



Understanding the Scriptures

Three teachers

1. Holy Spirit enlightenment
2. Disciplined study of the Word
3. Teaching of the church through the ages

Three principles

1. The natural sense
2. The original sense
3. The general sense

Understanding Revelation's Symbolism

Basics to keep in mind

1. Major on the majors
2. Keep your finger on the text
3. Avoid speculation
4. Humility, humility, humility

Approaches to understanding symbols, and numbers, and signs

1. Overarching approach
2. Revelation is a letter, Christian prophecy, and an apocalypse (genre)
3. Guidelines for reading Revelation



4. Different interpretive approaches influence understanding

Preterist

Historicist

Futurist

Idealist

Imagery in the Book of Revelation

Examples of Symbols, Numbers and Signs

1. Symbols interpreted in Revelation
2. Symbolism of colors and numbers in Revelation
3. Figures of speech in Revelation

Valley Church Statement of Faith

Christ's Return: We believe in the personal, bodily, and glorious return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service, and energetic mission.

Response and Eternal Destiny: We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.

UPCOMING DATES for Digging Deeper in Revelation

Monday, May 16 topic TBD

Monday, June 6 The 7 Churches of Revelation
guest speaker: Dr. Kenneth Cuffey, President, Urbana Theological Seminary

Miss the last Digging Deeper? Catch up here! valley.church/revelationarchive

22. Symbols Interpreted in Revelation

Text	Symbol	Interpretation
1:20	Seven stars	Angels of the seven churches
1:20	Seven lampstands	Seven churches
2:9; 3:9	Synagogue of Satan	Those who say they are Jews but are not
4:5	Seven blazing lamps	Seven spirits, or sevenfold Spirit, of God
5:8; 8:3-4	Golden bowls of incense	Prayers of the saints
7:9, 13-14	Great multitude	Those wearing white robes who have come out of the Great Tribulation
8:10-11	Great blazing star	Named Wormwood, meaning bitterness
9:11	Angel of the Abyss	Hebrew name is Abaddon, Greek name is Apollyon, both meaning Destroyer
11:3-4	Two witnesses	Two olive trees and two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth
11:8	Great city	Sodom and Egypt, where also the Lord was crucified
12:5	Male child	Son who will rule all nations with an iron scepter
12:9; 20:2	Great Dragon	Ancient Serpent, Devil, Satan
12:17	Offspring of the woman	Those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus
13:18	666	Number of the Beast and a man's number
14:1, 3-4	144,000	Virgins redeemed from the earth who did not defile themselves with women
16:13-14	Three evil spirits	Demonic spirits that perform miraculous signs and gather the kings for battle
16:16	Harmagedon (Armageddon)	In Hebrew, place where kings are gathered for the great battle
17:1, 15	Many waters	Peoples, multitudes, nations, and languages
17:3, 5	Woman sitting on a scarlet beast	Mother of prostitutes and of the abominations of the earth
17:3, 5, 18	Woman sitting on a scarlet beast	Great city Babylon that rules over the kings of the earth
17:3, 7, 9	Seven heads of scarlet beast	Seven hills on which the woman sits
17:3, 7, 10	Seven heads of scarlet beast	Seven kings: five fallen, one is, one has not yet come
17:3, 7, 12	Ten horns of scarlet beast	Ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom but will rule for one hour
19:8	Bride's fine linen	Righteous acts of the saints
19:11, 16	Rider on a white horse	King of kings and Lord of lords
20:5	1,000 years	First resurrection
20:8	Gog and Magog	Nations in the four corners of the earth
20:14; 21:8	Lake of fire	Second death
21:2, 9-10	Holy City, New Jerusalem	Bride, the wife of the Lamb

24. Symbolism of Colors and Numbers in Revelation

Colors	Reference(s)	Symbolism
Golden	1:13; 15:6	Divinity, splendor
White	1:14; 2:17; 3:4, 5, 18; 4:4; 6:2, 11; 7:9, 13, 14; 14:14; 19:11, 14; 20:11	Victory, purity, resurrection
Rainbow	4:3; 10:1	Omnipotence
Red	6:4; 12:3	Slaughter, war, violence
Black	6:5, 12	Disaster, famine
Green	6:8; 8:7; 9:4	Death
Blue	9:17	Smoke
Yellow	9:17	Sulfur
Fiery	9:17; 10:1; 11:19	Judgment
Purple	17:4; 18:16; cf. 18:12	Royalty
Scarlet	17:4; 18:16; cf. 18:12	Royalty
Numbers		
1/2	8:1	Short, brief
1	17:12; 18:8, 10, 17, 19	Exclusiveness, primacy, excellence
2	11:3, 4, 10; 12:14; 13:11; 19:20	Plurality
3	6:6; 8:13; 9:18; 16:13, 19; 21:13	Sufficiency; limited plurality
3½	11:9, 11; 12:14	Final period of Satan's rule
4	4:6, 8; 5:6, 8, 14; 6:1, 6; 7:1, 2; 9:10, 14, 15; 14:3; 15:7; 19:4; 20:8	Cosmic completeness
5	9:5, 10	Limited
6	4:8	Incompletion
7	1:4, 11, 12, 16, 20; 2:1; 3:1; 4:5; 5:1, 5, 6; 6:1; 8:2, 6; 10:3, 4; 12:3; 13:1; 15:1, 6, 7, 8; 16:1; 17:1, 3, 7, 9, 10, 11; 21:9	Perfection, completeness
10	2:10; 12:3; 13:1; 17:3, 7, 12, 16	Fullness, completeness
12	12:1; 21:12, 14, 21; 22:2	Completeness; number of God's people
24	4:4, 10; 5:8; 11:16; 19:4	12 x 2
42	11:2; 13:5	42 ÷ 12 = 3½
144	21:17	12 x 12
666	13:18	Man's number
1,000	20:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	Enumeration of large numbers
1,260	11:3; 12:6	1,260 ÷ 30 = 42
7,000	11:13	7 x 1,000
12,000	7:5, 6, 7, 8; 21:16	12 x 1,000
144,000	7:4; 14:1, 3	12 x 12 x 1,000

