



Revelation 13-19



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The Coming Beasts

Background to Revelation 13

- Revelation 13 introduces two Satanic agents, who will be present in the end times.
 - The Antichrist (v. 1-10)
 - The False Prophet (v. 11-18)
- Note 12:17 as the context for chapter 13.
 - The Dragon makes war with the remnant of the woman's seed.
 - Chapter 13 then answers the question, "how" will he make war?"
 - Note MSS difference between "I stood" & "he stood..."
- **Read Revelation 13:1-2**
 - The language here is *highly* reminiscent of Daniel 7, so lets begin there...
- **Read Daniel 7**
 - Context:
 - 1st year of Belshazzar (v. 1); thus after the vision of Chapter 2, which was given in the 2nd year of Nebuchadnezzar, i.e. around 40-50 years between the two visions.

Overview of Daniel 7

- Text:
 - Description of 4 earthly Kingdoms (v. 2-8, 17), after which the Kingdom of Messiah will be established (v. 9-14, 18).
 - The 4th Beast is further explained (v. 19-28).
- Debate:
 - Are these 4 kingdoms merely a repeat of Daniel 2 (i.e. Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, & Rome revived)?
 - Or are these 4 kingdoms subsequent to Daniel 2 (e.g. America, Russia, Asia, and the coming one-world order)?

The 4th Beast

- Either interpretation one takes of the 4 kingdoms, all *premillennialists* agree that the 4th kingdom of Daniel 7 is the kingdom present when Christ returns.

- The 1st readers of Revelation probably viewed the beast of chap. 13 as Rome. Yet the 2nd coming did not occur, so evidently we await another kingdom to emerge in history, which seems to fit this description of a revived Rome theory.

The Beast of Revelation 13:1-2

- The Ten Horns are Ten Kings, which make up this final kingdom (cp. Rev. 17:12). A 10-Nation Confederacy?
- 7 Heads will be discussed further in Rev. 17:9-10.
- Seven Heads... Leopard... Bear... & Lion...
 - This imagery seems to combine every major element of the 4 beasts of Dan 7, as well as echoes Rev. 12:3.
 - In other words, this final kingdom will be the world-wide combination of all great kingdoms which have come before!
 - Note how these empires are listed in reverse order from Daniel 7.
 - Could it be that the Antichrist will be possessed by the multiple powerful demons, which have headed these empires of old? (i.e. the Prince of Persia, Greece, Babylon, and Rome...)

“Out of the Sea”

- The Sea... Symbolically used in Revelation to refer to the nations (Rev. 17:15; also cp. Is. 17:12-13; Dan. 7:2).
- Fittingly viewed in Scripture as the realm of the Dragon (Is. 27:1).
- May also reference the Mediterranean as the physical location where much of this history will occur.
- Note the symbolism... the Antichrist may rise to power amidst the raging waters of world-wide political strife.
- Social chaos always seems an historic precursor to tyranny.

“The Name of Blasphemy”

- The Theme of Blasphemy is consistent through these texts (Daniel 7:8, 20; Rev. 13:1).
- Blasphemy = to speak “great things,” specifically against God.
- The “name” of blasphemy probably refers to the taking of a divine title.

- Historic examples... Antiochus “Epiphanies” (divine appearance); Octavian took the title Divi Filius (divine son); Domitian took the title “Lord & God.”
- The Antichrist will do the same thing (cf. 2 Thess. 2:4).
- **Read & cf. Dan. 11:36-39**

Satanically Empowered

The Dragon gave him...

- His Power (ability)
- The Antichrist will undoubtedly be greatly charismatic, politically savvy, & militarily unbeatable (cf. Rev. 13:4).
- **Note Daniel 9:26-27**, his ability to solve the Palestinian, Israeli, Muslim problem!
- **Read Daniel 8:23-25**, consider his sinister schemes and military prowess.
- His Throne & Great Authority (Rev. 2:13; 16:10).
- The offer of Satan to Christ in Luke 4 seems to be taken up by this man.
- Consider 1 John 5:19, the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.
- **Revelation 17:8** ascribes the origin of this beast as the “abyss,” and his destiny as “perdition,” i.e. eternal torment! **Compare Matt. 25:41**, the Devil and his angels... Antichrist, being his greatest!

The Career of the Antichrist

Review the Context: The Coming World-Wide Kingdom

- Most *premillennial* commentators have historically argued for a revived Roman Empire emerging at the end of history. They base this mainly upon Dan. 2:40-43; 9:26; & Rev. 17.
- These scholars argue that the Roman Empire has gone through multiple stages, yet has never really “fallen.” Note how Charlemagne, Napoleon, and Hitler justified their military ambitions based upon the revival of a Roman Empire.
- Thus modern history awaits the re-emergence of this ancient Empire in its ten-king form.
- Other scholars argue that the fourth beast of Daniel 7 will have no connection with ancient Rome, but that it will have an entirely different origin, perhaps middle eastern and Islamic, or something else.

Quotes on “Globalism”

- “Instead of having a set of policies that are equipping people for the globalization of the economy, we have policies that are accelerating the most destructive trends of the global economy.”
- “My second piece of advice is to stay global. As the world continues to change and we become more connected to each other, globalization will bring both benefits and disruptions to our lives. But either way, it's here, and it's not going away.”
 - Barack Obama
- “Whether the borders that divide us are picket fences or national boundaries, we are all neighbors in a global community.”
 - Jimmy Carter
- The stated mission of the National Education Association (NEA) is "to advocate for education professionals and to unite our members and the nation to fulfill the promise of public education to prepare every student to succeed in a diverse and interdependent world.”
- “Our mission in this new century is clear. For good or ill, we live in an interdependent world. We can't escape each other. Therefore, we have to spend our lives building a global community of shared responsibilities, shared values, shared benefits.”
- “What happened to us in September, 2001, is a microcosmic but painful and powerful example of the fact we live in an inter-dependent world that is not yet an integrated global community.”
 - Bill Clinton
- The emerging 'environmentalization' of our civilization and the need for vigorous action in the interest of the entire global community will inevitably have multiple political consequences. Perhaps the most important of them will be a gradual change in the status of the United Nations. Inevitably, it must assume some aspects of a world government.
 - Mikhail Gorbachev

Club of Rome: 10 Recommended Global Districts?

- Founded in 1968 in Rome, this organization identifies its purpose as, “a group of world citizens, sharing a common concern for the future of humanity.”
- It consists of current and former heads of state, UN bureaucrats, high-level politicians and government officials, diplomats, scientists, economists and business leaders from around the globe.
- The club states that its mission is "to act as a global catalyst for change through the identification and analysis of the crucial problems facing humanity and the communication of such problems to the most important public and private decision makers as well as to the general public.”
- The club published in 1972 what has become the most influential work on environmentalism in existence, *Limits to Growth*.
- One of their more elaborate plans includes breaking the world into ten regions in order to help sustain economic growth.
- In 2009, the organization established a three-year program on "A New Path for World Development". In a flyer describing the project, it declared "The global issues which were the focus of the 1972 Report, "Limits to Growth" are even more severe and urgent today." The project has five issue areas: Environment and Resources, Globalization, International Development, Social Transformation, Peace and Security.

Various Qualities of the Antichrist

- Extreme, even supernatural Intelligence (Dan. 8:23). Note how this description was used of Daniel in Dan. 5:12, yet the “wisdom” of the Antichrist will come from Satan, not God.
- He will wield the power of the Occult (Dan. 8:24), even with the ability to work miracles (Matt. 24:24; 2 Thess. 2:9).
- Some argue that he might possibly a homosexual (Dan. 11:37), though the “desire of women” may be idiomatic for Messiah.

Survey of the Career of Antichrist

- He begins as a politician (Dan. 9:26-27; 8:23-25), and initially becomes famous through his peace programs.
- He may be one of the final ten-kings, or in addition to them.
- He eventually succeeds over the 10 kingdoms by putting down three (Dan. 7:24). Daniel 11:40-45 may be an account of this rise

to power, via conquering 3 kings, or this passage might be a prediction of his final campaign in Palestine.

- The other kings submit to him (Rev. 17:12), thus granting him sole leadership over the earth (Rev. 13:4, 8).
- Rev. 13:3, 12, 14; 17:8 *may* allude to an assassination attempt, which may be the result or the catalyst to his rise to power. Or alternatively these verses may describe his “reviving” of the old Roman Empire (cf. Rev. 17:9-10).
- His rise to power will bring the violation of his treaty with Israel, the arrogant blasphemy of declaring himself god from the temple in Jerusalem, and the institution of a new world-wide religion in his name (Daniel 7:25; Matt. 24:15; 2 Thess. 2:4; Rev. 13:5-15). Compare Emperor Worship that was contemporary to when Revelation was written.
- In AD 89-90 Ephesus issued a coin that pictured Domitian as Zeus. Domitian himself wore a golden crown with Jupiter, Juno, & Minerva engraved on it and he had priests, who represented the deified Flavian family wearing similar crowns, yet with Domitian Himself engraved on them! Rev. 13:6 probably alludes to what Paul states in 2 Thess. 2, how the Antichrist will ascend the throne and declare himself divine. Plutarch rites of the imperial cult of Rome in grandiose language. The emperor was seen as divine, his power extending over earth & sea with the wind and waves subject unto him. The emperor was believed to be able to work miracles, heal men, and be the divine “savior of the world,” who appeared on earth in human form. His appearance brings good fortune to men. Upon his death the emperor ascends to heaven to take his throne among the gods, and the next imperial “savior” is born, who brings an era of peace to earth (TDNT under *euengellion*).
- His new religion will supersede the then religious system (Rev. 17), and he will change laws at will (Dan. 7:25). “All that dwell upon the earth” (cf. Rev. 13:8) will worship this beast, except those that are in the Lamb’s book of life (cf. Rev. 20:12). Rev. 13:9-10 warn those who worship the beast (cf. Jer. 15:2; 43:11, judgment is coming upon those who reject God, so saints be patient).
- He will then become the great adversary to Israel (Dan. 7:21, 25; 8:24; Rev. 13:7).

- His great rule can only be terminated by the direct judgment of God (Dan. 7:22, 26; 8:25; 9:27; Rev. 19:19-20).
- His kingdom will pass to the authority of Messiah (Dan. 7:27).

Nero Redivivus Myth?

- Emperor Nero committed suicide in AD 68, yet many, especially in the eastern provinces, continued to believe he was alive. Rumors began that his death was staged, and that he was returning at the head of a Parthian army! Others believed he would return to life.
- In fact, three Nero impersonators attempted to harness this “urban legend” and ally with Parthia to seize power (AD 69, 80, 88-89). Note this last impersonator was during the reign of Domitian.
- Needless to say, the original audience of the book of Revelation could identify with this scenario!

“Nero Redivivus Myth” (Excursus)

- Another piece of important background information for interpreting Revelation is the “Nero redivivus myth.” Shortly after Nero committed suicide on June 9, A.D. 68, Roman historians recount how a belief emerged throughout the empire that Nero had not actually died but was going to return with the Parthian army (Suetonius, Nero 49.3). Even after his death, many people decorated Nero’s statue “as if he were still alive and would shortly return and deal destruction to his enemies” (Suetonius, Nero 57.1). The fact that very few saw Nero’s corpse, coupled with uncertainty regarding the location of his tomb, gave credence to this belief, which was further nourished and reinforced by at least three pretenders. (Kostenberger and Patterson)

Supernatural Origin of Antichrist?

- Since the “Seed of the Woman” in Genesis 3:15 is in contrast to the “seed of the Serpent,” and since 2 Thess. 2:9 describes the origin of Antichrist as “according to the working of Satan,” some conjecture that the Antichrist will be a Nephilim, i.e. the

offspring of a human woman, and a fallen angelic being (Gen. 6:1-4).

- Revelation 16:13; 17:8 seem to allude to the Antichrist being demonically possessed. Yet he may even be demonically spawned.
- Note how this may be an intended parody of the virgin birth...

Ethnicity of Antichrist?

Jewish?

- Some conjecture that since the Jews will accept the Antichrist as the Messiah (John 5:43), and that they would only accept a Jew, then the Antichrist must be Jewish.
- These scholars also point to Dan. 11:37 and the phrase “God of his fathers” to indicate a Jewish origin.
- Because the tribe of Dan was missing from the list in Revelation 7, some conjecture the Antichrist will come from this tribe.

Roman?

- The Beast will rise out of the Sea (Rev. 13:1), which is arguably a symbol for the Gentile world.
- Daniel 9:26-27 refers to the the people of the prince that shall come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. These people were identified as Roman in AD 70. Therefore the “coming prince” will be Roman.

Assyrian?

- Micah 5:2-6 describes the birthplace of the Messiah as Bethlehem, and His destiny as the Ruler of His people.
- Yet when the Messiah comes to rule, He must first destroy “The Assyrian.”
- “The Assyrian” may be used here as a general term for “enemy,” or it may be a direct allusion to the ethnicity of the Antichrist.
- Ancient Assyria finds its modern counterparts in Iraq, Iran, and Syria.

The Beast from the Earth

Origin and Nature of the 2nd Beast

- “Another Beast”
 - Greek word implies “another of the same kind” as the 1st Beast.
 - “Beast” refers to a wild animal, which cannot be domesticated.
- “Coming up out of the Earth”
 - Most mythologies of the ancient world recognized a dreadful creature “from the sea,” and one from the “land.” Even Jewish legend assigned Leviathan as the greatest beast of the sea, and Behemoth as the greatest beast of the land.
 - “Up out” may allude to the Abyss (9:1-2).
 - Some conjecture “earth” as a reference to the land of Israel, and thus this Beast is a Jew, but that is still tentative.
 - “Earth” in contrast to the “sea” of verse 1 may also reference a settled order instead of the political chaos, from which the Antichrist rises.
- “...like a lamb...and spoke as a dragon.”
 - Note the subtle, deceptive appearance of this man.
 - He will be the epitome of Matt. 7:15.
 - He will appear lamb-like, i.e. meek, mild, even godly, yet will be Satanic.
 - This “lamb” speaks like a dragon, while the true Lamb is the incarnate “Word” of God.
 - Three times this Beast will be called the “false prophet.”
 - Demons come from his mouth 16:13.
 - He is captured by Christ 19:20.

- He will be eternally tormented in the lake of fire 20:10.
- Deception
 - Satan has many devices (2 Cor. 2:11), but perhaps his greatest is deception.
 - Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44).
 - Satan confuses the truth by mixing in error (1 John 4:1).
 - False Prophets have long been one of Satan's greatest tools (Deut. 13:1-5; Jer. 23:16-40; Matt. 24:24; 2 Peter 2:1).

