

THE TIME IS NEAR
Revelation 1:1-20
Richard Yen

- 1A. What is the purpose of this revelation?
- 1B. What are the keys to the proper understanding of this message?
- 1C. How was the message delivered?
 - 1D. Where was John when he received the vision? (1:9)
 - 2D. Communication has many components: the written (e.g. a letter), the verbal (e.g. a recording,) the visual (e.g. silent movie,) or a combination of them. What was the major format for this message? (visual, Rev 1:1)
 - 3D. Given that many things seen by John were not in existence at his time (but will be invented in the future,) what would be a major challenge for John to communicate accurately to people who live in the centuries to follow?
 - 4D. Since we are not living in John's time, many things familiar to him are strange to us. So if we encounter things that are unfamiliar to us, should we interpret the passage figuratively or literally?
 - 5D. Imagine yourself in an Italian opera and you do not understand Italian. Would it help if you have the English translation of the songs that they sing?
 - 1E. So when confronted with some parts that are clear and others that are less clear, which part should have priority?
 - 2E. What are some common fears that Christians have before they read this book?
 - 3E. If there is a difference of opinion between some commentators and the clear text of Scriptures, which one should you pay attention to?
 - 4E. If there are questions as to how to properly interpret a passage in Revelation, and three persons, Jesus, Paul and Daniel all appeared to have made remarks that might be helpful, which one should have precedence?
 - 5E. Who showed the Revelation to John?
- 2C. To whom was the message intended?
 - 1D. Most scholars agree that John wrote this around A.D. 95 at which time practically all of the early apostles were martyred. What about the condition of the churches that they established?
 - 2D. Many Christians reading the Bible today have the bad habit of only asking what the message means to them personally in the 21st Century. What is the danger of ignoring what Jesus was trying to tell the early churches?
 - 3D. Is this "one message to all 7 churches" or "7 messages to 7 churches"?
 - 1E. What difference does it make between the 2 scenarios?
 - 2E. If this is a single message, did the Ephesian church people have to care what was said to the Laodicean church members?
 - 3E. Why then was there seemingly 7 messages (in Chapter 2 and 3)?
 - 1F. Were these churches identical in their personnel and problems?

- 2F. If despite their differences, they had common problems, should we not discover what those problems were?
- 4D. Are the churches (and Christians) all the same today?
- 1E. Do you think that we may also have Christian communities as different as the Philadelphia and the Laodicean church at John's time?
- 2E. Is it important for Christians today to know what can happen to Christian communities?
- 2B. What are the key concepts highlighted in Chapter 1:1-3?
- 1C. There was a "chain" of relationship mentioned in the first three verses, was it about events or about people?
- 1D. Many preachers or writers love to focus on "What will happen in the future" (which leads to much speculation.) Was the Revelation given mainly to warn people or was it given primarily to show Jesus' power in predicting the future events?
- 2D. Was there any indication in the text that the letter was meant only for the people in the 7 churches in the first century in Asia Minor?
- 3D. Why is it that most discussions about Revelation would result in arguments rather than changed lives?
- 2C. Jesus did mention "things which must shortly take place." What was He trying to tell us?
- 1D. Would that mean "things that will happen after the 21st Century"?
- 2D. How would His primary audience (John and the 7 congregations) understand the phrase "must shortly take place"?
- 3D. Would a Christian know whether a prophecy had been fulfilled if that Christian had zero knowledge of church history or world events?
- 4D. Is it possible that some of the things mentioned in the Revelation were in fact fulfilled soon after A.D. 95?
- 5D. If they were already fulfilled in the first or second century, does it mean then we in the 21st century do not need to care?
- 2A. What did Jesus (through John) tell the 7 churches?
- 1B. What must the churches know about God?
- 1C. What aspect of God the Father was revealed here in 1:4?
- 1D. All people today understand that we live in at least 4 dimensions (3 in space and one of time.) While we have some control in where to go, we have no control over time. In contrast, what did this passage inform us about God?
- 2D. If God is not limited by time but can move between our past and our future, would He have any problem "predicting" ("pre" means "before") what will happen (not just events, but people)?
- 3D. One common argument about the future (and God's power) relates to the degree with which He controls human decisions (i.e. "predestination.") As a simple way to resolve this complex (and stupid) debate, let us ask: "If human beings have no choice, what was the purpose of Jesus warning

us through this book and calling a person blessed if he hears and keeps the words of this prophecy”?