25. Figures of Speech in Revelation

Reference	Simile
1:10	Loud voice like (ὡς) a trumpet
1:13	Someone like (ὅμοιον) a Son of Man
1:14	Head and hair white like wool, as white as snow; eyes like blazing fire
1:15	Feet like burnished bronze, as glowing in a furnace; his voice like the sound of rushing waters
1:16	Face like the sun shining in all its brilliance
1:17	I fell as though dead
2:18	Eyes like blazing fire; feet like burnished bronze
2:27	Break them like clay pots
3:3	Come like a thief
4:1	Voice speaking like a trumpet
4:3	Someone whose appearance is like jasper and carnelian, rainbow whose appearance is like an emerald
4:6	Something like a sea of glass, like crystal
4:7	First living creature like a lion, the second like an ox, the third with a face like a man, the fourth like a flying eagle
5:6	Lamb standing as slain
6:1	Voice like thunder
6:6	Something like a voice
6:12	Sun black as goat-hair sackcloth; moon (red) as blood
6:13	Stars of heaven fell as a fig tree drops its late figs
6:14	Heaven receded like a scroll rolling up
8:8	Something like a large mountain
8:10	Great star burning like a torch
9:2	Smoke rose like smoke from a large furnace
9:5	Torment like a scorpion's sting
9:7	Locusts' appearance like horses prepared for battle; something like crowns of gold; faces like human faces
9:8	Hair like woman's hair; teeth like lion's teeth
9:9	Breastplates like breastplates of iron; wings sound like many horse-drawn chariots charging into battle
9:10	Tails with stingers like scorpions
9:17	Horses' heads like heads of lions
9:19	Tails like snakes
10:1	Face like the sun; legs like fiery pillars
10:9, 10	Scroll sweet as honey
11:1	Reed like a measuring rod
12:15	Water like a river
13:2	Beast like a leopard, feet like a bear's, mouth like a lion's
14:2	Sound like that of many waters, like that of great thunder, like harpists playing their harps

14:14	Someone like a Son of Man
15:2	Something like a sea of glass mixed with fire
16:3	Blood like that of a corpse
16:13	Three unclean spirits like frogs
16:15	Come like a thief
18:21	Boulder like a large millstone
19:1, 6	Sound like that of a great multitude
19:6	Sound like that of many waters, like that of great thunder
19:12	Eyes like a flame of fire
20:8	Number like the sand of the sea
21:11	City's brilliance like a very precious stone, like a crystal-clear jasper
21:18	Pure gold like clear glass
21:21	Street like transparent glass
22:1	River clear as crystal
	Metaphor
1:1; 2:20; 7:3; 10:7; 11:18; 15:3; 19:2, 5; 22:3, 6	Servant, slave
1:5	To free from sin
1:6; 5:10; 20:6	Priest
1:16	Seven stars
1:16; 2:12, 16; 19:15, 21	Sharp double-edged sword out of the mouth
1:18; 9:1; 20:1	Key(s)
2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21; 5:5; 12:11; 17:14; 21:7	Be victorious/conquer/triumph
2:7; 22:2, 14, 19	Tree of life
2:10	Wreath/crown of life
2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8	Second death
2:13	Throne of Satan
2:17	Hidden manna; white stone
2:20	Jezebel
2:27; 19:15	Iron scepter
2:28; 22:16	Morning star
3:2; 16:15	Be watchful/wake up
3:4, 18; 16:15	Clothes
3:4-5; 4:4; 19:14	Dressed in white
3:5	Erase/blot out
3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27	Book of Life
3:7	Key of David

