



THE BOOK OF  
REVELATION

# Spooky Knowledge

**The Book of Revelation**

Week 1 - Extra Lecture | Professor Crews  
RELS 357 W

**Did someone  
say spooky?**

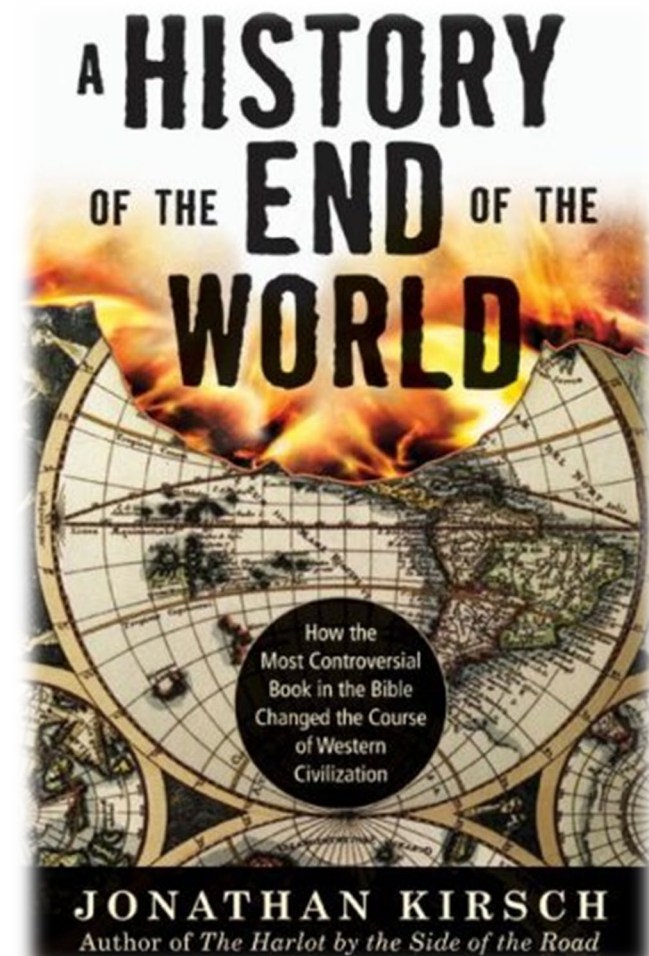


# Spooky Knowledge & End Things

Author Jonathan Kirsch notes in his book *A History of the End of the World*:

“Whether we approach the book of Revelation as drivel or divine mystery, however, the fact remains that Revelation is still embraced with credulity and deadly seriousness by a great many men and women in the modern world, and not only by the kind of true believers who announce their deepest convictions on their bumpers.”

“Indeed, Revelation has always served as a lens through which the recorded history of Western civilization can be seen in fresh and illuminating ways...at every point where contesting ideas of culture and politics have come into conflict—Revelation is always present, sometimes in plain sight and sometimes just beneath the surface.”



# Spooky Knowledge

As Kirsch notes, for followers of the Abrahamic religions, there are clear signs that will mark the 'End Times.'

“The beginning of the end, according to Revelation, will be augured by mysterious signs and wonders—a black sun and a blood-red moon, the stars falling to earth, persecutors and false prophets, plague and pestilence and famine. Then the satanic arch-villain who has come to be called the Antichrist will rise to absolute power on earth.”

This period is followed by 7 years of tribulations. Jesus then appears with his celestial army and defeats Satan, casting him into a deep pit. He then reigns for 1,000 years on Earth. Then Satan will escape, and a final battle occurs between the heavenly armies and those led by Gog and Magog. Jesus wins, and a new heaven and a new Earth are created for the saved to enjoy for eternity, while the wicked are doomed to suffer hellfire and eternal damnation.

# Spooky Knowledge

“The idea that the world will end (and soon)—and the phantasmagoria of words, numbers, colors, images, and incidents in which the end-times are described in the book of Revelation—are deeply woven into the fabric of Western civilization, both in high culture and in pop culture, starting in distant biblical antiquity and continuing into our own age.”

- The Battle of Armageddon
- Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse
- The Seventh Seal
- The Great Whore of Babylon
- The Antichrist



# Spooky Knowledge

“The book of Revelation has always been used as a kind of **code book to discover the hidden meanings behind the great events and personages of history**—war and revolution, kings and conquerors, pandemic and natural disaster.”

