

## REVELATION GUIDE

# GOD & THE ANCIENT ROMAN OLYMPIC GAMES



There was a common pattern to the program for the Olympic Games in ancient Rome. In a stunning display of literary art, the author of Revelation structures the first nine chapters to directly correlate to this program. Roman athletes competed on behalf of the patron god of their city, racing to bring them honor and glory. John, on the other hand, wants his readers to see themselves as running a different race on behalf of the One True God.



### OLYMPIC GAMES OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

Presentation of the Emperor

Announcement of Emperor's Mighty Deeds

Pronouncements to Cities of the Empire

*"I have heard..."*

*"I have this against you..."*

*"Therefore..."*

Singing of the Imperial Anthem

*Led by the 24 religious priests*

Herald Lifts Up the "god of gods"  
and "king of kings"

Chariot Races with Four Horses

*White, red, black, pale (spotted)*

Trumpets Blast to Begin the Games



### ULTIMATE GAMES OF GOD'S KINGDOM

Presentation of the One True God (Rev. 1)

Announcement of God's Mighty Works (Rev. 1)

Letters to the Seven Churches (Rev. 2-3)

*"I know..."*

*"I have this against you..."*

*"To the one who conquers..."*

Singing Hymns in God's Throne Room (Rev. 4)

*Led by the creatures and 24 elders*

Worthiness of the Lamb Declared (Rev. 5)

*New song dedicated to Jesus*

Four Horsemen of the Seals Released (Rev. 6)

*White, red, black, pale (spotted)*

The Seven Trumpets (Rev. 8-9)

## WHAT'S THE POINT?

The author of Revelation wants his ancient readers, and by extension, us, to see that we are all running a grand race. He points out that, at times, it might seem like the enemy has the upper hand. But there is no question who will ultimately emerge victorious.

More importantly, Revelation wants us to remember that we represent God; how we run our race on a day-to-day basis, especially when faced with persecution and pressure, will either bring God honor or dishonor. In other words, the way we live will reveal to the world who our God really is.

### WANT TO GO DEEPER?

Sign up for This Week in Revelation each Wednesday at 7 pm online  
with Alex Johnston, Director of Spiritual Formation.

[Learn more at hpumc.org/bible.](http://hpumc.org/bible)