**Revelation Thought Flow**

**Chapters 1 -13**

1:1-20: Jesus wants to reveal God’s perspective on history so that what was done in Christ brings comfort to suffering Christians.

*Revelation never answers the question, when? It seeks to answer the perennial question of God’s people who suffer in this life: “If Christ came and conquered,* ***why is there still evil?***

2:1-3:22: Christ encourages His churches to witness, resist compromise, and stay focused when persecuted.

***“to him who overcomes”*** *ends each letter: Jesus is teaching through visions that suffering is not the end of the story*

4:1-5:14: Believers find comfort knowing that God in Christ is sovereign over all creation to redeem and to judge. The method of rule is the sacrifice of a slain Lamb which is the only power that brings the Lion from the tribe of Judah.

This is creation’s control room. Heaven and earth are one created reality and the ***“Lamb standing, as if slain****(5:6)…is* ***worthy to receive glory honor and power*** *(4:11).”*

6:1-8: The first four seals display that although evil forces inflict trials on God’s people, Christ turns the evil to the ultimate good of His people.

*Is all this suffering doing any good?*

 *Seal 1: Military conflict*

 *Seal 2: Violence and war*

 *Seal 3: Economic collapse*

 *Seal 4: Health and sickness scares*

6:9-11: The fifth seal displays God’s people asking God to correct all the wrongs and bring justice which He promises to do when the time is fulfilled.

6:12-17: The sixth seal is a small glimpse showing that there will be a final judgement where God will exercise his justice on the unbelieving world that persecutes His church.

*v. 17* ***“who is able to stand?”*** *= who can endure all this suffering and is there ever an end to it?*

7:1-8: Angels prevent the evil forces from going too far until believers are given full spiritual protection against losing their salvation.

*Those* ***“who can stand”*** *are those who have been sealed with God’s salvation in Christ which brings His ultimate spiritual protection*

7:9-17: God and the Lamb are praised for displaying the promised redemption by protecting them through tribulations that evil brings.

8:1-5: The seventh seal concludes the seals: the final judgment is repeated (sixth seal gives same picture) to show the saints that God will indeed punish evil and unbelief.

*Another small picture that shows the promise that indeed there will be a final judgement that puts all things to the right. God has not forgotten His people.*

8:6 - 9:21: The first six trumpets show that God responds to the prayers of the saints even in this life and uses angels to execute judgements on the unbelieving world. These are small pictures of the final judgement.

 *Trumpet 1: natural disasters*

 *Trumpet 2: sea disasters*

 *Trumpet 3: inland waterways, pollution*

 *Trumpet 4: astronomical disasters*

 *Trumpet 5: emotional pain*

 *Trumpet 6: war, crime, violence*

*These “small” judgements point to the final judgement. As believers see these things happen they can be comforted that God is still working and that the Final Judgement will come on all evil.*

10:1-11: John is recommissioned to prophesy further about the inevitable judgement to come.

11:1-13: God’s decree guarantees His presence with His persecuted people as they witness during apparent failure and defeat, but that ultimately ends in the judgement of their oppressors.

*This is the ongoing reality of all God’s people in all times until Christ returns for the final consummation. This period is symbolized by three phrases which all symbolize the same historic period until Christ’s return: “****42 months****,” “****1260 days****,” and “****a time and times and half a time****.” These time references are symbolic and not to be localized to a future period of 7 specific years at the end of human history.*

11:14-19: The seventh trumpet is a picture of the consummated kingdom (repeating the same image and information provided by seal six and seven) and the execution of final judgement answering the question:

 *“will this suffering ever end?”*

12:1-17: As a result of Christ’s victory over Satan in His death and resurrection, God protects His people against the ultimate harm of Satan’s anger.

12:18 – 13:18: Believers are exhorted to be wise concerning Satan’s methods. Satan uses two major avenues of attack: (1) the power of the state to attack the church and (2) the persuasion of false religion to deceive. Further, false religion often cooperates with the state to attack believers.