

*The Most Embarrassing  
Book In The Bible:*

*Understanding the Book of*  
**REVELATION**

by

Dr. Andrew Corbett

*Understanding the Book of Revelation*

© 2004 Andrew Corbett, Legana, Tasmania

No part of this work may be reproduced without the written consent of the author

PO Box 1143  
Legana, Tasmania,  
Australia, 7277

[www.andrewcorbett.net](http://www.andrewcorbett.net)

All Scripture quotations are taken from  
*The New King James Bible*  
© 1988 Thomas Nelson Inc.  
Used with permission.

Special thanks to Rev. Anthony Llewellyn, Marsden,  
Queensland for proof reading this text.

# ***THE MOST EMBARRASSING BOOK IN THE BIBLE***

## **Understanding the Book of Revelation**

### **Contents**

---

<b>END TIMES POEM .....</b>	<b>IX</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION TO UNDERSTANDING THE BOOK OF REVELATION ..</b>	<b>1</b>
DIFFERENT SCHOOLS OF INTERPRETATION .....	3
THE DATE OF REVELATION'S AUTHORSHIP .....	4
HISTORICAL CONTEXT.....	5
CONSISTENCY .....	5
<b>CHAPTER 2 UNDERSTANDING THE THEME OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION .....</b>	<b>9</b>
CONTRASTING THEMES .....	12
<b>CHAPTER 3 UNDERSTANDING THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF REVELATION .....</b>	<b>17</b>
THE MESSAGE TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES AND TODAY'S APPLICATION .....	20
<i>Ephesus</i> .....	20
<i>Smyrna</i> .....	21
<i>Pergamos</i> .....	22
<i>Thyatira</i> .....	23
<i>Sardis</i> .....	24
<i>Philadelphia</i> .....	26
<i>Laodicea</i> .....	27
OVERCOMING AND HEARING .....	28

<b>CHAPTER 4 UNDERSTANDING THE THRONE ROOM OF REVELATION .....</b>	<b>33</b>
A DOOR OPEN IN HEAVEN .....	34
THE TWENTY FOUR ELDERS .....	36
THE SEVEN LAMPS OF FIRE .....	37
THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES .....	37
<b>CHAPTER 5 UNDERSTANDING THE SEVEN SEALS OF REVELATION.....</b>	<b>41</b>
THE FOUR HORSEMEN .....	41
<i>The First Seal</i> .....	42
<i>The Second Seal</i> .....	42
<i>The Third Seal</i> .....	42
<i>The Fourth Seal</i> .....	43
<i>The Fifth Seal</i> .....	44
<i>The Sixth Seal</i> .....	45
<b>CHAPTER 6 UNDERSTANDING THE THE SEVEN TRUMPETS OF REVELATION .....</b>	<b>51</b>
THE 144,000.....	52
THE SEVENTH SEAL: 7 TRUMPETS .....	55
THE TWO WITNESSES .....	63
<b>CHAPTER 7 UNDERSTANDING THE SEVEN BOWLS OF REVELATION .....</b>	<b>69</b>
THE BEAST .....	70
THE SECOND BEAST .....	72
REAPING.....	76
THE BOWLS .....	78
ARMAGEDDON .....	79
THE HARLOT & BEAST.....	81
<b>CHAPTER 8 UNDERSTANDING THE FINAL JUDGMENT OF REVELATION.....</b>	<b>89</b>
ESCHATOLOGY'S IMPORTANCE .....	90
DIVERSE MILLENNIAL POSITIONS .....	90
<i>The Pre-Millennial Position (Pre-Millennialism)</i> .....	91
<i>The Post-Millennial Position (Post-Millennialism)</i> .....	91
<i>The A-Millennial Position (Amillennialism)</i> .....	91
THE PLACE OF THE DEVIL TODAY.....	91
<i>Pre-Millennialism's Devil</i> .....	92
<i>Post Millennialism</i> .....	92
<i>Amillennialism's Devil</i> .....	93
<i>Hyper-Preteristism's Devil</i> .....	93
REVELATION'S DEMISE OF THE DEVIL.....	93
AN ANALYSIS OF REVELATION 20.....	95
SATAN'S RELEASE AT THE END OF THE 1,000 YEARS .....	97
GOG & MAGOG.....	99
THE BELOVED CITY .....	99
THE LAST JUDGMENT .....	101

