



# Revelation

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## *Part 2 of 2 Chapters 4-22*

### **God Judges the Great City: The Fall of Babylon**

The Book of Revelation is written to address the question of how am I to understand the call to be faithful and obedient to Jesus Christ in a world that *appears* to be under the control of the evil one. The revelation given to the Apostle John provides the struggling and persecuted Christians in the world with an eternal perspective on their present condition.

John is given a vision of the present and future realities taking place in both the earth and heavenly realms.

*Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this. –Revelation 1:19*

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The vision provides needed context. There is a larger and grand story which is playing out on the stage of redemptive history. The Christians are playing an integral role in that story. John writes in the tradition of the great prophets of the Old Testament. He is an ambassador of the King of Heaven. His message is “from the throne”.

The first three chapters establish John’s call to speak as a prophet and address the immediate concerns of the Church living in the world. Chapters 4-18 provide an spiritual picture of Jesus’ sovereignty over evil and reveal the ultimate fate of the evil powers in the earthly and spiritual realms. Chapters 19-22 describe the ultimate redemption, vindication and establishment of the people of God by Jesus at the end of the age.

For the persecuted and struggling church, knowledge of the ultimate provides the motivation and passion for faithful endurance in the present.

## Literary Structure

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### General Outline of Revelation

I.	The King Speaks to the Church in the City	Chaps. 1–3
II.	The King Judges the “Great City”	Chaps. 4–18
III.	The King Vindicates the “Holy City”	Chaps. 19–22

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### Expanded Outline of Revelation

<b>I.    <i>The King Speaks to the Church in the City</i></b>			<b><i>Revelation 1–3</i></b>
C.	The Prophet’s Call in the Presence of the King		1:1–20
D.	Seven Letters to Seven Churches		2:1–3:22
<b>II.    <i>The King Judges the “Great City”</i></b>			<b><i>Revelation 4–18</i></b>
G.	Heavenly Throne Room: Who is Worthy?		4:1–5:14
H.	Opening the Scroll: The Seven Seals		6:1–8:1
I.	Seven Angels sounding the Seven Trumpets		8:2–11:19
J.	Seven Signs: Exposé of the Powers of Evil		12:1–14:20
K.	Seven Bowls: The Last Plagues		15:1–16:21
L.	The Fall of the Great City: Babylon		17:1–18:24
<b>III.    <i>The King Vindicates the “Holy City”</i></b>			<b><i>Revelation 19–22</i></b>
E.	Throne Room: Praise of Lamb’s Victory		19:1–10
F.	Seven Visions of the End		19:11–21:8
G.	The Advent of the Holy City: The New Jerusalem		21:9–22:11
H.	The Letter Ends		22:12–21

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## The Heavenly Throne Room: Who is Worthy? (4-5)

### *The Throne in Heaven*

*Revelation 4: <sup>1</sup>After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.” <sup>2</sup>At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it.*

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The three main units of John's revelation begin with an interaction with the King. First, King Jesus is walking among the lamp stands of the 7 churches. Both the judgment section (4-18) and in the vindication section (19-22) begin with a vision of the heavenly throne room.

In the judgment section the key question being asked is: "Who is worthy to execute the Judgment of God?" That is not such a simple question. In both heaven and earth, the stewards of justice and righteousness have proven to be most *unworthy* executors. Rather than leading and maintaining justice the kings of this world and angelic princes of heaven have become beastly in their tyranny of those under them. Only one in heaven and on earth has proven worthy: the Lion of Judah, the Lamb who was slain.

*Revelation 5: <sup>1</sup>Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. <sup>2</sup>And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" <sup>3</sup>But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. <sup>4</sup>I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. <sup>5</sup>Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals." <sup>6</sup>Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.*

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### *The Christological Redefinition of Winning: The Sealed Scroll*

The Book of Revelation is revealing the end of the story to all who would receive it. The image of the seal evokes: the Law and the Prophets; the sweet tasting Scroll of Ezekiel (2:10); the Book of Life<sup>27</sup> (Names of the Redeemed see Rev. 3:5, 13:8; 17:8; 20:15; 21:27); and The Book of Judgment<sup>28</sup> (deeds are recorded for future judgment, see Rev. 20:12)



Throughout the Scriptures God is revealed as a God of the Word (Gen. 1, John 1, Heb. 1). He speaks and it comes to be. He reveals his own nature and character in order that he would receive glory. He reveals his will for us to follow and obey (Deut 29:29).

### *The Seven Seals*

A seal conveys a guarantee and authenticity. A seal places one's reputation on the line. It is a mark of authority. A seal conveys inaccessibility to the inappropriate and unworthy. An unbroken seal represents a mystery waiting to be revealed.

