

THE REVELATION

JANUARY 21, 2024

The Places

I. The Places of the Book (In Order of Appearance)

We have looked at the people in the book in an effort to get to know the characters in the Second Coming story. Now let us look at the places in the book in order to understand where things will happen before, during, and after the LORD's Second Coming.

A. Patmos (1:9)

The mention of the island of Patmos lends nothing to the story of the Second Coming save its being the place where the story was delivered to John and recorded for the Holy Bible.

Patmos is an island located between Greece and Asia. It contains about 13 square miles of land and today it has a population of about 3000 people. The island has four main villages and other little settlements around the island. It has two commercial ports and several churches. About halfway up the main mountain on the island is a cave called the *Cave of the Apocalypse*. This cave provides the main source of income for the island through *Christian* tourism. It is about 10 miles by water to the closest island and about 30 miles to the closest mainland on the Asian coast.

B. The Seven Churches

1. Ephesus (1:11, 2:1-7)

Ephesus is about 50 miles northeast by land and sea from Patmos. The city was founded in the 10th century BC and was abandoned during the 15th century AD. However, the city that was abandoned in the 15th century was a rebuilt city after the Goths had destroyed it in 263 AD. In that year, the Church addressed in this book ceased to exist. It lasted 168 years after the message was delivered to John.

2. Smyrna (1:11, 2:8-11)

Smyrna is about 47 miles north of Ephesus. We know that Smyrna was established before 2000 BC, about the time of Abraham, but how long before that we do not know. The church in Smyrna in John's day was situated on the slopes of *Mount Pagos*. What we do know about Smyrna is that it was destroyed by an earthquake in 178 AD but immediately rebuilt under Emperor Marcus Aurelius. On September 13, 1920, the signing of the *Treaty of Sevres* paved the way for Greece to annex the city. But over the next three years, the Muslims threatened that annexation and ultimately took control of the city on September 9, 1922. According to Catholic records, in 1921, with the influx of the Islamic threat looming, the pastorate seat in the church of Smyrna was removed and the church ceased to exist. It had lasted 1826 years after the message was delivered to John.

3. Pergamum (1:11, 2:12-17)

Pergamum is located about 68 miles north of Smyrna. Pergamum was a young city compared to Ephesus and Smyrna. The first written record of its existence occurred in 400/399 BC. However, pottery has been found there that dates back much earlier. Pergamum was affected by the same earthquake that hurt Smyrna in 178 AD. It did not suffer as much damage and continued on. In 1336 AD, the Ottoman Turks captured the city and Christianity was outlawed. Islam was the only religion allowed. At that time, the pastorate seat at the church in Pergamum was removed, and the church ceased to exist. It lasted 1241 years after the message was delivered to John.

4. Thyatira (1:11, 2:18-29)

Thyatira lies about 53 miles southeast of Pergamum. It was the ancient Greek city of Pelopia, but in 290 BC, it was renamed Thyatira by Seleucus I Nicator. According to the apostolic Church records, it was the home of a Christian community until 1922 when the members of the Christian Orthodox church were deported, and the Church in Thyatira ceased to exist. The Muslim Turks were the reason for the deportation, and this coincided with the same struggle that brought the church of Smyrna to an end. The Thyatira church lasted 1827 years after the message was delivered to John.

5. Sardis (1:11, 3:1-6)

Sardis is about 37 miles southeast of Thyatira. Situated in the middle of the Hermus valley, it lies at the foot of Mount Tmolus. The earliest reference to Sardis is from *The Persians of Aeschylus*, written in 472 BC, but we know that the city was captured by the Cimmerians in the 7th century BC. It was destroyed by an earthquake in 17 AD but was quickly rebuilt. From 1071 AD to 1402 AD, the city fluctuated between the Christian and Muslim struggle for control. Finally, in 1402 AD, the Muslims captured the city and ousted all Christians. The church ceased to exist. It had lasted 1307 years after the message was delivered to John.

6. Philadelphia (1:11, 3:7-13)

Philadelphia was about 30 miles southeast of Sardis. The city was established in 189 BC by King Eumenes II of Pergamum and he named it to show his love for his brother. In 17 AD, it suffered badly along with Sardis from an earthquake. In 1390 AD, the city was taken by the Sultan Bayezid and his Muslim force. All Christians were removed or killed, and the Church ceased to exist. The walls of the city were built with the dead bodies of those they had killed. It had lasted 1295 years after the message was delivered to John.