HELL & ULTIMATE JUDGMENT .....	102
<b>APPENDIX I UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLICAL POSITION OF ISRAEL TODAY .....</b>	<b>109</b>
DISPENSATIONAL CLAIMS .....	109
AN EVERLASTING, UNBREAKABLE COVENANT? .....	110
WHO REALLY OWNS PALESTINE? .....	112
WHO IS THE ISRAEL OF GOD? .....	114
<b>APPENDIX II UNDERSTANDING WHY THE RAPTURE IS UNBIBLICAL.....</b>	<b>119</b>
THE ORIGINS OF THE RAPTURE .....	120
WHAT IS THE RAPTURE? .....	121
DOES SCRIPTURE TEACH IT? .....	123
WHAT THEN IS OUR HOPE?.....	124
<b>APPENDIX III UNDERSTANDING THE RESURRECTION BIBLICALLY .....</b>	<b>129</b>
HYPER-PRETERISM IS PANTELOGY .....	130
ABOUT DEATH.....	132
RESUSCITATION .....	133
RESURRECTED BODIES .....	135
THE RESURRECTION MUST BE FUTURE .....	136
THE SECOND RESURRECTION.....	137
THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.....	139
THE FUTURE.....	142
<b>APPENDIX IV UNDERSTANDING THE OLIVET DISCOURSE.....</b>	<b>147</b>
A DIFFERENT PARADIGM.....	149
THE TEMPLE.....	151
FALSE MESSIAHS.....	151
WARS.....	152
FAMINES & EARTHQUAKES .....	153
MARTYRDOM.....	154
GOSPEL TO “ALL THE WORLD” .....	155
ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION .....	156
GREAT TRIBULATION .....	156
COMING OF THE SON OF MAN.....	157
QUESTIONS ABOUT THE COMING OF CHRIST-.....	159
SUN, MOON & STARS.....	160
THE SIGN OF THE SON OF MAN.....	161
THE TIME WAS NEAR THEN .....	162
WHAT THE SCRIPTURES REALLY TEACH ABOUT THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST .....	163
<b>INDEX: .....</b>	<b>169</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>173</b>



*When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.*

*Matthew 10:23*

*Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.*

*Matthew 16:28*

*Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.*

*Matthew 24:34*

*But He kept silent and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, “Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?”<sup>62</sup> Jesus said, “I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.”*

*Mark 14:61-62*

*Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.*

*Revelation 1:3*

*Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come.*

*1 Corinthians 10:11*

*for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

*Hebrews 9:26*

# End Times Poem

by Donna Maree Hill

Did you hear that Jesus is coming again?  
We must let everyone know!  
The best possible way of sharing the news,  
Is to make a scary video!

Sorry? You don't thinking scaring people,  
Is really God's loving way?  
Well, I think it's time He talked with me,  
Listened to what I had to say!

I'm "right up" with end times prophecy,  
With the help of my favourite book,  
No, of course it's not the bible!  
To the latest author I usually look.

Have you seen the current end times book?  
It's really a good read!  
Does it line up with what the bible says?  
What is your point? Indeed!

Shred your bank cards, big brother's tracking you,  
Every cent you spend!  
Don't buy anything with a barcode,  
On this your soul may well depend!

I heard you must convert your cash,  
To the currency of “religious gold”!  
What? Aurora won’t accept a nugget?  
Well, just rug up in the cold!

Going on holiday to Europe?  
Please take lots of care!  
Stay well away from Brussels,  
I heard the beast lives there!

I want to know the date for sure.  
Pre-trib, post-trib, when will it really be?  
Before the tribulation is important!  
No suffering for me!

Before the 70’s, 80’s, no, 90’s end,  
It’s definite Christ will appear.  
Have I checked a calendar?  
Um, surely before 2010. Oh dear!

There’s a world-wide government conspiracy,  
So give up your jobs, live underground!  
But I’m worried - will we be able,  
To hear the final trumpet sound?

Someone tried to tell me,  
To read the Bible, trust God and pray,  
But I’m too concerned that I might miss,  
That final rapture day.

# INTRODUCTION



## *Chapter 1*

# Introduction to Understanding the Book of Revelation

---

I sat across the table from a very seasoned American missionary and his wife. My colleague and I had travelled half way around the world to enjoy this lunch. Being somewhat cut off from the outside world, they asked my colleague what world events were currently fulfilling Bible prophecy. The question hung in the air until my colleague, who had borne the brunt of my recent discoveries into Revelation, said boldly, “*You should ask Andrew that. He’s been doing a lot of research into that lately.*” Knowing just how radical my views would seem, I was (to say the least) reluctant to share anything on the subject. “You don’t want to hear my views on end times!” I said. “Yes we do.” “No you don’t” I insisted. They thought I was being coy to gain their interest. I wasn’t. I have seen how unreasonably hostile believers have become with each other over the topic of Bible prophecy. I was a guest at this table in their adopted country and I had no intention of starting a hostile theological debate.