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<sup>27</sup> Ps. 69:28; 139:16; Dan. 12:1; Luke 10:20; Phil. 4:3; Heb. 12:23

<sup>28</sup> Dan. 7:10

A broken seal represents a command implemented. Jesus is described as the Lion of Judah (Gen. 49:9-10), the Root of David (Warrior-Messiah of Isa. 11:1). God's people have been weeping in lament as they have been lambs for the slaughter (Ps. 44:11, 22... but here comes the King! (cf. Rom. 8:36) And yet! The Lion is revealed as the *Agnus Dei*, The Lamb of God.

He is first the Lamb, then the Lion. His action as the one who was slain uniquely qualifies him to be the Lion who will rule justly and defend the humble. He is the *humble king*. The humble king elicits and deserves universal praise (5:8-14).

## Scene 1 & 2: Seven Seals & Seven Trumpets (6-11)

Figure 5 Albrecht Durer, The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse (1498)

### *The First Four Seals: The Four Horsemen<sup>29</sup>*

- White Horse: Crowned, Conquer, Bow
  - Parthians (Persians/Iranians)
  - Mounted Archers of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century
  - Is it Christ? (see 19:11-16)
  - Divine Passive
- Red Horse – Pax Romana replaced by internal anarchy
- Black Horse –Food Rationing
- Pale Horse – Death<sup>30</sup>

### *The Fifth Seal: The Cry of the Martyrs*

- Testimony—Martyr (1:2, 9; 19:10; 20:4)
- “Slain” used of Lamb 5:6
- Romans 12:1
- They cry out under the altar: “How Long?”<sup>31</sup>

### *The Sixth Seal: The Cosmos Shakes at God's Approach<sup>32</sup>*

- Cosmic groaning (Rom. 8:22)



<sup>29</sup> See Zech. 1:7-15, 6:1-8

<sup>30</sup> Jer. 14:12; 15:2; 21:7; 24:10; 29:17-18; 42:17; 43:11; Ezek. 14:21

<sup>31</sup> Ps. 74, 79:5-10; Luke 18:1-8

<sup>32</sup> Mark 13:5-36

- Who can Stand?
- The Wrath of the Lamb

### *Interlude: The Church 144,000 Sealed (7)*

#### The Church Militant

- Looked for the end... and what came was the Church
- 4 Angels (cf. Ezek. 9)
- Protective Seal
  - In Baptism<sup>33</sup>
  - Contra the Beast<sup>34</sup> and his Mark<sup>35</sup>
- Who are the 144,000?
  - The Church on Earth
  - 12 X 12: Old and New Israel<sup>36</sup>
  - 10,000 Multiplier
  - Military Precision
  - A Complete Number

#### The Church Triumphant

- In Heaven
- 4 Greats: Multitude, Salvation, Tribulation, Hope

### *The Seventh Seal: Silence (8:1)*

- Halleluiah Chorus
- “Be silent before the Lord, God! For the Day of the Lord is at hand!” Zephaniah 1:7, cf. Habakkuk 2:20
- Holy Silence: The Heavenly Worship<sup>37</sup>: Sounding the Seven Trumpets
- Distressed Christian Prayer (5:8; 8:3-4) always within the context of Heavenly Worship
- The Effect of Prayer: “Your Kingdom Come, Your Will be Done...On Earth as in Heaven.” (Matt. 6:10, Luke 11:2) – And it does...Rev. 11:15-19

“Through its worship and prayer, the church is intimately linked with the real world, the world of God”

–Eugene Boring, Revelation

<sup>33</sup> 1 Cor. 12:13; 2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30

<sup>34</sup> Rev. 11:7; 13:1-8; 14:9-11; 17:3-17; 19:19-20; 20:4, 10

<sup>35</sup> Rev. 13:16-17; 14:9

<sup>36</sup> Rev. 1:6; 5:10 Rom. 9-11; Gal. 3:29; 6:16; Eph. 2:11-22; 1 Pet. 2:9

<sup>37</sup> Heavenly Worship 4:1-5:14; 7:9-12; 6:9-11

### *The First Four Trumpets<sup>38</sup>: The Final Troubles Intensify*

- “the Last Trumpets”<sup>39</sup>
- The Plagues of Exodus Revisited
  - Hail and Fire (Ex. 9:23-25)
  - Sea of Blood (Ex. 7:20)
  - Darkness (Ex. 10:21)
  - Locust (Ex. 10:12)
- All Oppressive Worldly Power is judged & creation is Cursed due to Sin<sup>40</sup>

### *The Fifth Trumpet: First Woe, The Demon Locusts*

- The Fallen Star (Isa. 14:4-20 Day Star, Trans. Lucifer in KJV cf. Gen 6:1-4, 2 Pet. 2:4)
- This Brings to mind the Locust Army of Joel 1-2
  - Have a King 9:11 (cf. Prov. 30:27)
  - Apollyon—This is a Name Emperor Domitian like to use of himself.
  - Locust is symbol of the God Apollo
  - Rome as an instrument of Divine Judgment?
- Saints are preserved through it! v.4

