

## Lesson 14 – Revelation 17–18

### Brief Summary of Revelation 1–15

#### Revelation 1 The Introduction: Scene: Earth. Time: Past (ca. 95 AD).

John introduces the book of prophecy with an explanation of the circumstances surrounding the Revelation. John was exiled on the island of Patmos when Jesus sent and communicated the vision of things which must soon take place. John is commanded to write and send the book to the seven churches in Asia.

#### Revelation 2-3 Messages to the Angels of the Seven Churches in Asia:

*Scene: Earth. Time: Present (to original readers in Asia).*

Jesus sends a unique message to each of the seven churches in the western part of the Roman province of Asia: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. The cities are listed in the order of the geographical circuit that the messenger of the book would naturally travel as he delivered the letters.

#### Revelation 4–5 Prelude of Praise:

*Scene: Heaven. Time: Future (Onset of the Great Seven-Year Tribulation which will complete the present age, conclude with Jesus' return, and usher in the Millennium).*

Revelation 4-22 records events that will take place in the future. Three consecutive periods of judgment lead to the second return of Jesus Christ: 7 Seals; 7 Trumpets; and, 7 Bowls. A prelude of praise in heaven precedes the onset of each three sets of 7 consecutive judgments. Revelation 4-5 records the initial heavenly prelude of praise that will precede the opening of the 7 Seals of judgment in Revelation 6, ushering in “a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will” (Matt 24:21).

#### Revelation 6 Seven Seal Judgments

*Scene: Earth. Time: Future (Chronology moves forward.)*

The seven seals contain the judgments of the Great Tribulation, concluding with the return of Jesus. The seventh Seal contains the seven Trumpet judgments, and the seventh Trumpet judgment contains the final seven Bowl judgments. The Trumpet and Bowl judgments are all contained within the seventh Seal, unfolding consecutively through the seven-year Tribulation Period. Through judgment, Jesus becomes King of all the nations.

Revelation 6 records John's vision of the Lamb breaking the first 6 of 7 Seals:

- Seal #1: First Apocalyptic Horseman (White Horse): Conqueror
- Seal #2: Second Apocalyptic Horseman (Red Horse): Removes Peace
- Seal #3: Third Apocalyptic Horseman (Black Horse): Famine
- Seal #4: Fourth Apocalyptic Horseman (Ashen Horse): Death and Hades (over ¼ killed)
- Seal #5: Cries of the Martyrs for Judgment and Vengeance
- Seal #6: Earthquake, Blackened Sun, Blood-like Moon, Falling Stars, Split Sky, Moving Mountains and Islands, Hiding Men, Great Day of Wrath

The seventh seal remains unbroken at the end of Revelation 6. Before the Lamb breaks the seventh seal (Rev 8), the foreheads of 144,000 from the 12 tribes of Israel are sealed.

#### Rev 7:1-8 Sealing of 144,000 from 12 Tribes of Israel: Scene: Earth. Time: Future.

The angels are commanded to refrain from harming the earth, sea, or trees until the bond-servants of God are sealed on their foreheads with the seal of the Living God. The 144,000 include 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel.

#### Rev 7:9-17 Prelude of Praise by Multitude in Heaven: Scene: Heaven. Time: Future.

Before the Lamb breaks the 7th Seal, containing the 7 Trumpets and 7 Bowls, there is a prelude of praise in heaven by a great, countless multitude from every nation, tribes, peoples, and tongues. The multitude, clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands, stands before the throne and before the Lamb as they cry, “Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb” (7:10). The heavenly court responds in worship. One of the elders explains to John that the multitude came out of the great tribulation. They washed their robes, made white in the blood of the Lamb.