- Conquest of Jerusalem by medieval crusaders.
- The Bonfire of the Vanities in Florence during the Renaissance.
- The naming of the newly discovered Americas as the New World.
- The thousand-year Reich promised by Adolf Hitler.

# Revelation and Future History

- The Book of Revelation is sometimes referred to as “**future history**”, meaning that the prophetic events described in Revelation are events that have yet to come, but are divinely predicted to unfold.
- It is this fluid time dynamic which gives Revelation its lasting power, since the “things which much shortly come to pass” are always imminent.
  - Great Disappointment of 1844 with William Miller
  - End Times predictions of Hal Lindsey in the 1970s
  - “Left Behind” tribulations of Jenkins and LaHey in the 1990s
  - Harold Camping prophecies in October of 2011.

# Spooky Knowledge

Three main reactions to the Book of Revelation:

- Received word of God.
- Powerful prophetic story from a politically shrewd writer.
- Ravings of a lunatic mind.

Background context to keep in mind:

- Originally develop as an oral text to be read aloud
  - “Blessed is he who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, for the time is near.”
- Period of Roman domination over Judaism across Asia Minor



# Spooky Knowledge

- Most scholars agree that John of Patmos was a Jew writing in the period after the destruction of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem.
- Reactions to Revelation have been quite mixed over time, from a warm embrace to an outright rejection. Some common concerns included:
  - Millennial reign of Jesus over an earthly kingdom.
  - Lack of the wisdom teaching of Jesus found in Gospels.
  - Explicit imagery of sexuality and wanton violence.
  - Claims of divine message made by the author (Jesus speaking).

# Spooky Knowledge

As Kirsch notes, another important aspect of Revelation is its obsession with numerology and cyphers, especially related to the number 7:

- |                    |                 |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| Seven seals        | Seven kings     |
| Seven angels       | Seven lamps     |
| Seven bowls        | Seven mountains |
| Seven candlesticks | Seven plagues   |
| Seven churches     | Seven spirits   |
| Seven crowns       | Seven stars     |
| Seven eyes         | Seven thunders  |
| Seven heads        | Seven trumpets  |
| Seven horns        |                 |



# Revelation Villains

## The Revelation Revealed: (Revelation 1: 1-3)

**“The revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who testifies to everything he saw--that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.”**



# Revelation Villains

The arch villain of Revelation:  
**(Revelation 12: 3-4)**

“Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on its heads. Its tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth.”