### *The Sixth Trumpet: Second Woe—Demon Cavalry*

- Parthian Threat—A Vast Army (200 Million!)
- Repentance—Rebellious Humanity does NOT repent! (cf. Pharaoh and the Egyptians)

### *Interlude: The Angel and the Little Scroll*

#### The Church of Prophets and Martyrs

- Mighty Angel
  - Has all of the elements used of God: Rainbow, Face like Sun, Legs of Fire, Roaring Lion, Seven Thunders
  - God, Christ, Spirit/Angel
- Open Scroll (cf. 5:1 and Dan. 12:4, 9)
- Seven Thunders???
  - Limitations of Human Insight (1 Cor. 13:12; II Cor. 12:4; Deut. 29:29)
  - A Divine Contingency—“there will be no more delay” (Mark 13:20)
  - A God who Responds to the Actions of Creation (Jer. 9:5; 18:8; Jonah 3:9)
- Eating the Scroll (Ezek. 2:8-3:3)
  - God’s Word is to be consumed by the prophet
  - It is satisfaction and upsetting at the same time!

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<sup>38</sup> 2 Chron. 5:12-13; Ex. 19:16; Num. 10:2-10; Josh. 6:4; Ezek. 33:3; Joel 2:1, 15; Amos 3:6

<sup>39</sup> Isa. 27:13; Matt. 24:31; 1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thes. 4:16

<sup>40</sup> Gen. 3:17-18; Isa. 24:4-6; Rom. 8:19-23



### The Prophet-hood of All Believers

- Old Testament envisioned all would be Prophets: Joel 2:28-29
- New Testament Fulfillment: John 14-16, Acts 2:17-18 quoting Joel
- Two Martyrs (Witnesses) Acts 1:8
  - Two Olive Trees, Two Lamp stands: Zech 4; Romans 11, Matt. 5:14, 1 Thes. 5:5, Phil. 2:15
  - Moses and Elijah
  - Jewish and Gentile Christian Church to the World
- Martyrdom followed by Resurrection
  - No Rapture Escapism!

### *The Seventh Trumpet: The Kingdom as Salvation and Woe*

- The Reign of God
- The Wrath of the Nations

## Scene 3: The Great Ordeal: Exposé on the Powers of Evil (12-14)

### *Exposé on the Powers of Evil*

Plot: The Forces of Darkness, Disorder, and Sterility/Death rebel against Divine King of Light/Order Fertility/Life attempting to overthrow the Divine Order. They seek to kill the Newborn King and/or seize the kingship and establish the rule of Darkness.

### *The Characters of the Drama*

#### The Woman

- Eve (Gen. 3:1-16)
- Israel (Ex. 19:4; cf Ps. 74:12-15; Isa. 66:7-9)
- Mary (Matt. 2:1-15)
- The Church

#### The Child/Messiah

- Rules with Iron Scepter (Ps. 2:7-9)



## Christians

- Brethren (12:10)
- Offspring/ Seed of the Woman (12:17 again see Gen. 3:15 cf. Rev. 2:18; 21:7 “sons of God”)
- Martyrdom/Victory (12:11)
- Characterized by Steadfast endurance (13:10)
- **“Earth”** is both a Stage and personified actor. (13:16)

## Michael and the Angels (12:7; 14:6, 8, 9, 15, 17, 18)

- Heavenly Army of God
- Delegated Authority of God (Deut. 32:8-9)
- Michael is the Heavenly Angelic Champion of the People of God (Dan. 10:13, 21; 12:1)
- Michael is the only good angel named in Revelation

## God the Hidden Actor (12:5-6)

- Sovereign “...was given the power” (12:7)
- God allows and restrains evil but is not the direct cause of it.

## The Evil Trinity

- They are a Unit Rev. 16:13
- Contrast God/Creator, Christ/Lamb, Spirit/Word
- War is not against flesh and Blood see Ephesians 6:12

## The Dragon

- Parody of God/Creator
- His place was in the “heavens” 12:7 cf. Eph. 6:12, 2:2 “Ruler of the kingdom of air”
- Throne to delegate 13:2
- 7 Heads like Leviathan, Lotan, Tiamat, the “chaos monster”





## The Beast from the Sea

- 7 heads, ten horns, blasphemous names, features of the leopard, bear and lion of Dan 7:1-8.
- Comes out of the sea like Leviathan
- Worshiped as the Dragon's representative 13:8
- Wars against the Saints 13:7
- Beast is an empire. Dan. 7 images of Rome and her Emperors. (see 17:9-10)
- Fatal Wound → Nero 13:8
- Thus a Parody of the Lamb
- Conquers but only by the power of the sword.

