



# *A Study of Revelation*

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## *Week Eight – The Seven Bowls of Wrath, Scarlet Woman, & Fall of Babylon (Revelation 16-18)*

### **I. The Seven Bowls of Wrath (Chapter 15:5-16:21)**

The seven angels emerge from the heavenly temple (see Rev. 11:19), because their work is holy as are the judgments they bring. Their clothing is reminiscent of the priestly garments of the Old Testament, and the smoke of God's glory that filled the tabernacle and temple at their dedication (Ex. 40:34-35; 2 Chron. 7:1-4) now fills the heavenly temple, filling it with God's glory and power.

#### ◆ **The First Bowl: Loathsome \_\_\_\_\_ (16:2)**

The "foul and loathsome sore" that came on men reminds us of the \_\_\_\_\_ plague that God sent against Egypt (Exodus 9:8-12; see also Deut. 28:27, 35). Only those who submitted to the beast and rejected the warning of the first angel will experience this judgment (Rev. 14:6-7). Verses 10-11 indicate that the sores do not go away at the end of the first bowl, yet their compounding pain will not cause them to repent.

#### ◆ **The Second Bowl: \_\_\_\_\_ Turn to Blood (16:3)**

The second and third bowls parallel the \_\_\_\_\_ plague on Egypt (Ex. 7:14-25), with the second bowl turning the sea waters into blood. With the blowing of the second trumpet, 1/3 of the seas turned to blood, but with the pouring out of this bowl, the entire system of seas and oceans are polluted with blood.

◆ **The Third Bowl: \_\_\_\_\_ Turn to Blood (16:4-7)**

The third trumpet made 1/3 of the fresh water sources turn bitter as wormwood; but the third bowl judgment will turn all of the fresh waters into blood.

◆ **The Fourth Bowl: Scorching \_\_\_\_\_ (16:8-9)**

In previous judgments, a part of the sun had been dimmed (Rev. 8:12); now, the heat of the sun is intensified. All of life on earth depends on the sun and water. With the heat of the sun unbearable, coupled with no water to drink, the suffering on earth is unimaginable—yet it is still not enough to bring the earth-dwellers to repentance.

◆ **The Fifth Bowl: \_\_\_\_\_ (16:10-11)**

The darkness in this bowl is not worldwide, but limited to the throne and kingdom of the beast. Like the fifth trumpet (Rev. 9:2), this bowl of wrath duplicates Egypt's \_\_\_\_\_ plague (Ex. 10:21-23).

◆ **The Sixth Bowl: Euphrates \_\_\_\_\_ (16:12-16)**

The famous river was mentioned earlier in Revelation with the sixth trumpet (Rev. 9:13ff), when the demonic locusts and deadly horsemen were unleashed. Now, an army from the nations of the world under the control of the Antichrist gathers for the great battle at Armageddon. The drying up of the river will make it possible for the army of the “kings of the East” to cross into Palestine and invade the Holy Land.

◆ ***Where is Armageddon?***

The name Armageddon comes from two Hebrew words, *har Megiddo*, the hill of Megiddo. The word Megiddo means “place of troops” or “place of slaughter”. It is also called the Plain of Esdraelon and the Valley of Jesreel. The area is about 14 miles wide and 20 miles long, forming what Napoleon called “the most natural battlefield of the whole earth.” It was this plain that Barak defeated the armies of Canaan (Judg. 5:19), where Gideon met the Midianites (Judg. 7), and where King Saul lost his life (2 Sam. 31).

- Zechariah 12 & 14 describe this event from Israel’s viewpoint.
- Joel 3:9-21 parallels Zechariah’s references, and verse 19 makes clear that God will punish the Gentiles for the way they have treated the Jews (See also Zeph. 3:8ff; Isa. 24).

◆ **The Seventh Bowl: “\_\_\_\_\_!” (16:17-21)**

Given that the Devil is the “prince and power of the air” (Eph. 2:2), it is fitting that the final bowl has a special affect on his dominion. The immediate result of the seventh bowl is a devastating earthquake that destroys cities and nations.

The “great city” is probably Jerusalem (Rev. 11:8), and Zechariah prophesied an earthquake would change the geographical topography of Jerusalem (Zech. 14:4). The idea here, however, is that Babylon would fall (see Jer. 50-51; Rev. 18).

Added to the earthquake is a hailstorm with hailstones of over 125 pounds! This hailstorm is a reminder of the \_\_\_\_\_ Egyptian plague (Ex. 9:22-26). And just as Pharoah and Egypt did not repent during the time of Moses, neither will the earth-dwellers repent. Instead, they blaspheme God!

