COGMA

Church of God Mission Academy

STUDY GUIDE 58

The Gospel Day

STUDY GUIDE 2 OF 3:

Revelation and the Gospel Day

An overview of prophetic patterns through the New Covenant age.



Equipping and empowering for effective service

2 Timothy 2:2

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

My Study Plan

Preparing a Study Plan before starting this Study Guide will assist you in completing it within a designated timeframe. It also helps in developing the discipline required for studying God's Word effectively.

Proverbs 16:3:

> *Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.*

My Study Guide Journal

Keep a record as you progress through your Study Guide, including the Personal Responses for each section, for future reference and goal setting.

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Important Points

- COGMA does not claim to be infallible or the authority.
- Infallibility and authority belong only to God and His Word.

COGMA therefore strongly advises that you prayerfully study the content of each Study Guide with the heart of a Berean (**Acts 17:10–12**).

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PREFACE

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The previous Study Guide established the Gospel Day as the great New Covenant day that began at Pentecost in A.D. 31 and continues until the end of time. We now turn to the book of Revelation to see how Scripture gives us a prophetic framework for understanding that day more fully.

Revelation is not intended to draw us into speculation, fear or endless arguments about mysterious future events. Its opening words tell us what the book is about.

John wrote in **Revelation 1:1**:

> *"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:"*

The book is first of all *"The Revelation of Jesus Christ."*

The word revelation carries the thought of an unveiling or uncovering. The purpose of the book is therefore not to hide truth, but to reveal it. Revelation must be approached as a spiritual book whose symbols are interpreted through the harmony of Scripture, not through imagination or sensational prediction.

Throughout this Study Guide, we will see that Revelation presents one great vision through several connected series. The letters, seals, trumpets and other prophetic scenes do not tell unrelated stories. Together they provide different views of the same Gospel Day, tracing the spiritual journey of the Church from its beginning at Pentecost to the end of time.

We will also consider an important principle for understanding prophetic time: conditions before dates. Scripture gives prophetic events, spiritual conditions and timespans. History helps us recognise when those conditions have been fulfilled. Prophecy must therefore be handled carefully, humbly and without forcing certainty where the evidence does not establish it.

The symbols, periods and timespans of Revelation are important, but they must never become the centre of the message. Neither may any interpretation of Revelation be allowed to introduce doctrine outside the Word of God. Scripture remains the plumb line by which every prophetic conclusion must be tested.

Jesus Christ is the centre.

The purpose of prophetic understanding is not simply to know where we are on a chart. It is to see more clearly what God has revealed through His Word concerning Jesus Christ, His kingdom and His Church.

As we begin, one principle must remain before us:

Revelation does not give us another Gospel. It unveils more clearly the one Jesus Christ who is already the centre, fulfilment and reality of the Gospel Day.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Explain why Revelation unveils Jesus Christ rather than another Gospel.

Personal Reflection

Have you approached Revelation mainly with fear or fascination rather than expecting to see Jesus Christ more clearly?

Action Step

Before your next reading in Revelation, identify one attitude to change and read the verses with the question: What do they reveal about Jesus Christ?

INTRODUCTION: REVELATION AND THE GOSPEL DAY

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The Gospel Day gives us the broad framework of the New Covenant age. Revelation helps us see that same day through prophetic vision.

The book does not simply move from one historical event to another in a straight chronological line. John was shown a series of spiritual scenes that reveal the journey of the Church, the opposition she would face, the preservation of truth through periods of darkness, and the victory found in Jesus Christ.

Revelation therefore needs to be understood in relation to the Gospel Day. It is not a separate prophetic subject disconnected from the rest of Scripture. Its visions belong within the same New Covenant reality that began at Pentecost in A.D. 31 and continues until the end of time.

One Vision Covering the Gospel Day

Revelation presents one vision, but that vision unfolds through several connected series. These include the letters to the churches, the seals, the trumpets and other prophetic scenes. Each series gives another perspective upon the spiritual conditions and events found throughout the Gospel Day.

They are not competing visions, and we should not assume that every chapter simply follows the previous chapter chronologically. A later series may return to conditions already shown earlier and reveal them from another prophetic viewpoint. When these different perspectives are brought together, they help us see a broader picture of the Church's journey.

The subject remains one Gospel Day. The centre remains one Jesus Christ.

Revelation Is a Spiritual Record

The book of Revelation contains kingdoms, beasts, battles, cities, stars, candlesticks, trumpets and many other striking images. If these are approached only as natural objects and earthly events, the spiritual message can easily be missed.

Revelation is written in symbolic language, and its great subject is spiritual. It reveals Jesus Christ reigning, the Church being tested, truth being opposed, error developing, and God's people being called to faithfulness.

This does not mean that history is unimportant. Historical events can help us recognise when prophetic conditions have been fulfilled. But history must never become the authority that controls the interpretation.

The Word of God remains the plumb line.

Revelation Was Given to Be Read and Kept

John wrote in **Revelation 1:3**:

> *"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand."*

Notice that Revelation was given to be read, heard and kept. The purpose is therefore greater than satisfying curiosity about prophecy.

Revelation is intended to affect the life. Its message calls God's people to recognise truth, reject deception, remain faithful to Jesus Christ and walk according to His life within.

Prophetic understanding should lead to spiritual obedience.

Scripture Must Govern Our Understanding

As we move through this Study Guide, we will encounter symbols, prophetic timespans and historical boundaries. These must be handled carefully.

We cannot give a symbol whatever meaning we prefer. We cannot begin with a historical theory and force Scripture to fit it. We cannot use prophetic dates to create certainty where the biblical and historical evidence does not support it.

Scripture must interpret Scripture. Prophetic conditions must be examined before dates are assigned. Historical fulfilment must agree with the biblical description. Every conclusion must remain centred in Jesus Christ.

Seeing the Gospel Day More Clearly

Our purpose is not to produce a complete commentary on every verse of Revelation. We are establishing the prophetic framework needed to understand how Revelation relates to the Gospel Day. We will examine its symbolic language, its seven-series structure, its prophetic timespans and the principles used to recognise fulfilment.

Through all of this, one truth must remain clear:

Revelation does not move us away from Jesus Christ into a world of prophetic speculation. It helps us see more clearly His reign, His Church and the unfolding spiritual conditions of the Gospel Day.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Explain why Revelation shows the one Gospel Day from several prophetic perspectives.

Personal Reflection

Have you assumed each chapter must follow the previous chapter in time, even where the vision revisits the same conditions?

Action Step

Compare two connected prophetic scenes and record one assumption you will correct if their purposes overlap.

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

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The name of the book tells us how it should be approached. Revelation is not a book designed to conceal the truth behind an impenetrable wall of symbols. It is a revelation, an unveiling of what God wants His people to see.

Its purpose is not to produce secret knowledge for a spiritual elite. Neither does it invite us to invent meanings for its visions. Revelation belongs to Jesus Christ, and it must be understood in harmony with the Word of God.

John begins with these words in **Revelation 1:1**:

> *"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:"*

The opening words establish the foundation: *"The Revelation of Jesus Christ."*

Revelation Means an Unveiling

The Greek word translated *"Revelation"* is APOKALUPSIS. It carries the meaning of an unveiling, uncovering or disclosure. Something that was hidden is made known.

This is important because Revelation is sometimes treated as though God deliberately gave His people a book they could never understand. But the very word revelation tells us otherwise.

The closing chapter makes the same point. John wrote in **Revelation 22:10**:

> *"And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand."*

The command is: *"Seal not."* The book was given to reveal, not conceal.

This does not mean that every symbol can be understood immediately or without careful study. Revelation requires prayer, comparison of Scripture with Scripture, attention to context and submission to the Word of God.

But difficulty is not the same as deliberate concealment.

Revelation Belongs to Jesus Christ

Revelation is sometimes associated so strongly with John that people speak of it simply as John's Revelation. Yet John himself does not claim ownership of the message.