\*(A)=Application (C)=Context (D)=Difficult (DOC)=Doctrine (O)=Opinion (PER)=Personal (PR)=Principle (P)=Prophecy

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### Revelation 8–9 Trumpet Judgments

*Scene: Earth. Time: Future (Chronology moves forward, Second Half of Tribulation)*

After the sealing of 144,000 from the twelve tribes of Israel and a prelude of praise by a great multitude in heaven, the Lamb breaks the seventh seal. In response, heaven is silenced for half an hour. The seventh seal contains the seven trumpets, the second of three 7-judgment series that are consecutively released during the Great Tribulation. The seven bowls are contained in the seventh trumpet. The seven trumpets are contained in the seventh seal. When the Lamb breaks the seventh seal, He is actually initiating the seven trumpets. Once the seventh seal is broken, the seven trumpet judgments occur consecutively. Revelation 8–9 records the consecutive release of six of the seven trumpet judgments.

- Trumpet #1: Hail, Fire (upon earth)
- Trumpet #2: Burning Mountain (upon sea)
- Trumpet #3: Wormwood (upon waters)
- Trumpet #4: Sun, Moon, Stars (upon heavens)
- Trumpet #5: Demonic Locusts (upon people)
- Trumpet #6: Horsemen (upon people)
- Trumpet #7: Announces 7 Bowls

### **Summary of Revelation 10–15:**

#### **Transition from Trumpets (8–9) to Seals (16)**

*Scenes: Earth (10-14) and Heaven (15) Time: Future*

Just as chapter 7, which deals with the 144,000 sealed Israelites and great multitude from all nations, serves as a transition between the Seal and Trumpet judgments, Chapters 10–15 serve as a transition between the Trumpet and Bowl judgments. The interlude provides background information pertaining to significant people, places, and events during the Great Tribulation without advancing chronologically through the judgment series.

Chapter 10 introduces an angel, perhaps Michael the archangel, who announces the 7th trumpet, which contains the seven final Bowl judgments leading to the return of Christ.

Chapter 11 records John's measurement of the temple of God and the altar, then it introduces the two witnesses who prophesy for 1,260 days (42 months) of the Great Tribulation. At the end of 3 ½ years, the two witnesses die and their bodies are displayed for 3 ½ days before they are brought back to life and ascend into heaven.

Chapter 12 is often considered the most symbolic chapter in the Bible. Five of seven major tribulation personages are identified: (1) the woman clothed with the sun=Mary/Judah (2) the red dragon (7 heads, 10 horns, 7 diadems)=Satan; (3) a male child=Christ; (4) Michael/angels; and (5) offspring of woman persecuted by the dragon=Israel.

Chapter 13 introduces the final two of seven major tribulation personages: (6) beast out of the sea=Antichrist; and, (7) beast out of the earth=false prophet.

Chapter 14 reveals the Lamb standing on Mount Zion and the worship of the 144,000 who have the name of the Lamb and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. After a prelude of praise, angels announce fallen Babylon and the reaping of the earth.

Chapter 15 records a heavenly prelude of praise in preparation for the final series of judgment. Those who had been victorious over the beast and his image sing the Song of Moses and Song of the Lamb. One of the four living creatures gives to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever, and the temple is filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power.

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### Brief Summary of Revelation 16 (The Grand Finale)

#### Revelation 16 – Seven Plagues/Bowl Judgments

*Scene: Earth. Time: Future (Chronology moves forward.)*

The seven seals (Rev 6, 8) contain all the judgments of the Great Tribulation, concluding with the return of Jesus. The seventh Seal (Rev 8) contains the seven Trumpet judgments (Rev 8–9, 11:15), and the seventh Trumpet judgment (Rev 11:15) contains the final seven Bowl judgments (Rev 16). The Trumpet and Bowl judgments are all contained within the seventh Seal, unfolding consecutively through the seven-year Tribulation Period. Through judgment, Jesus becomes King of all the nations.

Revelation 16 brings the terrible judgments of the Tribulation to conclusion through the pouring out of the final seven Bowl judgments.

- Bowl 1 (upon earth) Boils
- Bowl 2 (into sea) Blood
- Bowl 3 (into rivers) Blood
- Bowl 4 (upon sun) Scorching
- Bowl 5 (upon throne of the beast) Darkness
- Bowl 6 (upon the Euphrates river) Dries Up
- Bowl 7 (upon air) Earthquake, Hail

### Introduction to Revelation 17–18 (Interlude)

*Scene: Earth Time: Future*

Revelation 17–18 form an interlude that describes the fall of Babylon, involving the destruction of its ecclesiastical form (Rev 17) and its political form (Rev 18).