# Revelation Villains

## 2 Minions of the Great Red Dragon: (Revelation 13: 1)

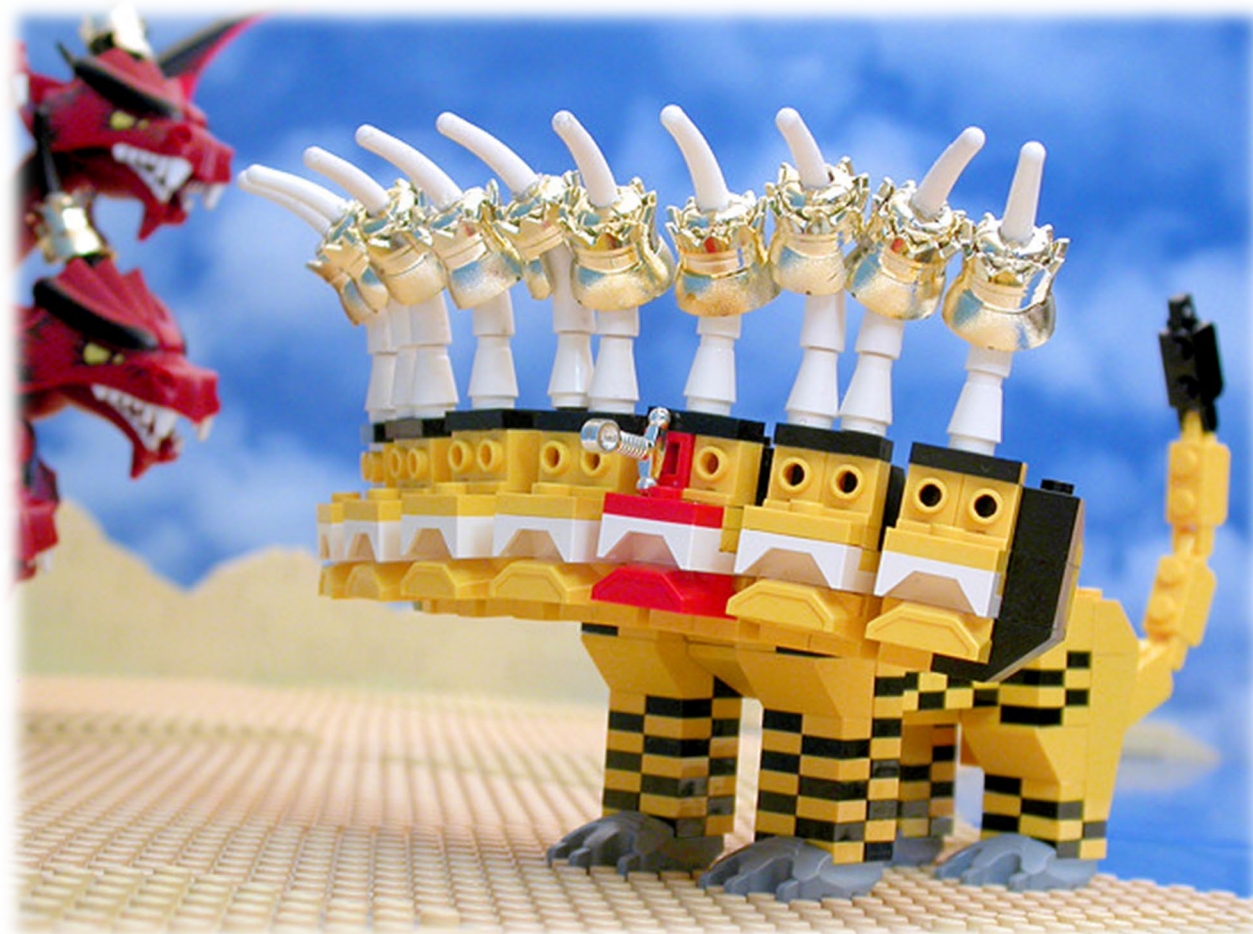
“The dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on its horns, and on each head a blasphemous name.”