It is *"The Revelation of Jesus Christ."*

John was the servant who received and recorded what was shown to him. Jesus Christ remains the source and centre of the revelation.

Jesus said in **John 14:6**:

> *"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."*

Truth cannot be separated from Jesus Christ. This provides an important safeguard when studying prophecy. An interpretation that moves Jesus Christ away from the centre has missed the purpose of the book.

The symbols may be important. The prophetic periods may be important. The historical fulfilments may be important. But none of them is greater than the Person being revealed.

Revelation Is Not New Truth Outside Scripture

To say that Jesus Christ reveals truth does not mean that believers should seek secret doctrines beyond the written Word. Paul used the same word for revelation when describing how the Gospel was made known to him.

Paul wrote in **Galatians 1:12**:

> *"For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."*

The truth Paul received was not a competing message beside the Gospel. It was the Gospel revealed through Jesus Christ.

In the same way, understanding Revelation must never become a search for new doctrines outside Scripture. Genuine spiritual light helps us see more clearly what God has already placed within His Word.

The Word remains the plumb line.

The Mystery Was Made Known

Paul also used the language of revelation when speaking about truth that had once been hidden but was now made manifest. Paul wrote in **Romans 16:25-26**:

> *"Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:"*

Notice the movement: *"kept secret"*, but *"now is made manifest."* That is the nature of revelation. What was concealed is made known.

Notice also how Paul connects this revealing with *"the scriptures of the prophets."* True revelation does not lead away from Scripture. It enables us to understand Scripture more clearly.

Spiritual Understanding Requires the Right Heart

Intellectual ability alone does not guarantee spiritual understanding. A person may know prophetic terminology, memorise dates and study religious history while still missing the spiritual message.

Paul warned in **2 Timothy 3:7**:

> *"Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."*

The problem is not learning itself. Careful study is necessary. The danger is knowledge without spiritual understanding.

Revelation must therefore be approached with humility, obedience and a willingness to allow God's Word to correct our assumptions. The goal is not to make prophecy fit what we already believe. The goal is to hear what Scripture actually says.

The Person Is the Centre of the Revelation

This gives us the proper starting point for everything that follows. Revelation is an unveiling. It is not sealed. It belongs to Jesus Christ. It must be interpreted through Scripture. Its purpose is not to introduce another Gospel or another source of truth.

As we study its symbols, series and prophetic timespans, we must continually return to its opening words:

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ."

The book may reveal the journey of the Church, the rise of opposition, periods of darkness and the recovery of light. But above everything else:

Revelation unveils Jesus Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Explain why Jesus Christ is the subject and centre of Revelation.

Personal Reflection

Has an interest in hidden knowledge ever become more important to you than belonging to and obeying Jesus Christ?

Action Step

In your next Revelation study, choose one truth about Christ and explain how it should govern an attitude or decision in your life.

WHO IS REVELATION FOR?

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The opening verse of Revelation not only tells us whose revelation it is. It also tells us who the message was given to.

John wrote in **Revelation 1:1**:

> *"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:"*

Notice the words: *"to shew unto his servants."*

Revelation was given to the servants of Jesus Christ. This does not mean that it belongs only to ministers, scholars or a spiritual elite. The word servant describes those who belong to Jesus Christ and live under His rule.

What Does "Servant" Mean?

The Greek word translated *"servant"* is DOULOS. It carries the thought of a servant or bondservant who belongs to a master.

That is much stronger than the ordinary modern idea of someone who performs occasional duties for another person. The biblical servant belongs to the Master.

Paul expressed this clearly in **1 Corinthians 6:19-20**:

> *"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."*

Notice the words: *"ye are not your own"* and *"ye are bought with a price."* This is the position of the servant of Jesus Christ. The believer belongs to Him.

Christ Governs His Servants From Within

Belonging to Jesus Christ does not mean attempting to serve Him through human determination alone. At the new birth, Jesus Christ comes to dwell within the believer as Spirit. His life within becomes the source of obedience, service and spiritual understanding.

The servant therefore learns to yield to the life of Christ within rather than continually insisting upon personal preference and self-rule. Jesus Christ is not simply someone the believer adds to an otherwise self-directed life.

He is Lord. His life within governs.

Servants Made Free From Sin

Paul gives another important description of God's servants. He wrote in **Romans 6:22**:

> *"But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."*

Notice the order: *"made free from sin"* and then *"become servants to God."* The servant described in Revelation is therefore not simply someone who uses the name Christian. This is a person who has been delivered from sin, belongs to God and now lives under the rule of Jesus Christ.

Revelation was written for such people.

Revelation Is Not Restricted to a Spiritual Elite

Because Revelation is addressed to *"his servants,"* we should not conclude that only a small group of specially trained people may understand it. John himself was a servant. Every born-again believer belongs to Jesus Christ and may approach His Word with humility, prayer and obedience.

The ability to understand Revelation does not come from possessing a religious title or belonging to a particular organisation. The essential relationship is with Jesus Christ.

The servant hears the Master. The servant receives His Word. The servant desires to obey what has been revealed.

The Heart Matters

This helps explain why Revelation must never become simply an intellectual exercise. A person may study symbols, dates and history while resisting the rule of Jesus Christ.

But Revelation was not given simply to satisfy curiosity. It was given to servants.

The proper question is therefore not only: Do I understand the prophecy? We must also ask: Do I belong wholly to the One who gave it?

Revelation is the unveiling of Jesus Christ to His servants. Those servants are not identified by position, title or organisation. They are those who have been born again, made free from sin, and brought under the saving rule of Jesus Christ.

Revelation belongs to the people who belong to Him.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Explain why Revelation was given to Christ's servants who hear and keep His word.

Personal Reflection

Do you read Revelation mainly to understand symbols, or are you willing for its message to examine the way you live?

Action Step

Select one command addressed to Christ's servants and explain the personal response you will make this week through His life within.

THE RIGHT WAY TO UNDERSTAND REVELATION

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Revelation can appear difficult because it contains unusual images, prophetic language and scenes that are unlike ordinary historical writing. Yet the book itself gives us principles that help us approach it correctly.

We must begin by remembering what Revelation is: the Revelation of Jesus Christ. It is spiritual in nature, it was given through signs and symbols, and it belongs within the harmony of the whole Word of God.

The correct approach is therefore not to begin with imagination, current events or human theories. We begin with Scripture.

Begin With What Revelation Says About Itself

John wrote in **Revelation 1:1-3**:

> *"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand."*

These opening verses give us several important principles. The book belongs to Jesus Christ. It was given to His servants. It was *"signified."* John bore record of *"the word of God"* and *"the testimony of Jesus Christ."* The blessing belongs not only to those who read and hear, but also to those who *"keep"* what is written.

Revelation therefore must be interpreted in harmony with the rest of Scripture and with Jesus Christ at its centre.

Revelation Is Spiritual in Nature

The kingdom revealed in Revelation is not an earthly political kingdom. Jesus had already explained the nature of His kingdom.

Jesus said in **John 18:36**:

> *"Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."*

This principle is essential. When Revelation speaks of kingdoms, battles, enemies, victory and rule, we must not automatically turn these into predictions about earthly governments and military conflicts.

The kingdom of Jesus Christ is spiritual. Revelation shows the spiritual conflict between truth and error, faithfulness and apostasy, Christ's rule and human religious systems. Historical events may help us recognise fulfilment, but the spiritual meaning must remain primary.

Revelation Was "Signified"

Revelation 1:1 tells us that the message was *"signified"* to John. The Greek word behind this expression is SĒMAINŌ, carrying the thought of communicating by signs.

A sign points beyond itself. This immediately warns us against treating every image in Revelation as a literal object or event.