- 2C. What details do we know about the Spirit?
- 1D. Many Christians have curiosity about “numerology” (the meaning of numbers.) The passage here described 7 spirits. Should this become the focus of a new debate about the Holy Spirit?
 - 2D. The simplest way to understand the passage is to show that there are 7 churches and the Spirit of God covers them all. So to the 7 congregations which were different, they appeared to be 7 Spirits. If John had no problem with that, should we raise an issue?
- 3C. What do we learn about the Son here?
- 1D. Jesus was first and foremost mentioned as “the faithful witness.” What quality would this suggest to be important in God’s sight (but missing in the early church)?
 - 2D. In addition to what Jesus did, it talked about the effect of what Jesus did on us. What were those effects? (1:5)
 - 3D. Verse 7 gave us a key to the proper interpretation of Revelation. Where else did the Bible mention “coming with clouds and every eye will see Him”? (Matt 24:30)
 - 1E. It was said that Matthew was the key to the chronology in Revelation. Why?
 - 2E. Since some events that are in the future for John (e.g. A.D. 1945) but were in the past for us, and some events are in the future for both John and us (the Rapture) it is important to draw a time-line when we discuss Revelation. What other book described a clear time-line? (Matt 24, 25.)
 - 3E. Matthew is essentially answering “What must we do on earth to be saved?” Revelation answered the complement “What will happen to you on earth if you are not saved.” So which is our reference when we get confused about the time-line in Revelation?
- 2B. How should we understand the “imagery” in 1:12-20?
- 1C. Although the gospel (including the one by the same author) included many righteous aspects of Jesus, most people pay attention only to His lovely side. How does this explain why many Christians have a hard time accepting this picture to be the same loving Jesus?
 - 2C. Lampstands, furnaces and swords are not things that we are comfortable with today. Overall, was this a message of good-feelings, or overwhelming-glory?
 - 1D. How did John react when he saw this vision?
 - 2D. If the intended reaction was one of respect, why should Christian today look for loving kindness?
 - 3C. What did Jesus tell John about the vision?
 - 1D. What are the stars and the lampstands?
 - 2D. Why was it necessary to use these “symbols”? (In a dream or vision, there may not be a division between “real things” and “symbols.”)
 - 4C. So what should we focus on: changed attitudes or speculative curiosity?
 - 5C. What will happen to us and our churches if we ignore the warning in this book?

6C. What can we do to make this message real to our lives and those around us?

HE WHO HAS AN EAR

Revelation 2:1-17

Richard Yen

- 1A. To whom was the letter written?
- 1B. What is the proper way to understand the letter sent to the 7 churches?
- 1C. What difference does it make whether it was one letter sent to 7 different churches, or 7 different letters to 7 churches?
- 1D. How does Rev 1:11 describe this letter (or book)?
- 2D. If it really were 7 different letters, did (for example) the Ephesian church need to care what was written to the Laodicean church?
- 3D. If it was really one letter, why were the parts about each church so different?
- 4D. Why were the churches arranged in that particular order?
- 1E. Find out where is Patmos (where John was imprisoned, Rev 1:9) on a map; then locate the 7 churches. Is there a pattern to the sequence of churches?
- 2E. Why was Ephesus the first city to get the letter? (Closest to Patmos)
- 4D. Since it really was one letter, should we pay attention to the common theme or to the differences between the 7 groups?
- 2C. Pay attention to the format of the letter. Even if you only have time to read about the first 3 churches, do you see a pattern?
- 1D. When the word “church” is mentioned today, we typically think of a building with a pastor and people worshipping on Sundays. How were things different at that time?
- 2D. The “angel” of the church can best be understood as its “elder” or leader. Does that mean only he gets to read the content of the letter?
- 3D. The letter all started with a reminder to the reader what God is like. What does this tell you about the seriousness of the letter?
- 4D. What followed after that? (“I know your works.”)
- 1E. It is generally recognized that John received the Revelation around A.D. 95. How were the Christian groups doing at that time?
- 2E. If a church was doing poorly at that time, was there such a thing like a denominational leader there to help (like we do today)?
- 3E. Can a church deteriorate as badly as some of these churches?
- 5D. Was there a warning involved?
- 1E. When Jesus was on earth, He talked about “He who has ears, let him hear” (Matt 13:9.) Why now would Jesus say “He who has an ear”?
- 2E. Who is supposed to overcome? (A group or an individual?)
- 3E. So whose responsibility is it to overcome when things go wrong?
- 4E. What happens to the church if individuals there do not repent or overcome the problems?
- 5E. Do you think the same principles apply today?