# Revelation Villains

## 2 Minions of the Great Red Dragon: **(Revelation 13: 2)**

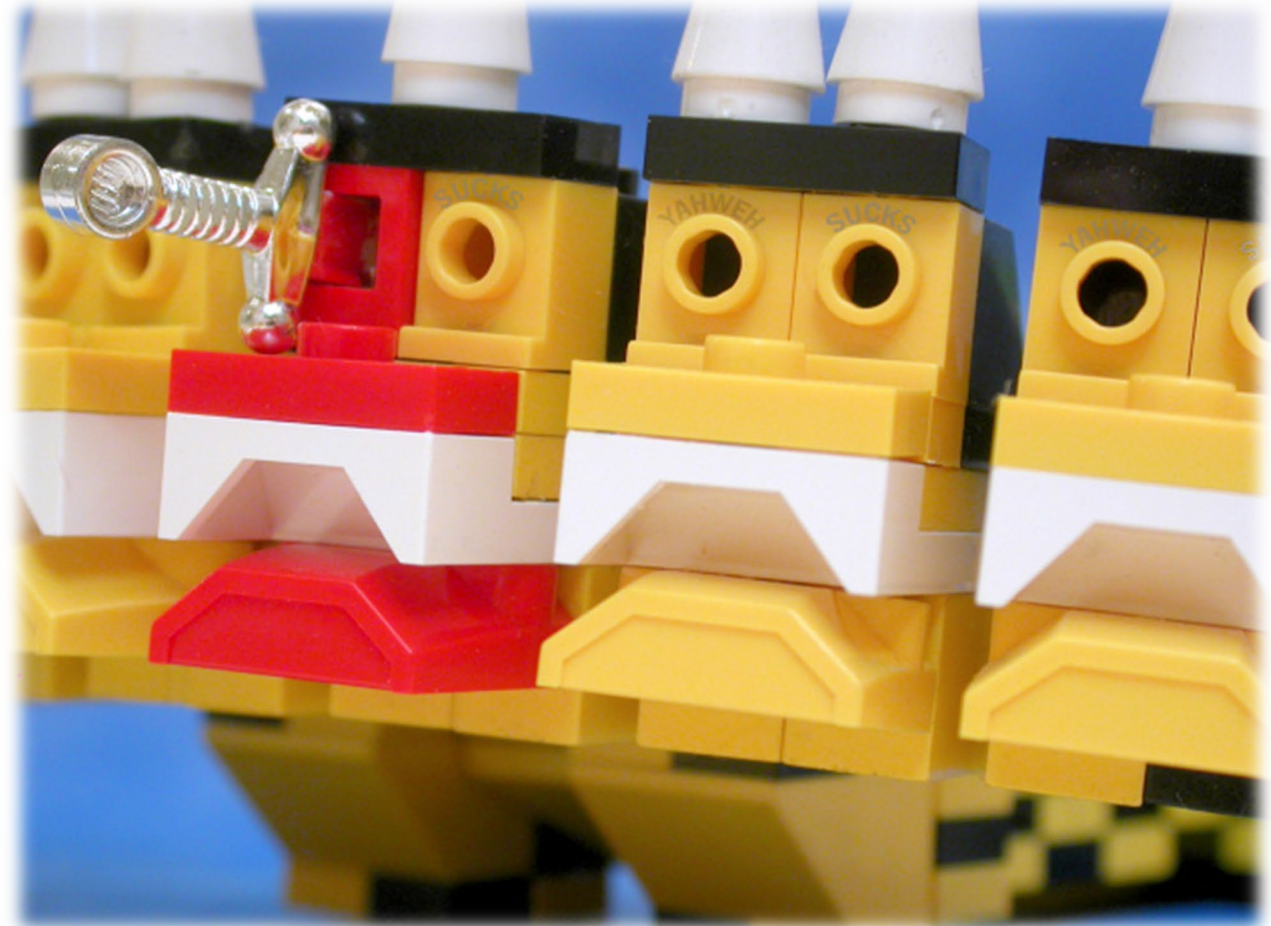
“The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority.”