## The Beast of the Earth

- Rose out of the Earth as a False Prophet
- Parody of the Holy Spirit
- Fake Elijah (cf. 1 Kings 18:20-39, cf. 11:4-13 the "two witnesses")
- As the Holy Spirit transforms to live a life in tension with the World's standards, the Beast creates conformity.
- Voice of Holy Spirit (2:1, 2:7 Seven letters) / Voice of Devil Dragon 13:11
- Seal of the Holy Spirit/ Mark of the Beast
- Control through Money and Economic Pressure.
- Who is this in Roman Days: Roman Council in Greek (*koinon*) or in Latin (*commune*)
- False Prophets traffic in Miracles Mark 13:22; 2 Thes. 2:9
- "Some Scholars have understood the *prophetic* features of the beast as its specific designation with the "false prophet" to point to John's opponents *within* the Church-the teachers and charismatic prophets who encouraged Christians to accommodate themselves to Roman Culture, Ideology and Cult as an aspect of their "Progressive Theology"<sup>41</sup>
- Roman Governors, Roman Priesthood, the *commune*, or false Christian prophets and teachers. The beast has characteristics of all.
- "Lamb-like" yet really Beastly (wolf in sheep's clothing)
- Entices Humanity to idolize human empire.

## *The foiled attempt of the Dragon (12:1-6)*

- The one who is the true Lord comes as a vulnerable state.
- Enemy the Dragon is foiled and the Son exalted.

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<sup>41</sup> See Minear, I Saw a New Earth, pp. 119- 27

- A Brief time (1260, 3 ½ years of trouble and persecution just before the End. (Dan. 7:25; 8:14; 9:27; 12:7, 11, 12) Imperial Persecution of the Saints

### *The Dragon Defeated in the Real World (12:7-12)*

- Satan is “unseated” from the heavenly realms. Ephes. 3:10,11; Col. 2:25
- Communion of the Saints in the suffering victory over Satan (12:10-11; cf. 2:10 “faithful unto death”)
- Opposite of Greek Mythology...in Revelation all the “action” happens on the Earth with heavenly cosmic implications for the evil powers in the transcendent world!
- Satan is a defeated foe: the message to Christians is to hang in there for the hellish last 3 ½ minutes of the game and you will win!
- The way to lose is to either join the wrong team or quit!

### *The Dragon persecutes the woman on the Earth (12:13-16)*

- The anti-Creator attacks the Woman but the unseen God/Creator protects her.
- There will be no miraculous help...
- “Nature” is on the side of the People of God.
- The Natural World will be redeemed too! (Rev. 21:1-22:6; Rom. 8:19-28)

### *The Beast from the Sea appears to conquer the Saints (12:17-13:10)*

- Is the Imperial Power
- Unable to kill the Church at large, Satan attacks portion of the offspring. Through enlisting help from the two Beasts...
- False Messiah, fatal wound that has been healed.
- Rescue from Death? It will get ugly...see Daniel 3:17-18
- Call to Saints: Patient Endurance

### *The Beast from the Earth and its promotion of Emperor Worship (13:11-18)*

- Enforces Imperial Power
- Uses Deception through Show, Economic Manipulation and Control by Force
- Call to Saints: Wisdom and Insight—look for man’s number: 666

### *Mark of the Beast*

- Parody of Seal of Holy Spirit
- Sign of Ownership and Security
- Dualism of Decision-no lukewarm
- Real, but not literal
- Coinage of Caesar

- 7 is complete, 6 is penultimate.
- Not who, but what
- Where in our time do we see the idolization of a “human savior”.
- Nero

The Lamb and the 144,000

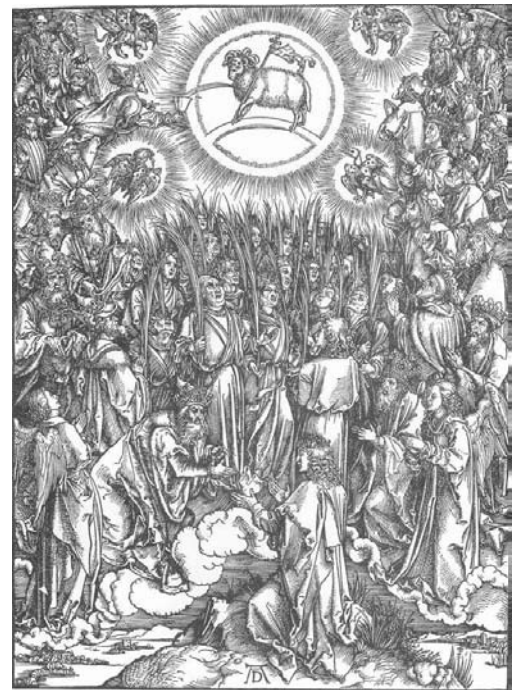
## The Truth about Salvation and Judgment (14:1-20)

### *Real Salvation: The Lamb, His Mark, His Followers (14:1-5)*

- Breath of Fresh Water and Clearing the Air—Real Power
- Triumphant, Glorious and Chaste—Contrast with the Adultery of the people of Babylon
- First fruits of a great soul harvest yet to come (like a grain offering, Ex. 34:22)