Purpose and Power of the 2nd Beast

- “He exercises all the power of the first beast”
 - His “authority” is delegated by the antichrist, just as the authority of the antichrist is delegated from Satan (13:4).
 - He supports the Antichrist by being his main media man.
 - You may see the parody here to the role of the Holy Spirit, which is to not speak of Himself, but to convince the world of Jesus Christ (John 14:16-27; 16:5-11).
- “Causes the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed” (v. 12).
 - His purpose is to promote the worship of the antichrist.
 - Note only the “earth-dwellers” will be deceived by him, not the elect (Matt. 24:24).
- Aiding this false prophet will be his ability to call fire down from heaven.
 - Even false prophets historically have had power, and so will the ultimate false prophet (Ex. 7:11; Deut. 13:1-5).

- It amazes me how modern “miracle workers” do not come under greater suspicion because of all the Scriptural warnings against them.
- Calling fire down from heaven was performed by Elijah (1 Kings 18; 2 Kings 1) Fire from heaven also occurred in the ten plagues under Moses (Ex. 9:23-24). However, in the context of Revelation the false prophet may be attempting to mimic and discredit the Two Witnesses of chapter 11 in a similar way as Jannes and Jambres (**2 Tim. 3:1-9**).
- Note how this “false Elijah” will prepare the way for the “false Christ” (Mal. 4:5)

Program of the 2nd Beast

- He says to the earth-dwellers, to make an image of the Antichrist, and worship it under penalty of death.
 - Like emperor worship in ancient Rome, an image of the Antichrist will be set up.
 - Approximately 5 years before Revelation was written Emperor Domitian had an imperial statue over 25 feet tall placed in the imperial temple in Ephesus.
 - Worshipping an image of the Antichrist violates the first and second of the 10 commandments, and helps to consolidate both the political, and religious power of the world.
 - Remember the original readers from Pergamum have already seen a foretaste of martyrdom (2:13).
- The combination of political and religious power has always been a potent combination throughout history, so it will be in the end.
 - Pharaohs of Egypt
 - Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (Dan. 3).

- Kings of Seleucid empire
- Emperors of Rome
- Jeroboam realized the power of religion (1 Kings 12:25-33).
- Charlemagne and the Holy Roman Empire.
- Calvin's Geneva
- Attempted by the Puritans
- Hitler's creation of the "Protestant Reich Church," a.k.a. German Evangelical Church.
 - Note the historic controversy over Hitler's public speaking voice & his normal voice, "spoke like a dragon."
- The false prophet will have power to give "pneuma" to the image.
 - Several passages in the O.T. mock idols as having no ability to speak (Deut. 4:28; Ps. 115:5; 135:15-17; Is. 46:1-7; Jer. 10).
 - Yet the final False Prophet will have the capability to make this image appear alive, either through trickery (*like some ancient temples according to the historian Lucian*) or demonic power (*several early church fathers spoke of demonic voices in pagan temples in their day*).
 - This "image" will most likely be set in the temple of Jerusalem as part of the "abomination" that desolates.

Program of the 2nd Beast was Foreshadowed by Daniel 3

- All who do not worship the image of the beast will be killed, reminiscent of Daniel 3.
- Nebuchadnezzar built an entirely golden image of himself 60 x 6 cubits, i.e. nearly 100 feet tall. Contrast Daniel 2:36-38 where only the head was of gold.

- He ordered all nations to bow down and worship it under penalty of death.
- Yet the faithful to the Lord were preserved through the fire!

Conjectures...

- Many Conservative scholars speculate that the “lamb-like” appearance of the False Prophet of Revelation may be a reference to an end time apostate Christianity such as the Roman Catholic Church, or the Liberal Church.
- Some conjecture that the Pope will himself be the Antichrist or the False Prophet.
- I have suggested this book before for those who may be interested in pursuing that line of argument further.
- Other scholars conjecture the prominence of the New Age movement led by a spiritual figure head such as the *Dalai Lama*, may take center stage in the end times.
- Other scholars conjecture the *Islamic Imam* will become the False Prophet for the Antichrist.
- The world religion presented in Revelation 17 will undoubtedly be an ecumenical combination of world religions. Note how this ecumenical mindset is alive and well in the world today.
- The “C” is the star and Crescent moon of Islam.
- The “O” is the Peace Symbol, upside-down broken cross.
- The “E” is the Male, Female symbols standing for feminism, transgender, and homosexual movements.
- The “X” is the star of David, a symbol for Judaism.
- The “I” is dotted with a Witchcraft Pentagram.
- The “S” is the symbol for yin-yang, i.e. Buddhism and Hinduism.
- The “T” is the Cross symbol for Christianity.

World Wide Deception: The power of the False Prophet will deceive the world (v. 14).

- Remember the words of Christ (Matt. 24:24). The ability of this beast to deceive will be unprecedented in history. The world will follow after him.
- Note the Divine allowance of such deception (2 Thess. 2:8-12).
- Trust Christ, receive the Gospel, and don't be deceived!

Heavenly Interlude (Rev. 14)

The Lamb and the 144,000

Uniqueness of Chapter 14

- If you removed chapter 14 from the book of Revelation you would not mess up the chronology of the book. Neither would you largely affect the personalities of the book.
- The purpose of this chapter is largely to applaud the faithful & warn the wicked. This chapter provides a motivational and persuasive portion of the book of Revelation. It is good for preaching!

Renewed Vision of the 144,000

- **Purpose:** in light of the “mark of the Beast” just mentioned in chapter 13, this vision reminds us of the alternative group, i.e. those who remain faithful to the Lamb are also “marked,” or “sealed,” not with the name or number of the Beast, but with the Father's name (cf. Ps. 15:1; 24:3). This vision emphasizes the Power of God and His ability to “keep” all who belong to Him (2 Tim. 2:19).
- This vision seems to be of Christ on the earth at His return. Note the significance of Mount Zion:
 - The Desolation was just mentioned (Matt. 24:15; Rev. 13:14-15).

- Christ on Zion is an O.T. symbol of victory (Zech. 2:10; 8:3; Psalm 2).
- They carry the seal of the Father on their forehead (Deut. 6:4-9)
- Heaven responds with joy and exaltation at this triumph (Luke 15:10; Eph. 3:10; Acts 7:55-56).
- This special act of redemption requires a “new song.”
- Special descriptions:
 - "Virgins," sexually pure as well as free from idolatry.
 - "First-fruits," Signifies Dedication to God, and Representation of a larger group, especially the nation of Israel that will be saved (cf. Rom. 11:26). The 144,000 are not all the Christians who will enter the kingdom like Jehovah's Witnesses claim.
 - “No guile,” is in opposition to the False Prophet.
 - “Without fault” and fulfillment of prophesy (Zeph. 3:13).

Three Angelic Announcements from Heaven (Revelation 14:6-13)

- What would you say to a terminal planet?
- God says three things:
 1. “Repent and believe the Gospel! There is still hope!” (v. 6-7)
 2. “Come out of Babylon and be separate!” (v. 8)
 3. “Do not receive the mark of the Beast!” (v. 9-12)
- These 3 announcements probably take place during the mid-point of these final 7 years, after the desolation, and during the introduction of the “mark,” i.e. the moment of decision!

The Everlasting Gospel

- God in His grace saturates the earth with an invitation to the Gospel not only through the 144,000, but now through the supernatural witness of an angelic messenger.
- He declares the Gospel universally to every nation, kindred tongue, and people.
- God sends an angel through the heavens (Greek term literally meaning “middle heaven”) as a supernatural, and universal messenger for the Gospel. Especially note the uniqueness of the angelic messenger. Contrast this with how God has chosen to use men and the foolishness of preaching throughout most of history (cp. 1 Cor. 1:27; 2:1-5).
- Does God use angels today as he did in Acts 10:1-8 and will in Rev. 14? cf. Heb. 13:2, and the dream phenomenon occurring in the Muslim world.
- God is also vindicating Himself by extending every opportunity for mankind to repent (cf. Jer. 7:25).

The Angelic Message:

- First, mankind must acknowledge God. “Fear God!” (Luke 23:39-43)... a prerequisite to true repentance. cf. Ps. 10 and Prov. 23:17 notes.
- Second, mankind must adore God. “Give Him Glory!” i.e. acknowledge and ascribe to Him the glory He rightfully deserves (contrast Rom. 1:21). The Gospel is essentially about God’s glory, and giving Him the glory due unto His name!
- Third, mankind must applaud God. “Worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters” (cf. Ps. 95; Rev. 4:10-11). Acknowledging God as The Creator is a particularly appropriate exhortation, especially in our day of evolutionary thought. Note also how this call to worship the unseen God is intended to counter the call to worship the image of the Beast.

Babylon is Fallen, is Fallen!

- One could summarize the history of the Bible as “the tale of two cities.”

- The city of God (Zion, Jerusalem), & the city of Man (Babylon). More in Rev. 17-18.
- God will judge the city of man, the city of Babylon, because she is the mother of all harlots! She has spread her adultery to the ends of the earth.
- The city of man will come to its final end during the Tribulation. The city of God will triumph. So this announcement is another appeal to forsake what ultimately will burn, and devote yourself to the Victor (1 John 2:15-17).
- Surrender! Come out! You are surrounded! This announcement parallels the calling of Lot out of Sodom (Gen. 18). This announcement is the reverse of Jeremiah 27.

Don't Take the Mark, Because there is Hell to Pay!

- Verses 9-13 serve as a final appeal to a dying planet to not forsake the worship of the Lamb, nor embrace the false worship of the Beast.
- Verses 9-11 provides a powerful warning about the terror & permanence of God's eternal wrath. These verses make up the strongest statement anywhere in the Bible about eternal punishment (esp. Greek: "from the ages to the ages").
- Parallel the "smoke" with the concept of Harem in Deut. 7 & Josh 6). cf. "torment" with Matt. 25:46.

The Cup of the Wine of the Wrath of God

- The "Cup of Wrath" is a common idiom in the O.T. (Gen. 15:18; Psalm 11:6; 75:8; Isaiah 51:17, 22; Jeremiah 51:7; Habakkuk 2:16). There is a cup of wrath (i.e. a decided amount), which when it is full, God will unleash His wrath on humanity.
- This is the "cup" that Jesus received willingly on our behalf (John 18:11). All those who place their faith in Jesus Christ escape the wrath of God. Yet all those who reject Jesus Christ invite the wrath of God upon themselves (Rev. 14:10; 16:19; 17:4).

Wine Without Mixture

- One part wine and two parts water was the normal strength for purifying poor water. Two parts wine and one part water was the normal mixture for drinking wine (cf. Prov. 9:2). Unmixed wine was too powerful, and only drank to purposefully get drunk.
- This allusion is communicating that God will pour out His wrath in full force! He will not water it down!
- Wine takes time, grapes ripen slowly (Genesis 15:16; James 5:7).
- Wine is produced by stomping (Isaiah 63:1-4; Lam. 1:15; Rev. 14:19-20).

“In the Presence of the holy angels, and in the Presence of the Lamb!”

- Hebrews 4:12-13 All lies naked and bare unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.
- Proverbs 16:4 Even Hell glorifies God, in that it magnifies His justice!
- Note Rev. 14:7, your life will magnify God one way or the other. Either you will trust in His grace and magnify His mercy, or you will spurn His gift, and magnify His justice.

Persevere!

- Verses 12-13 serve as an appeal to so-called “saints.” Persevere! Don’t turn back! This text applies the doctrine of hell to the believer. **Hebrews 10:35-39**. True Faith leads to Obedience and Perseverance.
- Verse 13 is one of the 7 beatitudes in the book of Revelation. *“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord!”*
- The Spirit says that they will have rest, Shalom, Peace (cf. Rev. 7:14-17; Heb. 4:1-11; Matt. 11:28)! Their works will follow them. Your deeds will catch up with you (1 Tim. 5:24-25). This is a blessed encouragement to the faithful who persevere (cf. 1 Cor. 15:58)!

The Final Reaping of the earth (Rev. 14:14-20)

Song of Man upon the Clouds

- Riding upon the clouds was a common motif for the deities of the Ancient Near East, but it is primarily an image throughout the O.T. for the sovereign power of God (Psalm 18:9-14; 68:4, 33; 104:3; Isaiah 19:1; Nahum. 1:3).
- “Crown” (stephenos) i.e. victor’s crown.
- The primary reference here would be Daniel 7:13. Remember also Rev. 1:7.
- Compare the words of Christ in His own ministry Mark 13:26-27. Also compare the words of Christ in Matt. 26:64; Mark 14:61-63, which merely led to further infuriate the Jewish leaders.

Another Angel Came out from the Temple

- The “Temple” is a reference to the heavenly temple, which we have seen referenced throughout the book.
- The angel’s announcement comes from God the Father, and he relays it to God the Son. The time of judging the earth has come. It is time for Jesus to exercise His authority. Note how extensive this theme is in both the ministry of Christ, and then the Apostles (cf. Joel 3:12-13; Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43; John 5:22, 27; Acts 10:42; 17:31; 2 Tim. 4:1).

The Judgment of God is likened to a harvest

- Rev. 14:16 is a short, pithy summary of perhaps the most prophesied event in the Bible!
- The harvest motif is used often throughout the Scripture as an idiom for divine judgment, especially in the parables of Jesus (cf. Joel 3:12-13; Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43).
- The final judgment upon planet earth is likened here to two types of harvesting. First, the grain harvest. Second, the grape harvest.
- The first is probably a reference to the bowl judgments of chapter 16, or perhaps a positive image of reaping the righteous (Mark 4:20, 29).

- The second is most assuredly a reference to a time of judgment for the wicked (cf. James 5:1-12), probably specifically a reference to Armageddon (cf. Rev. 16:16).

A Sickle is a tool used for harvesting

- “The time is come for you to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.”
- Greek word for ripe implies “dry,” or overly ripe, rotten. The grain is beyond usefulness, and only good for the fire (Mark 13:40). This pictures the patience of God and the presumption of men!
- Read James 5:1-8

The Grape Harvest

- “Another Angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.”
- Jesus will be accompanied by angels when He returns to judge (2 Thess. 1:7).
- “Another Angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire...” Remember in Isaiah 6, how the altar, and fire from off the altar is used as an image for cleansing. God is about to “purify” the earth, so that He may inhabit it (Rev. 21:3)!
- Also remember the association with the prayers of the saints (Rev. 6:9; 8:3).
- Here is an depiction of an Egyptian Wine Press.
- As we alluded to last time, wine is a potent image within the Scriptures for the judgment of God for two primary reasons.
 - First, because grapes take a long time to ripen, i.e. God is patient.
 - Second, because wine is produced by a violent stomping of the grapes, which serves as a vivid picture of judgment.