# Revelation Villains

2 Minions of the Great Red Dragon:  
**(Revelation 13: 3)**

“One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was filled with wonder and followed the beast.”



# Revelation Villains

2 Minions of the Great Red Dragon:  
**(Revelation 13: 11)**

“Then I saw a second beast,  
coming out of the earth. It had two  
horns like a lamb, but it spoke  
like a dragon.”

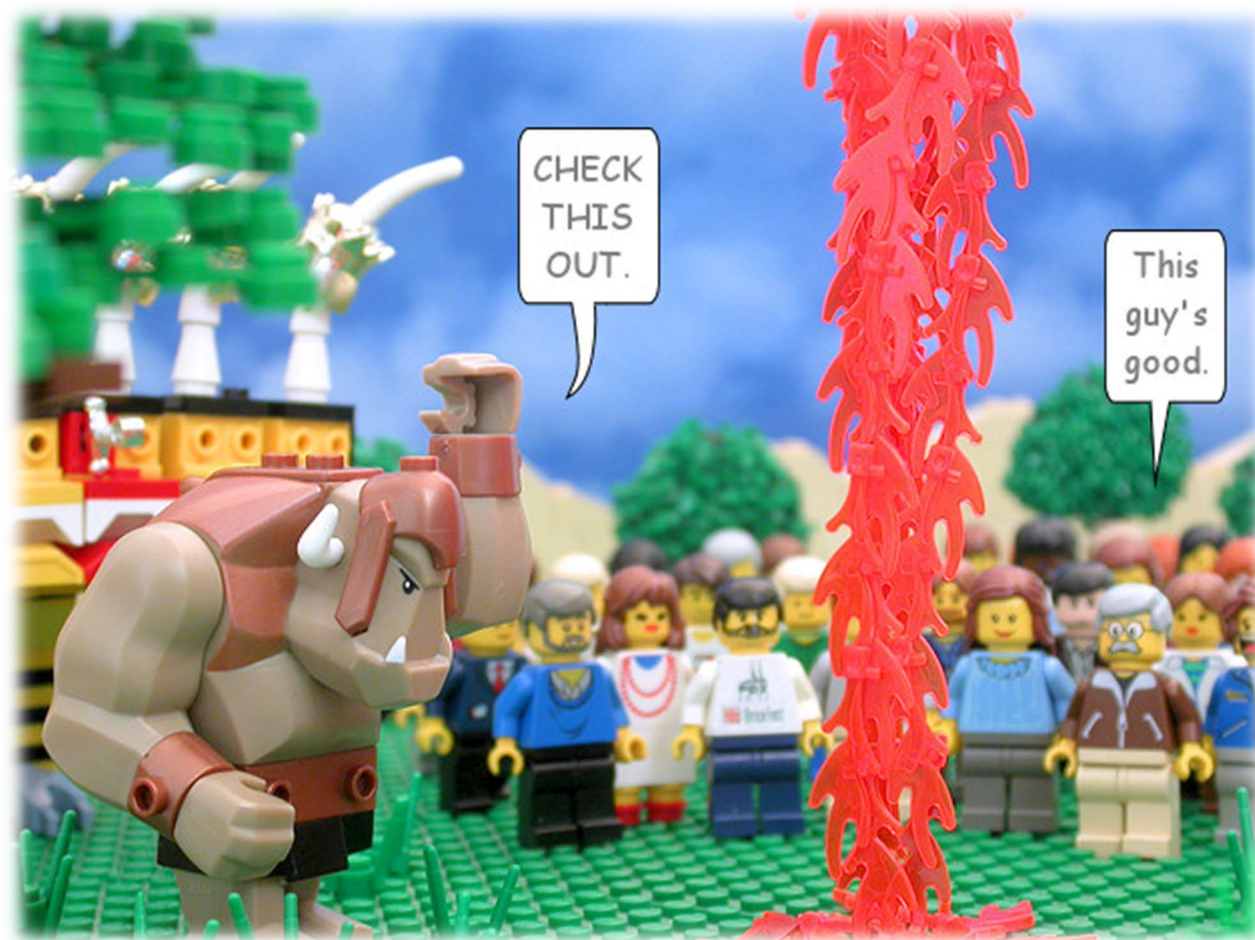




# Revelation Villains

## 2 Minions of the Great Red Dragon: (Revelation 13: 12-13)

“It exercised all the authority of the first beast on its behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. And it performed great signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to the earth in full view of the people.”



# Revelation Villains

## Great Whore of Babylon (Revelation 17: 3-5)

“There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns. The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and was glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls. She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries. The name written on her forehead was a mystery: Babylon the great the mother of prostitutes and of the abominations of the earth.”



# Beast vs. Anti-Christ

- Interestingly, as Kirsch notes, the Beast is commonly referred to as the anti-Christ, yet there is no such reference in the Book of Revelation. This is a later Christian invention which was overlaid onto Revelation and has come to be taken for granted by most Christians as actually in Revelation.
- Despite this fact, the Beast, the anti-Christ, and the number 666 are key ideas linked to Revelation in both pop culture and religious discourse.
- The only references to the anti-Christ come from the Gospel of John, a different writer. (\* Some Christians still believe it was the same John)

