

REVELATION
Final Exam Study Guide

Note: Be sure to bring an unmarked Bible with you to the exam that does not have study notes, as well as theme paper on which to write.

I. Dragon Cycle (12–20)

Briefly answer with short sentences or paragraphs the following questions, using short explanations, descriptions, and synthetic analysis. The questions were developed directly from the class lecture handouts.

1. Know the general outline of the Dragon Cycle, given in the graphic below. Be able to fill this out if presented as a blank table on the exam. What does this cycle add to the understanding of the local conflict engaged by the seven churches as already presented in the Christ Cycle?

Dragon Cycle (12–20)	
Cosmic Conflict (Rev 12–13)	Dragon Attack (12)
	Beast Agents (13)
Messianic Conquest (Rev 14–20)	Bowl Prelude (14)
	Bowl Judgments (15–16)
	Bowl Perspectives (17–20)
Eschatological Climax (Rev 20)	Satan's Defeat (20)
	God's Judgment (20)

2. What is the major method by which the Dragon Cycle judgment is woven into the previous series of judgments in Revelation 1–11? Key here will be to observe the significance of the triad of judgment heptads, as well as the common Old Testament tradition behind two of the heptad series.
3. What drives the plotline of the Dragon Cycle in contrast to the previous Christ Cycle? How does this new literary strategy help John make his point with the Dragon Cycle?

A. Cosmic Conflict (12–13)

1. Outline the structure of chapter 12 showing how John has intercalated a section. What does this intercalated section emphasize? What does Rev. 12:11 tell us of John's controlling theology for all imagery in Revelation? Memorize Dr. Stevens's comment on the phrase "by the blood of the Lamb." Restate this comment in your own words.
2. Explain how Revelation's Dragon Cycle could be titled, "A Tale of Two Women."
3. Illustrate how observing the apocalyptic genre of Revelation means allowing John to be highly innovative in his use of Old Testament traditions in the imagery of the first beast from the sea in chapter 13.

4. Describe how the second beast of Revelation 13 relates to the seven churches of Asia Minor. Of the six interpretive corollaries that derive from Revelation's mix of three genres, what corollary is behind the approach taken in the lecture handout?
 5. What is the main hermeneutical point to be made about decoding 666? Therefore, the only solution is which one? At the same time, what is the solution taken by a number of scholars on this number/name riddle?
- B. Messianic Conquest (14–20)*
1. *Proleptic Prelude (14)*
 1. Show the three-part movement of chapter 14 as a prelude on the bowl judgments based on the theme of God's judgment. What is John trying to accomplish by featuring a prelude to the Bowl Judgments?
 2. Use the phrase from 14:1–5, "in their mouth was no lie," to explain how one might characterize Revelation as a "war of words." Illustrate using examples from the text of Revelation. As one example, how do the "foul spirits as frogs" in Bowl 6 (Rev. 16:13–14) make this point?
 3. Explain how creation theology is crucial to understanding a theology of redemption by reference to 14:6–13 in the first angel's announcement of the "eternal gospel." Use this idea to explain 21:5–8. Again, how does the divine title Alpha/Omega relate to this observation (1:8; 21:6)?
 4. What is the problem associated with interpreting the two harvests of wheat and grapes? What Old Testament imagery defends taking both together as negative? What New Testament tradition defends taking each separately, one positive, one negative?
 2. *Bowl Judgments (15–16)*
 1. What would lead the reader of Revelation to conclude that the Bowl Judgments will bring the Judgment Cycle to a conclusion?
 2. How does John use the four living creatures surrounding God's throne as a narrative *inclusio* marking the inauguration and the conclusion of the Judgment Cycle? (See 15:5–8.)
 3. What Old Testament material is behind the imagery of the Bowl Judgments? Why would John think this Old Testament material is pertinent to the situation of the seven churches in Asia Minor?
 4. What three additional metaphors does John include to enhance the judgment of the sixth bowl? Thus, any of these three is just a "metaphor in a metaphor," as Dr. Stevens would say. So, literarily, what does that mean for the imagery of Armageddon? Is the battle of Armageddon even a main point or the primary focus for John?
 5. What are the linguistic ambiguities surrounding the term "Harmagedon" in 16:16? What do these ambiguities suggest is John's point about this battle? Then, if "Harmagedon" has no real geography, how does John communicate to whom this so-called "battle" applies? That is, what specific expressions in

the benediction of 16:15, expressed right before the imagery of Armageddon, help interpret to whom the Armageddon imagery applies?