John sees horses, beasts, stars, candlesticks, trumpets, a woman clothed with the sun and many other images. The question is not simply: What would this look like literally? The better question is: What spiritual reality is this sign revealing? We will examine this principle more fully in the next section.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Explain why Revelation was signified through images that need interpretation.

Personal Reflection

Have you insisted on a literal explanation of a symbol before considering how the Bible uses that image?

Action Step

Choose one symbol and compare its use in the Bible; state what preconceived idea you are prepared to change.

Scripture Must Interpret Scripture

The safest interpreter of biblical symbolism is the Bible itself. Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 2:13**:

> *"Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."*

Notice the principle: *"comparing spiritual things with spiritual."* We should therefore search throughout Scripture for the language, pictures and patterns used in Revelation. A symbol should not be assigned a meaning simply because it suits a theory. Its meaning must be supported by the Word of God.

Revelation itself demonstrates this method. John wrote in **Revelation 1:20**:

> *"The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."*

Here Scripture explains its own symbol. The candlesticks are not left to personal interpretation. We are told what they represent. This gives us a model for the rest of the book.

All Scripture Testifies of Jesus Christ

Jesus gave another controlling principle. He said in **John 5:39**:

> *"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."*

Revelation belongs to those Scriptures that testify of Jesus Christ. This means that an interpretation may contain complicated charts, impressive historical arguments and detailed prophetic calculations, yet still miss the purpose of the book if Jesus Christ disappears from view.

The symbols must ultimately serve the revelation of Him. The prophetic periods must help us understand His work. The history must help us recognise the spiritual conditions surrounding His Church.

Jesus Christ remains the centre.

Interpretation Must Not Be Controlled by Imagination

Symbolic language does not give us permission to invent meanings. A spiritual interpretation must actually be more disciplined, not less.

We must ask:

- What does the symbol mean elsewhere in Scripture?
- What does the immediate context establish?
- How does the interpretation harmonise with the rest of God's Word?
- Does the proposed meaning preserve Jesus Christ as the centre?
- Does it agree with the New Covenant reality already established in Scripture?

These questions protect us from forcing modern events, personal ideas or religious traditions into the Bible.

Read, Hear and Keep

Finally, Revelation is not given simply so that we can understand prophecy intellectually. The opening blessing is for those who read, hear and keep.

Prophetic understanding should produce spiritual faithfulness. If we can explain every symbol but refuse the rule of Jesus Christ within our lives, we have missed the purpose.

The right way to understand Revelation therefore begins and ends with the same Person. We approach it spiritually. We allow Scripture to interpret Scripture. We refuse speculation. We recognise its signs and symbols. Through everything, we seek to see Jesus Christ more clearly.

The right interpretation of Revelation must always lead us back to Jesus Christ and His Word.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Explain why reading, hearing and keeping Revelation should bring a person back to Christ and His Word.

Personal Reflection

When interpreting a difficult vision, do you rely first on your imagination or on the Bible's own explanations?

Action Step

Revisit one interpretation you have accepted and explain how its supporting verses will guide any correction you need to make.

SYMBOLS: THE KEY TO REVELATION

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The book of Revelation communicates much of its message through signs, pictures and symbols. These images are not decorative additions to the prophecy. They are part of the way God chose to communicate spiritual truth to John.

For this reason, we cannot interpret Revelation correctly if we insist that every horse, beast, star, candlestick, trumpet or other image must describe a literal physical object. A symbol

points beyond itself to a spiritual reality. Our task is therefore to allow Scripture to show us what that reality is.

Revelation Was "Signified"

John wrote in **Revelation 1:1**:

> *"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:"*

The important word is *"signified."* The Greek word is SĒMAINŌ, carrying the thought of making something known by means of a sign.

A sign is not the reality itself. A road sign pointing towards a city is not the city. It directs us towards the place it represents. In the same way, the symbols of Revelation point towards spiritual realities.

John used the same idea elsewhere. He wrote in **John 12:33**:

> *"This he said, signifying what death he should die."*

The word *"signifying"* shows that something was being indicated or represented. This helps us understand how Revelation communicates its message.

Symbolic Language Is Used Throughout Scripture

Symbolic language is not unique to Revelation. Jesus regularly used ordinary objects and creatures to communicate spiritual truth.

Jesus said in **Matthew 5:13-14**:

> *"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid."*

Jesus did not mean that His disciples literally became salt or natural light. The words are figurative. The images communicate spiritual meaning.

Jesus used similar language concerning false prophets. He said in **Matthew 7:15**:

> *"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves."*

Again, Jesus was not warning His disciples about literal wolves wearing clothing. The image represents people whose outward appearance hides a dangerous spiritual condition.

Paul used the same figure. Luke recorded Paul's words in **Acts 20:29**:

> *"For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock."*

Scripture itself therefore prepares us to understand symbolic language.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Explain why Scripture's own use of symbols guides the reading of Revelation.

Personal Reflection

Does studying Revelation increase your willingness to obey Jesus Christ, or has understanding become an end in itself?

Action Step

Choose one clear truth you have read in Revelation and identify the specific choice it calls you to make.

John Saw These Things in a Vision

Revelation also tells us that John was seeing prophetic images in a vision. John wrote in **Revelation 9:17**:

> *"And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone."*

Notice John's words: *"I saw the horses in the vision."* The strange appearance immediately tells us that we are looking at symbolic imagery. Throughout Revelation we encounter horses with unusual characteristics, a woman clothed with the sun, great beasts, a dragon, stars, trumpets and many other images.

These pictures are not invitations to imagine bizarre literal events. They are signs pointing towards spiritual realities.

Scripture Provides the Meaning

Recognising that Revelation is symbolic does not give us freedom to assign any meaning we choose. The symbols remain governed by Scripture.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 2:13**:

> *"Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."*

This gives us an important method: compare spiritual things with spiritual.

We search the Word of God. We look for the same image elsewhere. We examine its context. We consider how Scripture itself uses the symbol. We then allow those verses to guide our understanding.

Our imagination must remain under the authority of the Word.

Revelation Sometimes Explains Its Own Symbols

A clear example appears in the opening chapter. John wrote in **Revelation 1:20**:

> *"The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."*

Here there is no need to guess. Scripture explains the symbol. The candlesticks represent the churches.

This establishes an important principle. Where the Bible provides the interpretation, we accept the biblical explanation rather than inventing another one.

The Lamb Points to Jesus Christ

One of the most familiar symbols in Revelation is the Lamb. The symbol has already been prepared throughout Scripture.

John the Baptist said in **John 1:29**:

> *"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."*

The Lamb therefore directs us to Jesus Christ. When Revelation later presents the Lamb, we do not need to search for a literal animal. Scripture has already directed our attention towards the Person.

The Rock Points to Jesus Christ

The same principle applies to the Rock. Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 10:4**:

> *"And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."*

Paul could hardly be clearer: *"that Rock was Christ."* Again, Scripture interprets Scripture. The symbol points beyond itself towards Jesus Christ.

Symbols Must Lead Us to the Reality

This gives us the key to interpreting the symbolic language of Revelation. We do not stop with the image. We look for the reality it represents.

Because all Scripture ultimately testifies of Jesus Christ, the symbols of Revelation must remain connected with Him and with the truth already established in God's Word. A symbol must never become more important than the reality. A prophetic image must never replace the Person.

The symbols of Revelation point beyond themselves, and Scripture itself must show us where they point.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Explain why a prophetic symbol points beyond itself to spiritual reality.

Personal Reflection

Have you allowed the book's difficult images to make you forget that it was given to be understood through God's Word?

Action Step

Choose a familiar Revelation image, compare the Bible's explanation of it and explain how that changes the way you will read the vision.

THE BOOK OF SEVENS: ONE VISION IN SEVEN SERIES

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The number seven appears throughout the book of Revelation. We find seven churches, seven stars, seven candlesticks, seven seals, seven trumpets and many other groups of seven. As we established in the previous Study Guide, seven frequently carries the thought of completeness.