But I succumbed after reassurances that they would not martyr me if I upset or disagreed with their existing end-time views. I shared with them my journey of being a *rapture-waiting-no-way-am-I-going-to-be-left-behind-type* believer to becoming someone who realised that Scripture neither taught a rapture, a One World last days’ government, a future seven year tribulation, or a reconstructed Temple- to then becoming someone who realised that when Jesus said in Matthew 24:34 that all of the signs of the end of the age would take place within the generation which witnessed Him.

As the implication of this one verse dawned on me it drove me back to the Bible to search out what it really was saying about eschatology (end times). At the conclusion of the lunchtime conversation my hosts said, “*That makes more sense than anything else we’ve ever heard!*” I was relieved.

And it has generally been with great trepidation that I have shared with anyone what I have discovered. But at the end of every presentation (so far) I have had unanimous endorsement. This is not to say that it hasn’t provoked questions! What you are about to read is a major challenge to much of what is taught in Baptist, Charismatic and Pentecostal churches today. Just as those to whom I have already made this presentation have generally come from a Dispensational viewpoint and immediately recognised the impossibility of this theology, it is my humble hope that those who read this presentation will similarly be challenged to re-examine their views in the light of Scripture.

I don’t profess to have all the answers. But I trust that I can create some of the right questions. Neither do I claim to have made an enthralling presentation in this book. Some of this work might seem tedious to read, but I believe that if you take the time to wade your way through it you will be richly profited since that is the promise of the Book itself.

*Rather than assuming that a Biblical prophecy is yet to be fulfilled, the Preterist investigates whether it has already been fulfilled.*

*Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.*

Revelation 1:3

---

The Book of Revelation is placed last in the Bible for good reason! It should be the last book of the Bible that anyone seeks to become an expert on. The reason for this is simple. Without a thorough understanding of the rest of Scripture most of Revelation will neither make sense nor be appropriately appreciated. Most of the Book of Revelation is saturated in Old Testament imagery. Its language is highly symbolic and to be regarded as apocalyptic (revealing the future). It has clear echoes from the Books of Daniel and Zechariah where we also find similar apocalyptic passages.

## Different Schools Of Interpretation

Throughout the history of the church there have been several main schools of interpretation in regard to the Book of Revelation.

The *Historical School* regards most of Revelation describing events beginning chronologically close to its date of origin but extending through history to the end of time.

The *Futurist School* regards most of the Book of Revelation, from chapter 4 on, as applying to events far removed from the original readers. Futurists view the prophetic contents of Revelation as taking place near the end of time over a relatively short and compact period.

The third predominant school of interpretation regarding Revelation, which is once again enjoying resurgence in popularity, is the *Preterist School*. “Preterist” simply means *to look back into the past*. This view regards Revelation in the same way as we would view Ephesians or First Corinthians, or any other Book of the Bible. Rather than assuming that a Biblical prophecy is yet to be fulfilled, the Preterist investigates whether it has *already* been fulfilled. Preterists argue that the contents of Revelation need to be viewed from the context of the original recipients with consideration then given to how it can be applied to readers of any era.

I may be regarded as a *Partial Preterist* since I see the Preterist School as clearly the most Biblically responsible of Eschatological (End Times) Schools. Unlike Full-Preterists, I regard Scripture as describing the consummation of this age when Christ will hand over His kingdom to His Father (1Corinthians 15:26; noting Ephesians 1:10) whereupon there will a general resurrection (the Second Resurrection) and the final Judgment. I believe all this is described in Revelation, and does not conflict with any of the Church’s ancient creeds.

In this School of interpretation there are several important principles of interpretation that I believe must be adhered to for sound interpretation of any Scripture:

1. No Scripture should be interpreted outside of its textual, cultural, or historical context. This encompasses the principle of original audience.
2. No single verse of Scripture should be interpreted as contradicting the overall message of Scripture.
3. No verse should be interpreted as having multiple meanings or fulfilments, unless the passage itself clearly states that this is the case.

Therefore to adequately interpret the Book of Revelation the first of these Hermeneutical principles needs to be honoured. Understanding the *textual* context of the Book of Revelation will help us to realise that when it uses the number *seven*, unless it defines itself as a literal quantity of seven, it is also to be understood as having symbolic meaning. Taking into consideration John’s other writings, especially his Gospel, the textual context reveals that “seven” represents

*complete, finished, all.* Thus, when we read that the Lamb has seven horns, the text is actually telling us something other than what on the surface of it appears to be quite grotesque. Understanding that the literary use of the word “horn” frequently symbolised ‘*strength*’ in the Old Testament, we see that a Lamb with seven horns speaks of Christ who has *all strength* (He is therefore “Almighty”).