Winepress was Trodden

- Isaiah 63 is perhaps the most famous O.T. reference to stomping in the winepress. See also Lam. 1:15.
- This judgment occurs “without the city,” i.e. probably Jerusalem. Meaning that the return of Christ is to save the city of Jerusalem (Zech. 14:1-4), so that He may set up His capitol there. Others see this as a reference to the “New Jerusalem,” thus no “uncleanness” will enter that city (Rev. 21:27).
- The battle of Armageddon will occur about 60 miles north of Jerusalem in the plain of Megiddo (Rev. 16:16).

“Outside the City”

- Probably a reference to Jerusalem. The “winepress” may refer to the Kidron valley (a.k.a. the valley of Jehoshaphat, Joel 2-3).
- The flow of blood may well repeat the 1st century temple procedure of washing blood into the Kidron and down into the Dead Sea as a sort of sewage plant.
- Pontius Pilate had an aqueduct built in order to bring water into the city of Jerusalem, but made the temple treasury pay for it because the temple used the majority of the water!

Blood to the Horse’s bridle

- “Blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horses bridles, by the space of 1600 stadia...” i.e. 180-200 miles.
- Modern Israel is 263 miles north to south, and ranges in width from 9.3 miles at its narrowest, and 71 miles at its widest.
- So this blood bath will cover nearly the entire area of modern Israel. Imagery like this is often used in Jewish literature such as the Sibylline Oracles,¹ Enoch, 4 Ezra, and others.
- Lake of blood 4 ft. deep and 200 miles long? Or blood spattered up to 4ft. in height all across the land, as pictured by stomping a winepress?
- Which ever interpretation you prefer, note how it contrasts 22:2, the river of life. We do know that several million people will be involved in the final conflict at Armageddon, and the slaughter will result in a feast for the birds (19:17-18).

- *A preacher friend of mine who pastors in Westminster Colorado traveled to Israel a few years ago and reported that the tour guides will sometimes mention the extreme build up of vultures and other scavenger birds in modern Israel. Experts have no answer for what seems to be a random migration of these birds into Israel.*

Christ the Final Conqueror

- “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish from the way when His wrath is kindled but a little!” (Ps. 2:12)
- Note how such vivid language is written both to comfort churches amidst persecution, such as Smyrna and Philadelphia, as well as to convict compromising churches, such as Sardis, Thyatira, and Laodicea to get off the fence.

Prelude to the Bowl Judgments (Rev. 15)

Review of the chronology

- The three sets of seven judgments throughout the book of Revelation are all structured the same way.
- The seven judgments are divided into two groups, the first four judgments, then the last three are singled out.
- Yet between the 6th and 7th judgments an interval is inserted.
- These intervals include other visions, which normally are focused on encouraging the saints, which are upon the earth.
- The 7th Trumpet sounds in 11:14-19, but the effects of the 7th trumpet is not seen until chapter 15.
- Remember the declaration of the “Strong Angel.”
- “In the days of the sounding of the 7th angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God will be finished, as he declared to His servants the prophets.”
- “The Mystery of God will be Finished!”
 - We saw from 11:14-19 that the “mystery” is the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

- This was the specific question the disciples asked of Christ (Matt. 24:3; Acts 1:6).
- The “open scroll” in the angel’s hand reveals the Lamb as the rightful owner of planet earth.
- Remember that Chapters 12-14 formed a clear digression between 11:15 & 15:1. So 15:1 picks up where 11:15 left off.
- This digression reviewed some of the same chronology that we have already seen through the 7-year period popularly known as “the Tribulation.”
- The purpose of the digression is to give us a 2nd perspective to the events of the this 7-year period, namely, the perspective of the Dragon.

The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ

- Chapter 15 resumes the theme of 11:15-19. This chapter is largely an echo of 11:15-19.
- What the throne room scene of chapters 4-5 anticipated, is here being experienced.
- The theme of Revelation 11:15 is the theme of the entire book of Revelation, and even more than that, it is the theme of the entire Bible.

The seven **last** plagues

- The culmination of Divine judgment upon planet earth is about to occur. These last 7 judgments are the “Last,” (cf. Rev. 15:1) because in them the wrath of God is complete. God’s wrath does indeed come to an end.
- These judgments are called “plagues.” This same greek word is elsewhere in Luke 10:30; 12:48, Acts 16:23-24, 33, and 2 Cor. 6:5; 11:23 translated “stripes,” i.e. corporeal punishment.
- We will capitalize on this further in chapter 16, but note how similar these plagues are to the “plagues of Egypt.”

The sea of Glass

- This “sea” is also mentioned in Exodus 24:10; Ezekiel 1:22, & Revelation 4:6, but here for the 1st time it is “mingled with fire,” a symbol of judgment.
- The “sea” may function as a heavenly counterpart to the wash basin from the Tabernacle (Ex. 30:17), thus alluding those who are washed and able to stand before God.
- One idea this “sea” clearly communicates is the idea of a boundary between earth and heaven. Not only is a “sea” considered a boundary in many ways, but a sea of “glass,” or “crystal” would be impenetrable.
- Only the “overcomers” (2:7, 11, 17, 27; 3:5, 12, 21), who where temporarily “overcome” on earth (13:7) are now gathered on the other side of this sea, literally “upon” the sea. These saints have been cleansed in the wash basin (cf. Ex. 30:17), and can now approach the presence of God.
- Considering the allusion to the “song of Moses” in the next verse, those standing on the other side of the sea as victors may be intended to draw the parallel to the Red Sea crossing.

The Song of Moses & of the lamb

- Scholars debate whether the “Song of Moses” references Exodus 15, which was sung after the victorious Red Sea crossing, or references Deuteronomy 32, which foresees the outline of Jewish history as one of Israeli rebellion, followed by the faithfulness of God, and culminating in the restoration of Israel.
- In fact the chorus recorded in verses 3-4 quotes and/or alludes to both Exodus 15:11 & Deut. 32:4. So both “songs” may be in view.
- The Song of the Lamb probably refers to the chorus in Revelation 5:8-14, but it also parallels the Song of Moses, i.e. both songs sing about God’s redemptive acts. Moses was the leader in the 1st Exodus, and Jesus was the leader in the new Exodus (Col. 1:13-14).

The Chorus

- “Great and marvelous are Your works...” (Ps. 111:3; 86:9-10)
 - “Deeds” here are probably specifically referencing His exploits in redemption (1 Peter 2:9).
- “Just are true are Your ways” (Deut. 32:4).
 - The judgments that are about to take place are so severe, one may be tempted to question God’s justice. Yet He is always appropriate in judgement.
- “Who shall not fear You?” (Ex. 15:11; Jer. 10:7)
- “All nations will come,” (Zech. 14:16; Mal. 1:11), every knee will bow before the Holy God, because His power, justice, and holiness have been unveiled in these judgments, drawing mankind to worship (*Phil. 2:9-11, which quotes Isaiah 45:23*).
 - Note how this contrasts the worship of the Beast in chapter 13, which he attempted to enforce upon the world.

The vision of the heavenly temple

- The Temple “was opened” resuming the picture alluded to back in 11:19. It is clear that these judgments come directly from the throne room of God, they are at His order.
- The Heavenly Temple is Opened:
 - Remember that the earthly temple was merely a model of Heaven (Heb. 8:5). The word translated here as “temple” is a specific reference to the Holy of Holies.
 - An “opened” temple may allude to the Roman practice of opening the temple of Janus whenever Rome went to war. Or more likely an “open” temple communicates that God is about to do something and reveal Himself (Ezek. 1:1; Mark 1:10; Rev. 4:1).
 - This vision of the heavenly temple would have been an immense encouragement to the 1st century audience, who not only lost the temple in AD 70, but were also forced by the Flavian Dynasty to continue paying the “temple

tax.” This tax was used to build the Jupiter Capitolinus, a huge temple dedicated to Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva. This humiliated and infuriated the Jews, but this vision would encourage them, that the true temple still stands, and the saints have continual access!

- Seven angels come out clothed like priests (Lev. 16:4; Dan. 10:5), because they are functioning as righteous representatives of God as they administer His just retribution.
 - Compare Heb. 1:14 where angels are called “ministering spirits” to the heirs of salvation. Though they are here administering God’s wrath, they still function to vindicate the saints (Rev. 16:4-6). Also compare the words of Christ in Matt. 18:1-11 about vengeance upon the offenders.
- Then appears one of the “living creatures” (4:6; 5:6; 6:1; 7:11; 14:3; 15:7; 19:4), which is probably a reference to the the highest angelic order, cherubim, which surround the throne of God, and serve as intermediaries between God and these lesser angels.
- “Bowls” of wrath are given to the angels by the living creature, because the wrath of God is about to be completely “poured out.”
 - The last reference to “bowls” was in Revelation 5:8, where the bowls are the “prayers of the saints.” John doesn’t want us to miss the connection between prayer and divine retribution!
 - Also compare Isaiah 51:21-23
- The Temple fills with God’s glory, & no one is able to enter until the wrath of God is complete. Exodus 19:18; 40:34-38; 1 Kings 8:10-11; Isaiah 6:4 are all O.T. parallels to the smoke or cloud “filling” the temple.
- The idea is that God has been stirred, or aroused to action. No one is allowed into His immediate presence, thus *the time for intercession has passed!* His mercy upon a wicked earth has been exhausted!

- The bowls are not coming in as prayers like in 5:8, but the bowls are going out as the prayers for vindication are being answered with judgment.
- Compare Psalm 18:8-14 when God rises off His throne and comes to earth to vindicate David and judge David's enemies.
- This scene creates an atmosphere of extreme solemnity.

Compare the message from the O.T. book of Habakkuk

- Habakkuk complains to God because of a supposed lack of justice upon Judah (1:1-4).
- God answers that Judah will fall at the hands of Babylon (1:5-11).
- Habakkuk complains that the Babylonians are worse than Judah (1:12-21).
- God answers that Babylon too will fall (2:1-19).
- The Climactic summary of the book is found in 2:20, *“but the Lord is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.”* He is about to act in judgment!
- *Compare Psalm 46:10, “be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth!”*

The Bowl Judgments (Rev. 16)

Initial observations:

- Severity: Contrast the trumpets and the seals, which were over “a fourth,” or “a third.” The bowl judgments are more extensive, i.e. over all the earth. The word “great” (Greek word *megas*) is used 10 times in chapters 15-16.
- Focus: just like in the seal and trumpet judgments, the bowl judgments target the earth, seas, fresh water, and then the heavenly bodies.

- While the trumpet judgements in many ways also served as a call to repentance, the bowl judgements are merely an outpouring of Divine wrath. For those who took the mark (14:9-11) it is too late.

The Bowl Judgments: Structure

- The three series of 7 judgments have all been structured in the same way.
- The 7 judgements are subdivided into two groups: the first 4, then the last 3.
- As in the other two sets, the bowl judgments will also have 6 judgements, a pause, and then the 7th.
- The 6th judgement facilitates the “pause” as the demons go forth to “gather the nations” to war against God and His anointed.

Parallel to the 10 plagues

- These plagues are strikingly similar to the plagues upon Egypt.
1. The **Purpose** of the Exodus is the same as as the purpose of Revelation (Exodus 29:46 & Revelation 22:1-3).
 2. The **Means** used in the Exodus are the same means of Revelation, i.e. plagues demonstrate the power of God, and humiliate the false gods of earth (Exodus 12:12 & 2 Tim. 3:1-9).
 3. The response of the earth will be the same as the response of Pharaoh, they will harden their hearts!

The voice from the temple

- The cloud, which filled the temple in Rev. 15:8 now speaks. cf. Rev. 11:19.
- This scene is highly reminiscent of Isaiah 66:5-6, where those who oppress the righteous think they do God a service! So God promises to “appear to your joy, and they will be ashamed.” His appearance is foreshadowed by a “voice from the temple.”
- Compare John 16:2

The angels pour out the bowls

- Ancient Jewish thought believed the forces of nature were controlled by the angelic realm. Compare Rev. 7:1 where 4 angels are holding back the 4 winds of earth. Here in Rev. 16:5 one angel is called “the angel of the waters.”
- Ancient Greek thought would immediately see significance in the targets of these judgements, earth, water, fire, and air, seeing how these were considered by the Greeks as the four basic elements of all things.
- The act of “pouring” seems to allude to the Levitical religious practice of offering up a libation. This imagery would communicate that God is glorified even in judgement.

1st Bowl poured out

- Painful, foul, festering, ugly sores. Parallel Ex. 9:8-11.
- Compare Leviticus 13 & the “Plague” of Leprosy, which was viewed as a judgment (i.e. the meaning of the word “plague”). Thus leprosy was seen more as a spiritual matter, and less of a physical condition. Leprosy vividly manifests outwardly what you are inwardly.
- Several O.T. examples confirm this use of leprosy. Miriam (Num. 12 & Deut. 24:8-9), Gehazi (2 Kings 5), Uzziah (2 Chron. 26:19).
- God wants to show the sinful nature of mankind, who will not admit their sin.

2nd & 3rd bowls poured out

- Salt & Fresh water turn to blood, and all sea creatures die. Parallel Ex. 7:17-21; Psalm 78:44; 105:29.
- Compare the deadly “Red Tide” attacks in history. 60 miles of Florida coast was fouled with dead sea life in 1949.
- This would absolutely devastate whatever is left of the world’s fragile economy.
- Without fresh water, the oozing sores of fallen humanity cannot be washed, or cleaned.

- Note how this serves as a poetic reversal of the roles of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16). The wicked, who normally enjoy pleasure in this life while the righteous suffer, now God lets the wicked suffer in this life, with no prospect of future bliss.

The angel of the waters speaks:

- Verses 5-6 state that this is an act of Retribution: “Blood for blood.” This is another occurrence of *lex talionis* (the law of retaliation).
- Compare God’s promise in the song of Moses to vindicate His people (Deut. 32:42-43).
- Compare the history of Israel mentioned in Psalm 106:34-38; Jer. 2:30; Lam. 4:13; Matt. 23:30-37.
- Compare the threat of God upon Israel’s enemies (Is. 49:26; 51:22-23), where God promises the enemies of Israel that they will eat their own flesh and drink their own blood!
- The voice from the altar (v. 7) is probably one in the same as the voices, which we heard in Rev. 6:9-11, & Rev. 8:1-6, crying out for vindication.
- It is interesting to note how this voice from the altar appears amidst all three series of judgments... the seal judgments (Rev. 6:9-11), the trumpet judgments (Rev. 8:1-6), and the bowl judgments (Rev. 16:5-7). God has not forgotten their plight, nor ignored their prayers. He will answer them in due time!