- 2B. What are some common mistaken ways to read Revelation chapter 2 and 3?
- 1C. Many preachers say that the 7 churches represent the 7 church ages:
- (a) Ephesus means “Desirable”: AD 70 – 170 (The early church)
 - (b) Smyrna means “Bitter Herb”: AD 170-312 (Suffering church under the Romans)
 - (c) Pergamum means “Married and Elevated”: AD 312-600 (Union with the Roman state)
 - (d) Thyatira means “Continual Sacrifice”: AD 600-1517 (Suffering Under the Papacy)
 - (e) Sardis means “Remnant”: AD 1517 – 1750 (The Reformation)
 - (f) Philadelphia means “Brotherly Love”: 19- 20th century (The Missionary Movement)
 - (g) Laodicea means “Rule of People: Now (The Apostate Church)

They emphasize that this method of interpretation “proves that Revelation is truly a message from Jesus” because only Jesus has control of human history. What is the problem with this kind of thinking?

- 1D. Cutting history into 7 segments is arbitrary, if not dangerous. For example, some people would emphasize the contribution of the Reformation. Did the Roman Catholic church cease to exist, or stop being influential after 1517?
- 2D. Is it true that only Protestant churches send out missionaries?
- 3D. Is it a good practice to misinterpret Scriptures in order to arrive at certain pre-determined, helpful “moral lessons” or “spiritual applications”?
- 2C. How do we know that the churches are not “church ages”?
- 1D. Was there a church in each of the cities: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea at the time John wrote the document?
- 2D. If these are church ages, did the congregation in Ephesus need to be faithful till Jesus returns (Rev 2:5) or just till the arrival of the Smyrna Age?
- 3D. If these are church ages, can a Philadelphia church age appear after a Laodicean church age?
- 1E. Typically Christians today are told they represent the Laodicean church. If so, can our churches send out missionaries?
- 2E. If our churches do send out missionaries (meaning we are still at the Philadelphia church age) then we should wait for the arrival of the Laodicean church ages first, before we can expect Jesus to come back?
- 3C. What are the implications if these are 7 parallel churches that exist at the same time (and not sequential)?
- 1D. If each church is locked into history, what hope is there for changing (into a better church)?
- 2D. If churches were so different at the time of John, can we expect churches to be the same today?
- 3D. Can we expect today that some churches are very mission-minded while others are apostate?

- 4D. Are there churches that are still being persecuted today?
 - 1E. Which of the early churches does your church best resemble?
 - 2E. Do church members have a responsibility, even today?
- 2A. What are the specific problems of the recipients of this letter?
 - 1B. What was the problem with the Ephesian church?
 - 1C. Was there anything good about this church?
 - 2C. How come they could not maintain their love (for Christ and each other)?
 - 3C. Nicolas was a deacon in the early Jerusalem church, who was a Gentile converted at Antioch (Acts 6:5.) He obviously had quite a following that influenced the Ephesian church. If you cannot trust someone who had such credentials, whom can you trust?
 - 4C. Is the overcomer supposed to listen to what the Spirit has to say to his church or to all churches?
 - 1D. What is the implication regarding the other churches?
 - 2D. Is that the same for all overcomers of all the 7 churches or just this one?
 - 3D. So what is the common message for all 7 churches even though the churches are very different? (faithful unto death)
 - 2B. What was the problem with the Smyrna church?
 - 1C. Actually the city itself was one of the most prosperous in Asia Minor. Yet the church here was described as having tribulation and poverty. Was there a brighter future in store for them?
 - 2C. Why would anyone want to attack a church which had neither wealth nor fame to offer?
 - 3C. What did Christ expect them to do? (faithful until death)
 - 1D. What was the “second death” (Rev 2:11)?
 - 2D. Polycarp was the bishop of this church, who was martyred in A.D. 155/156 for refusing to recant his faith. So did the message get through (at least to some)?
 - 3B. What was the problem with the Pergamum church?
 - 1C. Pergamum was the official administrative capital of the “Province of Asia” with the first temple of the imperial cult in honor of Rome and Augustus. What can happen to Christians who refuse to worship the emperor?
 - 2C. What is the doctrine of Balaam? (See Numbers 22-25)
 - 1D. Balaam was supposed to be a prophet but instead he tried to curse Israel for money offered by Balak, the Moab king. So is this an internal or external problem?
 - 2D. What areas of morality became quickly compromised?
 - 3C. Where is the church of Pergamum today?
 - 1D. Jesus said He would come quickly to fight against the enemies in that church. Did He?
 - 2D. Did Christ expect the whole church to repent, or just individuals?
 - 4B. What is expected of churches today?
 - 1C. Are church leaders aware of their mission?
 - 2C. Do church members have any role in correcting problems when found?
 - 3C. Is everyone aware of corruptive influences from within and from outside?