This pattern also helps us understand the structure of Revelation itself. The book is not written as though chapter 1 begins a straight chronological timeline that continues without interruption until chapter 22. Instead, John is shown a series of prophetic scenes. A later series may return to spiritual conditions already shown earlier, but reveal them from another point of view.

Together, these connected series give us a broader picture of the Gospel Day.

Revelation Is One Vision

John did not receive seven competing revelations. The book is one Revelation of Jesus Christ.

Within that one revelation, however, the spiritual journey of the Church is shown through different prophetic series. Each series contributes something to the larger picture.

One may emphasise the spiritual condition of the churches. Another may emphasise the opening of the seals. Another may show the sounding of the trumpets. Another may focus upon the conflict between the Church and the religious powers opposing her.

The perspective changes, but the Gospel Day remains the same. This principle is important because without it, a person may try to force the whole book into one continuous chronological sequence. That can create confusion when a later chapter appears to return to a condition already described earlier.

The repetition is not a mistake. The same period may be viewed from another prophetic angle.

Revelation Was Given to Be Understood and Obeyed

John wrote in **Revelation 1:3**:

> *"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand."*

Notice again that the blessing is connected with reading, hearing and keeping. The structure of Revelation therefore serves a spiritual purpose. The seven series are not given simply so that we can construct a prophetic chart. They help us recognise the spiritual conditions through which the Church has passed and the truths God's people must continue to obey.

Series One: Chapters 1-3

The first series introduces the seven churches of Asia. Chapter 1 establishes Jesus Christ in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, and chapters 2 and 3 contain the seven letters. These were genuine congregations existing in John's time, but within the prophetic framework of Revelation they also present spiritual conditions corresponding with the seven periods of the Gospel Day.

The letters address matters such as faithfulness, compromise, suffering, spiritual decline, endurance and the need to hear what the Spirit says. The repeated expression is important: *"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."* The seven letters therefore provide one prophetic view of the Church throughout the Gospel Day.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Explain why the letters to the churches address real faithfulness, compromise and endurance.

Personal Reflection

Have you become more interested in a symbol than in the spiritual reality or Person it reveals?

Action Step

Explain one Revelation symbol in your own words this week, and finish by identifying the response it calls for towards Christ.

Series Two: Chapters 4-8

The second series introduces the seven seals. Chapters 4 and 5 prepare the scene, and the seals begin to be opened in chapter 6. The emphasis now changes.

We are no longer simply reading letters addressed to congregations. We are seeing prophetic events connected with the opening of a sealed book. Each seal reveals another part of the spiritual journey.

The seals correspond with the same Gospel Day already represented by the seven churches, but the imagery gives us a different perspective. This is an important example of how Revelation works.

The letters and the seals are not describing two different Gospel Days. They are showing the same great day from different angles.

Series Three: Chapters 8-10

The third series centres upon the seven trumpets. A trumpet in Scripture is associated with sounding a message, warning or call. Within the Gospel Day framework, the trumpets portray the Word of God being sounded through His ministry during different spiritual periods.

Again, the prophetic viewpoint changes. The churches show spiritual conditions. The seals unveil events. The trumpets emphasise the sounding of the message.

Yet all belong within the same Gospel Day. The trumpet series will become particularly important when we later examine how prophetic messages correspond with changing spiritual conditions through history.

Series Four: Chapter 11

The fourth series is concentrated within Revelation chapter 11. Here we encounter the two witnesses, understood within this prophetic framework as the Word and the Spirit. This series gives us another broad view of the Gospel Day. It shows truth present in the Morning Time, truth under pressure during the Dark Day, the witnesses in a condition described symbolically as death, and their later restoration.

This series therefore helps us understand not simply seven individual periods, but the larger spiritual movements that occur across the Gospel Day. The detailed meaning of these conditions will be developed later. For now, we are identifying the structure.

Series Five: Chapters 12-19

The fifth series gives a much broader picture of the Church and the forces opposing her. The imagery becomes especially vivid. We encounter the woman, the dragon, beasts, Babylon and scenes of conflict and victory.

These images must remain subject to the symbolic principles we have already established. We must not turn them automatically into literal animals, modern nations or speculative future events. They present spiritual realities.

This section of Revelation shows conflict developing through the Gospel Day and ultimately points towards victory over false religion. Some of these symbols will receive fuller treatment in later modules. We therefore do not need to settle every detail here. Our present concern is to recognise where this series belongs within the larger structure of Revelation.

Series Six: Chapter 20

The sixth series is contained within Revelation chapter 20. This chapter again presents the spiritual journey and conflict of the Gospel Day from another prophetic viewpoint. It includes the imagery of the thousand years, the binding of the dragon and the final defeat of the Church's enemies.

These expressions have often been taken literally and placed into a future earthly millennium. That is not the framework used in this study.

Revelation remains a spiritual book, and chapter 20 must be interpreted in harmony with the spiritual kingdom already established through Jesus Christ. The kingdom has come. The Gospel Day is the final dispensation. Chapter 20 therefore belongs within that established New Covenant framework rather than creating another future earthly Gospel age.

Series Seven: Chapters 21-22

The seventh and final series brings us to chapters 21 and 22. Here the prophetic vision presents the Church in glory, purity and completeness. The imagery includes the New Jerusalem, the river of life, the tree of life and the light of God. Within the Gospel Day framework, these chapters reveal the beauty and completeness of the Church under the full light of Jesus Christ.

The final vision does not move the centre away from Jesus. It brings Him into even clearer view. The city has no need of another source of spiritual light because the glory of God illuminates it.

The final series therefore brings the sevenfold structure to its completion in the Person who has been the centre from the beginning.

Different Perspectives, One Gospel Day

We can now see why Revelation must not be read as a simple uninterrupted timeline. The seven series repeatedly bring us back across the Gospel Day.

They show:

- The spiritual condition of the churches;
- The opening of the seals;
- The sounding of the trumpets;
- The witness of the Word and Spirit;
- The Church and her enemies;
- The great spiritual conflict;
- The Church revealed in restored glory.

Each series contributes another layer to the same prophetic picture. They do not introduce seven different gospels. They do not give seven different Churches. They do not produce seven different plans of salvation.

There is one Gospel Day, one born-again Church, one Spirit and one Saviour.

The Seven Series Must Serve the Revelation of Jesus Christ

This final principle is essential. It is possible to become so interested in the structure of Revelation that the structure itself becomes the message. That would defeat the purpose of the book.

The seven series are valuable because they help us see the Gospel Day more clearly. But the series are not the centre. The seals are not the centre. The trumpets are not the centre. The prophetic chart is not the centre.

Jesus Christ is the centre.

The book begins as *"The Revelation of Jesus Christ."* Every part of its prophetic structure must finally bring us back to Him.

Revelation is one vision, unfolding through seven connected series, revealing the journey of the Church throughout the one Gospel Day under the reign of Jesus Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Explain why seven connected series serve one vision of Christ and His Church.

Personal Reflection

Have you treated the letters to the seven churches as distant history instead of allowing their warnings to examine your conduct?

Action Step

Take one warning from a church letter and state the attitude or practice that needs to change in your own life.

HOW THE SEVEN SERIES ALIGN WITH THE GOSPEL DAY

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Once we understand that Revelation is one vision presented through several connected series, the next question is how those series relate to the seven periods of the Gospel Day.

The letters, seals and trumpets are presented as parallel prophetic witnesses. They do not describe three unrelated histories. They look across the same Gospel Day from different angles. One series may emphasise the spiritual condition of the Church, another the events being unveiled, and another the sounding of the message. Placed together, they help us recognise the same period from several Scriptural viewpoints.

The Seven Letters Provide the First Framework

The letters to the seven churches in Revelation chapters 2 and 3 form the first clear sevenfold framework. These were real congregations in Asia, but within the prophetic structure of Revelation they also present conditions corresponding with the seven periods of the Gospel Day.