3. *Bowl Perspectives (17–20)*

a. Harlot (17)

1. What is the general outline of the material in chapters 17–20 after the Bowl Judgments? What is John providing with this material? Whose viewpoints are featured to accomplish this objective? Be able to fill out the graphic below if presented as a blank table on the exam.

Bowl Perspectives	
Persp.	Rev 17—Harlot (Prophet's View)
	Rev 18—Babylon (Heaven's View)
17–20	Rev 19—Rider (Messiah's View)
	Rev 20—Millennium (Martyr's View)

2. What themes does the Nero *redivivus* myth provide in a parody of Christ? (See material on the sources for chapter 17.)
 3. What view is presented by the harlot material in chapter 17? How is chapter 17 on the harlot to be related to issues in the Seven Letters?
 4. How does John make transparently obvious with his harlot imagery that he is talking about Rome?
 5. What are the two major interpretive problems with using the eight kings sequence in chapter 17 in the attempt to date Revelation?
 6. How does the beast biography given in 17:9–14 reveal God's strategy for dealing with evil?
- #### b. Babylon (18)
1. Whose perspective binds the laments in 18:1–19:10? How does this perspective interpret the laments for the reader? Would John sing the woe dirge or the hallelujah chorus? That is, does John want the reader to think he empathizes with those who are lamenting Babylon's fall?
 2. What is the central message and central command of this entire chapter given in 18:4–6? Does John think the command is to be fulfilled literally? In terms of the situation of the seven churches, how would the command be fulfilled? (See 18:4–6.)
 3. How does Babylon's boast, "I sit as a queen," in 18:7 relate to the issues confronted in the seven letters, according to Dr. Stevens?

4. The detailed list of commercial activity that John provides clearly reveals that he has in mind what empire and its control over trade and what kind of lifestyle associated with the elite of that empire?
- c. Rider (19)
1. Whose perspective on the Bowl Judgments is John providing with the Rider imagery? On what color horse would victorious Roman generals ride down the streets of Rome in a triumph parade? What does this background suggest about John's imagery?
 2. Explain how the "unknown name" of the rider on the white horse in chapter 19 may relate to Babylon specifically in terms of power to break Babylon's "sorcery" (i.e., Rome's ideological and empire propaganda).
 3. How does John's description of the robe and the name of the rider on the white horse integrate into an understanding of 5:6 in the Vision of Heaven that is the theological foundation for the entire Judgment Cycle?
 4. How does the theological focus of the Vision of Heaven in Rev 4–5 parallel that of the Vision of Babylon in Rev 18–19? By making this parallel, is John implying that the Rider imagery is about realities of the parousia or of the incarnation?
 5. Having a robe "baptized in blood" is whose blood in terms of all the imagery of the Lamb in the book of Revelation? Is this imagery a focus on the incarnation or the parousia?
 6. What about the army's description indicates the army following the Rider is not a "typical" army of the standard Roman military variety? What does this suggest about the "battle" to be engaged?
 7. What key characters introduced in chapter 13 are defeated in this engagement? John used these characters to describe what conflict (think seven churches)? Therefore, the issues of the Rider scene are still the same as the issues of the local conflict engaged in chapter 13. Once again, what does this say about the focus of the Rider imagery, incarnation consequences or parousia consequences?
 8. Reflect on the victorious Rider scene. How does this scene theologically integrate the first and second coming? What does John's master image of a slaughtered lamb signal about the nature of the struggle? The nature of the victory? The nature of the second coming?
 9. What is the theological significance of the imagery of the lake of fire in 19:17–21? How does the defeat of the confederate kings fulfill 12:11?
- d. Millennium (20)
1. Whose perspective on the Bowl Judgments is John providing with the millennium imagery?
 2. Identify three critical observations to be made about the martyr reign of the millennium in terms of its focus, location, and subjects.

3. How does the martyr reign of the millennium speak to the issues of the Seven Letters in terms of Antipas, the promises in the letters “to those who conquer,” and the promise in 14:6?
4. The martyr reign specifically is for beast martyrdom. How does this express vindication of Antipas and all those rejecting imperial propaganda in Asia Minor of the first century?
5. What does the benediction of 20:6 indicate Christ’s kingdom is composed of?
6. What do the radical variations in the length of time for the messianic interregnum in Jewish thought suggest about John’s one thousand year reign?