7. Laodicea (1:11, 3:13-22)

Laodicea was the last Church to receive a letter from the LORD, both in the Scripture and chronology. It, therefore, heard the last word to be included in the Bible first before it was circulated throughout the Christian world. It was about 61 miles southeast of Philadelphia and about 99 miles east of Ephesus. It was originally called *Diospolis*, or *The City of Zeus*. Later, it was called *Rhodas*, and finally, Antiochus II Theos renamed it after his wife, Laodice. It is just 11 miles from Colossae. It was a large Jewish community by the time of John's writing. The Church *Council of Laodicea* was held there from 363 – 364 AD. The city was desolate by 1450 AD, but the Roman Catholic Church placed it under the bishopric as a *titular see*, meaning that if a pastor was ever needed, one would be provided. Even without a population, the Roman Catholic Church held a position for a *titular bishop* of the

titular see of Laodicea until 1968. No further consideration has been made since then, therefore rendering the lampstand of Laodicea extinguished. The Church ceased to exist in 1450 AD, but the position of a pastor for that Church did not cease until 1968 AD. In one way, it had lasted only 1355 years after the message was delivered to John. In another way, it lasted 1873 years after its delivery to John, making it the last Church of the seven churches to exist in the timeline to the Second Coming of the LORD.

C. The Door Open to Heaven (4:1)

When John had finished writing the letters to each of the seven Churches, he was shown a door in the air leading to heaven. He was then invited to enter heaven to see all the rest of the story that would occur after the seven Churches ceased to exist. John did not really enter into heaven. He told us that he was immediately in the spirit, or rather, in his spirit he was taken into heaven. It was a spiritual journey, not a physical one. In the Scripture, the prophecies of the LORD were given in three ways. First, in *oracles*, sometimes called *burdens*. In this type of communication, the LORD would tell the prophet exactly what to say, how to say it, when to say it, and why they were to say it. Not one word was open to change or interpretation. For all practical purposes, the letters to the seven Churches would be considered *oracles* or *burdens*. The LORD told John exactly what to write to each Church. Second, through *visions* which we would call *daydreams*. The LORD would allow the prophet to drift off in his mind away from the reality of earthly life and see in living color something that was going to happen in the future. The *drifting off in the mind* is what John means when he indicates that he was in the spirit. He was not asleep; he was awake, but definitely in another place mentally. With *visions*, the LORD allowed the prophet to explain in his own words what he saw. That is exactly what the LORD did with John starting in chapter 4 verse 1. Third, just for completeness, the LORD would sometimes visit the prophet or a person in a dream. Like the *visions*, the LORD allowed the prophet to see the scene played out in his dream in living color and when he awoke, he was allowed to write what he had seen in his own words. Visions were like *daydreams*; however, dreams were given while the prophet or person was asleep.

D. The Throne in Heaven (4:2-11)

When John drifted off in the spirit to the vision that awaited through the door to heaven, he saw the *Throne Room of the LORD*. He saw what the LORD created for Himself before He created the Earth. It was magnificent. In summary, he saw the floor of the room as a sheet of crystal emerald polished glass. He saw the twenty-four elders. (*Note: If the twenty-four elders were made up of the twelve sons of Jacob and the twelve Apostles as some teachers teach, there should have been only twenty-three elders. Why? John was an Apostle and he had not died yet! He does not tell us that he saw himself in the group of elders.*) He saw the four living creatures, the cherubim with the face of a lion, bull, man, and eagle. He saw the seven spirits, that is, those seven angels that were always before the throne of the LORD. “Always” means *always*; it does not mean that they go and come, it means they are always there in front of Him. The whole room was surrounded by ten thousand times ten thousand angels, row after row, all joining in with the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures to “say” praises to the LORD. “Glory, glory, glory is the LORD God Almighty,” etc, etc, etc!

And he saw the focal point of the whole throne room, the *emerald throne* with the LORD seated upon it - thunder and lightning exploding around it, a rainbow encircling it.

There, in the throne room, the seals will be broken, the trumps will be blown and the bowls of wrath will be poured. The twenty-four elders will cast their crowns at the feet of Jesus, play their harps and offer incense all of which represent the prayers of the saints. O' how marvelous! O' how wonderful! Even John's attempt to describe it must fall far short of the magnificent glory and splendor of the LORD's personal throne room. The beauty of all He created here on earth, must pale in comparison to what He created for Himself!