- 4C. Are people content or are they vigilant?
- 5C. What can people do more to “overcome”?

HOW LONG, O LORD

Revelation 5:1 to 6:11

Richard Yen

- 1A. What did John see up there?
- 1B. It is true that “what you see depends on where you stand.” So where was John when he reported the events of Revelation Chapter 5 and 6? (4:1)
- 1C. Many commentators interpreted “After these things” (4:1) to mean “after the end of all church ages.” Why was that a mistake?
- 2C. If John said “I looked” (4:1) and he saw the vision in AD 95, would “these things” refer to events that happened immediately before his looking, or to events that will happen after all Christians are gone?
- 3C. If “after these things” truly mean after the church ages (after Christians were delivered from the Great Tribulation) would Rev 5 and 6 concern us?
- 1D. So what are some problems when well-meaning scholars try to fit Biblical data into their pre-conceived ideas?
- 2D. Can you now understand why most commentators do not seem to agree with each other and why ordinary Christians are confused about Revelation?
- 2B. If John was way up there, does that mean all of the described events happen in heaven and not on earth?
- 1C. Some Christians like to ask whether some descriptions in the Bible are “literal” or “figurative.” What should we do if we are not sure?
- 1D. For example, John said “I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll” (5:1) Should we ask “Does God have a right hand also?” Or, “Is it a real throne, or does it just mean power?”
- 2D. The key to proper interpretation is “getting what the speaker intends to communicate to his primary audience.” What did John want to say when he said “I saw”?
- 3D. Many things that were familiar to people in John’s time would produce uncomfortable feelings in people who live in the 21st century. Can you give some examples?
- 4D. Language can also be a problem when the audience lives in a different century. For example, try describing to John what a television is like, or a cell phone. And if John asked whether what you described was “literal” or “figurative” how would you reply?
- 5D. Even today, when we describe new tools or inventions (what it is), we communicate by pointing out what it is designed to do (function.) Do you think it would be helpful when we study Revelation to focus on the “functional aspect” of unfamiliar objects or descriptions?
- 2C. One of the important messages in the Bible is that what happens in heaven affects earth and what is going on earth affects heaven. How do we know that is true especially in Revelation?
- 1D. The objects being described (throne, scroll, seals): do these things exist on earth?

- 2D. The description of certain events (“You were slain”; “Have made us kings and priests” 5:9-10): where did these take place?
 - 3D. What would be the problem if we try to limit John’s report to only what we have experienced, or can understand?
- 2A. What is this scroll?
- 1B. What is the purpose of a scroll?
 - 1C. How is a scroll different from a present-day book? (You can read the last chapter of a book without opening to the first chapter.)
 - 2C. What does the description “written inside and on the back” tell you?
 - 3C. If the purpose of a scroll is to record things for people to read, why then was it sealed with 7 seals?
 - 2B. What is the best way to understand this scroll?
 - 1C. If you are watching an Italian opera and you do not know Italian, how can you enjoy the story?
 - 1D. You may ask someone who claims that he knows Italian to explain, but then how do you know he is correct?
 - 2D. What if there is a booklet which has translated the songs into English?
 - 3D. If there is a choice between the visual (body language, imagery) and the audio (written language, songs, words), which one is more likely to make sense?
 - 4D. Are there clear descriptions of what is going on here? (5:9-10, 12, 13)
 - 2C. The passage described again the presence of 4 living creatures and the 24 elders. What are their functions? (worship; 4:8-11)
 - 3C. So no one was worthy to open and read the scroll, except the Lamb (5:6) What does this suggest about the content of the scroll?
 - 3B. Why was the Lamb the only worthy one to open the scroll?
 - 1C. What had the Lamb done to deserve the honor?
 - 2C. How many people were affected by the Lamb’s sacrifice?
 - 3C. Was the effect of the Lamb’s sacrifice limited to only past events?
 - 4B. What did the 3 songs tell us?
 - 1C. Who were the ones singing each of the songs?
 - 2C. What was the focus of all these songs?
 - 3C. Do you suppose the scroll had anything to do with the Redemptive History of mankind?
- 3A. What are the first 5 seals?
- 1B. The first 4 seals are all presented by “horses.” The focus is obviously not on the horse itself but what it does (represents.) What are they?
 - 1C. What does the white horse represent? (Conquest)
 - 2C. What does the red horse represent? (Killing)
 - 3C. What does the black horse represent? (Famine)
 - 4C. What does the pale horse represent? (Death)
 - 1D. Did these terrible things start only after the “end of all church ages” or were they always there with mankind?