#### **STUDY QUESTIONS:**

**Rev. 17:1** Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying,

“Come here, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, <sup>2</sup> with whom the kings of the earth committed *acts of* immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality.”

- 1. After John was shown the seven plagues of the seven angels (16), what does one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls say to him? Where does the great harlot sit? (17:1)**
- 2. Who committed immorality with the great harlot? With what were those who dwell on the earth made drunk? (17:2)**
- 3. Describe the imagery conjured by the description of the “great harlot,” “many waters,” and “wine of her immorality.” (17:2)**
- 4. How could earth dwellers be made drunk with the harlot’s immorality? (17:2)**
- 6. What do you learn about God from Rev. 17:1-2? How could this truth transform your life?**

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**Rev. 17:3** And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns. <sup>4</sup> The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality, <sup>5</sup> and on her forehead a name was written, a mystery, “BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.” <sup>6</sup> And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. When I saw her, I wondered greatly. <sup>7</sup> And the angel said to me, “Why do you wonder? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns.

**Rev. 17:8** “The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will wonder when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come.

- 1. Where is John carried away in the Spirit? Describe the woman he sees. Describe the scarlet beast upon whom the woman is sitting. What is in the woman’s hand? (17:3-4)**
- 2. What is written on the forehead of the woman? What does the name communicate about the woman? (17:5)**
- 3. With what is the woman drunk? Why does John wonder greatly? (17:6)**
- 4. Describe the mystery revealed by the angel. (17:7-8)**
- 5. Where will the beast come from and go? Who will wonder when they see the beast? What is the significance of the phrase “that he was and is not and will come”?(17:8)**
- 6. What do you learn about God from Rev. 17:3-8? How could this truth transform your life?**

**Rev. 17:9** “Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits, <sup>10</sup> and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while. <sup>11</sup> “The beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction. <sup>12</sup> “The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour. <sup>13</sup> “These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast. <sup>14</sup> “These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him *are the* called and chosen and faithful.”

- 1. What will the mind which has wisdom understand about the seven heads? What are they? How many kings are there? How many have fallen? How many are? How many have not yet come? When he comes, what must he do? (17:9-10)**
- 2. What numbers are the beast which was and is not? Where does he go? (17:11)**
- 3. What are the ten horns? What have they not yet received? What do they receive? For how long? What is the one purpose of the ten kings? (17:12-13)**
- 4. Against Whom will the ten kings wage war? What will be the outcome? Why? (17:14)**

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5. Who is with the Lamb? (17:14b)

6. What do you learn about God from Rev. 17:9-14? How could this truth transform your life?

**Rev. 17:15** And he said to me, “The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues. <sup>16</sup> “And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire. <sup>17</sup> “For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God will be fulfilled. <sup>18</sup> “The woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth.”

1. What does the angel tell John about the waters? (17:15)

2. Describe the relationship between the ten horns (kings), beast, and harlot? (17:16)

3. What happens to the harlot? Who does this to the harlot (17:16)

4. What purpose has God put in the hearts of the ten horns (kings)? For how long? (17:17)

5. What is the woman whom John saw? Over whom does this great city reign? (17:18)

6. What do you learn about God from Rev. 17:15-18? How could this truth transform your life?

**Rev. 18:1** After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illumined with his glory. <sup>2</sup> And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird. <sup>3</sup> “For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed *acts of* immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality.”