# Revelation Villains

## Armies of Heaven vs. The Beast (Revelation 19-20)



'King of Kings' leading army of Heaven



The armies of the Beast

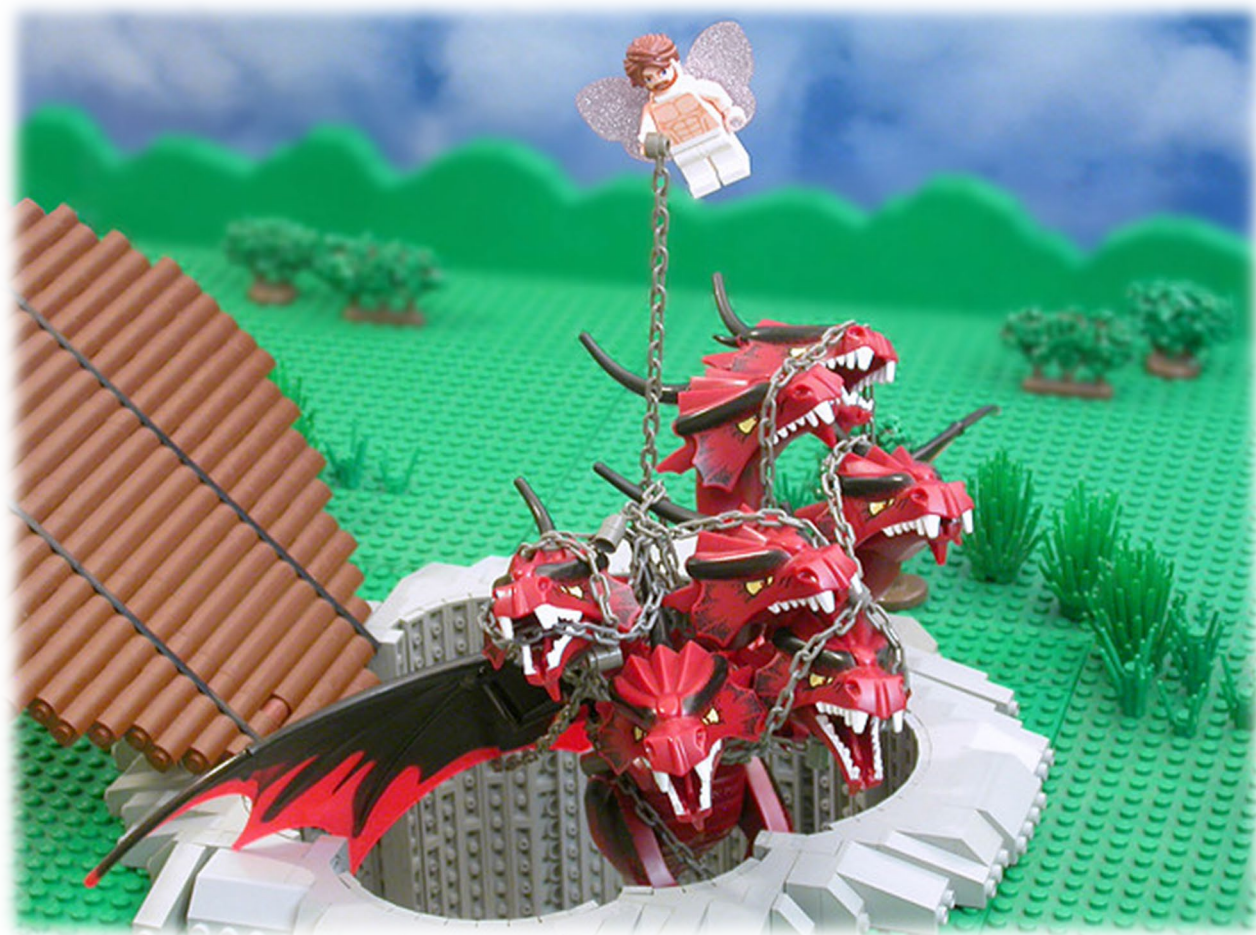


Armies of Heaven destroy their foes

# Revelation Villains

## Battle for Earth (Revelation 20: 1-3)

“And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended.”



# Revelation Villains

## Millennial Kingdom on Earth (Revelation 20: 4)

“I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”

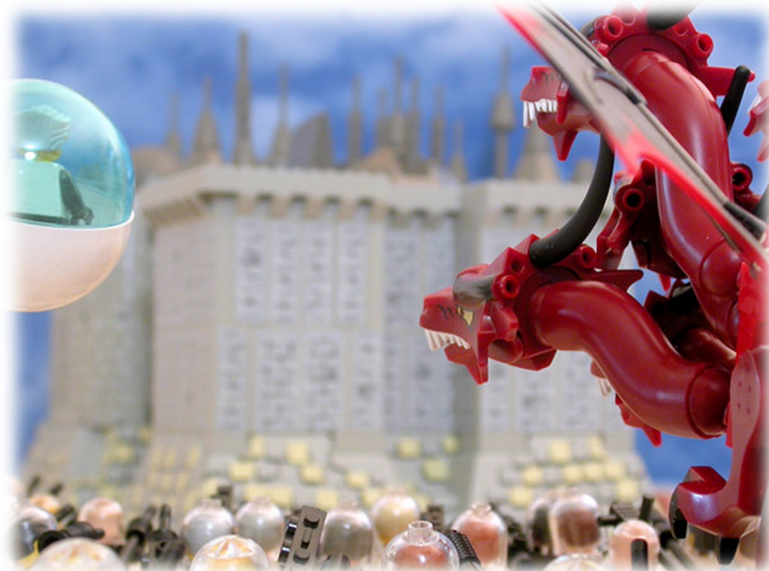


# Revelation Villains

Revival of the Beast, Gog & Magog, Final Battle & Judgement (Revelation 20: 7-10)



Beast released after 1000 years



Final battle with Gog & Magog armies



Beast thrown into eternal hellfire

# Revelation Villains

## Judgement Day (Revelation 20: 11-12)

“Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.”