C. Eschatological Climax (20)

1. Satan’s Defeat—Gog and Magog (20:7–10)

1. Explain what Satan being “loosed again” (20:7) probably means in context of the historical setting of the Dragon Cycle as figuring first-century Asia Minor churches confronted by the idolatrous and blasphemous claims of the Roman empire. (Satan’s ability to deceive the world in the Roman empire in the first century is reprised again in a final empire assaulting the church that issues in the final passion of the church.)
2. What indicates the context has shifted and we no longer are in the first century? However, what is John now suggesting about the connection of the local situation of the seven churches in first-century Asia Minor (symbolized in the Seals, Trumpets, and Bowls, and in the beasts and Babylon) and the end of time imagery in Gog/Magog?
3. In what three ways does John innovate the Gog/Magog imagery in 20:7–10 to accommodate his special use of Ezekiel’s imagery?
4. What does John ignore in his own narrative by presenting this Gog/Magog battle in terms of the defeat of all opponents in the immediately previous Rider scene?
5. What imagery does John use to indicate evil is totally eradicated? In what way in the plot of Revelation is this judgment indicated as being forever? That is, what is true about every character thrown into the lake of fire in the drama of Revelation?

2. God’s Judgment—Great White Throne (20:11–15)

1. How does the Last Judgment imagery in chapter 20 return us full circle to Revelation 4?
2. How does John indicate that this judgment is thoroughly inclusive?
3. What is the distinction in the roles of Death and Hades? Of what are these personified characters the preeminent symbols? What is the implication of their destiny in the lake of fire for the new creation?

4. Identify two theological questions surrounding the lake of fire imagery in the Last Judgment in 20:11–15.

II. Vision of Victory (21)

Briefly answer with short sentences or paragraphs the following questions, using short explanations, descriptions, and synthetic analysis. The questions were developed directly from the class lecture handouts.

1. What is the problem with understanding “new” in the new heavens and the new earth?
2. What are two elements behind the expression, “he who conquers,” in 21:7 related to the Roman Empire and to believers?
3. To what specifically does the vice list in 21:5–8 relate? Explain in this context expressions such as “cowardly,” “faithless,” and “liars.”
4. In the imagery of New Jerusalem, what is John’s major innovation of Ezekiel’s description of the eschatological city of God? What does this mean theologically?
5. How does Dr. Stevens understand the pilgrimage of the nations theme that John innovates in describing the wealth of New Jerusalem in 21:9–27?
6. What are the three Garden of Eden elements in the description of New Jerusalem? How do these elements relate to the context of this narrative unit in Revelation?
7. How does John’s description of the illumination of New Jerusalem (“the Lord will be their light”) cause the narrative of Revelation to run full circle back to the opening scene of the Inaugural Vision of the one like a son of man? What theological significance would you draw from this imagery?
8. How does the antithetical rhetorical function of the unit that concludes the description of New Jerusalem (22:1–5) relate to the Seven Churches?

III. Conclusion (22)

1. What are the narrative functions of the conclusion of Revelation in 22:6–21?
2. How does John understand Daniel’s “after these things” prophecy of the future kingdom of God in terms of its time frame? How are we to integrate this perspective into our eschatology? What event really “unveils” the future?
3. Outline Beasley-Murray’s take on the words of invitation in 22:17. What is the contextual significance of “water of life without price,” according to Dr. Stevens?
4. What is the contextual significance of the words of warning in 22:18–19, according to Dr. Stevens?
5. How does the prayer, “Come, Lord Jesus!” relate to the first public reading of Revelation among the Seven Churches of Asia Minor?

6. What interpretative corollary do we draw from the epistolary benediction in 22:21? How is this significant for interpreting the material in Revelation bounded between its epistolary beginning and ending?

IV. Reflective Analysis

1. Look over your book review of Boyer's monograph, *When Time Shall Be No More*. Also, review the articles in Stevens's book, *Essays on Revelation*. Using these and the Stevens's textbook as a point of departure, provide your own serious reaction, reflection, and analysis about the book of Revelation. What are you learning? What have been your major moments of insight?
2. What are your continuing questions about the book of Revelation? What are the challenges for integrating your understandings into your ministry in the local church?