### *Real Judgment: God the Creator and Judge (14:6-20)*

- Three Angels Contrast with the “sham” judgment of the third beast in the Roman Courts.
- Angel of the true Gospel Promise
  - True Good News vs. false good news of Caesar
  - Good News to the believers in God
- Angel of Judgment against Empire
  - Babylon/Rome will fall
  - The Evil Empire is going down!
- Angel of announcing judgments against individuals who bear the mark of the beast.
- Grain Harvest--Grape Harvest! (see Matt 10:28)
- Call to the Saints: Patient Endurance and Remain Faithful



**Blessed are those who die in the Lord – rest from labor (the seventh day)  
and their work will be rewarded. (14:12-13)**

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## Scene Four: The Seven Last Plagues (Chapters 15-16)

### *The Victory Celebration in the Heavenly Worship*

An Exodus Scene--biblical memory transfigured

- “a sea of Glass mixed with fire”
- Those who have conquered (cf. 7:1-8; 14:1-5)
- The Song of Moses and the Lamb (Ex. 15 & Deut. 32)
- The Plagues, The Smoke of Sinai & The Tabernacle
- “dry ground” (16:12)
- Two Groups of People: Those who had conquered the beast and its image and number and those who bore the mark of the beast

A Worship Scene--Christian Worship Transfigured

- Victory is already celebrated, though not full yet
- “Now but not yet”
- Eucharistic Celebration past, present future
- God’s Attributes Revealed in Mighty Acts: Justice, Truth, Holy, Righteous

The Proper Response

- Fear
- Glory to His Name
- Coming
- Worship

## The Seven Bowls of God's Wrath (Revelation 16)

- Voice From the Temple—The Lord is Sovereign in his Holy Temple (Isa. 66:6)
- Magnitude of Judgment: Poured on all and everything
  - Earth (sixth Egyptian Plague Ex. 9:9-11)
  - Sea (Ex. 7:20-21)
  - Rivers and Springs (Ps. 78:44)
  - Sun
  - The Beast
  - The River Euphrates
    - Cyrus the Persian Herodotus Hist. 1.191
  - Air
- God is Just in his Judgments (16:4-7)
  - God is Holy



- They are Persecutors of God's People
  - Acts 9:4ff
  - John 15:18-25
  - Psalm 19:9; 119:137
- Their Punishment (Isa. 49:26)
- The Refusal to Repent and Worship (16:8-15)
  - They Cursed the Name of God
  - Loved Darkness more than Light (John 3:16-21)
  - Like Pharaoh Ex. 7:13, 22, 8:15, 19, 32, 9:7, 12, 34, 35; 10:20, 27, 11: (the Lord's Hardening)
  - The Purpose of Pharaoh to reveal God's Power and Glory...Ex. 9:16; see Romans 9:14-21; 11:9

### *The Judgment of the Beast/Caesar/Pharaoh/ Babylon/Rome/Egypt*

#### The Battle of Armageddon (16:16-21)

- Josh. 3:1-4:18
- Kings of the East—Parthians
- Har=>Mountain
- "Meggiddo"
  - Judges 4:4-5:31; cf. Rev. 5:19 II Kings 23:28-29
  - Plain of Megiddo Judges 5:19, 2 Chron. 35:22 (closest mount is Mount Carmel see 1 Kings 18:20-46)
- Hebrew word for Assembly
  - Kings assemble (16:14)
  - Isaiah 14:12-15
  - "O Morning Star" Is. 14:12 see Rev. 22:16



#### Thief in the Night

- Rev. 3:3 Matt. 24:1-3
- 1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Pet. 3:10

#### "It is done."

- John 19:30

## Scene Five: The Fall of Babylon and the Lament (17-18)

### *"The Great Prostitute": Babylon*

- A Parody of the Heavenly City (17:1 cf. 21:9)
- Picture of Judgment vs. Salvation

### *The Identification of the City*

#### "Wilderness" (12:6, 14)

- Protection and Provision
- Israel/ Jesus
- And Escape-Lot- Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19)

#### A City as a Prostitute

- Jerusalem as a Virgin (Isa. 37:22; Lam. 2:13)
- Faithful Wife and Mother (Isa. 66:7-14)
- Unfaithful Wife (Ezek. 16)
- Nineve and Tyre as a Harlot (Nahum 3:1-7; Isa 23)

#### Rome (cf. 17:9-10)

- The Goddess Roma is not a Great Mother but a Whore!
- Patriotism
- "Enthroned upon many waters (or enthroned above the Ocean, NEB; or Built near many rivers, TEV)" (Jer. 51:13 Babylon and the Euphrates)
- Multinational Commerce (17:15)
- Idolatry: Caesar Cult & Roma Cult
- Rome is the Orientation for life in this world
- Persecutor 17:6
- "Rome Dresses well and drinks fine wine, but her clothes are the harlots finery and her wine is made from the blood of God's people."<sup>42</sup>
- The Beast is Rome (see 13:1-8)
- Seven Heads: Seven Hills of Rome and the Seven Kings (17:9-10)
- Mystery: Revelation not Puzzle
- 1:20; Eph. 3:3-5
- "Babylon the Great" (See 1 Peter 5:13: code for Rome)