- 2D. Did Jesus say something to the same effect when the disciples asked Him “When will be the end of the age”? (Matt 24:6-8)
- 2B. The 5th seal revealed a question asked by all people regardless of location, culture, or era. What was it?
- 1C. If the scroll is about human history, what does the 5th seal (when opened) reveal?
- 1D. Even people with no faith will tell you that there are good people and bad people on earth (their terminology.) Which group is the focus here?
- 2D. If God is all powerful and all kind, why do bad things happen to good people?
- 2C. Many people say there is no God “because there is too much evil on earth.” Why is this a wrong conclusion?
- 1D. If there is nothing but evil on earth (everything is colored “black”) how on earth do people get the idea that there ought to be some good (“white”) somewhere (which they say do not exist)?
- 2D. So if there is a powerful God who can overcome evil at any time of His choosing, and right now there is evil, what is the logical conclusion?
- 3C. What is the purpose of God’s saying “wait a little”?
- 1D. Would that be unfair to the martyrs?
- 2D. Did God give a reason?
- 4C. What is the significance of the 5th seal?
- 1D. If the hold-up is due to the number of martyrs still lacking, is it God’s fault, or people not willing to live and die for righteousness’ sake?
- 2D. Did God give a fix number completion of which will end all suffering?
- 3D. What does it say about the importance of “perseverance of the saints”?
- 4D. What does it imply about the teaching saying that Christians will not have to suffer, but that they will be delivered from earth before the Great Tribulation can come?
- 3B. How does the vision seen by John coincide with Jesus’ direct teaching?
- 1C. Jesus said “Take heed that no one deceives you” (Matt 24:4-8) which included false prophets and generalized suffering such as wars and rumors of wars (but that was not the end.) How does that fit with the first four seals in Revelation?
- 2C. Jesus went on to say “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you” (Matt 24:9) So deception is not enough, there will be martyrdom. How does that parallel the question in the 5th seal?
- 3C. If the first 4 seals deals with suffering in general (by all people) and the 5th seal moved to focus particularly on the tribulation of the saints, what do you suppose will happen at the 6th and last seal? (Deliverance of the saints and Retribution to the sinners.)
- 4C. So is the message of Revelation about Hope or Despair?
- 1D. Why do some people still say the message is unclear?
- 2D. Do you agree the Bible actually supplies all the information we need to understand it?
- 3D. Does this passage affect what you think about your own life?

THESE COME OUT OF THE GREAT TRIBULATION

Revelation 6:12 to 7:17

Richard Yen

- 1A. What is the relationship between the Great Tribulation and Rapture?
- 1B. The Great Tribulation refers to the period of tribulation which Jesus said was so severe that none was like that before, nor after, and “for the elect’s sake, those days will be shortened.” (Matt 24:21-22) What are the characteristics of this period?
 - 1C. What is the difference between Tribulation (the unjustified suffering of the righteous) and Retribution (the justified punishment on the unrepentant)?
 - 2C. How do these two concepts fit under the general term of Suffering? (“Suffering” does not distinguish between the reasons for the affliction.)
 - 3C. What will happen if someone is confused about these three concepts?
- 2B. Many Christians like to argue whether the Rapture (deliverance of the Christians) will come before or after the Great Tribulation. Why? (To help confused minds see the picture, draw a line on a piece of paper to represent the “period” call the Great Tribulation and then make three marks on this line to represent the possible time “pints” when this one event, Rapture, may occur.)
 - 1C. For the idea that Christians will be delivered before the Great Tribulation (called “Pre-Trib”) what is its main appeal?
 - 2C. Regarding the idea that Christians will be delivered after the Great Tribulation (called “Post-Trib”) what is its major warning?
 - 3C. There is a third idea called “Mid-Trib” which means Christians will be delivered during the Great Tribulation which will go on after the Rapture. What does that imply about the Great Tribulation?
 - 4C. How do we know which idea comes from the Bible and which one comes from imagination and speculation?
- 3B. During debates, many people will say “It all depends on how you define it.” Who coined the term Great Tribulation?
 - 1C. If Jesus had given His definition and you hear a different definition from a “Bible scholar” which one should you listen to?
 - 2C. Jesus mentioned that tribulation will fall on His disciples, but that is not the Great Tribulation. What then defines the Great Tribulation?
 - 1D. What does the Abomination of Desolation have to do with the Great Tribulation? (Matt 24:15) (That was the start of this period)
 - 2D. How will this Great Tribulation end? (When Christians are delivered from its rule: Matt 24:29 “Immediately after the tribulation of those days.”)
 - 3D. Jesus said the Great Tribulation will be cut short for the sake of the elect. Some people thought the elect meant the Jewish people. Is that correct?
 - 1E. When Jesus said “not one stone shall be left here upon another” what event was He prophesizing? (Titus’ complete destruction of the temple in AD 70.)
 - 2E. So was that prophecy fulfilled?
 - 3E. Yet Jesus said that period was so severe that no other tribulation will