Jesus repeatedly speaks to each church and gives the same call: *"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."* The letters therefore reveal spiritual conditions that can be recognised across the course of the Gospel Day.

The first letter is addressed to Ephesus. John wrote in **Revelation 2:1**:

> *"Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;"*

This places Jesus Christ in the midst of His Church. He walks among His people, examines their condition and speaks to them.

The Seals Follow the Same Gospel Day

The second major series is the opening of the seven seals. The seals do not begin a different age. They provide another prophetic view of the same Gospel Day.

The first letter, to Ephesus, aligns with the first seal. The same principle continues through the remaining periods: the letters and seals correspond while emphasising different features.

The first seal is opened in **Revelation 6:1-2**:

> *"And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer."*

The imagery is different from the letter to Ephesus, but both belong to the same opening period of the Gospel Day. One series addresses the Church directly, while the other shows the period through prophetic imagery. The viewpoint changes, but the timeline remains connected.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Explain why the seals and letters can portray the same opening period with different imagery.

Personal Reflection

When reading seals and letters, have you assumed their order requires them to refer to separate historical eras?

Action Step

Compare the first letter and first seal, and state one reading habit you will change to preserve their distinct emphasis.

The Trumpets Provide Another Witness

The third series is the seven trumpets. Within this framework, the trumpets portray the Word of God being sounded by His ministry through the periods of the Gospel Day.

Again, the trumpets are not a separate chronology detached from the letters and seals. The first trumpet belongs alongside the first church and the first seal. The second trumpet belongs with the second period, and the pattern continues through the seven periods.

John wrote in **Revelation 8:6**:

> *"And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound."*

The emphasis now moves towards proclamation. The letters show spiritual condition. The seals unveil prophetic events. The trumpets show the message being sounded.

Together they provide a fuller view than any one series would provide by itself.

Parallel Series Give Greater Detail

This parallel structure helps explain why Revelation sometimes appears to move forward and then return to earlier conditions. If every chapter is forced into one uninterrupted chronology, the book can become difficult to understand.

Once we recognise that Revelation revisits the Gospel Day through different series, the structure becomes clearer. A simple way to picture the relationship is:

- First period: first church, first seal and first trumpet;
- Second period: second church, second seal and second trumpet;
- The same pattern continues through the remaining periods.

This does not mean that every symbol says exactly the same thing. Each series contributes additional detail. The agreement lies in the period being described, while the emphasis of each series is different.

Other Series Broaden the Picture

The remaining series also belong within the same Gospel Day, although they do not always follow the same one-to-one pattern as clearly as the letters, seals and trumpets.

Revelation chapter 11 gives the picture of the two witnesses and helps us see the larger movement through the four great epochs. Chapters 12-19 show the Church and the powers

opposing her. Chapter 20 presents another broad view of spiritual conflict. Chapters 21-22 bring the vision to its final picture of the Church in glory and completeness.

These later series broaden the prophetic picture rather than creating separate plans or ages.

The Framework Must Remain Subject to Scripture

A chart can be useful for showing how the series align, but a chart is never the authority. The authority is the Word of God.

Isaiah wrote in **Isaiah 34:16**:

> *"Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them."*

The principle is important. Scripture must be brought together in harmony.

The letters, seals, trumpets and other prophetic scenes must not be forced into a prophetic interpretation simply because a diagram requires it. The diagram must follow the evidence of Scripture.

Where the Word establishes an alignment, we should state it clearly. Where a historical boundary is less certain, we should remain cautious.

One Gospel Day Seen From Several Angles

The value of this structure is that it allows us to see the Gospel Day with greater depth. The same spiritual period may be viewed through the condition of the Church, the events being unveiled, the message being sounded and the opposition surrounding God's people.

When these witnesses agree, they strengthen our understanding. But none of the series introduces another Gospel, gives another Saviour or replaces the New Covenant already established in Jesus Christ.

They are different prophetic perspectives upon the same great day. The seven series align because they belong to one Revelation, one Gospel Day and one Jesus Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Explain why letters, seals and trumpets offer parallel views of one Gospel Day.

Personal Reflection

Does your understanding of the letters, seals and trumpets make Christ's work clearer, or is it becoming mainly a chart to memorise?

Action Step

Prepare a brief explanation of two parallel series that shows how each directs attention to the same Gospel Day and Jesus Christ.

THE GOLDEN RULE OF PROPHECY: CONDITIONS BEFORE DATES

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Prophecy must be handled with care. Scripture sometimes gives a prophetic period, particular conditions and events that will occur, but does not give us a modern calendar date beside them.

This means we must not begin with a date and then search for a prophecy that can be made to fit it. We begin with the Word of God. We identify the conditions Scripture describes, and then examine whether those conditions have actually been fulfilled.

This gives us an important principle for the study of the Gospel Day: conditions before dates.

Prophecy Must Not Become Speculation

The purpose of prophecy is not to encourage endless prediction. When Scripture gives a prophetic timespan without supplying a calendar date, we should not manufacture one simply because we want certainty.

The prophecy itself must provide the controlling evidence. We must ask: What conditions are described? What events are said to occur? What marks the beginning or ending of the period?

Only after those questions have been answered should historical dates be considered. This protects us from making history control Scripture. History can help identify fulfilment, but Scripture defines what fulfilment must look like.

Peter Gave Us an Important Example

The Day of Pentecost gives us a clear example of prophecy being recognised through fulfilment. When the Holy Ghost was poured out, Peter did not invent a new interpretation to explain what was happening. He pointed directly to the prophetic Word.

Peter said in **Acts 2:16**:

> *"But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;"*

Those words are important: *"This is that."*

Peter could look at what was taking place and identify it with what the prophet had already spoken. The prophecy came first. The fulfilment followed. Then the fulfilled condition confirmed the meaning.

This is a sound principle for prophetic study. We allow the event to agree with the prophecy rather than forcing the prophecy to agree with our expectations.

Scripture Often Gives Timespans Rather Than Calendar Dates

The Bible frequently gives periods of time without writing beside them the calendar dates we use today. This is especially important when we come to Revelation.

We will encounter expressions such as:

- 1260 days;
- 42 months;

- time, and times, and half a time;
- three and a half days;
- a thousand years.

The presence of a timespan does not automatically tell us the historical year in which that period begins or ends. We need more information.

The conditions described in the prophecy must help identify where the period belongs. Then history may help us recognise when those prophetic conditions occurred.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Explain why prophetic conditions must be identified before calendar dates are proposed.

Personal Reflection

Are you more persuaded by a confident date or by the actual conditions described in the Bible?

Action Step

Select a proposed prophetic date, check the conditions in the relevant verses and describe what you will believe or explain differently as a result.

Daniel's Seventy Weeks Demonstrates the Principle

We have already seen this method in the study of Daniel's seventy weeks. Daniel was given a prophetic period together with specific events and conditions.

Daniel wrote in **Daniel 9:25**:

> *"Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times."*

Notice that Daniel gives a starting condition: *"the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem."* The prophecy does not simply print the year 457 B.C. into the verse. The historical date is identified by recognising which decree fulfilled the prophetic condition.

This distinction is important. Scripture provides the prophecy. History helps us locate its fulfilment. History does not create the prophecy or determine its meaning independently of Scripture.

Conditions Must Control the Date

This gives us the practical rule. If a prophetic interpretation requires a particular date, we should ask:

- Does the condition described in Scripture actually occur there?
- Does the proposed ending fit the biblical description?
- Does the timespan agree?
- Do related prophecies support the same conclusion?
- Does the interpretation harmonise with the wider Word of God?

If those questions cannot be answered, we should not force certainty simply because a date appears convenient. A prophetic chart must remain subordinate to Scripture.