The sixth and seventh bowls strategically set the stage for the final events of the Tribulation, culminating with the battle of Armageddon and return of Christ. In these final events, Satan’s entire system of power is systematically dismantled by God: his religious system (the “harlot”; Rev. 17), his political and economic systems (Babylon, Rev. 18), and his military system (the armies, Rev. 19).<sup>1</sup>

## II. **Fall of Satan’s Religious System: The Harlot (Chapter 17)**

Though she has been at work since the beginning of the Tribulation period, the description and role of the harlot is detailed in Revelation 17. As with all of Satan’s paradoxical counterfeits, she stands both similarity and direct contrast to the Church, the pure bride of Christ (Rev. 19:7-8; see also 2 Cor. 11:2). Instead, the harlot is a false religious system who prostitutes herself for personal gain and leads others to abandon the truth. Sadly, in virtually every age there has been a “harlot” of false religion; but these heresies will culminate with the exaltation of the Antichrist as lord over the earth.

◆ ***The Description of the Harlot (1-15)***

One of the angels shows John the harlot. Four times in the chapter the woman is called a “harlot” (vv. 1,5, 15-16), and her sin is called “fornication” (vv. 2, 4). Her wicked influence covers the world, even extending into powerful places (“the kings of the earth”).

- **She is lavished in \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.** She is dressed in expensive garments, decorated in gold and precious stones. She is holding a cup full of the earth's wickedness and idolatry. On her forehead, she wears a special name (see Rev. 13:16; 14:1).
- **She sits on the \_\_\_\_\_ and “\_\_\_\_\_”.** The beast is scarlet and has seven heads and ten horns.
  - *Seven heads represent seven mountains (Rev. 17:9), which is likely \_\_\_\_\_, and the ten horns represent ten \_\_\_\_\_ (Dan. 7:24). All this suggests a newly revived Roman Empire—likely a coalition of ten European nations.*
  - *The scarlet color often symbolizes \_\_\_\_\_ (Rev. 12:3) and \_\_\_\_\_ (Isa. 1:18), but is also associated among the Romans in John's day with \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.*
  - *The “many waters” represent the “peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues” of the world (Rev. 17:15); this is the “sea” of \_\_\_\_\_ out of which the beast (Antichrist) emerges (Rev. 13:1).*
- **She is drunk with the \_\_\_\_\_ of God's saints.** She is the sponsor of the persecution of God's people and the eradication of God's influence on the world.

❖ *The harlot is identified with a city during John's day (“reigns” is present tense in vs. 18). The city is prosperous and powerful, but also corrupt and dangerous. Not only does it have the reputation of polluting the world with heresies, it also persecutes those belonging to the Lord.*

- **She has the name, “Mystery, \_\_\_\_\_ the Great”.**
  - *In the New Testament, a “mystery” is a hidden truth that only the spiritually minded can understand. In this case, the mystery has to do with Babylon, and even John marveled in amazement at the mystery (v. 6-7).*
  - *Idolatry began in Babylon or Babel (“gate of God”) with \_\_\_\_\_ (Gen. 10:8-10). A descendant of Ham, Nimrod is credited as the founder of the first Mesopotamian “kingdom,” a civilization that eventually produced Assyria and Babylon. Although God had ordained government to restrain evil, Nimrod prostituted the concept and established a “kingdom” (the term occurs here for the first time in the Bible, suggesting the beginning of those world systems characterized by idolatry and opposition to the Lord (see Gen.11:1-9). Thus, from the beginning of Nimrod's city in Genesis 10, a wicked anti-God “Babylonian influence” has persisted throughout history, making Babylon not only a harlot, but the “\_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.”*

#### ◆ ***The Death of the Harlot (16-18)***

Despite the codependence, the harlot will be destroyed by the very system that supports her. It is important to note that the beast \_\_\_\_\_ the harlot (vs. 3, 7). During the first 3 ½ years, Satan and the Antichrist will use the apostate religious system to accomplish his own ends—attain world power; but afterwards, Satan will do away with the harlot (vs. 16) and establish his own religious system for the final 3 ½ years. Yet all of this will be the fulfillment of God's design (vs. 17)!

### III. Fall of Satan's Political & Economic Systems: Babylon (Chapter 18-19:10)

In the Old Testament, the ancient city of Babylon was a powerful empire and the symbol of mankind's rebellion against God. In Revelation 17-18, Babylon is not only symbolic of the beast's religious system; it is also representative of his political and economic systems as well. John calls Babylon as "city" at least eight times (Rev. 14:8; 17:18; 18:10, 16, 18-21), but the Old Testament prophets declare that the city itself will not be rebuilt (Isa. 13:19-22; Jer. 51:24-26, 61-64). Some scholars equate Babylon with Rome, often referring to Peter's reference to Babylon in 1 Peter 5:13 as a "code name" for Rome. This is very possible, but it is safer to say that Babylon is at least representative of the demonic systems of the beast during his earthly reign.

