphemy.
- Persecutes Christians.
- Raging wrath.
- Violent kingly power.

The beast from the Earth

Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. Rev 13:11-12

I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *coming* out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, *which* go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world. Rev 16:13-14

Also known as ‘the false prophet’ (Rev 16:13, 19:20, 20:10).

This refers to satanic, world, religious power. There will be a single world religion to accompany the single world government.

‘Earth’ refers to civilised nations.

Although this beast has power, it is not as much power of the first beast (only two horns).

It looks like a lamb but speaks like a dragon. Note the use of deception here. It tries to convince people that it is godly (like a lamb, like Christ) but it is satanic. [Note the example of the Three-Self Church movement in Communist China. It promoted itself as Christian but it was state controlled and led to worship of the state.]

⁴ This is the meaning of 666 (the number of the beast). Six is the number of man (falling short of perfection, 7). The triple form refers to God (three). Thus man trying to be God.

The chief job of this beast, which equals the false prophet, is to make the Earth worship the first beast, satanic, political power.

Note that the dragon and the two beasts are characterised by, ‘three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world’. This refers to the unclean (‘frogs’) doctrines of demons⁵ that underlie the teaching and dictats of the world government.

Babylon the harlot

‘Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.’ So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast *which was* full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. And on her forehead a name *was* written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. Rev 17:1-5

The beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. Rev 17:7

The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth. Rev 17:15, 18

Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury. Rev 18:2-3

Babylon, the great city, the great harlot, represents satanic, global, immoral, commercial materialism and fleshly hedonism. Worldliness. Fleshly pursuits and ungodly passions. This affects all tribes of people [‘where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues ... all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication’].

The kings of the Earth are devoted to this [‘the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her’]. Purple and scarlet refers to Jewish and Gentile kingly authority. Note again the same satanic seven heads and ten horns. The beast (political system) carries her; government rulers are filled with the abominations of hedonism and worldliness. The greed of materialism and corruption rules world leaders [‘the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth’].

Gold etc. here refers to the vanity of worldly riches. [‘The merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury’.]

‘Abominations’ refers to the appalling sins that the rich leaders of the world commit, such as paedophilia, necrophilia, sodomy and blasphemy. The character of the world is demonic [‘has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit’].

⁵ 1 Tim 4:1, ‘Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons’.

Summary



The end time world empire is the final success of Satan (allowed by God after being restrained for thousands of years, Rev 20:1-6). This final global kingdom is the fulfilment of mankind's sin, which leads to the judgment and wrath of God (pictured as a winepress oozing blood, Rev 14:19-20, 19:15).

Satan rules this evil empire through human proxies. It is chiefly divided into three parts: a world political system ruling in fierce power; a world religious system based on deception causing people to worship the political power where leaders think they are gods; and a worldly, system of commercial, materialistic hedonism based on selfishness. The worship of this system is received by Satan as worship of himself because he built this empire and sustains it.

The foulness and abomination of this empire is short-lived. God does not allow this to continue long before he brings in final judgment. It is the culmination of man's rebellion and sin, initiated by the Fall of Adam.

The reversal of God's decree

The Devil, in general, seeks to reverse God's character in all he does. Thus, in society, he seeks to bring in evil, disharmony, unrighteousness, hate and violence.

In the end we see the fulfilment and completeness of man's sin in submission to Satan. It is the fulness of rebellion against God; consummated wickedness. Thus mankind is ripe for judgment and the world is burned up in wrath to remove all traces of satanic evil in holy fire ready for nature's restoration in godliness.

The satanic global empire at the end is the fulfilment of Satan's plans for world domination and it represents the reversal of God's decree.

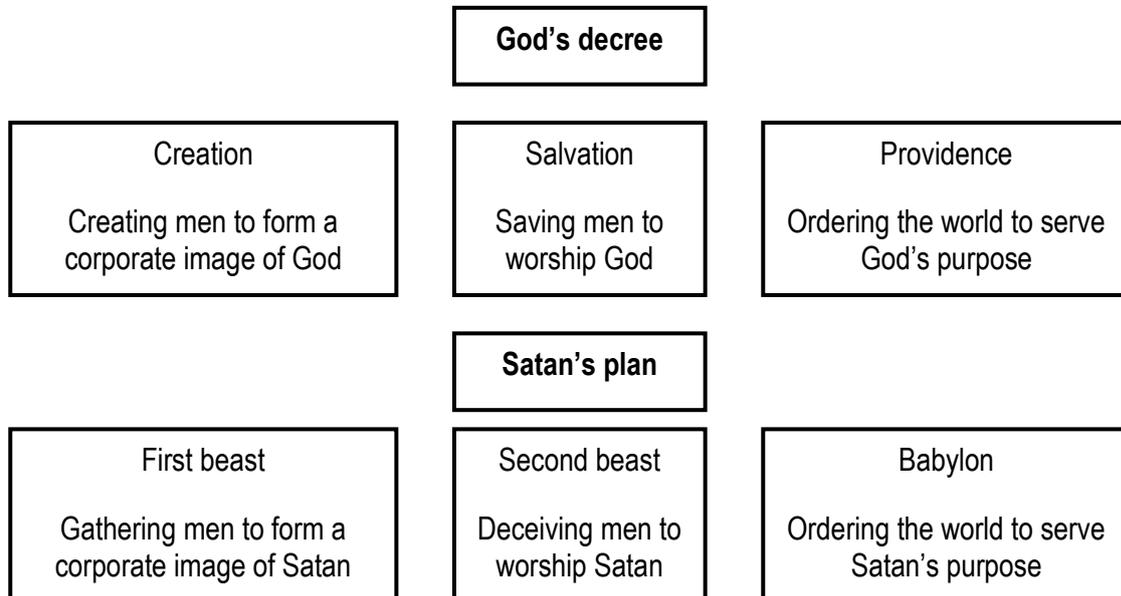
In simple terms, God's eternal plan and counsel includes creation, salvation and providence.⁶ There are various subsets of these but this is a summary of the decree implemented. Satan seeks to have his own version of this in mockery of God's plans. Thus he also has a threefold character in reverse of the decree.

The first beast is evil political power, mirroring God's decree of creation to form mankind in his own image. The beast is world political power to gather mankind into a satanic union manifesting the image of Satan.

⁶ Election and glorification can be considered as aspects of salvation.

The second beast is satanic religious power in the earth getting men to worship Satan through worshipping the beast. This mirrors God's decree of salvation; true religious power to save and get men to worship God.

Babylon is the immoral, materialistic, hedonistic, commercial world system; ordering and organising the world and all human society in wickedness.



This is why the final kingdom is called Antichrist (1 Jn 2:18). The Greek word *antichristos* does not essentially mean someone opposed to Christ. It means someone who usurps the place of Christ. It is opposition by taking the place of Christ. *Anti* can mean opposition or substitution. Thus Jesus warned of 'false Christs' (Matt 24:24). At the end evil men think that they are God and take the place of Christ, demanding worship. This is why Antichrist is best considered as evil corporate humanity.

The plan of Satan is far more than merely filling the Earth with sin. It is the fulfilment of his eternal hubris to be God and to rule the world as God with a race of men identified with him, mimicking Christ as the Head of his church. Satan's plan is a counterfeit to the divine decree.

Conclusion

This is a mere summary of a few doctrinal statements of many that are found in Revelation. Those who never read this book, due to its inherent interpretative difficulties, are missing a great deal that is beneficial. This is one of the reasons that a promise of blessing is attached to the reading and obeying of this and no other book (Rev 1:3).

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