### *Rome, the Beast and the Christians*

#### Beast

- The resurgence of the power of Chaos

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<sup>42</sup> Boring, Revelation p.180

- Held in check but finally to be destroyed
- Beastly empire vs. Humane Empire of “Son of Man” (Dan. 7:1-14)
- “was, is not, and is to come” (parody cf. 1:4, 8; 4:8)
  - Imperial Persecution Nero 64 AD
  - Not Currently
  - Is Coming...get ready!
- Recognize he is a defeated foe—do not get discouraged!

#### What Time is it? Discern the context of the Seven Kings:

- 5 have fallen
- 1 is – Current Lull
- 1 is yet to come
- 8<sup>th</sup> King will share power with 10 Kings
  - Parody of Jesus
  - Reincarnation of Nero-only worse!

#### Is Roman/ Human Culture Utterly Depraved?

- Battle is not against Flesh and Blood (Ephesians 6)
- One sided picture of culture, economics and politics
- Compare Genesis 1-2 with Rev. 21:14-16!
- The Sin of the Tower of Babylon Compare: Gen. 11 with Gen 12

#### The Self Destructive Power of Evil

- “goes to destruction”
- Already Accomplished by the Lamb 17:14 (cf. 5:1-14)
- Self Destructive Battle (17:16-18)

#### *The Fall of Babylon Celebrated/Lamented*

##### Literary and Historical Context

- Not hindsight but foresight
- The Height of Splendor

##### Source and Model

- Dirges and Laments from the OT
- Isa. 13:21; 23:1-16; 34:11-14; 47:7-9; Jer. 50:39; 51:37; Zeph. 2:14-15
- Fulfillment of the OT Prophets
- God is Faithful to his word!
- Paying back “Double” of her own Drink! (cf. Jer. 16:18; Isa. 40:2)

##### The Laments for Babylon the Great

- Actual judgment is not seen but heard through the songs of those who loved her...
- Do we “rejoice” at their distress?

- Do we love her too?
- “The hearer/ Reader may take the lamentations ironically and celebrate what is lamented by the speakers on the visionary stage, and/or they may actually join with them in lamenting what was good in human culture but which has now been perverted and consequently subjected to the judgment of God.”<sup>43</sup>

#### What is Wrong with “Babylon”?<sup>44</sup>

1. “The idolatrous and blasphemous worship offered and encouraged by Rome, especially the emperor cult.”
  - Rev. 13:1-18
  - “Harlot”, “Fornication” (See Hosea)
  - Violates the 1<sup>st</sup> and Great Commandment...no other gods before me.
2. “The violence perpetrated by Rome especially against Jews and Christians” (18:20, 24)
  - Jerusalem, cf. Matt 23:37, Luke 13:34
3. “Rome’s Blasphemous Self-Glorification/Self-Gratification” (18:7)
  - “luxury or sensual, to live in luxury or sensuously” Rev. 18:3, 7, 9
  - The Tower of Babel Gen. 11
  - Economic Pressure against Christians
    - i. Exclusion (see “Mark of the Beast” 13:16ff.)
    - ii. Temptations (Nicolatians)
4. “Babylon’s Wealth” (18:3, 11-19, 23)
  - God is the Source of Wealth--Deut. 8:11ff.
  - “She has fallen, to be sure, but the poet walks among her ruins feeling the weight of the loss and singing God’s victory with a heavy heart.”<sup>45</sup>
  - Loss of some good things:
    - i. Music
    - ii. Marriage
    - iii. Art
  - All that is Good will be redeemed in the Holy City (see 21:1-22:6; esp. 21:24-26)



<sup>43</sup> Boring, 186.

<sup>44</sup> Adela Yarbro Collins, “Revelation 18”, p 203.

<sup>45</sup> Craddock, “Preaching the Book of Revelation” p.277



### *What are Christians to do?*

- Overthrow Babylon and establish a more just rule???
  - i. It was not a real possibility
  - ii. It had been tried and failed with disastrous results for the Zealots of Israel 63-73AD.
  - iii. God's Power and Victory is exercised in self sacrificing crucified love and martyrdom. 5:1-14
  - iv. Unnecessary because of imminent end of History
  - v. God will be the one to judge Babylon and establish justice.
  - vi. Are modern day Christians to have passive acceptance toward injustice, corruption and tyranny in the cultural economic and political systems of our day??
- Two injunctions:
  - i. "Come out of Her my People" (18:4)
    - 1. Not Geographical relocation...
    - 2. but inner reorientation toward:
      - a. The Holy City
      - b. The Judgment of God against Babylon
  - ii. "Rejoice" (18:20)
    - 1. In our hope in God's Sovereign Decree of Judgment
    - 2. For You against Her