4th bowl poured out

- God turns up the heat, and scorches men with the power of the sun.
- Also consider the consequences of the polar ice caps melting in this severe “global warming!” Water levels rise, coastal regions are destroyed.
- God gives them a foretaste of the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14). Also like the rich man in hell (Luke 16), they have no water to cool the tip of their tongues!

- Remember the words of Jesus (Luke 21:25), and earlier tribulation events (Rev. 6:12; 8:12; 9:2), in which God strikes the heavenly bodies.
- Consider the poetic allusion to the parable of the four soils (Matt. 13:6), that when the sun rises up, the wicked are burned because they have no root.
- Contrast the promise to believers in Rev. 7:16.
- Response of earth is like the response of Pharaoh (Ex. 4:21; 7:3). They are become like the god they worship!
- They refuse to give God the glory that the angelic announcement called for in Rev. 14:7. cf. Josh. 7:19, and what gives God glory!

5th bowl poured out

- Darkness and Numbness: Parallel Exodus 10:21-23. See several O.T. references to “the day of the Lord” as a day of darkness (Joel 2:2; Amos 5:20; Zeph. 1:15).
- Considering the maddening effects of no sunlight. Mental conditions as well as physical defects have been demonstrated to result from a total lack of sunlight.
- The plague upon Egypt recorded in Exodus uses a specific word that references not only physical darkness, but spiritual, oppressive darkness. This is another parallel to the fate the wicked will inherit in “outer darkness” (cf. Matt. 8:12 note).
- Note where this judgment occurs, Throne & Kingdom of the beast. The “Throne” of Satan was mentioned in Rev. 2:13. The Throne of the beast was mentioned in Rev. 13:2. This may be a specific reference to the capitol city of the Antichrist. Babylon? Rome? etc.
- “The Kingdom” must refer to the earth, the entire realm over which Antichrist rules, or at least his capitol city (cf. Rev. 17-18, Babylon).
- Note how this judgment reveals the true nature of his “kingdom” (Col. 1:13; 1 Peter 2:9). Satan may masquerade as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14), but he is the ruler of darkness.

- “They gnawed their tongues” because of pain... most likely, or *in order to have pain*, i.e. to feel something other than numbness.
- Note how this darkness of eyes and numbness to feeling is meant to physically illustrate their spiritual condition (Is. 8:21-22; 2 Cor. 4:4). When one rejects the light that is given, and will not repent (Rev. 16:9), they inherit darkness.

Unrepentant Earth

- “Blasphemed the God of Heaven, because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.”
- Compare wicked king Ahaz (2 Chron. 28:22), which is the historic situation alluded to in Isaiah 8:21-22.
- Also historically true of the nation of Israel (Jer. 5:3).
- True also of wicked king Belshazzar (Dan. 5:22-23).
- Note the Irony: the very thing they blaspheme God for is the very thing intended to bring them to repentance (Amos 4:6-12).

Sixth Bowl: Euphrates Dried Up (Rev. 16:12-16)

Introducing the Euphrates:

- The “Euphrates,” known in the Bible as “the great river,” 1st appears in the Bible as one of the 4 rivers, which proceeded from Eden.
- The headwaters of the Euphrates begin in the mountains of Ararat, and the river winds for 1,740 miles, and empties into the Persian gulf.
- The mighty Euphrates gave rise to the great city of Babylon, and is later associated as either a boundary or a major vein of every great empire of the ancient world (Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, & even the eastern boundary of Rome).
- The Euphrates also formed the boarder to the promised land (Gen. 15:18; Deut. 1:2-8). Revelation 16, the last Biblical reference to this great river where the river is supernaturally dried up by God, also envisions the “opening up” of Israel’s boarder to facilitate the invasion of the Antichrist.

- Ancient Babylon was built in such a way that the Euphrates ran through the city.
- The “drying” of the river Euphrates in the book of Revelation prepares the way for the coming of the “kings of the east.” Yet this act to the Euphrates may be meant to poetically parallel the “diverting” of the Euphrates on Oct. 12, 539 B.C., which led to the first “fall of Babylon,” which fulfilled prophecy (*Read Isaiah 44:21-45:7*).
- Note how this pattern is being repeated, yet reversed. God “diverts” the Euphrates with the 6th bowl, which brings armies *out* of Babylon instead of *into* Babylon. God then brings the fall of Babylon with the 7th bowl.

The Kings of the East

- Approximately 50 different interpretations exist for the “kings of the east,” literally in Greek “*kings of the rising sun*.”
- Biblically, the title “kings of the east” is almost exclusively reserved for Babylon, so here it may refer to the armies of Antichrist, which will be stationed in Babylon.
- Since the 1970’s a popular view among Bible scholars has been to view these kings as China, or a combination of countries from the Far East including Japan, Korea, and India.

Three Unclean Spirits like Frogs

- Note the intended parallel with Exodus 8:2-7 & the plague of frogs.
- Frogs proceeding from the mouth of the Dragon, Beast, and False prophet, is a reference to issuing the command to gather at Megiddo. Their commands are probably carried out by their demonic minions!
- The “kings of earth,” which are gathered refer to the final 7 kings, which remain of the original 10 king world-confederation.
- Frogs were considered “unclean” by Mosaic Law (Lev. 11:10).

- Also note the contrast between this description of these “unclean spirits,” and the common description used of the “Holy” Spirit (Matt. 3:16).
- Note where these demons come from, where they go, and what they are doing. cf. Daniel 10; Isaiah 14; & Ezek. 28.

The Beatitude of Verse 15

- Verse 15 serves as the “pause” between the 6th and 7th judgements, just like the seals and trumpets were structured. In the same fashion as the seals and trumpets, this “pause” is meant to encourage the believers.
- The word from the Lord in verse 15 is similar to the words of Jesus in Matt. 24:42-51. Stay alert! Watch! Remember the letters to Sardis and Laodicea Revelation 3:3-5, 17-18.
- The comfort, which is provided is that witnessing the armies of the world gather against Jerusalem is a tip off that the coming of Christ is near!
- The clothing imagery seems to conjure up a military readiness image. A Roman soldier was never allowed to loosen his belt or take off his uniform while on duty.
- Compare Malachi 3:16-17. Amidst judgement upon God’s enemies, comfort for His people may be found.

Megiddo: Strategic Location over the Jezreel Valley

- Megiddo, mentioned 11 times in the Bible, is a fortified city placed at the intersection of two major highways in ancient Israel, the Via Maris, and the Kings’ Highway.
- The city overlooks the strategic Jezreel Valley.
- It once existed as a Canaanite stronghold (Judges 1:27), but later came under the control of Israel. Due to its strategic location Solomon made it into a fortified chariot city.
 - *The stables of Solomon are believed to have been excavated at this site.*

Megiddo

- This city has a long history, being destroyed and rebuilt over 20 times.
- Its greatest weakness was that its water source was outside the city walls. This weakness was later remedied by an underground tunnel from within the city, to its water source.

Jezreel Valley

- Jezreel = “God sows” is a plain roughly 25 miles long, and 10 miles wide.
- **Economically** strategic because it is considered the bread basket of Israel, even to today. It served as perhaps the singular most important asset in the ancient Israeli agricultural society.
- **Militarily** strategic especially in order to gain the high ground and approach Jerusalem.
- **Politically** strategic throughout Israeli history, because of the previous reasons. The royal city of Jezreel became a summer palace for the northern kings of Israel (1 Kings 18:45-46; 21:1; 2 Kings 8-9).
- “There is no place in the world more suited for war... the most natural battleground on earth.” –*Napoleon Bonaparte*

Biblical Battles on the Plain of Megiddo

- Sisera (Judges 4-5)
- Gideon and the Midianites (Judges 6-8). *The Midianites camped there due to its easy accommodations for 135,000 men.*
- Israel versus the Philistines (1 Sam. 29).
- Pharaoh Shishak and Rehoboam (1 Kings 12).
- Josiah and Pharaoh Necho (2 Kings 23).

Historic Battles on the Plain of Megiddo

- Thutmose of Egypt (1469 B.C.)
- Ramesses of Egypt (1350 B.C.)

- Sargon of Assyria (722 B.C.)
- Sennacherib of Assyria (712 B.C.)
- Omar of the Persians (A.D. 637)
- Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (606 B.C.)
- Antiochus IV (168 B.C.)
- Pompey of Rome (63 B.C.)
- Titus of Rome (A.D. 67)
- The Crusaders (A.D. 909)
- Saladin (A.D. 1187)
- Turks at the Battle of Megiddo (A.D. 1516).
- General Allenby of the British defeated the Turks (A.D. 1918).
- Some Authorities count 200 battles there throughout history.

Gathering at Megiddo

- The plain of Jezreel will serve as a staging ground for the armies of Antichrist.
- “Armageddon will play a similar role that England played in the closing stages of World War II. The allied forces gathered their armies together in England, but that is not where the final battle took place. The final conflict began on the beaches of Normandy, France, on D-Day. Armageddon will also serve as a gathering place, with the battle beginning elsewhere.” - *Arnold Fruchtenbaum*

History as Prophecy

- *The O.T. history in the Jezreel Valley foreshadows the prophecy of Revelation.*
- Remember the sin of Ahab in shedding the blood of Naboth in the Jezreel Valley and the prophecy against him (1 Kings 21:17-24).

- Remember how God allured Ahab into the battle that would claim his life by allowing seducing spirits to work (1 Kings 22).
- Remember the fulfillment of Elijah's prophecy in the lives of Ahab and Jezebel (1 Kings 22:34-38; 2 Kings 9).
- God not only avenged the innocent blood of Naboth upon Ahab, but God also avenged the innocent blood shed by Jehu upon the house of Israel (Hosea 1:4-5).
 - *Fulfilled in 2 Kings 15:8-12 with the end of Jehu's dynasty, & in 2 Kings 17 with the fall of Samaria and the scattering of northern Israel.*
- Yet that is not the end of the story. God promises that He will sow Israel back into the land (Hosea 1:10-11), and take vengeance upon her enemies in the same place (Rev. 16:16).
- The eradication of Ahab's house, the fall of Jehu's dynasty, and the destruction of Samaria exist as some of the largest blood-lettings in Israel's history. These were designed by God to punish Israel, & cleanse her from evil.
- This history serves to foreshadow the largest blood-letting in all of human history, in which God will cleanse the earth of its wicked rulers, who have shed the innocent blood of His children.

The World's Final Conflict: *The Armageddon Campaign*

End Time Conflicts: Which is Which, & Which is When?

- The Bible records a great end time conflict in many passages: Psalm 83; Isaiah 34, 63; Ezekiel 38-39; Dan. 11:40-45; Joel 3:9-17; Zech. 12:1-5; 14:1-3; & Rev. 16:16; 19:19.
- About 8 different views exist as to what these different battles refer to, when they occur, and in what sequence.
- The simplest view (*yet not without inconsistencies*) sees all of these passages as merely different perspectives, all of which refer to the final campaign of Armageddon.
- All other views see a chronology between these different conflicts, yet vary when, why, and in what order they occur.

- **Psalms 83** an Arab/Israeli conflict. *[This may be one in the same as Ezekiel 38-39, or a precursor to that event.]*
- **Ezekiel 38-39** Gog and his allies invade Israel and are defeated supernaturally. *[Some believe this passage concerns Armageddon merely from a different perspective. Other scholars believe this conflict occurs before the 7-year tribulation begins. Others (Vlach included) believe this conflict occurs after the Millennial kingdom due to the reference in Rev. 20:8.]*
- **Daniel 11:40-45** describes military campaigns of the Antichrist, which bring him into the land of Israel. *[This Daniel passage may be one in the same as the gathering at Armageddon (Rev. 16), or it may reference Antichrist's rise to power 3 years earlier, in which he conquered three of the 10 kings (Dan. 7:19-20).]*
- **Isaiah 34:1-7; 63:1-6** Jehovah wars with Edom.
- **Revelation 16** the nations gather at Armageddon for the final conflict of history, which ends with the appearance of Christ (Rev. 19:11).
- **Zechariah 12:1-5; 14:1-3, 12-15 & Joel 3:9-17** an all out attack against Jerusalem, which ends with the appearance of Messiah (Zech. 12:10; 14:3-4).

Where do the Nations Gather?

- The 6th bowl judgement facilitates the gathering of the nations in the valley of Jezreel (Rev. 16:12-16).
 - *Read Joel 3:9-17*
 - *Remember Psalm 2*
- Jezreel seems to serve mainly as a staging area for these massive armies. Yet the slaughter at the return of Christ actually occurs beyond merely the Jezreel Valley (Rev. 14:20 covers 180 miles).

Why do the Nations Gather?

- They are gathering “to make war against Him who sat on the horse, and against His army” (19:19).

- *Remember earlier discussion on an “alien invasion” scenario.*
- The armies of the world gather against Jerusalem, because Jerusalem has become a “burdensome stone for all people” (Zech. 12:3). *In light of this thought, compare Exodus 10:7, as a possible motive for world hatred of Israel.*
- They may be coming because of “spoil” if Ezekiel 38-39 record Armageddon...
- To those who view Dan. 11:40-45 as a record of Armageddon, these national alliances may be coming to oppose Antichrist...
- Whatever the human reason or scenario, ultimately these nations gather because God draws them there (Ezek. 38:4; Zech. 14:2; Rev. 16:16)!
- Remember the parallel from 1 Kings 22:19-23, where God draws Ahab into the battle, which will bring about his downfall.
- Also compare Exodus 14, where Pharaoh is drawn to the destruction of his army.

United Nations Sculpture:

- The bronze sculpture "Let Us Beat Our Swords into Ploughshares," was created by Soviet artist Evgeny Vuchetich, and presented to the United Nations on 4 December 1959 by the Government of the USSR. The sculpture, depicting the figure of a man holding a hammer aloft in one hand and a sword in the other, which he is making into a ploughshare, is meant to symbolize man's desire to put an end to war, and to convert the means of destruction into creative tools for the benefit of mankind. It is located in the North Garden of the United Nations Headquarters.
- **Compare Isaiah 2:2-4 vs. Joel 3:10**

What Happens?

- Zechariah 12:1-3; 13:7-14:3 seem to indicate that the nations gather against Jerusalem before the appearance of Messiah. Revelation 16:16 says they gather at Armageddon.