Charts on the Book of Revelation

3:8	Open door
3:11	Take away your wreath/crown
3:12	Pillar; write God's name and name of God's city on him; new name
3:12; 11:1; 21:22	Temple
3:12; 21:2	New Jerusalem
3:15-16	Hot; cold
3:16	Spit/vomit
3:18; 16:15	Shameful nakedness
3:20	Christ knocking at the door; eating together
3:21	Sit with me on my throne
5:1	Right hand
5:5	Lion of the tribe of Judah
5:5; 22:16	Root (and offspring) of David
5:6 (+28 more)	Lamb
5:8; 8:3, 4	Incense
5:8; 14:2; 15:2	Harp
6:4	Large sword
6:11; 7:9, 13, 14	White robe
6:13	Stars fell
7:4; 14:1, 3	144,000
7:14	Washed their robes
7:17	Shepherd
8:3	Incense offering
10:9, 10	Eating the scroll
10:10	Turned sour/became bitter
11:1, 2; 21:15	Measuring rod
11:2, 3; 12:6, 14	42 months/1,260 days/time, times, and half a time
11:4	Two olive trees; two lampstands
11:5	Fire from their mouths
11:8	Sodom; Egypt
11:8; 16:19; 17:18; 18:10, 16, 18, 19, 21	Great city
11:18; 22:12	Reward
12:1, 6, 13-17	The woman
12:2	Woman bearing a child
12:3; 13:1; 17:3, 7, 9	Seven heads, ten horns
12:15	Sweep away
13:3	Whole earth
13:6	To blaspheme God's dwelling place
14:4	Virgins; to redeem; firstfruits
14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21	Babylon

14:10; 17:4; 18:6	Cup
14:11, 13	Rest
14:15-16	Grain harvest
14:17-20	Grape harvest
14:19, 20; 19:15	Winepress
17:1, 15, 16; 19:2	Great prostitute
17:1, 15	Many waters
17:2	Sexual immorality, intoxication
17:4	Golden cup
17:6	Drunk with the blood
17:9	Seven hills
17:16	Leave her naked; eat her flesh; burn her with fire
18:5	Piled up to heaven
18:7	Widow
18:14	Fruit
19:7; 21:9	Wife
19:9	Wedding feast
19:11	White horse
19:12	Many crowns
19:20; 20:10, 14, 15	Lake of fire burning with sulfur
20:2	To bind
20:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	1,000 years
20:8	Gog and Magog
20:9	Camp of God's people
20:11	Great White Throne
20:12	Books
21:2, 9; 22:17	Bride
21:7	My son
21:27; 22:14	Entering the city
22:4	His face
22:17	Thirsty for water
	Personification
1:12; 4:1	"The voice" for voice of God
1:18; 6:8; 20:13, 14	"Death" refers to a person; "Hades" to his kingdom
5:13	Every creature singing
9:1-2	"Star" for doorkeeper
9:3-6	"Locusts" for army
9:11	"Abaddon" and "Apollyon" for angel over place of dead
9:13	Horns of altar speaking
12:3-6	"Dragon" for Satan
12:15	Serpent spewed water

12:16	Earth opened mouth and swallowed
13:1	“Beast out of the sea” for Roman emperor and his proconsul
13:11	“Beast out of the earth” for Asiarch who was priest of imperial cult
16:7	“Altar” for martyred saints and prophets
17:3–18	“The woman” (Roma) for Rome
17:12	“Ten horns” for ten kings
21:2	“Holy city, new Jerusalem” for an adorned bride
22:15	“Dogs” for sodomite
22:17	“Bride” for the church
	Apostrophe
18:10, 16, 19	“Woe! Woe, O great city . . .”
18:23	“Your merchants . . . your sorcery”
	Parody
2:24	“Deep things of Satan” perhaps a parody of motto “deep things of Jezebel”
6:8	To kill with a sword parodies Roman <i>ius gladii</i> (the right of execution)
13:1	Beast’s appearance parodies Christ
13:1	Ten horns suggest universal rule parodying Christ’s sovereign rule
13:3	Beast’s fatal wound and healing parodies death and resurrection of Lamb (cf. 5:6)
13:4	“Who is like . . . ?” parodies similar OT questions used in OT hymns
13:11	Beast with two horns parodies appearance of Lamb
13:16	Mark of Beast parodies seal of the living God (cf. 7:3; 9:4)
17:8, 11	Beast who was, is not, and is to come parodies God who was, and is, and is to come (4:8; cf. 1:4, 8)
19:17	Great supper of God parodies the wedding supper of the Lamb
	Metonymy
2:3	“My name” refers to person of exalted Christ
6:6	“Oil and wine” refers to olive trees and grapevines
7:9	“Palm branches” refer to victory
7:14	“Blood of the Lamb” refers to atoning death of Christ
11:18	“The earth” refers to the people of the earth
	Merism
1:8; 21:6; 22:13	Alpha and Omega
1:17; 2:8; 22:13	First and last
21:6; 22:13	Beginning and end
	Euphemism
6:11	Rest/wait
17:10; cf. 14:8; 18:2	Fallen

Paradox	
2:9; 3:9	Synagogue of Satan
3:1	Reputation of being alive but are dead
3:16	Neither hot nor cold but lukewarm
3:17	Claim to be rich but wretched and poor
Hyperbole	
4:8; 7:15	Day and night
7:9	Great multitude that no one could count
9:16	Two hundred million
14:20	Blood to the height of the horses' bridles
18:5	Sins piled up to heaven
19:3	Her smoke rises forever and ever
Irony	
3:9	Jews to fall down at the feet of Gentile believers
3:17	Laodiceans poor, blind, and naked
5:5-6	Lion becomes Lamb