# God Redeems “the Holy City”

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## Part 1: Halleluiah and the Seven Visions of the End (19:1-20:15)

### *The Great Hallelujah -- Praise God's Victory*

#### Hallelujah—“Praise the Lord”

- Great Multitude (cf. great multitude 7:9-10, twenty four elders 4:4-8)
- “Salvation to our God”
- Not- Gloating but the celebration of the correction of injustice.
- Vindication (cf. Romans 12:14-21)
- Smoke vs. Incense (5:8, 8:3-4)
- Invitation to Praise (v. 5; cf. 5:11-14; 8:3-5) <sup>46</sup>

### *Praise for the Wedding*

- The reign of God vs. the usurpers
- Lamb and the Bride
- God/Christ & People of God/Israel/ Church
- OT (Hos. 2:14-20; Isa. 62:5; Jer. 2:2)
- Gospels (Mark 2:19; John 3:29)
- Paul (2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25-32)
- Fine Linen (cf. Filthy Rags Isa. 64:6)

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<sup>46</sup> But the most obvious fact about praise-whether of God or anything-strangely escaped me. I thought of it in terms of compliment, approval, or the giving of honor. I had never noticed that all enjoyment spontaneously overflows into praise unless (sometimes even if) shyness or the fear of boring others is deliberately brought in to check it. The world rings with praise-lovers praising their mistresses, readers their favorite poet, walkers praising the countryside, players praising their favorite game-praise of weather, wines, dishes, actors, motors, horses, colleges, countries, historical personages, children, flowers, mountains, rare stamps, rare beetles, even sometimes politicians or scholars. I had not noticed how the humblest, and at the same time most balanced and capacious, minds, praised most, while the cranks, misfits and malcontents praised least....

I had not noticed either that just as men spontaneously praise whatever they value, so they spontaneously urge us to join them in praising it: "Isn't she lovely? Wasn't it glorious? Don't you think that magnificent?" The Psalmists in telling everyone to praise God are doing what all men do when they speak of what they care about. My whole, more general, difficulty about the praise of God depended on my absurdly denying to us, as regards the supremely Valuable, what we delight to do, what indeed we can't help doing, about everything else we value.

I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation. (C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1958, pp. 93-95)

### *Invitation to Wedding (to be the Bride)*

- Beatitude for those invited (repeated 22:16-17)
- Warning against worship of the messenger.

### Seven Visions of the End

- “Then I saw...” (19:11, 17; 20:1, 4, 11, 21:1) missing at 20:7.
- “Here is no calendarization of the End, but a tour through an eschatological art gallery in which the theme of God’s victory at the end of history is treated in seven different pictures, each complete in itself with its own message and with little concern for chronology.”<sup>47</sup>

### The Return of Christ (Parousia)

- Flaming Eyes (1:14)
- Sword from his mouth (1:16; 2:12)
- Jesus is the Word of God (John 1, Heb. 1, 4)
- Other pictures of the Parousia: Mark 13; Luke 17; 1 Thes. 4; 2 Thes. 1; 1 Cor. 15)
- Bloody Garments (Isaiah 63:1-3)
- Rod of Iron (Psalm 2:9)
- Winepress of Wrath: Rev. 14:17-20)
- Army of the Saints (martyrs, Rev. 7:14; cf. Rom 8:34-39)
- Title: King of Kings. Lord of Lords

### Three Senses of the Parousia

1. That Christ came as a revelation of God and Never left. Out pouring of the Spirit is Christ’s continual coming.
2. Christ is departed but “comes” again in judgment and grace within the events of History and the experience of the church and individuals responding conditionally to prayer/ repentance/ rebellion.
3. Christ is heaven but will return unconditionally at the end of history to bring this age to its completion and establish God’s new order.

### The Last Battle

- Carrion Feast
- Defining characteristic is not social but relational to Jesus
- Wedding Feast or Feast of the Vanquished? Choose.
- The Anti- Christ (Beast) and Anti-Spirit (False Prophet) –Emperor and Culture
- Lake of Fire

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<sup>47</sup> E. Boring, Revelation: p. 195.