- *In order to take Jerusalem, one must control the Jezreel Valley, which allows one access to the hill country leading to Jerusalem.*
- Antichrist attacks Jerusalem (Zech. 12:2; 14:2).
- Jerusalem is empowered by God to put up a valiant fight (Zech. 12:1-8), but ultimately falls to a great slaughter (Zech. 13:7-14:2; Mic. 4:11-5:7).
 - 2/3 of Israel is slaughtered (Zech. 13:8), and 1/2 of Jerusalem is captured and plundered (Zech. 14:2).
- Sometime, perhaps even during the Armageddon campaign, the 7th bowl is poured out, and the capitol city of Antichrist is destroyed (*this event is further discussed in Rev. 17-18*).
 - It is interesting to note from Jeremiah 51:31-32 that the king of Babylon may not be there when Babylon falls.
 - Not only was that true historically under the reign of Nabonidus (Dan. 5), but according to Revelation 16, this may also be true under the reign of Antichrist.
- Some of the Antichrist's attacking forces are diverted to attack the remnant "in the wilderness" (cf. Rev. 12:14), [*possibly at Petra*].
- The remnant of the Jewish nation both "in the wilderness," and holed up in Jerusalem will acknowledge their sin, and petition for their Messiah to return (Lev. 26:40-42; Deut. 30:1-4; Jeremiah 3:12-14; Hosea 5:15; Zech. 12:10; 13:9; Matt. 23:37-39).
- Christ will then descend in the clouds of heaven! At the sight of the returned Messiah, the tribes of earth will mourn (Matt. 24:30; Rev. 1:7) as they recognize their pending defeat.
- Christ will 1st defend the remnant in Edom, and destroy the military contingency of Antichrist (cf. Isaiah 34:1-7; 63:1-6).
- From "Edom" (Isaiah 63:1-6) Christ will ride to Jerusalem, and regain the city (Zech. 14:3; Joel 3:9-17), and He will tread the

winepress “outside the city” of Jerusalem (Rev. 14:20), in the “valley of decision” (Joel 3:12-13).

- Christ will then “touch down” upon the mount of Olives (Zech. 14:3-4; Acts 1:11), thereby splitting the mount in two. *As we will discuss next week, the earthquake of Zech. 14 may be one in the same with the 7th bowl.*
- He will then “triumphantly” ride into the city of Jerusalem, through the eastern gate (Matt. 23:39; 24:27), returning the same way He left (Matt. 24:1; Acts 1:11).

Seventh Bowl: The Earth Utterly Shaken

- The occasion for the pouring out of this 7th Bowl *may be* one in the same as the commencement of the Campaign of Armageddon.
- As we will note, the great earthquake spoken of here in Revelation 16, may be the same earthquake mentioned in the prophetic books of Isaiah, Joel, & Zechariah.
- Though the *exact* chronology of many end times events is not entirely clear, recognize that some of these final events *may be* going on simultaneously.
- The Target of this final judgment is “the air.” Compare Ephesians 2:2. The Greek word for “air” in Ephesians 2:2 is the word used by the ancient Greeks to refer to “ether,” or atmosphere. The ancient Greeks viewed the “air” as the abode of demons. Judaism also viewed the atmosphere as the dwelling place of “spirits,” [remember both the Greek & Hebrew words for “spirit” also mean “wind”].
- *Four N.T. passages seem to use this Greek word in that context, and thus may advocate this view (Eph. 2:2; 1 Thess. 4:17; Rev. 9:2; 16:17).*

“It is Done!”

- A great voice from heaven (*probably God*), speaks and declares, “It is Done,” signaling the completion of Divine wrath (cf. Rev. 15:1).

- Compare John 19:30, where the wrath of God was completely poured upon Christ, and the penalty for sin was complete. Here in Revelation the great penalty upon sin is also being completely meted out. *Which would you like to be a part of?*
- Both events are followed by earthquakes (Matt. 27:51 & Rev. 16:18-20).

Voices, Thunders, Lightnings, & a Great Earthquake

- Similar phenomenon has already been seen in the book of Revelation and throughout the Bible as a majestic picture of the building up and unleashing of God's wrath (Rev. 4:5; 6:12; 8:5; 11:13, 19).
- In the O.T. specifically these signs often accompany a Theophany, i.e. a Divine appearance (Ex. 19; Nah. 1; Psalm 18, 29).
- Revelation 16 pictures God taking action. God rises off His throne and descends to earth. God is roaring (cf. Joel 3:16; Nahum 1; Micah 1; Heb. 12:25-29). This scene might be one in the same as Rev. 19:11...

Greatest Earthquake of History

- This mighty earthquake has many appearances in the prophetic books.
- Read Isaiah 24:16-23; Haggai 2:1-9 & Hebrews 12:25-29.
- The extent of this earthquake, ("the cities of the nations fell," & "every island fled away, and the mountains were not found,") *may* correlate to the return of Christ as He touches down on Mount Olivet (Zech. 14:4-10).
- Remember the words of Jesus in Matt. 24:7. This final earthquake is the final "birth pain," which gives birth to the Kingdom!

The Significance of the Earthquake

- The "Great City" was divided into three parts...

- *Most believe this to be a reference to Babylon. The destruction of Babylon will be the topic of the next two chapters in Revelation.*
- *Others believe since Babylon is mentioned later in the verse, that this is a reference to Jerusalem (cf. 11:8).*
- The destruction of the cities of man!
 - The “city,” since Genesis 11, has been a symbol of man’s consolidation & rebellion against God. *[The book of Acts is the only exception to this motif...]*
 - The ultimate city of man, Babylon, finally meets its demise! More on this next time.
- The elevation of the city of God!
 - This earthquake will completely change topography of earth as we know it.
 - Not only will there be no mountains or islands, but Isaiah 2:2 & Zech. 14:10 indicate that the new highest elevation on planet earth after this earthquake will be Mount Zion!
- This earthquake will be the greatest catastrophe in all of history since the flood, and it ought to be viewed as a reversal of the flood.
- According to the prophets, the Millennial kingdom will return to the Eden-like state before the fall of mankind. “The lion will eat straw like an ox, the wolf and the lamb will lie down together” (Isaiah 11, 65, Micah 4).
- The event that shattered the perfection of the original world was not only the fall of man, but also the flood of Noah (2 Peter 3:5-6).
- The topography that you and I know today is a result of the flood. The great earthquake of Revelation 16 will seemingly reverse our topography to be more like Eden.

Great Hail Out of Heaven

- Note how this parallels Exodus 9:23-24, the plague upon Egypt.

- Note also that this is much more severe. Each hail stone weighs a “talent” (approx. 90-135 pounds).
- The heaviest hail ever recorded was in 1986 in Bangladesh at 2.25 pounds. The world-wide destruction resulting from the hail would be catastrophic.
- Several O.T. passages highlight the use of hail as a means of Divine judgement (Job 38:22-23; Isaiah 28:2, 17; Ezekiel 13:11-13; 38:22).

Hail in History

- A violent forty-minute hailstorm bombed Fort Collins, CO, on July 30, 1979 with hail up to [grapefruit](#) size. Two thousand homes and 2500 automobiles were severely damaged, and about 25 people were injured, mainly when hit on the head by the huge stones. A three-month-old baby died of a fractured skull, struck by a large hailstone while being carried by her mother, who was running with her to seek covers.
- July 11, 1990: [Softball](#)-sized hail destroyed roofs and cars, in Denver Colorado causing \$625 million in total damage (\$1.1 billion in damage adjusted to 2013 dollars).
- June 19, 1992: Two batches of severe thunderstorms, occurring within 6 hours of each other, dumped hailstones up to 4.5 in (11 cm) in diameter across Sedgwick, including the city of Wichita, and surrounding counties in south-central Kansas. Over 10,000 homes were damaged. The hail left wheat fields in a near total loss. Estimated property damage totaled \$500 million with crop damage at \$100 million. The thunderstorm episode ranks as one of the worst ever to hit Kansas.
- April 30, 1888 in Northern India one of the deadliest hailstorms of all time killed at least 230 people, and over 1600 sheep and goats, in Uttar Pradesh. The hailstones were reportedly as big as oranges, and in some areas piled up to 2 ft (0.61 m) high. No warning system existed in 1888 and therefore the death toll of this event was exceptionally high.

Parallels Between Beth-Horon and Revelation

- Adoni-Zedek (*Hebrew for “Righteous lord”*) is an evil king upon the throne of Jerusalem, who forms an alliance with the kings of earth, to fight against the people of God.
- As they meet in battle, this false king is defeated with the supernatural occurrences of the sun standing still, and hail falling from heaven to kill God’s enemies.
- The enemies of Israel are then placed “under their feet” (Joshua 10:24).
- *In many ways the book of Revelation is another “conquest” of the land by Joshua, Yeshua. Yet this time it is a universal conquest.*

Great Hail Out of Heaven

- Don't miss the symbolic significance of the hail. Deuteronomy 13:1-11 declares that in ancient Israel one who attempted to lead others astray into **false worship** was to be stoned to death.
- Leviticus 24:10-16 demonstrated that stoning was to be the penalty for **blasphemy**.
- According to Revelation 13:4, 14-15; 16:9, 11 the world will be guilty of *both* blasphemy *and* false worship.
- **Let the punishment fit the crime!**

***Tale of Two Cities:** Babylon (the city of Man) vs. Jerusalem (the city of God) (Rev. 17)*

Summary of History

- *Charles Dickens wrote a famous book known as “A Tale of Two Cities.” This book compared the cities of London and Paris at the end of the 1700’s. At that time London was singing the hymns of John & Charles Wesley, while Paris was following the teachings of Voltaire. London goes on to greatness, while Paris enters the “reign of terror,” in which thousands of frenchmen lost their lives.*
- *The Bible in many ways is a study of the two cities of Babylon and Jerusalem. These cities can serve as a meta-narrative, which ties together both the Bible and History in general.*

Babylon in Revelation

- *The city of “Babylon” gets a lot of ink in the book of Revelation.*
- *Babylon appears 6 times in the book (the number of man...).*
- *Rev. 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21.*
- *The cities of Babylon and Jerusalem are the physical counterpart to the Kingdoms of light and darkness.*

Creation of Babylon & Jerusalem

- *Creation of Babylon (Genesis 11)*
- *Babylon was created in defiance against God, and established false worship, which permeated the rest of the world as the nations were dispersed.*
- *First appearance of Jerusalem (Genesis 14)*
- *In Genesis 12 God creates His own nation, while rejecting the paganized nations of Genesis 10.*
- *Abram obeys God, yet brings his nephew Lot along, who was taken as a prisoner of war amidst a conflict between Canaan and Babylon (don't miss this significant reference to “Shinar”).*
- *Abram rescues Lot, defeats the king of Shinar, and meets the king of Salem.*
- *So within the first 14 chapters of the Bible we see two cities arise, which cannot mix. One is built in rebellion against God most high, while the other is dedicated to worship Him.*

Jerusalem Compromises With Babylon

- *Hezekiah, being flattered by emissaries from Babylon, makes an unwise alliance between Babylon and Jerusalem (2 Kings 20 & 2 Chron. 32).*
- *This event becomes the occasion for the 1st announcement of the Babylonian captivity (2 Kings 20:16-21).*
- *Josiah will later die in battle against Egypt, in order to stop Egypt from aiding Assyria against Babylon in the ancient battle*

of Carchemish (609 B.C.). Josiah did this probably because he felt the need to honor Judah's alliance with Babylon (2 Chron. 35:20-27).

- *Babylon not only makes a poor ally, but they will get you killed!*

Confrontation Between Babylon and Jerusalem

- *Babylon subjugates Jerusalem (supposedly their ally) to vassal status (2 Kings 24:1).*
- *Jerusalem rebels twice, eventually bringing the wrath of Babylon.*
- *Babylon conquers Jerusalem, and takes its inhabitants captive (2 Kings 25).*
- *Jerusalem's "ally" became their overlord. This is always how sin works!*

Confession of the True God to Babylon

- *Daniel and his three friends boldly stand for the true God within the context of proud, pagan Babylon (Dan. 1-4).*
- *God uses Daniel to communicate to Nebuchadnezzar the future, and the fact that Israel's God controls it.*
- *God even must humble proud Nebuchadnezzar with insanity before he recognizes the power of YHWH.*
- *All the while Daniel prays toward Jerusalem in recognition of the true God, and His chosen city.*
- *Yet this ultimately has little effect on proud Babylon.*

Collapse of Babylon

- *Proud Babylon, amidst a drunken feast, praises the gods of gold, silver, brass, iron, wood, and stone. They mock the God of Israel by using His dedicated implements (Dan. 5).*
- *God brings down proud Babylon, fulfilling prophecy (Isaiah 44-45), and humiliating proud Babylon.*

Continuation of Babylon Foreseen

- *The prophet Zechariah, who prophesies after the return from the Babylonian captivity, foretells of a time when Babylon will resurface as both a religious & economic center of world politics (Zech. 5).*

Re-Consolidation of Babylonian World Power

- *Revelation 17-18 picks up where the O.T. left off, and further describes the prophecy of Zechariah 5.*
- *The center of world politics, economics, and religion will once again be centered at Babylon.*
- *Note many scholars take this figuratively as “the spirit of Babylon,” while others take this literally as “the city of Babylon.”*

What happened to Babylon?

- *Though Babylon was no longer a leader among the cities of the world, it never ceased to exist. During the Persian, Greek, and later Roman empire, the city continued to be inhabited, even on into N.T. times (1 Peter 5:13).*
- *Babylon remained relatively obscure throughout modern history until the 1980’s when Saddam Hussein began rebuilding its ancient ruins for tourism, and national pride reasons.*

Historic Tyrants

- *The famous Muslim warrior Saladin, took control of Jerusalem in A.D. 1187. He was the first muslim to unite multiple muslim states into a fighting force, and his taking of Jerusalem was the catalyst for the 3rd crusade, where Richard the lionhearted came to retake Jerusalem. This is the background for Robin Hood.*
- *Saladin was born in the small village of Tikrit, along the Tigris river. This is the same village where Saddam Hussein was born in 1934!*

Saddam’s Dream

- *Saddam was like a 2nd Saladin. Saddam's hero was Nebuchadnezzar. A booklet published by the Iraqis intentionally compared Saddam with Hammurabi and Nebuchadnezzar.*
- *Saddam was a member of the Ba'ath party, which maintained the goal of uniting all Arabs into an Islamic socialist nation.*
- *When Saddam seized power he began an Iraqi renaissance in an attempt to unite the Islamic states. His most successful tactic to unite Muslims was to provoke Israel. The only thing Muslims will fight quicker than each other is a Jew.*
- *Saddam was quoted in 1979 as saying that since Nebuchadnezzar bound Jews, that this remained an Iraqi responsibility.*

The Final City? Babylon? or Rome? or Elsewhere?

