

The Book of Revelation: A Book of Contrasts

by Bryan Gibson

“Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and blessed are those who hear and who keep what is written in it...” (Revelation 1:3, NRSV). Don’t you just hate what some have done to the Book of Revelation? They’ve turned what was intended to be a practical book into a playground for all sorts of wild theories and speculation. To help us see some of the practical value, let’s point out some of the contrasts in this book.

Contrasts in People

Those whose “washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb” (7:14) vs. those whose robes remained “filthy” (22:11).

Those who belong to God (3:12; 7:3; 14:1, 4-5) vs. those who belong to Satan (9:4; 13:14-18; 14:9).

Those who “dwell in heaven” (12:12; 13:6) vs. those who “dwell on the earth” (3:10; 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 12:12; 13:8, 12, 14; 14:6; 17:8).

Those whose names are written in the “Book of Life” (3:5; 21:27) vs. those whose names have never been written there, or have had their names blotted out (13:8; 17:8; 20:15; 22:18-19).

Those who give “glory” to God (4:9-11; 5:11-13; 7:11-12; 11:13; 15:3-4; 19:1) vs. those who “blaspheme” God (13:5-6; 16:9, 11, 21), which includes those who will not repent (9:20-21; 16:9, 11).

Those who worship and obey God and the Lamb (14:4, 6-7, 12; 15:4; 19:10; 22:14), who live forever and ever (4:8; 5:12-13) vs. those who worship and obey the beast, who will be destroyed (13:4; 19:19-21).

Those who keep themselves pure from the world (“not defiled with women”—14:4) vs. those who become corrupted by the world (join themselves to the “great harlot”—17:1-2, 5; 19:2).

Those who are brave in the midst of persecution (2:12-13; 6:9; 12:11; 20:4) vs. those who are cowards (13:11-18; 21:8).

Those who hate false teaching (2:2, 6; 14:5) vs. those who either love it (22:15) or tolerate it (2:14-15, 20).

Contrasts in Rewards

Those who drink from “living fountains of waters” (7:17; 21:6; 22:1, 17) vs. those who “drink the wine of the wrath of God” (14:8-10).

Those who dine with the Lord (3:20; 19:9) vs. those devoured by the Lord (19:17-21).

Those who “rest from their labors” (14:12-13) vs. those “who have no rest day or night” (14:11).

Those who stand victoriously on the “sea of glass” (15:2) vs. those cast into the “lake of fire and brimstone” (19:20; 20:10, 15; 21:8).

Those who never experience pain and anguish again (21:4) vs. those who suffer forever and ever (14:10-11; 20:10).

Those who “enter through the gates” into the heavenly city (21:24-27; 22:14) vs. those who are left “outside” (22:15).

CONCLUSION:

It's not real hard to see WHO receives WHAT, is it?