1. What does this angel who comes down from heaven have? What happens to the earth? What might the phrase “Illumined with his glory” mean? (18:1)

2. What does the angel proclaim in a loud voice about Babylon? (18:2)

3. Why has Babylon become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird? (18:2-3)

4. What is the relationship of Babylon the great to the kings and merchants of the earth? Interpret this metaphor in your own words. (18:3)

5. What do you learn about God from Rev. 18:1-3? How could this truth transform your life?

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**Rev. 18:4** I heard another voice from heaven, saying, “Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues; <sup>5</sup> for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. <sup>6</sup> “Pay her back even as she has paid, and give back *to her* double according to her deeds; in the cup which she has mixed, mix twice as much for her. <sup>7</sup> “To the degree that she glorified herself and lived sensuously, to the same degree give her torment and mourning; for she says in her heart, ‘I SIT *as* A QUEEN AND I AM NOT A WIDOW, and will never see mourning.’ <sup>8</sup> “For this reason in one day her plagues will come, pestilence and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for the Lord God who judges her is strong.

**Rev. 18:9** “And the kings of the earth, who committed *acts of* immorality and lived sensuously with her, will weep and lament over her when they see the smoke of her burning, <sup>10</sup> standing at a distance because of the fear of her torment, saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! For in one hour your judgment has come.’

1. What does another voice from heaven command? Why? What has God remembered? (18:4-5)
2. How is Babylon to be paid back? In what measure? To what degree? (18:6-7)
3. Who did Babylon the great glorify? How does she live? What does she say in her heart? How might this warning apply to people today? (18:7)
4. Why will Babylon’s plagues come in one day? What will happen to her? (18:8)
5. What will the kings of the earth who committed immorality and lived sensuously with her do when they see the smoke of her burning? What will they say? (18:10)
6. What do you learn about God from Rev. 18:4-10? How could this truth transform your life?

**Rev. 18:11** “And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, because no one buys their cargoes any more — <sup>12</sup> cargoes of gold and silver and precious stones and pearls and fine linen and purple and silk and scarlet, and every *kind of* citron wood and every article of ivory and every article *made* from very costly wood and bronze and iron and marble, <sup>13</sup> and cinnamon and spice and incense and perfume and frankincense and wine and olive oil and fine flour and wheat and cattle and sheep, and *cargoes* of horses and chariots and slaves and human lives. <sup>14</sup> “The fruit you long for has gone from you, and all things that were luxurious and splendid have passed away from you and *men* will no longer find them. <sup>15</sup> “The merchants of these things, who became rich from her, will stand at a distance because of the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning, <sup>16</sup> saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, she who was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls; <sup>17</sup> for in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste!’ And every shipmaster and every passenger and sailor, and as many as make their living by the sea, stood at a distance, <sup>18</sup> and were crying out as they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, ‘What *city* is like the great city?’ <sup>19</sup> “And they threw dust on their heads and were crying out, weeping and mourning, saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, in which all who had ships at sea became rich by her wealth, for in one hour she has been laid waste!’ <sup>20</sup> “Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment for you against her.”

1. Why are the merchants of the earth weeping and mourning over her? (18:11-13)
2. For what do they long that has passed away and will no longer be found? Who had become rich from her? What will they do and say because of the fear of her torment? (18:14-15)

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3. **How is the city described? How long does it take for such great wealth to be laid waste? Who will stand at a distance? What do they say when they see her burning? (18:16-19)**
4. **Who is to rejoice? Why? (18:20)**
6. **What do you learn about God from Rev. 18:20? How could this truth transform your life?**

**Rev. 18:21** Then a strong angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, “So will Babylon, the great city, be thrown down with violence, and will not be found any longer. <sup>22</sup> “And the sound of harpists and musicians and flute-players and trumpeters will not be heard in you any longer; and no craftsman of any craft will be found in you any longer; and the sound of a mill will not be heard in you any longer; <sup>23</sup> and the light of a lamp will not shine in you any longer; and the voice of the bridegroom and bride will not be heard in you any longer; for your merchants were the great men of the earth, because all the nations were deceived by your sorcery. <sup>24</sup> “And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on the earth.”

1. **What does a strong angel throw into the sea? What does the angel say will be thrown down with violence and not found any longer? Not heard? Not shine? (18:21-23)**
2. **Why will this happen to Babylon the great city? (18:23b-24)**
3. **What is found in Babylon, the great city? (18:24)**
4. **What do you learn about God from Rev. 18:21-14? How could this truth transform your life?**

**Write a prayer in response to Rev. 17–18.**