E. Abyss (9:11)

With the breaking of the seals, the blowing of the trumpets and the pouring of the bowls of wrath in heaven, things begin to happen on earth. The first mentioned is the *abyss*. An *abyss* is always located deep in the ocean or sea in the Scripture. Therefore, the *abyss* described by John could be in any of the mighty and vast oceans. But as we will see, it makes just as much sense for the *abyss* mentioned in this story to be located deep in the Mediterranean Sea as we see later in this lesson. In John's day it was called the *Great Sea*. The reason for this suggestion is that all the nations of the Roman Empire which included the Western Empire that fell in 476 BC and the Eastern or Byzantine Empire that fell in 1453, surround the *Great Sea* save the state of Britain. All the rest of the nations have a coastline on the *Great Sea*. The *Beast out of the Sea*, will be revealed in the Revelation as the joining together of ten nations around the *Great Sea*. Out of the *abyss* of this sea will come the *beast* but an angel will also have the key to the prison cell located at the bottom of that sea in which *Satan* will be bound in chains and secured under locked doors for 1,000 years.

F. Great River Euphrates (9:14)

The *Great River Euphrates* is difficult to identify, not because of where it runs and its length, but because it begins near the Black and Caspian Seas and runs southeast to the coastline of the gulf in modern-day Kuwait. Its flow of water is not in doubt at all. The problem is that no one knows the location of the imprisoned, four, hideous demons that have been locked up and will continue to be locked up until the actual Second Coming of the LORD begins. Where are they? Are they to the north, directly above Israel, where Haran was located, the home of Abram until his father died? Or, are they hundreds of miles downstream to the east where the city of Babylon once stood? Maybe they are in the Bagdad area! In fact, we do not know. We do know the track of the river, but we do not know the place of these events. Where will the 200,000-million-man army cross over the river and march to the valley of Armageddon? We do not know! Even if they did march across it at the old Babylon location, it would be foolish for any generation to attempt to cross the 600-mile hot desert between the crossing and the valley. It would make better sense that they followed the *Fertile Crescent* up the Euphrates River to the Haran area and then turned south. Doing so would assure such an army of enough fresh water and supplies to make the trip. Why would we say this with the advantage of modern vehicles that can make the trip easy? It all has to do with the fact that John saw them marching on foot. That changes the dynamics and itinerary of the journey. Even mighty Alexander the Great followed the *Fertile Crescent* as well as all the other armies of the world. If they use aircraft, that would be a different story altogether. We will see when we get into the storyline.

G. Sodom and Egypt – Jerusalem (11:8)

In a very strange metaphor, Jerusalem is compared to Sodom and Egypt. We know it is Jerusalem because John states that it is the city "where the LORD was crucified." Sodom indicates a *vice* and

Egypt indicates a *vanity or emptiness*. Sodom was guilty of the sin of homosexuality; Egypt was guilty of the emptiness of the worship of every god in the book except the true LORD God. Both are detested by the LORD! With the beast in control of Jerusalem, with his throne established there, and the new worship imposed by the false prophet, Jerusalem will be a center of vice and vanity. It is and will continue to be the great city of sin until the Israelites change their hearts and accept the LORD as their Messiah.

H. Beast Out of the Sea (13:1)

In chapter 13, we discover the true makeup of this red *beast out of the sea*. It is not an animal at all, that is just his symbol for descriptive purposes. He is actually a nation made up of the ten states formed when the Western and Eastern Roman Empires fell (*Britain, France, Spain, Italy, North Africa, Greece, Macedonia, Turkey, Syria, Egypt*). Those ten states will be represented on the beast as the *horns*. We might better think of them as the horns of power in each state. But there are only seven heads. Why? At the beginning of the formation of this newly revived Roman Empire, there will be ten heads. May we call them ten presidents of the ten nations that decided to join together to make a new nation? In the formation of the new empire, a man will arise who is not one of the ten presidents. It will be his desire to be the leader of the ten-nation empire. In the story, three of the presidents will reject him as leader. He will have them killed, leaving only seven heads to lead all ten nations with him as the supreme president. All the other seven presidents will then be considered vice presidents, for lack of a better term. The new supreme president is described in the book of Daniel as the “little horn that came up among the ten horns.” This supreme president will come from Egypt, he will be blinded in one eye, and he will set his capital in some unknown location in the new empire for some unknown length of time. This beastly empire may have been in place for many years before he will be revealed to be satanic in every way. What we do know is that in the middle of the seven years of tribulation for the nation of Israel, the king of the north along with the kings of the east and south, will attempt to take Jerusalem by force and this little horned beastly king will move into Jerusalem, defeat the three kings and set his throne in the temple there. Once in place, he will reveal his true nature and his satanic empowerment.