Understanding the cultural context we would consider that most of the original readers were either from a Jewish background or thoroughly familiar with it. So when it speaks of seals being opened the original readers would have harkened back to the Lord’s words to Daniel to “seal up” these words until the end and realised that the Lord was now saying the latter days were near (refer also to 1 Cor. 10:11; Heb. 9:26). The use of trumpets was also highly significant in the Old Testament. They announced to the camp of Israel that a significant and often triumphant time for the community had commenced and that they should gather together in response to the trumpet sound.

## The Date Of Revelation’s Authorship

It would be remiss of any serious student of Revelation not to at least do a cursory examination of the historical context to which Revelation is back-dropped. The first point of reference would have to be to determine when Revelation was written. Most scholars regard there being only two possible dates. Dr. Leon Morris explores this adequately in his Tyndale Commentary series volume on Revelation, and I recommend that this widely available commentary be read. In the case of most books of the Bible, determining the date of its authorship, while certainly important, is not necessarily crucial to its interpretation. But this is absolutely not the case with the Book of Revelation. Some tradition has up until recent times regarded the date Revelation’s authorship to be around 95AD. This has been based almost entirely on one vague statement by the second century Church Father, Irenaeus.

But the recent doctoral work by Kenneth L. Gentry on dating Revelation has concluded that it must have been written in the “mid to late 60s” rather than in 95AD -

*There are suggestive evidences within the book to date it in the mid- to late-60s of the first century. In fact, the evidence is persuasive enough that it convinced such notable scholars Moses Stuart, F. J. A. Hort, B. F. Westcott, and F. W. Farrar in the last century, and J. A. T. Robinson, R. A. Torrey, Albert A. Bell, and C. F. D. Moule in our own day.*

*Two leading indicators of the early date are: (1) The "temple" in the "holy city" is still standing as John writes, though it is being threatened with devastation (Rev. 11: 1-2). We know as a matter of historical fact that the Jewish temple was destroyed in A.D. 70, and has never been rebuilt. (2) The sixth "king" is presently ruling from the "seven mountains" and will do so until a king comes who will reign a "short time" (Rev. 17:9-10). The preterist takes this to be a clear enough allusion to Nero Caesar. According to the enumeration*

*found in Josephus' Antiquities (18:2:2,6, 10) and Suetonius' Lives of the Twelve Caesars, Nero is Rome's sixth emperor, following Julius Caesar, Augustus, Tiberius, Gaius, and Claudius. The next reigning emperor, Galba, reigned but six months, the shortest reigning emperor until that time.*

*Sourced from- <http://www.kennethgentry.com/Merchant2/apocalypse.htm>  
by Dr. Kenneth Gentry Jr.*

## Historical Context

It was a dark time for the Church. Since the death of Stephen in Acts 7, the Jewish Temple authorities had been waging a violent war against the Church. This continued up until the time of Jerusalem's destruction in 70AD. Empire sanctioned persecution against the Church was being intensified since 64AD when Nero had ordered Christians to be put to death (usually by beheading). He declared that everyone in the Empire must acknowledge that *he* was Lord and King. Christians were publicly humiliated, ostracized and martyred throughout the Empire by both Jews and the Romans as they refused to declare that Caesar was either their Lord or their King (titles they exclusively reserved for Christ) or that the Old Covenant had any hold on them. Added to this was the rise in false doctrine, an increase in spiritual routine and therefore a decline in authentic passionate love for Jesus.

The Lord reveals through John that the wave of persecution against the Church was driven by the Dragon, no longer would his initial readers be lulled into thinking that they were engaged in some mere politico-ideological war- but a life-and-death *spiritual* war.

## Consistency

Some fanciful interpretations of the Book of Revelation have seen computer chips predicted within its pages and other things equally amazing. But when we refuse to take one verse out of context or let one verse contradict the overall message of Scripture, it is very difficult to give such interpretations any credibility.

Still others have invented a system of interpretation that says a prophecy can have multiple fulfilments. This makes prophetic Bible passages totally arbitrary (subject to change according to a person's whims). The problems with this kind of interpretation are obvious. How does a serious student of the Bible determine when a prophetic passage should be interpreted as having multiple fulfilment options? What about prophecies that we all assumed only had one possible fulfilment (such as the virgin birth of Christ), but which someone else claims will be fulfilled again? Unless the particular prophetic Scripture states that it will have multiple or staggered fulfilment it is hermeneutically perilous to devise multiple

fulfilments otherwise. One writer even bases his concept of the “Law of Double Reference” on what he calls an ‘*ancient rabbinic principle of interpretation*’. Supposedly these are the same rabbis who denied that Jesus was the Messiah or that He fulfilled any Old Testament prophecy (?).