Confluent Prophecy Strengthens the Evidence

Another important principle is confluent prophecy. The word confluent describes separate streams flowing together.

In the same way, different verses of Scripture may approach the same fulfilment from different directions. One prophecy may give a timespan. Another may identify a kingdom. Another may describe a spiritual condition. Another may identify the Person at the centre.

When these independent lines of Scripture flow together in the same fulfilment, they strengthen the conclusion. The coming of Jesus Christ provides a clear example. Prophecies from different parts of the Old Testament pointed towards His coming, His suffering, His work and the establishment of God's saving purpose. They were given at different times and through different prophets, yet they converged upon Jesus Christ.

The same principle becomes important when studying Revelation. Its letters, seals, trumpets and other prophetic series provide several witnesses to the same Gospel Day.

Fulfilment Should Increase Confidence in Scripture

Prophecy should therefore strengthen faith rather than produce fear. When we can look at fulfilled conditions and recognise *"This is that which was spoken,"* the fulfilment confirms the reliability of God's Word.

This does not mean that every detail of every prophetic date will always be equally clear. Where the evidence is strong, we may speak clearly. Where the evidence is incomplete, we should remain careful.

Humility is not weakness. It is part of rightly handling the Word of God.

The Word Remains the Plumb Line

The Golden Rule of Prophecy is therefore not really about dates. It is about authority. Do we allow Scripture to govern our interpretation, or do we begin with a theory and make Scripture fit it?

Our method must remain:

- Scripture gives the prophecy;
- The prophecy gives the conditions;
- Fulfilment identifies the reality;
- History may help establish the date.

This is the approach we will use as we examine the prophetic timespans of Revelation. We are not attempting to make prophecy say what we want it to say. We are looking for the point where Scripture and fulfilled conditions meet.

Conditions come before dates, because the Word of God, not the prophetic chart, must remain the plumb line.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Explain why the Word of God rather than a chart is the plumb line for prophecy.

Personal Reflection

Have you ever treated a prophetic diagram as more authoritative than the words of the Bible?

Action Step

Before using a prophecy chart again, return to the relevant verses and correct any conclusion that the words do not support.

PROPHETIC TIMESPANS IN REVELATION

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Revelation does not only give us symbols and prophetic scenes. It also gives us a number of important timespans. These expressions help us recognise the movement of the Gospel Day and the spiritual conditions that develop within it. Among these prophetic measurements are 1260 days, 42 months, *"a time, and times, and half a time,"* 1000 years, three and a half days, and 1600 furlongs.

These expressions must be approached in the same way as the rest of Revelation. The book was *"signified."* Its language is symbolic. We should therefore not assume that every prophetic measurement is a literal calendar period simply because it contains a number.

The Gospel Day Has a Beginning and an End

Before examining the individual timespans, we need to keep the larger framework clear. The Gospel Day began at Pentecost in A.D. 31 and continues until the end of time.

John wrote in **Revelation 10:6**:

> *"And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer:"*

The prophetic periods of Revelation therefore belong within the Gospel Day. They do not point to another Gospel age beyond it. They describe spiritual conditions and prophetic events that occur within the one great New Covenant day.

Forty-Two Months

One of the recurring measurements in Revelation is forty-two months. John wrote in **Revelation 11:2**:

> *"But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months."*

The same measurement appears again in connection with another prophetic power. John wrote in **Revelation 13:5**:

> *"And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months."*

The repeated use of the same prophetic measurement is important. Revelation is not giving us an isolated number without context. The forty-two months appear within scenes describing opposition, spiritual pressure and the condition of God's people. The precise historical boundaries must therefore be established by the prophetic conditions and fulfilled evidence, not by treating the number as a simple literal calendar calculation.

One Thousand Two Hundred and Threescore Days

Revelation also uses the expression one thousand two hundred and threescore days, or 1260 days. John wrote in **Revelation 11:3**:

> *"And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth."*

John also wrote in **Revelation 12:6**:

> *"And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days."*

Again, the emphasis is spiritual. The two witnesses are shown prophesying under difficult conditions. The woman is shown in the wilderness, yet she is not abandoned. A place has been prepared for her, and she is fed there.

These verses therefore contribute to the prophetic picture of truth being preserved even during periods when it is obscured or opposed. The timespan helps us identify the period, but the number cannot be separated from the spiritual conditions described around it.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Explain why the 1260-day witness belongs within Revelation's symbolic timespan language.

Personal Reflection

Do you tend to focus on the size of a prophetic number while overlooking the spiritual circumstances it describes?

Action Step

Choose one of the 1260-day references and explain how the stated conditions should guide the interpretation rather than the number alone.

"A Time, and Times, and Half a Time"

A third expression appears in the same broad prophetic setting. John wrote in **Revelation 12:14**:

> *"And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent."*

This verse again shows the woman in the wilderness, but notice that she is *"nourished."* Even when the visible conditions are difficult, God does not lose His people.

The Church belongs to Jesus Christ. Truth may be opposed. Human systems may rise. The visible religious world may enter darkness. But God preserves those who belong to Him.

The prophetic timespan is therefore connected not only with opposition, but also with preservation.

The Thousand Years

Revelation also contains the well-known expression “a thousand years.” John wrote in **Revelation 20:2**:

> *“And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,”*

Because Revelation is a symbolic book, this expression must be interpreted within the same prophetic method used elsewhere. We should not suddenly make the thousand years a literal future earthly kingdom while treating the surrounding dragon, chain and other images symbolically.

The thousand years belongs within Revelation's spiritual picture of the Gospel Day. Its detailed meaning will require careful examination in its proper setting, but it must not be used to create another Gospel age after the New Covenant.

The kingdom of God has already come. The Gospel Day remains the final dispensation.

Three and a Half Days

Revelation also uses the shorter period of three and a half days. This measurement belongs to the prophetic scenes surrounding the two witnesses.

At this stage, our purpose is not to determine every historical application. It is enough to recognise that Revelation uses both long and short symbolic timespans as part of its prophetic framework.

The same rule applies. We identify the conditions. We examine the Scriptural context. We look for fulfilled evidence. Then, and only then, do we consider the historical boundaries.

The Measurement of Sixteen Hundred Furlongs

One of the more unusual measurements appears in Revelation chapter 14. John wrote in **Revelation 14:20**:

> *“And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.”*

At first sight, sixteen hundred furlongs appears to be a geographical measurement rather than a timespan. Within the prophetic framework of the Gospel Day, however, it is treated as a prophetic measurement that belongs within the same symbolic structure.

We should therefore resist the temptation to force an immediate literal explanation. Its meaning must be established from the wider prophetic context and the harmony of Scripture.

This is another example of why Revelation requires patience. Not every symbol should be explained before the biblical evidence is clear.

Timespans Must Be Read With Their Conditions

This brings us back to the Golden Rule of Prophecy. A number by itself does not establish a historical date. We must ask what is happening during that period.

Is the Church in the wilderness? Are the witnesses prophesying? Is the holy city being trodden under foot? What spiritual power is being described? What changes mark the beginning and ending of the period?

Those conditions are essential. The prophetic measurement and the prophetic condition must remain together. Only then can history be examined to see where the description has been fulfilled.

The Timespans Serve the Gospel Day Framework

These measurements help us trace:

- The progression of the Gospel Day;
- The conflict between truth and deception;
- The preservation of God's people.

They are not given so that prophecy becomes a mathematical puzzle. Nor are they intended to draw attention away from Jesus Christ. The purpose of the prophetic framework is to help us recognise how the Church's journey through the Gospel Day agrees with what God revealed beforehand in His Word.

The numbers matter. The conditions matter. The historical fulfilment matters. But Scripture remains the authority over them all.

As we move next into the historical anchors of the Gospel Day, we will apply the principle already established: The timespan gives us part of the framework, the prophetic conditions tell us what to look for, and history helps us recognise where those conditions were fulfilled.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Explain why prophetic timespans serve the Gospel Day framework rather than control it.