I. Mount Zion (14:1)

The old city of David, called Jerusalem, sat on Mount Zion. It was just south of Mount Moriah where the Temple was built in Solomon’s day. Mount Zion was originally controlled by the Jebusite tribe from the descendants of Canaan. On that mount they had built the great Jebusite citadel that was thought to be undefeatable. But David defeated them in his seventh year as king, captured the citadel, moved the capital from Hebron to the mount and called it Jeru-salem. *Jeru* meaning *city of* and *salem* meaning *peace*. Throughout all of history, from the days of Abraham until today, whoever controlled Mount Zion controlled all the politics of the Promised Land and whoever controlled Mount Moriah controlled the religion in the Promised Land. Mount Moriah is really controlled by the nation of Islam today, not Israel, but Mount Zion is controlled by the nation of Israel, not Islam.

J. Babylon the Great (14:8)

In chapter 14, we see the first mention of Babylon in the Revelation. It may be the first, but it is far from the last. “Fallen, fallen, is Babylon the Great” is but a warning of the coming complete

destruction of the political, religious, and economic systems of the beast. It will be doom for anyone who defies the beast, it will be the winepress for wrath from the LORD for anyone who worships the beast and takes his number 666 on their heads or hands. We would like to say that this great city of Babylon is located far to the east on the Euphrates River, but we cannot. It is the city where the capital of the beast rests. When this little horned beast shows his true color and intent with his seven-headed nation and ten-horned kingdom, he will be residing and controlling the Revived Roman Empire from the “great city” – Sodom and Egypt, that is, the city of Jerusalem.

K. Temple of the Tabernacle in Heaven (15:5)

John had been viewing all the events in the different locations on earth from the throne room of the LORD in heaven. Now it was time for him to see the *Temple of the Tabernacle in Heaven*. Moses had seen this *Temple of the Tabernacle* when he was on Mount Sinai. He had measured it in order that a replica could be built at the foot of the mount. He had measured the seven candle lampstand, the table of showbread, the table of incense, the veil, the Ark of the Covenant, the tent, the curtains, the rope, the lines, the brazen altar, and the large basin. He also took measurements of all the fire pans and utensils there in that heavenly Tabernacle so they could be replicated down in the Sinai camp. John will see the Ark of the Covenant in that *Temple of the Tabernacle*, the original one that Moses saw and measured, not the one that was built on earth. Jeremiah hid it in 586 BC before Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem. John had never seen the Ark, it had long since been gone from sight for five centuries by the time this Revelation was given.

L. Har-Magedon (16:16)

The famous valley of Har-Mageddon! We call it the Valley of Armageddon today. In the Bible it is called *the Valley of Jezreel, the valley of decision, the valley of Jehoshophat* and of course *the valley of Armageddon*. Just south of Nazareth, in Galilee, a large valley can be found southwest of the *Sea of Galilee*. The scholars tell us that more battles have been fought there and more blood has been spilled there than in all the other battles in the world combined in history. King Saul and his sons died on the slopes of Mount Gilboa that led down to this valley. Egyptian Pharaohs and their armies were defeated there. Jehu killed Jehoram there. King Ahab died there and many more.

The valley is spear-shaped, with the point of the spear pointing to Mount Carmel and the shaft reaching eastward into the Jordan Valley. The valley had many hills around it with famous names, Megiddo, Jezreel, Gilboa, Tabor, and more. It covers about 138 square miles of land. Experts tell us that 26 million people can stand side-by-side and front to back in one square mile. That means that the valley of Armageddon can squeeze in like sardines approximately 3,588,000,000 people or 10 people within every square meter in the valley. Leaving Jerusalem and going north, the nearest point to touch the valley is about 55 miles away, far enough that the new Temple mount can rise from the Mount of Olives 50 miles square and still leave enough room to the north for the blood of the dead in the valley to rise as high as the bridles on the horses and remain there for days as the birds of prey dine at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

M. Waters of the Woman (17:15)

The waters of the Woman, the *Adulterous Woman riding the red beast*, are the people of the ten-nation Revived Roman Empire under the control of the *Red Scarlet Beast*.

N. The Woman – the Great City (17:18)

The *Adulterous Woman riding the red beast*, is the great city. When she arrives in the storyline, the *Red Scarlet Beast* has moved his capital to Jerusalem. She controls the *Red Scarlet Beast* from Jerusalem, too. This point is not new, she is already there. She has controlled the temple mount since 900 AD. She is Islam, and she will rule over the Red Scarlet Beast with her laws until he does not need her anymore. Therefore, we see her capital in the city of Jerusalem, too.