be like that; so He was using the experience of the actual destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 to forecast another similar event. Who else in the Bible are called the “elect”? (Romans 2:28-29)

- 4E. Jesus said “Immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.” (Matt 24:29) Do you think that the disciple would understand how this could be achieved?
- 3C. If the Great Tribulation will terminate at a time when Christians are delivered from its authority, would the idea of “Mid-Trib” still be valid?
- 1D. Can there be any more tribulation if Christians are no longer on earth?
- 2D. Does this mean there will be no suffering on earth after Christians are raptured?
- 3D. Will there be people still on earth after the Rapture?
- 4D. After all Christian influences are removed from earth, what can we expect people who are left behind to do to each other?
- 4C. Why do most people like the idea of “Pre-trib” rather than “Post-trib”?
- 1D. Who would prefer suffering over no-suffering?
- 2D. What was Jesus’ major warning in Matthew 24:13?
- 3D. What is the danger of picking and promoting only ideas that are popular?
- 4D. What if someone says he rather not be a Christian if Christians have to suffer?
- 1E. Suffering is bearable if the cause is just. What is our cause?
- 2E. Suffering is bearable if God is with us. How real is God to you?
- 3E. People worry what if they cannot bear the suffering. What happens to people who think (ahead of time) that they will not be able to withstand?
- 4E. Do you think the Christian public today have enough encouragement and equipping to withstand suffering?
- 2A. What happens as the 6th Seal is opened?
- 1B. What did the previous 5 Seals reveal?
- 1C. Did the first 4 Seals deal with good or bad events? (Conquest, Killing, Famine and Death)
- 2C. What did the 5th Seal deal with? (Martyrdom and the reason for it)
- 2B. What happens at the 6th Seal?
- 1C. What happens to the sun, the moon, the stars?
- 2C. How was the sky described?
- 1D. How does a scroll look like when “rolled up” versus “rolled open”?
- 2D. John had no knowledge of an atomic blast. How does this description fit in with what we now know about a nuclear detonation?
- 3D. The first atomic bombs exploded in 1945. Does this mean this vision had been fulfilled?
- 4D. John described “every mountain and island was moved out of its place.” Did this happen when the bombs were dropped in Japan?
- 3C. How will the rulers of that time react to this horrific calamity?

- 1D. What is the safest place to hide when an atomic bomb goes off?
- 2D. Where are the highest national defense of the USA located today?
- 3D. How can John in the first century possibly know about atomic fission or fusion?
- 4D. If one were to pick one verse in the Bible to mark where human history is standing today (i.e. between what had happened up to this point and what will yet happen) which verse will it be? (Rev 6:11)
- 4C. Is the opening of the 6th Seal just another big scale nuclear war or is there more to it ?
 - 1D. As the rulers try to hide inside the mountains, what else do they see?
 - 2D. Jesus told His disciple about the Sign of the Son, what is that? (His appearance in the sky, Matt 24:30)
 - 3D. Matthew 24:30 described how the people would “mourn.” Does this mean that they will repent? (See Rev 6:17)
- 3A. What happens after the people on earth see “Him who sits on the throne and the Lamb”?
 - 1B. Rev 7:1-3 described 4 angels. What are their duties?
 - 1C. What are the angels told to do?
 - 2C. What does the “four corners” of the earth imply? (A world-wide conflict, not that the earth is a square pancake.)
 - 3C. What will the winds do to the earth, the sea and the trees?
 - 4C. Atomic bombs kill in three way: (a) the direct blast force, (b) the heat, (c) intense radiation. How does John know that?
 - 2B. Another angel used this moment to seal 144,000 Jews. What are their duties? (They stay behind on earth after the Rapture to witness to the wicked. Rev 14:1)
 - 3B. What happens to the Christians as this world-wide nuclear holocaust occur?
 - 1C. What did John suddenly see in heaven? (Remember, what John saw in heaven actually extends way beyond AD 95 into the future.)
 - 1D. How big is this group of people?
 - 2D. Where do they come from?
 - 3D. What do they praise God about?
 - 2C. Why does the elder ask John about this group if the elder already knew?
 - 3C. John replied that “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” (7:14)
 - 1D. So if the faithful has been delivered, will they still be on earth enduring suffering from the hands of the wicked?
 - 2D. What will happen to the period called Great Tribulation if Christians are no longer there to undergo tribulation?
 - 3D. Does that mean there is no more suffering on earth? (Actually more)
 - 4B. What must a Christian do to be delivered from the nuclear holocaust?
 - 1C. How do we know that they had been severe persecuted? (7:16-17)
 - 2C. Many people say that after an atomic war there will be no one left on earth: “We will all die!” How do we know that cannot be true?