- *The multi-metallic image of Daniel 2 has long given commentators the idea that the final end times government will be a revived Roman empire.*
- *This view is largely due to the fact that the ten toes come from the two legs of iron.*
- *Also that the modern nations of Europe inherited the power of ancient Rome, and a reunion of these nations may constitute a "revived Rome."*
- *Yet the explicit reference to "Babylon" in the book of Revelation seem to clearly imply that the final locus of power will be in Iraq.*

Could it be Both? (cf. notes by Joel Richardson for Mecca)

- *Some scholars view these two ideas as complimentary, not opposing.*
- *These scholars conjecture that a revived Rome will be the political figure-head of the end times, while an Iraqi led Arab coalition may be an oil based consolidation of the world economy. This was one goal of Saddam Hussein both in the Iran-Iraq war, and his invasion of Kuwait.*
- *Ultimately, we will see!*

Catastrophe of Babylon & the Triumph of Jerusalem

- **Revelation 14:8; 16:19; 18:2; 19:2** describe the final fall of the world-wide Babylonian empire,
- **Revelation 21** describes the New Jerusalem as descending out of heaven in ultimate triumph over the evil city of man.
- *You are born a citizen of Babylon. Its humanistic dream is for Bab-el (the gate of god), but it only achieves babel (confusion).*
- *One is naturally born a citizen of Babylon, one must be re-born to be a citizen of heaven (John 3).*

Citizenship

- *In **Galatians 4** Paul teaches us that we are citizens of this Jerusalem above, if we are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.*
- **Hebrews 12:28** announces that we who are in Christ are part of a “kingdom which cannot be moved!”
- **Philippians 1:27** teaches that if we are citizens of that kingdom, we ought live its ideals here on earth.
- *Will you enter the celestial city?*

The Great Whore: Revelation 17:1-6

“One of the seven angels”

- Probably the 7th angel from (Rev. 16:17-21). Chapter 17 is an expansion on the 7th bowl judgment.

“The Great Whore that Sits upon Many Waters...”

- *Chapter 17 presents to us some powerful images of world apostasy and false religion.*
- *The Whore is the great city (v.18). - Perhaps located in literal Babylon, but nonetheless she represents the totality of world-wide false religion.*
- *The Many Waters are the nations ruled by her (v. 15). - To “sit” has the idea of authority over; i.e. to rule. This end times world religion will have sway and authority over the whole earth.*

Her Fornication

- *“**Fornication**” is used throughout the scripture as an idiom for idolatry, or false religion (Ex. 34:16; Lev. 17:7; Hosea 1-3; Nahum 3:1, 4; Isaiah 1:21; 23:15-17).*
- *The kings and inhabitants of earth have “committed fornication” with the great whore, that is, they have bought into the world-wide, ecumenical, religious system of the end times (Jer. 51:7).*
- *Contrast this with the “adultery” of Israel, who is often viewed as the wife of Jehovah (Ezek. 16 & 23). Here the nations commit fornication, but not adultery, because they were not in a relationship with Jehovah to begin with.*
- *The New Jerusalem and her inhabitants are called the “bride” (Rev. 21:2)!*

She Rides upon a Scarlet Colored Beast

- *The “beast” is one in the same as the beast of Revelation 13:1-10, namely, the final world-wide kingdom headed by the Antichrist.*
- *Similar to the description in 13:5-6 this “beast” is full of names (titles) of blasphemy (Dan. 7:25; 11:36).*
- *Verse 16 reports that the beast will turn and destroy the harlot. This probably references when the Antichrist will exalt himself above all that is called God, calling himself God (2 Thess. 2:4).*
- *This world-wide religion will initially serve a purpose for the Antichrist in uniting the world, yet he will ultimately turn on it, enforcing the worship of himself (13:11-14).*
- *Some see here an allusion to the legend of Europa, a woman on a beast, and believe it points to the modern European Union???*

Her Luxury

- *“The woman is arrayed in purple...”*
- *Purple was highly valued in the ancient world. 12,000 murex snails were required to produce 2 grams of purple dye. The*

wealthy Phoenician empire was built upon trading purple dye. Phoenicia is a Greek word that means, “the land of purple.”

- *During Roman times this purple dye was valued at 15-20 times the value of gold. Hence purple became the color of royalty, and the wealthy. The original audience would have viewed purple as synonymous with Rome.*
- *Note how this contrasts the linen white and clean, with which the saints are arrayed (19:14). **False religion CANNOT provide genuine righteousness!***

Her Success

- *“Decked with gold and precious stones and pearls...”*
- *The world-wide economic value of Babylon will be further explored in chapter 18.*
- *The point of this passage, however, is that this harlot has successfully plied her trade, and has become very wealthy. False religion can be lucrative, but only temporarily, not eternally.*

Her Depravity

- *A cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication (v. 4).*
- *The false worship of the Antichrist in the end days, like all false religions before it, ultimately culminate in gross immorality.*
- *Drunk with the blood of the saints (v. 6).*
- *The other mark of false religion is its inherent hatred and persecution of genuine Christianity.*

Pictured by Ancient Rome

- *The original readers undoubtedly read these descriptions and thought of Rome, which at that time was the center of world religion and economics, and also responsible for Christian persecution.*
- *Roman imperial worship is a historic example of the absolute power of a religious-political union, and its abuses. The state of*

Rome was often personified by the goddess “Roma” who was sometimes pictured as a woman seated on seven hills, with waters all around...

- *Further, the licentious religious practices of Rome give a historic foreshadowing of this end time religion. A secret name used by pagan priests to refer to Rome was Amor, which is the word for “love.” This title alludes to the licentious Roman worship. Yet the word Amor is also the name Roma spelled backwards.*
- *Roman rulers also loved using “blasphemous” titles such as “son of God,” or “divine savior.”*

Continued by the Roman Catholic Church?

- *Several facets of this vision have lead many scholars throughout history to assume a description here of the Roman Catholic Church. Some conclude that Catholicism will be the ultimate world-wide church of the end-times.*
- *Arrayed in purple...*
- *Cup in her hand (alluding to Eucharist) ...*
- *Drunk with blood of saints (millions of true Christians slaughtered by Catholicism throughout history)...*
- *Riding the Beast, (Political and Spiritual union throughout history)*
- *Gold, pearls, & precious stones, (extreme wealth of the Roman Catholic Church)...*
- *The blasphemous use of divine titles...*
- *The Catholic church is currently a world leader in the modern ecumenical effort...*

The Great Mystery

- *The great “mystery,” which the Bible reveals about false religion is that Babylon is the “mother” of all harlotry, that is, all false religions are ultimately of the same Satanic source.*

- *Every false idea and spiritual abomination existent in the world today traces its origin back to Babel.*
- *Jeremiah 44 & Ezekiel 8:14 give evidence that ancient Judah had been infected with forms of Babylonian worship, which was one reason God promised judgement against them.*
- *Genesis 11 records the making of a tower, the top of which was to be “of heaven.”*
- *Most ziggurats, some of which still exist today, from that part of the world have the zodiac emblazoned at the top.*
- *The 12 constellations were recognized as gods and goddesses, who were worshiped often times by cult prostitution, and other occult practices.*
- *Forms of this original pagan religion have been found in nearly ever culture around the world from the Middle East, Egypt, Latin America, to the Germanic tribes of Europe and beyond.*
- *These religions are known to many as “the Mystery Babylonian Religions.”*

False Religion Mocks the Glory of God & Will Meet His Wrath

- *False religion and the abuses upon society that they create bring total disgust to the Christian.*
- *How much more do you think this infuriates God? God is disgusted at false religions, which all inherently seek to deny Him His position, power, and prominence.*
- *Isaiah 42:8, God works for His own glory. False religions not only ignore that glory, but also steal from that glory!*

The One Worldwide Outcast

- *According to sources quoted in an article by “prophecynewswatch.com” an estimated 27,000 Christians were killed for their faith in 2016.*
- *Other sources quoted by a Fox News report estimated 90,000 Christian martyrs last year.*

- <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2017/01/06/christians-most-persecuted-group-in-world-for-second-year-study.html>
- *The most oppressive country in the world toward Christians is North Korea, followed by Somalia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sudan, Syria, Iraq, Iran, and Yemen.*
- *Every religion hates Christianity. Many religions can “get-along” and have even joined the Pope in a worldwide ecumenical effort, including Islam. Yet genuine Evangelical Christianity is the hated target of every other religion.*
- *The Tribulation period will be just like ancient Rome, which accepted every religion, yet persecuted Christianity because of its exclusive claims to one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism (Eph. 4). Yet note that this universal rejection unintentionally authenticates Christianity!*
- *Note the intentional word-play, the harlot bears a “name” in verse 5, while hating the one with the “name” on His thigh (19:12-13), & persecuting those who bear the true name of Christ (3:12). Do you name the name? Do you proclaim the name?*

Mystery Babylon: (Richardson)

- Isaiah 21:1–10 parallels Isaiah 13 and Revelation 17-18. These verses may find fulfillment in 539 BC, (cf. Daniel 5), with Babylon's fall to Cyrus the great (cf. "Elam & Media" v. 2).
- Perhaps these verses find fulfillment in 702 BC with Sennacherib's final defeat of Meradoch-baladan, monarch of Babylon.
- Ultimately, however, these words are fulfilled in the fall of Mystery Babylon in Revelation 17-18.
- Scholars have long debated as to the identity of Mystery Babylon. Suggestions range from literal Babylon, to Rome, to New York, to L.A., to Mecca, or a symbolic way of referring to the coming world wide religion.

- Some believe that Mecca is the "Mystery Babylon" of Revelation 17-18, and use this passage as primary support.
 - They note that Mecca sits in a desert by the Sea, and also serves as a world-class shipping lane.
 - If one reads Isaiah 13-14, 21, & Rev. 17-18 literally, they describe specific criteria that helps one identify the end times "Babylon."
1. Mystery Babylon will be a real city (Rev. 17:18; 18:10, 16, 18, 19, 21)
 2. City located in a desert by a sea, with a strategic shipping port (Rev. 17:3; 18:17-19; Is. 21:1)
 3. A consumer city, not a producer (Rev. 18:11-13)
 4. A city steeped in idolatry and religious fanaticism (Rev. 17:2-6)
 5. which will lead to the killing of Jews and Christians (Rev. 17:6; 18:20, 24)
 6. Mystery Babylon will wallow in excessive luxury (Rev. 17:4; 18:7, 14, 17)
 7. The city will possibly possess royalty (Rev. 17:4).
- What modern city best fits these descriptions?

The Meaning of the Woman and the Beast

John marvels at the vision (v. 7)

- The reason that John marveled is not given, however, it may be due to the world-wide religious influence of the beast described in chapter 13, with now the new vision of the great harlot.
- Perhaps John did not understand the relationship between the woman and the beast, which she rode.
- So the angel takes the time to explain.

Structure of the Passage

- V. 7 “*I will tell you the mystery of the woman, and the beast that carries her...*”
- V. 8-14 form a digression, which speaks of the beast.
- V. 15-18 return to the topic of the woman, and her destruction.

The woman rides the beast

- We discussed the woman last week. She is identified as the Great Harlot, that is, the source of all idolatry and false religion.
- She rides the beast. This means that the beast supports her, that is, there is a state run, world wide religion in the end times.

The waters upon which she sits are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues (v. 15)

- The final world wide kingdom of Antichrist, its 10 kings, and the great world-wide religion will govern all the inhabitants of earth.
- The one world religion will be a political tool for the Antichrist, to unite the earth. Ethnicity, Geography, Political ambitions are all natural divisions which separate the world. The only way to unite the world will be with something above the natural, that is, the supernatural.

The ten kings & the beast devour the great harlot (v. 16-18)

- The woman is the “great city” (Babylon), which rules over the kings of the earth.
- The 10 kings & the beast will turn and devour the woman. This most likely occurs at the Abomination of Desolation (2 Thess. 2:4), where Antichrist declares himself God, & enforces world wide worship of himself.

The Beast (v. 8)

- Remember that “the Beast” can refer to the final world kingdom as in Daniel 7.

- “The Beast” may also double as a reference to the individual who rules this kingdom, namely, the Antichrist.

The origin and destiny of the beast (v. 8)

- The Beast is a cheap imitation of He who was, and is, and is to come (Rev. 1:4).
- The Beast was, is not, then is again. Depending on how you interpret the word “beast,” this phrase may refer to...
 - The resurrection of a previous world empire.
 - The resurrection of the individual who leads that empire.
- Rev. 13:3 might indicate an assassination attempt made upon the Antichrist, which facilitates a mock resurrection, which wows the world, and brings them to his feet in worship.
- The origin of the beast is described as from the “abyss,” i.e. the realm which confines demons. Remember our study on the Abyss from chap. 9. The Antichrist will be Satanically empowered (13:4).
- The destiny of this beast is “perdition,” i.e. the eternal destruction recorded in 19:20 & 20:10. Just after a reference to his rise to power, we seen a reference to his eternal demise (for other uses of the word “perdition” also see John 17:12; 2 Thess. 2:3; 2 Peter 3:7).

The world will follow the beast in awe (v. 8)

- The inhabitants of the world will marvel after the beast...
- 17:8 reiterates what has already been stated at length back in 13:3-15.
- *If* 13:3 describes a mock resurrection, then this may be the event, which takes the Antichrist from being a mere celebrity, to being perceived as divine!
- Or the world may marvel at the fact that this world ruler can resurrect an empire that has not existed for centuries.

The mind which has wisdom

- Verse 9 begins with a phrase, which signals a difficult passage ahead.
- What is coming in verses 9-12 requires a mind with understanding, and a readiness to learn.
- Essentially this phrase says, “listen up, this is where it gets complicated!”
- Compare 13:18 & Daniel 12:4, 8-10, which may even indicate that these verses won’t be fully understood until when they unfold.

The seven heads are seven mountains... & there are seven kings (v. 9-10)

Two Primary views exist, which attempt to interpret these phrases. The first primary view sees v. 9-10 as a description of a revived Rome.