#### ◆ *The Declaration of Babylon's Fall (1-8)*

In the wake of the destruction of the city of Satan, at least four voices can be heard.

##### • **The Voice of \_\_\_\_\_ (1-3)**

- *This announcement was anticipated in Revelation 14:8; but it is also referenced in Jeremiah 51-52, where the prophet saw the fall of historical Babylon. Here, however, John sees spiritual Babylon, the world systems under the beast's control.*
- *The phrase, "\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_," not only emphasizes the announcement, but may suggest a dual judgment: the religious system (the "harlot," Rev. 17) and the political/economic system (Rev. 18). This notion is amplified by God's pronouncement that Babylon will receive "double" for her many sins (vs. 6).*

- *God's judgment has come because the Babylonian systems have polluted the whole world. As in the judgment of the harlot, the sin is that of "fornication," or \_\_\_\_\_. The political system has intoxicated kings with pride, and the economic system has intoxicated the merchants with \_\_\_\_\_. On the whole, it has catered to those who were "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God" (2 Tim. 3:4).*

##### • **The Voice of \_\_\_\_\_ (4-8)**

- *The second voice is a call for separation. Paralleling Jeremiah 50:8 and 51:6, 45, the admonition warns that those who embrace the cares of the world (which are the systems of Satan) will also share in their destruction.*
- *The voice gives two reasons for God's people to come out of this diabolical influence:*
  - That they might avoid \_\_\_\_\_ and "share in her sins."
  - That they might be spared the terrible \_\_\_\_\_ He will unleash onto Babylon.
- *God's reasons for the judgment of Babylon are clearly listed:*
  - She seduced the nations of the world with \_\_\_\_\_ (vs. 3).
  - She "glorified" herself with \_\_\_\_\_, seeing herself as a queen who could never be dethroned (vs. 7).

- She worshipped \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_—to live proudly in abundance while others go without.

Because Babylon was characterized by these very traits is why the entire system that governed the world fell in \_\_\_\_\_ short \_\_\_\_\_ (vs. 20).

#### ◆ *The Reaction to Babylon’s Fall (9-20)*

##### • **The Voice of \_\_\_\_\_ (9-19)**

- *These verses detail the elaborate mourning of the \_\_\_\_\_ as they see Babylon go up in smoke and all their wealth destroyed. The image portrayed here is that of a prosperous city that is a vibrant port for many ships. The wealth of the city is a source for many nations and employs many people. Because of this, not only do the merchants lament over the city’s fall (vs. 11), but also the \_\_\_\_\_ of the earth (vs. 9). Business and government are so interconnected at this point that when one goes so does the other.*
- *The word translated “\_\_\_\_\_” (vs. 9, 11) means “a loud lamentation” in contrast to a silent weeping. What is especially noteworthy is who they are weeping for. They are not mourning for the city but over her, “for no one buys their merchandise anymore” (vs. 11). They are not sorrowful for the city but for \_\_\_\_\_! Even their employees are found weeping (vs. 17-18).*
- *John gave an inventory of the commodities that brought such wealth but are now lost: gold, silver, and precious stones; fine linens and expensive wood; imported spices and foods. Perhaps the most disturbing on the list is what is last: “bodies and souls of men,” equating \_\_\_\_\_ as the same as cattle, horses, and sheep.*
- *The description of this fall parallels Ezekiel 27, the lament over the fall of the ancient city of \_\_\_\_\_; both share several similarities.*

##### • **The Voice of \_\_\_\_\_ (vs. 20)**

In contrast to the lament of the kings and merchants is the call for rejoicing among heaven’s inhabitants. This is certainly a reminder of the importance to look at events from God’s point of view, for from that perspective we see that in the bleakness of this judgment is the vindication of God’s saints, especially those who died for the faith.

#### ◆ *The Finality of Babylon’s Fall (21-24)*

- Note the phrase, “\_\_\_\_\_...\_\_\_\_\_.” Jeremiah used a similar phrase when he warned Judah of the nation’s coming judgment at the hands of the Babylonians (Jer. 25:8-10). Now the same judgment comes to Babylon itself! This description of Babylon’s losses indicates that both its luxuries and its necessities will be taken away. As violent as the satanic systems were, their benefits—their music and manufacturing, their work and weddings—will come to an equally violent end.

- Verse 24 should be compared with Revelation 17:6 and Matthew 23:35. Satan has used religion and business to persecute and kill the people of God. During the last half of the Tribulation, as the beast rises to power, ecclesiastical and political-economic Babylon will work together in opposing the Lord and His people. Now the people of God who were victims of the Devil throughout the ages—both in the Old Testament (“\_\_\_\_\_”) and the New (“\_\_\_\_\_”)—will be fully avenged.

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<sup>i</sup> Notes for this section have been taken and adapted from excerpts of Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Victorious* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985).