- 1D. Many people are afraid of a nuclear war. What we now know is that the temperature will rise to ten million degrees within a millionth of a second. Typically our nerves conduct signals at about 1 meter per second. Will people feel pain if they die under the direct blast of a nuclear bomb?
- 2D. So who should fear, those who die or those who somehow survive?
- 3D. The Cold War between the Soviet Union and the USA is gone. Do we now have a high chance of world-wide atomic conflict or less?
- 4D. Some people may still think that the Bible is written for the weak of mind and the uneducated. How does the book of Revelation show otherwise?
- 3C. What criteria did Jesus give that will decide whether a person will be delivered from the Great Tribulation? (Matthew 24:13)
 - 1D. Does this principle apply to Christians in all generations?
 - 2D. What does it mean by “faithful to the end”?
 - 3D. What will happen to people who only want blessings and not sufferings?
 - 4D. Do you think it is important that Christian follow world events closely?
 - 5D. Is it healthy to have a little fear of the Lord in our daily walk?
 - 6D. What can we do to help ourselves and our love ones to be more prepared?

THEY DID NOT REPENT

Revelation 8:1-9:21

Richard Yen

- 1A. What will happen on earth around the time of the Rapture?
- 1B. Let us review. What is the sequence of events before the rapture of Christians?
- 1C. The scroll was sealed with 7 seals. What do the first 4 Seals represent?
(Suffering of all human beings since the beginning of mankind)
- 2C. What is important about the 5th Seal? (Suffering of the saints=Tribulation)
 - 1D. What specific question did the saints ask God? (Rev 6:10)
 - 2D. What was God's answer? (Rev 6:11)
- 3C. What world-wide calamity will happen at the opening of the 6th Seal?
 - 1D. What description suggests that this nuclear event is greater than the two atomic bombs dropped on Japan in 1945? (6:14)
 - 2D. Would Rev 6:12-17 have been fulfilled if that description was about Hiroshima and Nagasaki? (Those were 13 to 20 kiloton bombs, we now have 500 kilotons to 20 megaton warheads; over 2 tons TNT-equivalent for every person on earth .)
- 4C. Before a detail description of the effect on human life on earth, two events will occur first. What are those?
 - 1D. How do we know those 144,000 servants are not gentile Christians?
 - 2D. Where do we find the Christians at this time point?
 - 1E. How big is this crowd?
 - 2E. What have they done to deserve deliverance from the nuclear holocaust? (Rev 7:14)
 - 3E. Where do they come out of? (Great Tribulation)
 - 4E. What will happen to this period called Great Tribulation if the Christians have been delivered (raptured) from it?
 - 5E. Does this mean there will be no one left on earth?
 - 6E. Does this mean there will be no more suffering on earth?
- 2B. How does the first verse of chapter 8 fit in with the known effects of nuclear explosions?
 - 1C. One interpretation of the "silence for about half an hour" could be "awe and anticipation for the coming judgment of God." However, is it possible that John really noticed silence in heaven (in stead of the respectful feelings of humans or angels)?
 - 1D. No one before the 20th century (including John and people in the 7 churches) knew anything about atomic energy. How would they understand Rev 8:1?
 - 2D. We do have people today who know something about the effects of nuclear explosions. How will they understand this straight-forward description from AD 95?
 - 2C. One effect of nuclear explosion is the electromagnetic pulse (EMP) which will induce an electric current along any large metal object, e.g. power line or

radio antenna. Actual test in the Pacific wiped out emergency communications in Hawaii, 750 miles away. It is calculated that one large bomb exploding over Omaha can wipe out all electronic signals from coast to coast in the USA (see "Life After Doomsday, by B.D. Clayton.) What happens when all the computers, T.V. and radio are disabled?