- Roman coinage and literature is replete with references to the “city of 7 hills...” Capitoline, Aventine, Caelian, Esquiline, Quirinal, Viminal, and Palantine.
- The 7 Kings represent either 7 Roman emperors 5 have fallen, 1 currently reigning, and 1 more to come, *or better*, 7 stages of the governmental system of Rome beginning with the Etruscan kings, & culminating with the revived empire.
- The second primary view sees the “7 hills” of verse 9 as synonymous with the “7 kings” of verse 10.
- “Hills,” or mountains can be used throughout the Scriptures to refer to governments (Ps. 30:7; 68:15-16; Is. 2:2; 41:15; Dan. 2:35; Hab. 3:6; Zech. 4:7).
- The 7 hills/kings would be the 7 great world empires of history, which all arose to power after the Tower of Babel, 5 of which were past when John wrote, 1 still existed, and 1 remained future.
- Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, & the Final kingdom.

The eighth kingdom (v. 11)

- If we are correct in viewing the 7th kingdom as the final world rule of Antichrist, then what is the 8th?
- The 8th is “of the 7th.” Both the 7th & 8th kingdoms are the kingdoms of Antichrist in two different stages.
- *The 1st stage* will be in the first 3 1/2 years of the tribulation period when Antichrist rules over the ten regions of a unified world system.
- *The 2nd stage* is the final 42 months (13:5) when the Antichrist has absolute power over the whole earth and declares himself God.
- While the other kingdoms “fall” this final kingdom will not. The end of this kingdom is “perdition!”
- Remember the vision of Daniel 7:9-14, when this kingdom comes to its end supernaturally by the hand of God.

The ten horns are kings (v. 12-13)

- The “10 kings” refer to the rulers over the 10 nation confederacy, which will be contemporary with the Antichrist (Rev. 13:1; Dan. 7:20, 24).
- Remember our discussion from chapter 13, that the final world kingdom of Antichrist will be composed of 10 regions.
- These kings will be completely devoted to the beast, and will have authority with the beast “for one hour,” i.e. a short period of time.

10 Recommended global districts

- Founded in 1968 in Rome, this organization identifies its purpose as, “a group of world citizens, sharing a common concern for the future of humanity.”
- It consists of current and former heads of state, UN bureaucrats, high-level politicians and government officials, diplomats,

scientists, economists and business leaders from around the globe.

- The club states that its mission is "to act as a global catalyst for change through the identification and analysis of the crucial problems facing humanity and the communication of such problems to the most important public and private decision makers as well as to the general public."
- The club published in 1972 what has become the most influential work on environmentalism in existence, *Limits to Growth*.
- **One of their more elaborate plans includes breaking the world into ten regions in order to help sustain economic growth.**

These kings make war with the Lamb (v. 14)

- These 10 kings, which together with the Antichrist make up the 8th, or final, world kingdom will be those which make war with the Lamb (16:14-16).
- These will be the kings present at the return of Christ in Revelation 19 (see also Psalm 2).
- Yet the Lamb will overcome them... BECAUSE He is the King of kings, & Lord of lords!

God is fulfilling His will (v. 17)

- Lets take particular note of v. 17 before we end our study.
- *"Who has declared this from ancient time? Who has told it from that time? Have not I the LORD? There is no God else beside me; a just God and a Savior; there is none else beside me."*
Isaiah 44:21
- **GOD IS IN SOVEREIGN CONTROL OF HISTORY. HE PROPHESED WHAT WOULD HAPPEN AND ENSURES THAT IT WILL.**
- *Read 1 Timothy 6:11-16; "fight the good fight," because our end is secure! Eschatology impacts sanctification!*

The Fall of Babylon the Great (Rev. 18)

Flow of the Chapter

1. Angels Issue Two Announcements (Vv. 1-8)
2. Kings and Merchants of Earth Mourn (Vv. 9-20)
3. Heaven Rejoices (Vv. 21-24)

Angelic Announcements

- Two angelic announcements make up the first 8 verses of the chapter.
- First, an angel announces the fall of Babylon in Verses 1-3.
- Secondly, another angel issues a warning to “come out” of Babylon in Verses 4-8.

“Another Angel”

- Verse 1 reports “another angel” descends, i.e. a different angel than the one in chapter 17.
- While chapter 17 will be fulfilled half way through the Tribulation, chapter 18 records the destruction of Babylon at the end of the Tribulation.
- The destruction of Babylon in chapter 18 is initiated by the 7th bowl judgement (16:17-21).

The Angel Lightens the Earth

- As the Angel descends, the earth is “lightened” with his glory.
- Just as Moses glowed in the aftermath of being in the presence of God (Ex. 34), so this angel glows.
- The plague of darkness (Rev. 16:10-11) may still be in effect at this point.
- Note the bright “glory” of this angel, and how this must be dwarfed by the glorious appearance of Christ in chapter 19 (note Isaiah 30:26).

“Babylon is Fallen”

- The angelic announcement of verse 2 reminds us of 14:8, which was probably given during the middle of the tribulation.
- These two announcements may be given by the same angel.
- The announcement in chapter 18 is probably given just before the 7th bowl is poured out.
- So complete will be her fall that she will become “haunted” by demons, and scavengers.
- Several passages in the O.T. harness this image to communicate the idea of absolute desolation, and the absence of any human inhabitants (Isaiah 13:20-22; 14:23; 34:14; Jer. 9:11; 19:3, 8; Lam. 5:18; Zeph. 2:13-14).
- Note reference to “Satyrs,” which is probably a reference to demons, are also present in Greek mythology as half man, half beast. This may be another Biblical allusion to the idea of corrupting not only the human race, but also the animal kingdom in Gen. 6.
- The reason for Babylon’s destruction is found in her moral depravity and greed.
- Babylon has intoxicated the whole world with false religion (Hosea 4:10; Jer. 3:2) and materialistic luxury.
- Her evil influence upon the world must be judged.

The Fall of Babylon in O.T. Prophecy: Isaiah 13-14 and Jeremiah 50-51

- Many scholars have long assumed the fall of Babylon to the Persians in 539 BC was the fulfillment of Isaiah 13-14 and Jeremiah 50-51.
- Upon closer examination, however, several parts of these prophecies were not fulfilled literally in the fall of Babylon at that time.
- Many modern scholars, therefore, are beginning to believe that a future “fall of Babylon” may occur.
- “Babylon, indeed, will be permanently destroyed, as recorded in the very next chapter (18:21), but this has not happened yet. The

prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah also refer to this future destruction, not merely to Babylon's present-day condition, as is evident from the following considerations, among others: (1) The destruction will take place in the time that the stars and sun are darkened (Is. 13:1, 9, 10). (2) The city will become as desolate as Sodom and Gomorrah, burned completely, with no remains whatever (Is. 13:19; Jer. 50:40). (3) It shall become desolate forever, with neither man nor beast entering it any more (Is. 13:20; Jer. 51:62). (4) It will be a time of judgment not only for Babylon, but for all nations (Is. 13:11-3; Jer. 51:49). (5) Its destruction will be followed by universal rest and peace (Is. 14:7-8). (6) Its destruction is directly associated also with the casting of Lucifer into Sheol (Is. 14:12-15). (7) Babylon's stones will never be used in future construction elsewhere, whereas the present-day ruins of Babylon have been frequently plundered and reused in later constructions (Jer. 51:26)." (Henry Morris)

Call to Escape the Coming Destruction (Vv. 4-8)

- Another angel issues a warning in verse 4.
- This warning is an allusion to Isaiah 48:20; 52:11; Jeremiah 51:9, 45, all of which called Israel out from evil Babylon.
- "Come out," i.e. separate so that you are not partakers with her in her sins nor her plagues. Compare Lot in Genesis 19.
- In 2 Cor. 6:14 Paul issues this same warning to the present day believer to stay separate from this evil world. Also compare the call in Pilgrim's Progress to withdraw from "Vanity Fair."

Her Sins have Reached unto Heaven

- The greek verb "have reached" literally means, "to glue together," and it graphically communicates the picture of brick building.
- This is a not-so-subtle allusion to the Tower of Babel.
- Babylon has built her sins so high that God must take action.
- Compare Genesis 15:18 & Jonah 1:2.

"Double" for Her Sins

- The time for judgment upon Babylon has finally come, and it will be severe!
- To repay “double” is not merely the *lex talionis*, which states “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,” but paying “double” is reminiscent of the penalty for a thief (Ex. 22:4,7,9).
- This is a profound way to emphasize the evil of Babylon in how she treated others with extortion and tyranny.
- Now Babylon has finally earned the wrath of a holy God, who views her as a thief that not only robs the world, but also robs Him of His glory!

“Torment & Sorrow Give Her”

- God decides to repay Babylon with torment and sorrow, which corresponds to the amount of luxury and glory that she has enjoyed.
- Remember James 5:1-6 where the rich oppress the poor, and merely fatten themselves for the day of judgement.
- God revels in bringing down the proud (Isaiah 3:16-17; Prov. 29:23).

“I Sit a Queen”

- In her arrogance Babylon announces that she alone rules the world.
- In fact this quote comes from Isaiah 47:7-8 where proud Babylon boasts over the fact that she has never fallen, and she has never been widowed, which is a reference to military preeminence.
- She believes her resources to be inexhaustible and her security to be never ending.
- Babylon blasphemously sees her rule as “Queen” to rival even the sovereignty of God.

Therefore, Her Judgement Comes in One Day

- God revels in humbling the proud (Prov. 29:23; Luke 14:11).

- Particularly when it comes to Babylon, God has humbled it before, and will bring it down once again (Dan. 5:30).
- She claims to be “Queen,” but God is “Judge,” and He has no rivals.
- Therefore, just as with Egypt of old, God will humiliate proud Babylon in order to demonstrate His own greatness and supremacy (Ex. 9:16).
- Even the mightiest of nations, “are as nothing before Him...” “they are counted as dust on the scales” (Is. 40:15-17).

Genre of a Funeral Dirge or Lament

- A “lament” is a common genre especially in the writings from the ancient world.
- Ancient Near Eastern culture was very elaborate in their mourning rituals, one of which included the writing of a poem or a song to mourn the fall of someone or something.
- The entire book of Lamentations is written in this genre.
- O.T. Prophets would often write a funeral dirge about a city even before its fall (Is. 23 & Ezek. 27). This was intended to declare the certainty of its coming doom.

The Earth Mourns (v. 9-19)

- This text unfolds in three stages:
- Kings of Earth Mourn (v. 9-10).
- Merchants of Earth Mourn (v. 11-16).
- Ship Captains Mourn (v. 17-19).
- Each of the three choruses in this lament song will unfold in a similar fashion:
- The mourner is identified...
- The reason for their mourning is given...
- They express awe at the fall of the tremendous city Babylon...

- They stand “afar off” out of fear that they will partake in the torment of the city...
- All three mourners emphasize the suddenness of Babylon’s fall, i.e. “one hour.”

Kings Mourn (v. 9-10)

- Remember the world-wide common market that will be enforced by Antichrist (Rev. 13).
- The kings of earth who have committed fornication with her will partake of her luxury & mourn her fall (v. 9).
- These kings who view her destruction will stand “afar off” fearing they too will be tormented.

The Merchants Mourn (v. 11-16)

- After announcing the mourning of the merchants, these verses state the many commodities available in luxurious Babylon.
- This list is very similar to what is found in Ezekiel 27, and is historically illustrated by Rome.
- Emperor Vitellius ruled for only 1 year, and is said to have spent the equivalent of \$20 million on food.

The Shipmasters Mourn (v. 17-19)

- *The captains of the ships, which brought the commodities to Babylon join in the mournful chorus.*
- *They “cast dust on their heads” as a classic sign of mourning in the ancient world.*

The Luxury & Downfall of an Historic Empire Foreshadows the Coming World Empire

The Luxury of Ancient Phoenicia

- Revelation 18 is highly reminiscent of Ezekiel 27 where the wealth and glory of Tyre is elaborated, followed by a prophecy of its fall.

- Phoenicia was an ancient maritime nation mentioned often in the pages of the O.T.
- The wealthy Phoenician empire was built upon trading purple dye. Phoenicia is a Greek word that means, “the land of purple.”
- Purple was highly valued in the ancient world. 12,000 murex snails were required to produce 2 grams of purple dye. During Roman times this purple dye was valued at 15-20 times the value of gold. Hence purple became the color of royalty, and the wealthy.

The Fall of Tyre: *Ezekiel 26:1-14*

- The prophesy of Ezekiel 26 dates to 586 B.C. while the city was under siege by the Babylonians.
- God announces judgment upon Tyre because of her Antisemitism (26:2). Compare Amos 1:9-10 & Joel 3:3.
- Ezekiel proclaims that “nations” **plural** will come against Tyre.
- *King Nebuchadnezzar conducted a siege of Tyre right after his siege of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.*
- *Jerusalem fell after 30 months, but it took Nebuchadnezzar 13 years to bring down the mainland city of Tyre in 573 BC thus fulfilling Ezekiel 26:7-11.*
- However, the Island fortress of Tyre did not fall to Babylon (*note Ezekiel 29:18 which was stated after the fall of mainland Tyre*).
- Undoubtedly, Tyre boasted itself, even perhaps mocking the prophecy of Ezekiel.

Alexander the Great

- In 332 B.C. Alexander the Great was bent on conquering the world.
- Having given Persia its first two stunning defeats, Alexander began to consolidate the Mediterranean seaboard.
- Tyre, however, resisted Alexander. The Mainland city was largely abandoned, and approx. 40,000 people lived on the island.

- So Alexander mustered the navies of “many nations,” which he had conquered in order to aid him.

Prophecies

- “I... will cause many nation“s” to come up against you” (Ezek. 26:3).
- *Fulfilled when both Babylon, and later Greece and her allies came against Tyre.*
- “They will destroy the walls of Tyre, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock” (Ezk. 26:4)...
- Even more specifically, “they will break down your walls, and destroy your pleasant houses: and they will lay your stones and your timber and your dust in the midst of the water” (Ezek. 26:12).
- *Fulfilled when Alexander used the rubble of the mainland city to build a causeway to the island city.*
- “It will be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea: for I have spoken says the Lord God” (Ezek. 26:5)
- “I will make you like the top of a rock: you will be a place to spread nets upon; you will be built no more” (Ezek. 26:14).
- *Featured to the right is a picture from CNN in 2013. The area around ancient Tyre is known for its fishing. Though a modern city of Tyre exists, it is not on the original sight of the ancient city.*

Heaven Rejoices (v. 20, 24)

- Just like Jerusalem was held responsible for all the blood of the prophets (Matt. 23:34-39), so too God will hold Babylon responsible for all the innocent blood of His people spilt during this final world empire.
- The Prayers of the saints since Revelation 6:9-11 are finally being answered.
- We ought take refuge in the unstoppable justice of God!