Personal Reflection

Have calculations sometimes made you more certain than the evidence allows, or distracted you from Christ's people and His Word?

Action Step

When explaining a prophetic timespan, state the spiritual condition first and identify one limit you will respect in assigning historical dates.

HISTORICAL ANCHORS AND THE SEVEN PERIODS

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Prophecy gives us spiritual conditions and timespans, but history helps us recognise where those conditions became visible. Historical dates therefore have an important place in the study of the Gospel Day, but they must remain servants of Scripture rather than masters over it.

We do not begin with a date and then force Revelation to fit it. We begin with the prophetic description, look for its fulfilment, and then use history to help identify the period.

Some dates provide stronger historical anchors than others. For this reason, the boundaries of the Gospel Day periods should be understood as prophetic and historical markers rather than dates that Scripture itself prints on a calendar.

A.D. 31: The Fixed Beginning

The clearest starting point is Pentecost in A.D. 31. This date is foundational because the Gospel Day itself begins there.

Jesus Christ came as Spirit to dwell within His people. The kingdom came into New Covenant reality, the Church existed as a born-again spiritual body, and the Gospel began to go forth in power.

The first period therefore begins with clear Gospel light. This is the Morning Time established in the previous Study Guide.

Unlike some later boundaries, Pentecost is not simply a convenient historical marker. It is the event that defines the beginning of the Gospel Day itself.

Around A.D. 270: A Change in Spiritual Conditions

By the later third century, significant changes were becoming visible within the professing Christian world. Around A.D. 272, Emperor Aurelian became involved in a dispute concerning church property and leadership at Antioch. The importance of this event within the Gospel Day framework is not simply the dispute itself. It demonstrates the increasing involvement of imperial authority in matters affecting the visible Church.

This provides a useful historical marker. The early Church had existed under Jesus Christ as Head, often suffering from the powers of the world. Now another condition was developing: political authority was beginning to influence religious affairs.

The transition did not happen in a single day. Apostasy is a process. But the conditions were changing.

A.D. 313: Imperial Toleration and Increasing Favour

A major change came in A.D. 313 with the agreement commonly called the Edict of Milan. Christianity received legal toleration within the Roman Empire.

On the surface, relief from persecution was a blessing. Christians no longer faced the same legal pressure simply for professing their faith. Yet the Gospel Day framework asks us to look beyond the political benefit and recognise another developing condition.

The relationship between the visible Christian religion and imperial power was becoming much closer. Persecution from the State was giving way to favour from the State. And favour could carry another danger: dependence upon political authority rather than complete dependence upon Jesus Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Explain why imperial favour altered visible Christian conditions without changing Christ's truth.

Personal Reflection

Have you mistaken political favour or public acceptance for proof that a church is faithful to Jesus Christ?

Action Step

Examine one historical example of political support for religion and explain how you will judge it by Christ's headship rather than its influence.

A.D. 325: Imperial Authority and Church Councils

The Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325 provides another important marker. Emperor Constantine convened the council, bringing bishops together to address major doctrinal controversy. Whatever view is taken of individual decisions made there, one historical fact is important for the Gospel Day framework: an emperor was now directly involved in convening and supporting a major council concerning Christian doctrine.

The visible Christian religion was moving increasingly into an institutional relationship with imperial authority. This was very different from the simple spiritual government of the New Testament Church under Jesus Christ.

The issue for us is not simply the existence of a council. The deeper question is: Who governs the Church?

Jesus Christ must remain the Head.

A.D. 380: Christianity Joined to Imperial Authority

The relationship became still stronger in A.D. 380, when Nicene Christianity received official imperial status under Theodosius I. The visible Christian religion had moved from persecution, to toleration, to imperial favour, and finally into an official relationship with the State. This forms an important part of the spiritual decline represented in the Gospel Day framework.

The kingdom of God does not require earthly government to give it authority. Jesus said His kingdom is not of this world. Whenever earthly power is used to define, enforce or control spiritual identity, the simplicity of Christ's spiritual kingdom is endangered.

A.D. 476 and the Rise of Religious Rome

In A.D. 476, Romulus Augustulus was deposed, a date traditionally used to mark the end of the Western Roman Empire. Political Rome in the West had fallen, but religious authority centred in Rome continued to grow. The Gospel Day framework therefore sees the centuries surrounding this change as part of the movement from imperial Rome towards the dominance of an organised religious system.

By the sixth century, the authority associated with the Bishop of Rome had increased considerably. The period around A.D. 530-538 therefore becomes another useful prophetic and historical boundary within the Dark Day.

Again, we should remember that such changes developed over time. The dates identify visible stages in a process rather than suggesting that the spiritual condition of every person changed overnight.

A.D. 1530: Partial Light Returns

The year A.D. 1530 provides another major marker through the Augsburg Confession and the wider Protestant Reformation. For centuries, much Gospel truth had been obscured beneath religious tradition and institutional authority. The Reformation challenged papal control and recovered important biblical truths.

Light was breaking through, but the restoration was not complete. New organisations, creeds and national churches developed. Much inherited doctrine and outward religious structure remained.

For this reason, the period beginning around 1530 is represented not as full Morning Light, but as a cloudy and dark condition. There was light, but the light was not yet clear.

Around A.D. 1770: Further Awakening

Around the eighteenth century, particularly from approximately A.D. 1770, another change became visible. Evangelistic preaching, missionary activity, calls to repentance and renewed emphasis upon holy living spread through many areas. This represented further movement away from the spiritual deadness of earlier centuries.

Yet denominational divisions remained. People were recovering important truths while still being separated by competing organisations, creeds and inherited traditions.

The light was increasing, but the scattering continued.

Around A.D. 1880: The Evening Light

The period around A.D. 1880 becomes especially important within the established Gospel Day framework. A restoration movement associated prominently with Daniel S. Warner called believers away from sectarian division and towards the biblical truth of one Church, one body and Jesus Christ as Head. This period corresponds with the Philadelphia condition and the sixth period of the Gospel Day.

Jesus said in **Revelation 3:8**:

> *"I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name."*

The Evening Light message emphasised restored truth, holiness and unity. Yet even this restoration was not the end of increasing understanding.

Those who came out of earlier religious systems still carried some inherited doctrines and practices with them. Greater light was still needed.

History Helps: Scripture Decides

These historical anchors help us trace the changing conditions of the Gospel Day:

- Pentecost: clear Morning Light;

- Increasing imperial involvement: compromise develops;
- Religious and political union: darkness deepens;
- The Reformation: partial light returns;
- Later awakenings: understanding increases;
- The Evening Light: restoration and unity are proclaimed;
- The seventh period: greater light must bring us to all Jesus.

History provides important evidence, but dates do not create prophecy. Scripture gives the conditions, history helps us recognise their fulfilment, and Jesus Christ remains the centre of the entire Gospel Day.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Explain why history may identify conditions but Scripture decides prophetic meaning.

Personal Reflection

Do you begin with an accepted historical date and make the Bible fit, or are you willing for the Bible to correct your date?

Action Step

Review one historical anchor and write the prophetic condition first; change any claim that goes beyond what the evidence establishes.

A CAUTIOUS PROPHETIC TIMELINE

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The seven periods of the Gospel Day give us an important prophetic framework, but we must distinguish between what Scripture establishes clearly and what has been identified through historical interpretation.

Some boundaries are much stronger than others. Pentecost in A.D. 31 provides the established beginning of the Gospel Day. Other dates are identified by comparing prophetic conditions with developments in Church history. For this reason, those later dates should be treated carefully and should never be allowed to carry greater authority than the Word of God.

The Seven Periods Are Not in Question

Caution concerning a particular date does not mean rejecting the seven periods themselves. Isaiah wrote in **Isaiah 30:26**:

> *"Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the LORD bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound."*

The sevenfold light remains an important part of the Gospel Day framework. The seven churches, seals and trumpets provide further prophetic witnesses to this sevenfold structure.