- 1D. Can a Christian comprehend the accuracy of Biblical accounts if he has no knowledge of science or history?
 - 2D. Can a Christian be effective if non-Christians now have knowledge on certain facts (described in the Bible) but the Christian does not?
 - 1E. If John had no knowledge of atomic explosions, why should we?
 - 2E. If a prophet does not know all the details in the prophecy, what does that reveal about the source of the prophecy?
 - 3C. If the "silence" in Rev 8:1 really described the early effects of nuclear explosions, what can we expect the rest of the chapter to describe?
- 2A. What will happen on earth after Christian are raptured?
- 1B. What are the first 4 Trumpets?
 - 1C. How are the vegetations on earth affected?
 - 2C. What happens to the sea creatures and the shipping industry?
 - 3C. How will the fresh water supply be affected?
 - 4C. How can a third of the sun, the moon and stars be darkened?
 - 2B. Where was John when these Trumpets were sounded?
 - 1C. What kind of people will still be on earth at that time?
 - 2C. Will people care if Christians are all missing at that time?
 - 3C. Can we expect regular church services and offering at that time?
 - 4C. Given that nuclear blasts will vaporize many people, how difficult or how easy is it to explain away the disappearance of religious people?
 - 5C. Jesus described how there will be "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (regret, Matt 24:51) and "outer darkness" (Matt 25:30) for those who are left behind. How will people (who think that they are Christians but are unfaithful) feel when they find out that they survive the nuclear holocaust but all their Christian friends are gone?
 - 1D. What choice do they now have?
 - 2D. Do you see how Matthew is answering the question "How can we on earth be saved?" while Revelation is describing "What will happen to you on earth if you are not raptured"?
 - 3B. What happens at the 5th Trumpet?
 - 1C. In addition to the atomic explosions caused by man, there is now a new problem facing humans on earth. Where does the smoke come from?
 - 1D. It is well known that earthquake and volcano eruptions can release more energy and gases than even atomic bombs (and they can be triggered by atomic bombs.) What effect does the smoke have on the locusts?
 - 2D. Of all the animals on earth, insects are most resistant to radiation damage. Is it possible that these locusts are real insects and not just "symbols of Power"?

- 1E. It is well known that the biomaterial from insects are often stronger than man-made material (e.g. the silk from a spider is stronger than steel of similar dimensions and the exoskeleton of cockroaches are more protective than armor plates of similar thickness.) Why should we not be surprised that insects are used to torment people at that time?
- 2E. Does that mean we should stop all bioengineering and biomaterial research?
- 3E. John could not possibly know anything about genetic engineering and bioelectronics. How can he describe events that are in active research and development in the 21st century and beyond?
- 2C. John said that these insects have “king over them the angel of the bottomless pit.” Does it mean the locusts are only figurative and not real?
- 1D. Again, John’s duty is to report what he saw. What is the danger today if every thing Christians read are interpreted as symbols (not real)?
- 2D. Suppose you try to tell John what is a cell phone and what your cell phone can do. How do you convince John that what you say is real and not just symbols?
- 4B. What happens at the 6th Trumpet?
- 1C. How many people will be killed when the angels of Euphrates are released?
- 1D. Most people know now that the river Euphrates crosses Iraq. Does that mean Iraq will conquer one third of the world in the future? (No)
- 1E. When was the country Iraq established? (after World War I, as a punishment to the Ottoman Empire which sided with Germany.)
- 2E. Is it safe to use the Bible to speculate the political future of a government or country?
- 3E. Some people say they cannot find the USA being mentioned in Revelation and therefore there is no future for this country. Why is that kind of speculation ridiculous?
- 4E. Others like to suggest that China will be a world power because the Bible had descriptions about a dragon. Why is that equally silly?
- 5E. One thing we do know: the river Euphrates was mentioned in Genesis 2:14. What then is the best way to understand the angels of Euphrates?
- 2D. Nuclear proliferation is a major problem today. What was the estimate from experts on the fraction of Americans that could die from direct air blasts if we were to be attacked by the Soviet Union? (34.3%, according to “Nuclear Winter” by M.A. Harwell) (No telling what the new nuclear countries like Iran and North Korea will do to us.)
- 2C. Do you think people will be more likely to listen if Christians can relate the message of Revelation in real terms to them, or if we make it “more spiritual”?
- 5B. How will people respond to the unprecedented destruction on earth?
- 1C. Do most people see the “hands of God” when human beings drop bombs on each other?
- 2C. With the Christian influence gone, do you think people will be more likely

to repent, or will they rebel against God even more?

3C. If the Christians are already safely tugged away (in heaven) why do we have to bother with any nuclear wars on earth by then?

4C. What makes you think that you will not be left behind?