A Millstone is Cast into the Sea

- A mighty angel enacts a parable, which parallels Jeremiah 51:63-64.
- This action communicates two main ideas...
- The Violence of Babylon's Fall.
- The Finality of Babylon's Fall, i.e. *it will never rise again*.
- Such vivid language appears elsewhere in the Bible: Exod. 15:5; Neh. 9:11 refer to the Red Sea Crossing. In Matt. 18:6 Christ uses similar words to describe a terrible fate. Also compare how this resembles the "stone" of Daniel 2.

Nations Deceived by Sorcery

- Verse 23 explains one reason that Babylon had such sway over the nations.
- "Sorcery" has the idea of a magic spell.
- Remember Rev. 16:13, the unclean spirits that sway the earth to come to Megiddo.
- Compare Hosea 4:12 & 5:4.

No More Joy or Song

- Ironically, phrases similar to these were used often by O.T. prophets to describe judgment falling upon Judah, or Jerusalem (Is. 24:8, 9. Je. 7:34; 16:9; 25:10; 33:11. Eze. 26:13; Is. 23:8. Eze. 27:24, 25, 33, 34).
- Now this phrase is used against God's enemies. Those who have consistently made Israel suffer loss, now suffer loss themselves.
- These men are the ultimate fulfillment of Mark 8:36. They gained the whole world and lost their own souls!
- Contrast what is occurring in Heaven (Rev. 5:8-14), Joy, Song, and Worship!

The Coming Climax (Rev. 19)

The Hallelujah Chorus (Revelation 19:1-6)

Context & Function

- *Revelation 19:1-10 both summarizes what has already occurred in the book of Revelation, as well as foreshadows what is coming.*
- ***First***, this passages expands 18:20-24, & repeats the major themes from Rev. 11:15-19.
- ***Second***, the invitation to the marriage supper of the Lamb (verses 7-10) functions to foreshadow the return of Christ (19:11-16), and the beginning of the Kingdom (20:1-4).
- *Revelation 19-20 presents seven visions that sum up history before the final state described in Rev. 21-22.*

The Four Hallelujahs

- *Verses 1-6 in many ways is like a miniature study in the Psalms.*
- *Hallelujah is a Hebrew imperative: Hallel- (“to praise”) -u- (“you praise”) -jah- (YHWH).*
- *Hallelujah is a command, “You Praise YHWH!”*
- *The word “hallelujah” occurs more times in the O.T. book of Psalms than all the rest of the Bible combined.*
- *“Hallelujah” first appears in Psalm 104:35 in a similar context to Rev. 19.*

The Book of Psalms

- *The book of Psalms in the O.T. is subdivided into 5 “books.”*
- *Psalms 1-41*
 - *42-72*
 - *73-89*
 - *90-106*
 - *107-150*

- *Each book ends with the doxology, “Blessed be the LORD God of Israel,” or a variation of that phrase.*

Collections Within the Psalter

- *Many smaller “collections” within the book of Psalms have been recognized by most scholarship.*
 - *Psalms of David, or Asaph.*
 - *War Psalms (Ps. 20-21).*
 - *Songs of Ascent (Ps. 120-134).*
 - *Royal Psalms / Enthronement Psalms (Ps. 93-99).*
 - *Egyptian Hallel (Ps. 111-118).*

The Final Hallel

- *Psalms 146-150 consists as the final collection of the Psalter known as the “Final Hallel,” or “the final praises.”*
- *Every Psalm in this final section both begins and ends with the word “hallelujah.”*
- *The word “hallelujah” occurs twice as many times in these 5 Psalms as any other group of 5 Psalms in the book.*

The N.T. “Final Hallel”

- *The word “hallelujah” only appears 4 times in the entire N.T.*
- *All 4 occurrences of this word in the N.T. appear in Revelation 19:1-6.*
- *This paragraph in Revelation serves as the N.T. version of the “Final Hallel.”*
- *The final climactic praises of the Bible, yea, of all of History, occur right here in Revelation 19.*

Handel’s Messiah

- *Composed in 1741 by George Frideric Handel,*

- *Messiah* has become one of the best known and most frequently performed choral works in Western History.
- The work consists of three major parts, which take a little over 2 hours to fully perform:
 - **Part 1** Consists of O.T. Prophecies concerning Redemption, beginning with Isaiah 40:1-3, and listing the major prophecies mostly from Isaiah and Malachi.
 - **Part 2:** Consists of N.T. Passages beginning with John 1:29, “Behold the Lamb of God,” then continuing through the Life, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Messiah, and climaxing with the gospel going to the nations.
 - **Part 3:** Consists of a Hymn celebrating victory over death largely taken from 1 Cor. 15, then climaxing in “Worthy is the Lamb,” taken from Revelation 5.
- The Lyrics consist of 43 O.T. verses, and 30 N.T. verses for a total of 73 verses.
- The Famous “Hallelujah Chorus” is the 7th and final Scene of Part 2, the lyrics of which come from Rev. 11:15; 19:6, 16.

Verse 1

- *A multitude of voices in heaven erupt in praise. This multitude is probably a mixture of angels and saints.*
- *The multitude praises YHWH by ascribing to Him four characteristics.*
 - *Salvation (i.e. victory or triumph)*
 - *Glory (Hebrew word implies weight, or significance. Greek word implies a high opinion of...)*
 - *Honor (i.e. value or costliness)*
 - *Power (i.e. strength or ability)*

Verse 2

- *The cause of Joy in this verse is not the damnation of the wicked (Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11).*
- *Rather, this joyful chorus is sourced in the fact that God triumphs over evil, and that He asserts justice!*
- *God makes no mistakes Deut. 32:4.*
- *He will justly condemn the wicked, while vindicating the righteous.*
- *Genesis 18:25 “shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”*

Verse 3

- *Verse 3 states, “Her smoke rose up for ever and ever.”*
- *Just like Sodom and Gomorrah, which was destroyed by fire from heaven, Babylon will serve as an eternal monument to the power and justice of God.*
- *For the idea of eternal punishment see also Revelation 14:11; 18:9, 18; Isaiah 34:10; Jude 7.*

Verse 4-5

- *This verse informs us that the 24 elders, who surround the throne, and the 4 living creatures now join the chorus of praise.*
- *“Amen;” Let it be, so it is, this is sure!*
- *This scene is highly reminiscent of the throne room scene in Rev. 4-5.*
- *The purpose of this similarity is clear. While Revelation 4-5 was praise in anticipation, Revelation 19:1-6 is praise in culmination.*
- *A voice proceeds from THE THRONE: God? A powerful angel?*
- *The command to “praise our God,” essentially functions as another “hallelujah.”*
- *The command for all things both small and great to praise God is reminiscent of Philippians 2:9-11 & Isaiah 45:23.*

Verse 6

- *The voice of the great multitude sounds like many waters and mighty thunders. These voices chime in probably in response to the command of v. 5.*
- *This multitude may be the same as multitude in Revelation 7, where the delivered saints sing praise to the Lamb.*
- *This verse also shares great similarity to Revelation 11:15-19.*

Compare These Two Hymns

Remember the Historic Context

- Recall that the book of Revelation was written during the reign of Roman emperor Domitian.
- One of Domitian's favorite titles was "Lord and God."
- Also recall the elaborate throne room of Domitian located in the Domus Flavia.

The Domus Flavia

- The Flavian Palace, also known as the Domus Flavia, is part of a vast residential complex of the Roman Emperors on the Palatine Hill in Rome.
- It was completed in 92AD during the reign of Domitian and was built to be very robust and extravagant.
- This Complex was not only immense in size having two courtyards with elaborate fountains, but many of its walls had marble veneer, and its columns were made of Phrygian Marble.
- The poet Statius, a contemporary of Domitian, describes it as follows...
 - "Awesome and vast is the edifice, distinguished not by a hundred columns but by as many as could shoulder the gods and the sky if Atlas were let off. The Thunderer's palace next door gapes at it and the gods rejoice that you are lodged in a like abode [...]: so great extends the structure and the sweep of the far-flung hall, more

expansive than that of an open plain, embracing much enclosed sky and lesser only than its master.”

“The Lord God Omnipotent Reigns!”

- *This phrase serves as another flashback to the Psalter, encouraging the reader.*
- *The Royal, or Enthronement Psalms (Ps. 93-99) all contain or allude to the phrase, “YHWH Reigns!”*
- *These Psalms are strategically located in the Psalter to encourage Israel that in spite of the Babylonian exile, God still sits on His throne.*

Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7-10)

Remember the Context: *Especially note how this passage contrasts 18:21-23.*

Elements of the Passage (v. 7-10)

1. Command to Rejoice (v. 7)
2. Announcement of the Marriage Supper (v. 7)
3. Description of Bride’s Apparel (v. 8)
4. Beatitude concerning the Invitation to the Supper (v. 9)
5. Desire, yet Denial of Worship (v. 10)
6. Worship Directed to the True Object of Worship (v. 10)

A Wedding Feast is a common image in nearly every Culture for Joyful Fellowship.

Wedding Imagery Throughout the Bible

- Old Testament:
 - Prophetic Literature often pictures the final Messianic age as a grand wedding feast (Isaiah 25:6; 54:1-8; 61:10-62:5; Jer. 31:12; Hos. 2:7; 14:7).

- New Testament:
 - Epistles of Paul allude to the church as the Bride of Christ (1 Cor. 11:26; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:32).
 - Book of Revelation alludes to the “Bride,” or “Wife” of Christ (Rev. 19:7; 21:2, 9; 22:17).

Wedding/Messianic Feast Imagery in the Life and Parables of Christ

- Commenting on the Centurion’s Great Faith (Matt. 8:10-12).
- Parable of the Wedding Feast for the King’s Son (Matt. 22:1-14).
- Parable of the 10 Virgins (Matt. 25:1-10).
- At Last Supper, Jesus proclaims He will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom feast (Mark. 15:25).
- In answer to the question, “Lord, are there few who are saved?” (Luke 13:22-30).
- Parable of the great supper, which is given in response to a Pharisee who piously remarks, “Blessed is he who will eat bread in the kingdom of God” (Luke 14:15-24).
- Jesus alludes to the common practice of a Jewish wedding in His promise to return to His own (John 14:1-2).

A Jewish Wedding Pictures the Promises to the Believer

The Bride and Groom Establish a New Home, and Rule it as King & Queen (Rev. 22:5)

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb not only Climaxes the Wedding Imagery of the Bible, but specifically the Book of Revelation

- Revelation 2:4, the Church at Ephesus “left its first love.”
- Revelation 2:10 & 3:11 contain the Promise of the “Crown of Life,” which may include an allusion to a bridal wreath.
- Revelation 14:4-5 describes the sealed 144,000 as “virgins,” which in addition from being literal, probably also alludes to spiritual fidelity.

- Revelation 19:8, 13 Christ arrives in the same white festive robes worn at the wedding feast.
- Revelation 21:2, 9 the Bride of Christ, i.e. the New Jerusalem contains all the redeemed community together (Heb. 12:22-23).
- Revelation 22:17 concludes with this theme as the bride entreats the Lamb to “come quickly.”

The Bride Versus The Harlot

Fine Linen, Clean and White

- Allusion to a righteousness given, not earned (Isaiah 61:10; Rev. 7:14). The bride has been granted this because she has held to the testimony of Jesus (Rev. 19:10).
- Allusion to the Priestly garments in which we serve night and day (Rev. 7:15).
- This garment is promised to overcomers (Rev. 3:4-5).
- Allusion to the purity and fidelity of a bride to her groom (2 Cor. 11:2).
- Robed appropriately for the occasion of a wedding feast (Matt. 22:11-13).
- “Clean” can also be translated, “bright” (Dan. 12:3; Matt. 13:43).
- Contrast “Fine Linen” with “Cobwebs” *Isaiah 59:1-6*

“Blessed are they which are called unto the Marriage Supper of the Lamb”

- Remember the Seven Beatitudes of Revelation: [Rev. 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7 & 14]
- This is the Envied Existence... Eternal Life!
- This time of unprecedented intimacy between Christ, and His followers gives rise to the earnest instruction, “*Write... these are the true sayings of God!*”

Desire, yet Denial of Worship (v. 10)

- Compare Daniel 10, where Daniel is also overcome at the appearance of an heavenly angelic messenger.
- Note the natural human tendency to worship something that awes us (Rev. 22:8-9; Acts 10:25-26). Especially note practice of Angel worship (Col. 2:18).
- The angel stressed his role merely as a fellow-servant (Heb. 1:14), or like a human prophet is merely a messenger.
- One angel who accepted worship got himself into a lot of trouble! Compare 2 Cor. 11:14, angel of light...

“Worship God!” *Worship the Triune God; the Father planned redemption, the Son performed it, and the Spirit applies it (Eph. 1:3-14).*

Compare Hebrews 1

- *As awesome as angels are, they are nothing compared to the true object of worship.*
- *Jesus is all that God is (v. 1-3)*
- *Jesus is worshiped by angels, whose only purpose is to worship God (v. 4-7)*
- *Jesus is called “God,” by the Father (v. 8)*

“The Testimony of Jesus is the spirit of Prophecy”

- This phrase has been variously interpreted. The best two views in my opinion are as follows...
- It may reference the idea that the “essence” of all prophecy is Christ (Luke 24:27; John 5:39).
- Or it may reference the Holy “Spirit,” whose mission is to testify of Christ through human prophets and their writings (John 16:12-14; 1 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Peter 1:21).
- However interpreted, the grand function of the both the Bible, and the Spirit is to “unveil” Christ.

Christ: The Sum of the Bible

- Beginning at Moses, and all the Prophets... all the Scriptures concern Christ (*Luke 24:27*).
- “Search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me” (*John 5:39*).
- Christ is the Climax of God’s Cosmic Plan of Redemption (*Ephesians 1:9-10*).
- Christ is the Grand Subject of all the Prophets (*1 Peter 1:10-12*).
- Major Prophecies of the Coming Messiah
- Genesis 3:15; 2 Samuel 7; Isaiah 7, 9, 11, 53; Daniel 7 & 9; Zechariah 12-14.
- Major Types of the Coming Messiah
- Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Elisha
- Major Shadows of the Coming Messiah
- Wilderness Tabernacle & the Sacrificial System

Christ: The Unifying Theme of the Bible

- The Law Foreshadows the Ministry and Person of Christ.
- History Follows the Footsteps to Christ.
- Poetry Forecasts the Wisdom of Christ.
- Prophecy Foretells of the Suffering and Glory of Christ.
- Gospels Evidence the Life, Death, and Resurrection of Christ.
- Epistles Explain the Purpose, Accomplishments, and Goals of Christ.
- Revelation Exhibits the Triumph of Christ.

He Truly is the Alpha & Omega

- *Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!” (Matt. 17:4-5)*