# Revelation Villains

## A New Heaven and a New Earth

**(Revelation 21: 1-2)**

“Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.”



# Revelation Villains

## A New Heaven and a New Earth (Revelation 21: 3)

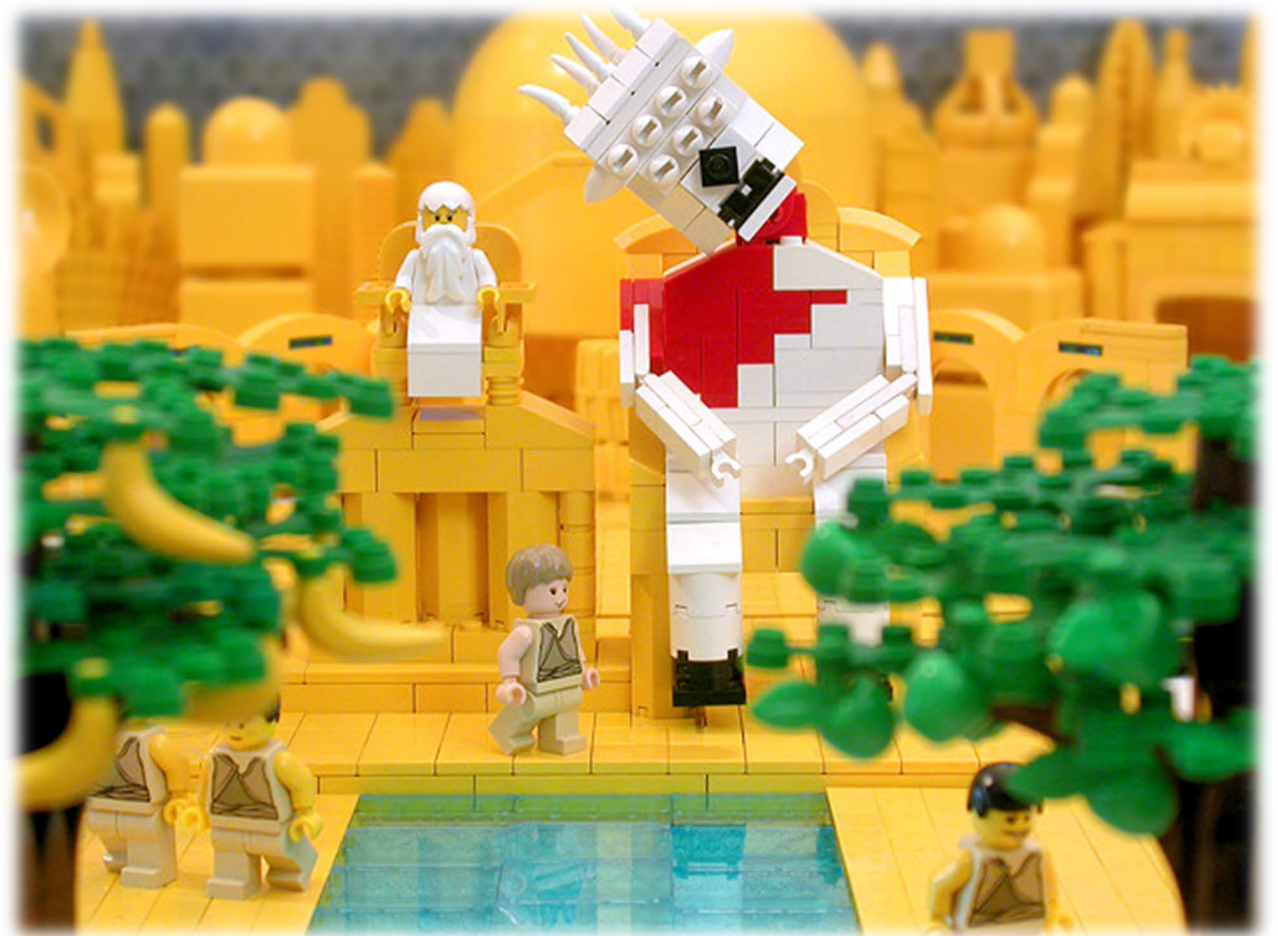
“And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.”



# Revelation Villains

## The Eternal Paradise (Revelation 22: 3-5)

“The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.”



# Revelation Villains

## A Final Divine Warning (Revelation 22: 18-21)

“I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll. And if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the Holy City, which are described in this scroll. He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. **The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen.**”