### Satan Bound

- The Key and the Chain: “Locked, Sealed and Kept” but not destroyed (Isa. 24:2)
- Dragon/ Devil/ Satan still endures yet is constrained.
- A Reprieve from “Deceiving the Nations”
- What does this say about the power of evil?
  - Limited
  - Under God’s Sovereignty
  - Temporary

### The Millennium

- A Reprieve
- Pre-, Post-, or A-
- Christ is Reigning, and his martyr church with him.
- Priests & Kings: Ezekiel 37 (cf. 1 Cor. 4:8; 6:2-3)

### The Defeat of Gog and Magog: Satan’s Last Stand

- Back to “Deceiving the nations”
- Gog and Magog (Ezekiel 38-39)
- Evil must be magnified to its fullest before being destroyed.
- “Resist the Devil and he will flee from you”
- Lords Prayer, “Deliver us from Evil”
- Eternal Torment

### The Last Judgment

- White Throne
- The Books
- Lambs Book of Life (13:8, 17:8; cf. Ps. 139:13-16)
- Saved by Grace Eph. 2:8-10; Phil. 2:12-13
- God’s Courtroom Romans 8:31-34
- Death and Hades (1 Cor. 15:28, Isa. 25:6-9)
- The Second Death
- Judgment is no idle threat...21:8, 27



## Part 2 “The New Jerusalem” Revelation 21-22



### A New Heaven and a New Earth

#### *The New Jerusalem*

##### Jewish Tradition:

- “Decent” established by God not human effort
- The Imagery of God’s Throne
- Gold and jeweled construction
- Seeing the face of God
- Golden streets, gates of pearl
- List of jewels

##### The Roman aspirations for the Ideal city

- Heroditus description of Babylon
- Rome’s proud claim to be the Eternal City

##### In the End, God...

- God is the End! (cf. 1Cor. 15:28, God will be “all in all”)
- “God’s dwelling with humanity” (21:3; cf. Ezekiel 48:35)
- No Temple (follows the pattern of Ezekiel 40-48)

- “Holy of Holies” → The Entire City! 21:15-16; 1 Kings:6:20; II Chron. 3:8-9)
- God is the Temple (21:22)
- Jasper → God’s Glory surrounds the city (see Rev. 4:3; Zech 2:4-5)

### Via Negativa

- We cannot say what the transcendent world IS, so we have to use language to say what it IS NOT.
  - No Sea (21:1 cf. 4:6; 13:1 Gen 1:1)
  - No Tears, Death, Sorrow, Crying, Pain (21:4)
- Reversal of the Consequences of the Fall
  - “former things” “passed away”
  - Fulfilling, joy, abundant life
  - No cowardly, faithless, polluted, murderers, fornicators, sorcerers, idolaters, or liars.
- Right and Justice prevail
  - “vice catalogue” like others<sup>48</sup> Cowardice and Liars (Yielding to Persecution and Pressure of roman courts)
  - Sorcery and Idolatry (pagan cultic practices)
- Exhortation to be faithful Now!
- Characterizes life in the city not who will finally be there.

### *The New Jerusalem, the Bride of the Lamb*

#### The City of God

- A City
  - Garden of Eden, Gen 2
  - The first city was built by Cain
  - Babylon, Gen 11
  - “Twelve”
- “Jerusalem” Isa. 49:16
- A beloved, beautiful, bridal, city
  - Israel /People of God/ Church Isa. 49:14-23; 54; Zech. 9:9-10; John 3:29-30; II Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25-32
- A renewed City
  - God does not make all new things but “all things new”
  - “Tree of Life (Gen. 2:9)
  - “River of Life (Gen. 2:10)
- A big, universal city
  - Number of the redeemed is “uncountable” (7:9-17)

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<sup>48</sup> (Rom. 1:28-32; 13:13; or. 5:9-11; 6:9-10; II Cor. 12:20; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 4:31; 5:3-5; Col. 3:5, 8-9; 1 Tim. 1:9-10; 6:4-5; 2 Tim. 3:2-5; Titus 3:3; 1 Pet. 4:3; mark 7:21-23; Luke 18:11; cf. Rev. 9:21; 22:15)

- Vast: 1500 miles cubed
- Nations, kings (21:24-26)
- Grove of the tree of life for healing of the “nations” (Ezekiel 47:12)
- Twelve Gates with One way traffic
- A holy city
  - Romans 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 6:16-18
- An active city
  - Worship and Service (22:3)
  - Reigning (22:5)

#### More Via Negativa – Creation Developed and Redeemed

- No Temple (21:22)
- No Sun, Moon, night, Closed Gates (21:23, 25; 22:5)
  - Un-Creation (Gen. 1)
  - The gates are always open
- Nothing Impure will enter it
  - Barriers to the “Holy” sections of the Temple in the OT
  - Only the “those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of Life.”
- No Curse (22:3)
  - Gen 3:1-6; Isa. 24:4-6; rom. 5:12-21
  - Curse on the earth Gen 3:17; Rom. 8:18-25
  - Beauty of this world must be transformed “transparent gold” and “crystallizing” jasper
  - A living city with light and color contrast with Babylon’s dead silent streets (18:22)
- The Imperative Question: How is your life oriented?

## John and the Angel Epilogue: Invitation and Warning

### *The Vision Ends*

- “Worship God!”
- Sacred Revelation
- Invitation for Faithful response:
  - Come & Take
  - The Free Gift of the Water of Life (Ezek. 47; John 7:37-39)
- “I am coming soon”
- The Letter Ends