O. The Marriage of the Lamb (19:7)

John had seen the *Throne Room for the LORD* and the *Temple of the Tabernacle in Heaven*. At this point in the story, he is allowed to see the Bride of Christ exit from the bridal chamber, ready and prepared for battle. All we know is that the *Bride* has been with the LORD Jesus in the marriage ceremony for seven years at this point. The *Judgment Seat* occurred during that ceremony in the chamber where the LORD gave gifts and rewards to His *Bride*. Note here that everyone will be judged sometime by the LORD. For those of us who belong to the LORD, our judgment will be gifts and rewards; for those who detest and hate the LORD, their judgment will be punishment and doom in the Lake of Fire and Brimstone.

P. The Marriage Supper of the Lamb (19:17)

We have already spoken of this event several times. It will occur in the valley of Armageddon where the blood will rise as high as the bridles on the horses. It is quite possible that the dead bodies and spilled blood in that valley will consist of more than three and a half billion people. The invited guests who will come and dine on the feast of flesh and blood will be all the birds of prey. They will follow the LORD and His Bride, who is the mighty host of heaven accompanying the LORD to the Battle of Armageddon. The birds will then eat the blood of the marriage supper.

Q. The 1,000 Year Kingdom (20:5)

Once the LORD arrives at the valley of Armageddon, the words “it is done” will be heard by all. The people and their animals who have gathered in the valley to defeat the LORD will begin to rot where they stand. The Mount of Olives will begin to move when the LORD places His foot on the same place He lifted it from when He ascended into heaven. The mount will split and move toward the north and south. A new mountain will begin to rise that will have a plateau 50 miles wide and 50 miles deep. All the other mountains of the world will begin to move, too. The highest of the mountains in the world will all become lower than this holy mount. His new Temple will be set up with the entrance facing the east. A river will run from behind the LORD’s throne out the east entrance and turn south to run to turn the Dead Sea into a living sea. In the movement of the topography of the world on that day of Armageddon, the Red Sea which includes the Sea of Suez and the Sea of Aqaba will be filled with dirt allowing a seamless land mass from the Nile River to the Euphrates River and great highways will be built so the world can come to this elevated Jerusalem by land or sea with no traffic jams at all. Everyone in the world will be required to visit the LORD in His temple at least once every year.

On that day of the LORD, Satan, the Red Dragon, will be chained by an angel and secured at the bottom of the abyss under locked doors for 1,000 years.

Then the LORD will reign in His holy temple as the King of kings and LORD of lords.

R. The Last Battle Attempt of Satan (20:7-9)

At the end of the 1,000 years, the angel will let Satan, the *Red Dragon* loose from the abyss. He will go about deceiving the people of the world again. Then, he will call all those who have believed him to assemble in the valley north of Jerusalem for the purpose of marching on the Temple and removing the LORD Jesus from His Great White Throne. They will not be successful. The LORD will defeat them all with His Word, and they will be sent to the Lake of Fire and Brimstone.

S. The Lake of Fire and Brimstone (20:10)

On the day of Armageddon, the two beasts will be cast in the Lake of Fire and Brimstone. They will be the first to go there. It will be 1,000 years before anyone else will be sent to that eternal hell.

T. The Great White Throne Judgment (20:11)

When the final battle is over, the LORD will immediately call for the resurrection of all the dead who have gone to the place of torment in Hades. They will all stand before the LORD at His Great White Throne to give an account of their lives. The *Book of Life* will be searched, and their names will not be there. They were blotted out when they died without accepting Jesus as their LORD. They all are without excuse. Not one of them will be pardoned. They will all be sent immediately to the Lake of Fire and Brimstone for eternity.

U. New Heaven and New Earth (21:1)

Before any more sin can occur on the earth, the LORD will instantaneously transform all the humans who have placed their trust in Him into sinless, glorified bodies dressed in robes of white like all the believers who have gone before. At that time, the heavens and the earth will be purified of all sin, never to show its evil again, never thought of, never acted on, never in one's mind.

V. The New Jerusalem (21:2)

Then, with the earth being sinless, with all humans transformed with all evil eradicated, John saw the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven. He may have called it the New Jerusalem because it is going to take the place of the old Jerusalem. Even the 1,000-year elevated Temple Mount of the LORD will be replaced. The LORD will not need that Temple anymore because God the Father will bring His home to this world for all eternity. The New Jerusalem is not new at all. It was the first thing the LORD made on the first day of creation before He made the earth. It has been and forever will be the home of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. It is an amazing place that we will get to know when we get to chapter 21 in the story.