The question is therefore not whether there are seven periods. The question is how carefully we identify their historical boundaries.

Not Every Date Has the Same Certainty

A date may be useful without being equally certain. For example, the broad movements around A.D. 270, 1530 and 1880 correspond with recognisable changes in spiritual and historical conditions.

But we should not assume that every period began on one precise day or that every believer everywhere immediately entered the same condition. Prophetic periods describe developing spiritual conditions.

Their boundaries may therefore be recognised through events that mark a transition rather than through a single moment in which everything changed at once. This is why historical dates should be treated as anchors, not as replacements for the prophetic conditions themselves.

The Question of A.D. 1930

A.D. 1930 has traditionally been identified by some as the beginning of the seventh, or Laodicean, period. The reasoning was connected with perceived spiritual decline within the movement that had carried the Evening Light message from the late nineteenth century. Institutionalisation, sectarian tendencies and loss of earlier spiritual emphasis were understood as signs of a Laodicean condition.

Those concerns may help us recognise the kind of spiritual change Revelation describes. But the precise year 1930 should not be treated as definitively established simply because it has been traditionally accepted.

The principle of conditions before dates still applies. A traditional date must remain subject to Scripture.

The Seventh Period Has a Clear Spiritual Character

Even where the exact boundary requires caution, the spiritual purpose of the seventh period is much clearer. The sevenfold light of Isaiah points towards greater clarity and healing. Greater light, however, does not mean receiving another Gospel or revelation outside Scripture. It means seeing more clearly the truth already given in God's Word.

The seventh period must therefore bring Jesus Christ into clearer view. The message cannot become centred upon:

- A movement;
- An organisation;
- A historical leader;
- A prophetic chart.

The message must become increasingly clear: all Jesus.

A Return to the Morning Truth

The Evening Light and the seventh period are not intended to create something beyond the New Testament Church. The movement is towards restoration.

It is a return to the truth already present in the Morning Time:

- Jesus Christ as Head;
- One born-again Church;
- One Spirit;
- One Gospel;
- Salvation complete in Him;
- The indwelling life of Jesus Christ governing His people.

Greater light does not improve upon Jesus Christ. It removes what has obscured Him.

Scripture Must Remain Above the Timeline

A prophetic timeline can help us understand history, but it must always remain subordinate to Scripture. Where Scripture and fulfilled conditions provide strong evidence, we may speak confidently. Where a particular historical boundary remains less certain, we should say so.

That is not weakness. It is faithfulness to the Word.

Our purpose is not to defend inherited dates at all costs. Our purpose is to understand the Gospel Day as Scripture reveals it.

The timeline serves the truth. The truth does not serve the timeline. The final period of the Gospel Day must never become centred upon those who recognised it. The greater the light becomes, the more clearly it must reveal Jesus Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Explain why the cautious timeline distinguishes firm anchors from less certain boundaries.

Personal Reflection

Have you repeated a disputed prophetic date more confidently than the Bible and historical evidence justify?

Action Step

Choose one uncertain boundary and explain how you will present it accurately, without making it the foundation of your faith.

CONCLUSION: REVELATION AND THE GOSPEL DAY

BACK TO CONTENTS

The book of Revelation gives us a prophetic framework through which we can understand the Gospel Day more clearly. It is not a sealed mystery intended to confuse God's people. It is the Revelation of Jesus Christ, given to His servants so that they may read, hear and keep its message.

Throughout this Study Guide, we have established several principles that must remain together. Revelation is spiritual. Its language is largely symbolic. Its symbols must be interpreted through Scripture rather than human imagination. Its prophetic structure must always remain centred upon Jesus Christ.

We have also seen that Revelation is one vision presented through seven connected series. The letters, seals, trumpets and other prophetic scenes do not describe competing histories.

They provide different views of the same Gospel Day, each adding further detail to the spiritual journey of the Church.

The letters reveal spiritual conditions. The seals unveil prophetic developments. The trumpets show the sounding of God's message. The remaining series broaden the picture of conflict, preservation, restoration and victory.

Together they provide a fuller view of the one Gospel Day. We have also established an important principle for interpreting prophetic time: conditions before dates.

Scripture gives the prophecy. Scripture identifies the spiritual conditions. Prophetic timespans provide part of the framework. History then helps us recognise where those conditions were fulfilled.

This keeps historical interpretation under the authority of the Word of God. The dates are useful, but the dates are not the authority.

For this reason, some historical boundaries may be recognised with greater confidence than others. Pentecost in A.D. 31 provides the established beginning of the Gospel Day. Other dates help identify significant transitions, but they must remain subject to the prophetic evidence.

This is especially important when considering the traditional identification of A.D. 1930 as the beginning of the seventh period. The seventh period itself remains part of the sevenfold Gospel Day framework, but the precise historical boundary should not be made more certain than the evidence allows.

Greater light must never produce greater confidence in human tradition. Greater light must reveal Jesus Christ more clearly.

This brings us back to the purpose of Revelation. The book is not primarily about beasts, dates, historical movements or prophetic charts.

It is the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Every true interpretation must therefore lead us back to Him.

In the next Study Guide, we will take the prophetic framework established here and examine the four great epochs of the Gospel Day: the Morning Time, the Dark Day, the Cloudy and Dark Day, and the Evening Light. But the controlling truth will remain unchanged.

There is one Gospel Day, one Church, one Spirit, one Saviour, and one great message at the centre of it all: Jesus Christ.

It is all Jesus.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Explain why Revelation's symbols and series reveal Christ through the Gospel Day.

Personal Reflection

In studying Revelation, have you focused more on its series and symbols than on Jesus Christ and what He asks of His people?

Action Step

In your next explanation of Revelation, identify a truth about Jesus Christ and the personal response to His Word that follows.

SUBMISSION TO COGMA FOR APPRAISAL

Instructions

Complete this section after you have finished the Study Guide. It must be completed online.

The link is located at the bottom of the online Study Guide — https://cogma.com.au/study-guides/

Your answers should reflect your understanding, your personal response, and how you intend to live by the truth you have studied. Answer honestly and be specific.

1. Main Truth

Why is Revelation first a revelation of Jesus Christ? Explain how that truth should guide the way you read its signs and hear its message to the churches.

2. Understanding

How can the seven series show the same Gospel Day from different viewpoints? Use the letters, seals, or trumpets to explain why reading every series as the next event can lead to error.

3. Personal Reflection

Has studying Revelation challenged your interest in fearful predictions, secret knowledge or precise dates? Describe one change in the way you will approach Jesus Christ's revelation.

4. Response to Truth

When you face a symbol that is difficult to understand, what attitude must govern your interpretation? Explain how the Bible and the life of Christ within should correct your assumptions.

5. Action Step

Choose one symbol in Revelation that you have previously understood or explained. Which Bible verses will you use to test it, what assumption are you prepared to correct, and when will you begin?

6. Early Response

Have you examined the symbol chosen in Question 5 using those Bible verses? If so, explain what the comparison confirmed or corrected in your understanding. If not, explain what hindered you and how you will begin.

7. Ongoing Practice

How will you keep testing proposed historical dates against the conditions described in prophecy? Explain what you will do when the evidence remains uncertain.

8. Doctrinal Clarity

Why may the letters, seals, and trumpets describe parallel periods rather than a single chain of events? Explain how this changes the way you understand the seven series and the Gospel Day.

9. Living the Truth

Someone gives a confident but disputed date for a Revelation symbol. How would you examine the prophetic conditions and historical evidence, and how would you answer that person with care?

10. Final Response

Bring together Revelation's focus on Christ, its symbols, the seven series, prophetic timespans, and historical anchors. What has changed in your understanding, and how will you study and live by its message?