Too often the symbols in Revelation are interpreted as meaning something contrary to how Revelation interprets itself. One such example of this is to interpret the Dragon of chapter 12 as referring to Communist China. The passage goes on to clearly define the Dragon as Satan (Revelation 20:2).

The Preterist view of Revelation regards this as the glorious culmination to the Bible. Study of this Book will strengthen the believer’s confidence in both Christ and His Word. There is much to be learned, applied, and drawn from this Book for your life today. It is my hope that I can prove this to you.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "A. Corbett". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Andrew Corbett,

November 2004

## *Chapter 5*

# Understanding The Seven Seals of Revelation

---

*Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see."*

*Revelation 6:1*

**H**aving been introduced to the seven churches of Asia who were all battling in some way both internally (with false doctrine and immorality) and externally (with persecution), then with the throne-room of the universe where judgment was about to be executed we are now about to unfold the judgment seals of God.

## The Four Horsemen

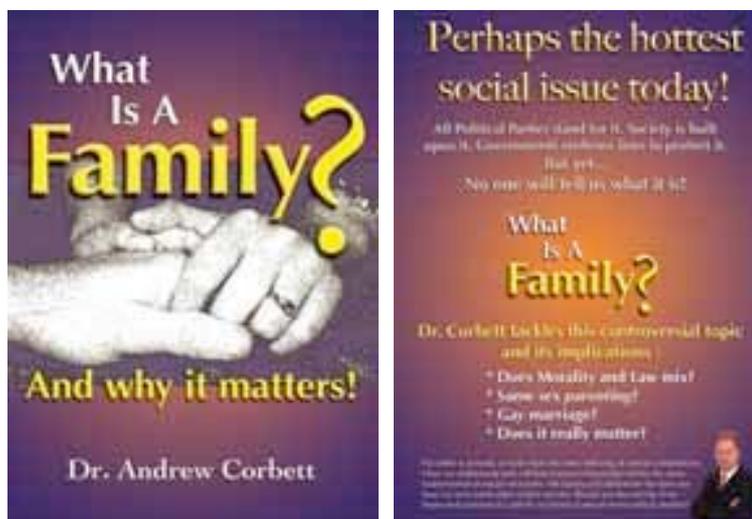
This is where many commentators on the Book of Revelation commence to speculate. Historicist commentators see in the first four seals (the Four Horsemen) world leaders who have arisen down through the ages. Dispensational futurists regard the Four Horsemen as yet to come events. The Preterist attempts to avoid these interpretations by firstly looking to the time of the original recipients of this Epistle to determine how they would have understood its message. Employing the sound principle of “intended meaning” means that a prophetic statement can only logically have one fulfilment, or *intended meaning*. So whatever or whoever these Four Horsemen are, it is absurd to suggest that they could have multiple yet diverse intended meanings.



This is a preview of this exciting commentary. Get the complete commentary for just \$AU5.95 at-  
<http://www.andrewcorbett.net/e-books/m-e-b-revelation.html>  
Your feedback comments are most welcome.

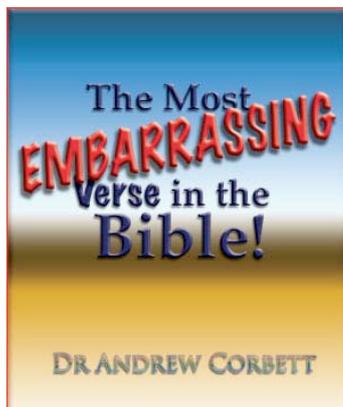
## Other books by Dr Andrew Corbett -

What Is A Family? And Why It Matters!



Just \$A4.95 plus postage and handling.

Order the upcoming book -



## The Most Embarrassing Verse In The Bible!

**You've read this commentary on Revelation – now read Dr Corbett's groundbreaking upcoming book which details how so many believers have been taught a wrong interpretation of Bible prophecy and why these concepts are so disastrous!!!**

- How the Bible prophecy industry is dictated by commercial interests rather sound Bible interpretation!
- How to answer skeptics who use embarrassing Bible verses against Christians!
- Why Christians *must* engage in every facet of society (politics, media, the arts, academia)

Just \$A9.95 plus postage and handling