

Part IV – Tue Apr 23rd

The Third Vision – Christ and His Victories*(17:1-21:8)***The Judgment of the Great Harlot****17**

Chapter 17 describes the nature and history of the great harlot which is Babylon and referred to about 300 times in the scripture. It is occasionally viewed as a satanic religious program that opposes the true worship of God. Babylon as a term stands for both a city and a system. It is the world viewed as the embodiment of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (**1 Jhn 2:16**). There is a Religious and a Commercial Babylon which becomes the seat of power of the great world empire which will dominate the second half of the last years before the second coming of Jesus Christ. **(1-6)** In Revelation the harlot is Babylon, the symbol of human civilization. The allegory of a harlot and figures of harlotry is found in the scriptures (**Isa 23:17**). **(3)** Revelation portrays the Great Harlot as a direct opposite to the Bride of Christ; Great Harlot in the wilderness rides the beast. **(4)** The Harlot holds a golden cup which is symbolic of false religion confirmed by the words written on the Harlot's forehead, "Mystery Babylon the Great," the mother of prostitutes and of the abominations of the earth. Babylon is clearly associated with the Beast she sits on. The Beast is the entire anti-Christian movement. The woman is depicted as a great harlot involved in spiritual adultery portraying those who outwardly and religiously seem to join to the true God but who are untrue to this relationship. **(12-14)** The Beast and the Ten Kings will make war against the Lamb, promoting world religion and a world political system but the Lamb overcomes them. After the Rapture of the Church takes place all that are left in Christendom will be apostate regardless of whether they are Catholics, Orthodox, Protestants, Evangelicals, or Charismatics.

Babylon is Fallen**18:1-4**

Chapter 18 shows the inevitable, complete and irrevocable character of Babylon's fall. **(4)** The saints were being warned. As saints we must separate from the world. God's people are in the world but not of the world (**Rom 12:1-2; 1 Pet 1:14**).

Apostles and Prophets Avenged**18:9-24**

(20) This passage describes the fall of Babylon as judgment from God for their wickedness and evil whereas three groups of mourners lament the fall of Babylon, three groups are encouraged to rejoice that Babylon has fallen. Those groups are saints, apostles, and prophets. **Heaven rejoices over one sinner that repents (Luk 15:7)**, and it rejoices when Babylon collapses. God and God alone is in the business of securing vengeance for his people (**Rom 12:19**). His vengeance may not come immediately, or as soon as we would prefer (**Hab 1:2; Rev 6:10**). But when it does, it comes with full recompense. He does not let wrong triumph over right (**Psa 37:28**). The beast's end-times reign (**Rev 13:1-10**) is characterized by ego, greed, cruelty, and injustice, but with one powerful stroke God puts an end to it. God's judgment vindicates His righteous, holy character. As used in the Bible, "saints" are believers: saved Christians whom God has set apart to Himself. "Saints" is not a term for specially-holy persons; it means anyone who has believed in Christ (**Jhn 3:16**). "Apostles" are those who saw the risen Lord and received a commission from Him to preach the gospel (**Act 1:2**). "Prophets" were those gifted by the Lord to disclose His will to the church before the New Testament was complete. They were also foretellers of the Word. All three groups view Babylon's judgment from heaven. Babylon's judgment was recompense for what the saints, apostles, and prophets had suffered. **(24)** By the time of the tribulation, the world's opposition to truth—especially Christian truth—will be at an all-time high. So, too, will be its hatred for those who dare stand up for what is moral and right. End-times Babylon will have no tolerance for God's people. The

beast and his followers hate them so much they kill them and leave their blood stains on the streets (**Rev 11:7-8**). The evil system (**Rev 17:1-3**) led by the beast is described in John's vision as martyring believers wherever it found them (**Rev 13:7; 12:16-17**). Babylon's goal will be to rid the earth of those who follow the Lamb and refuse to bow to the beast. The overthrow of Babylon will **partially** avenge these martyrs.

The Binding of the Dragon

20:1-3

(1) This is not the first time the abyss (bottomless pit) was opened, as that also happened in (**Rev 9:1-2**), when an angelic being was given the key to the abyss, and he let out an army of what might be demonic beings John described as “locusts” having power to sting like a scorpion. The term “bottomless pit” in chapter 9 and abyss in chapter 20 are both translations of the same Greek word “abyssos” and refer to the same place. The abyss is referred to throughout scripture as a place for confining disobedient spirits while they wait for judgement, like a sort of dungeon for spirits (**Jud 6; Luk 8:31**). This time, it appears that one of the good angels has opened the pit and put Satan as a dragon into the pit. The second angel coming down from heaven to access the abyss is presented somewhat like a zookeeper who has his great chain in his hand, and intends to lasso the dragon (Satan), and confine him to his cage, where he will lock him up with his key to the abyss. The chain that the angel in Revelation 20 carries is to emphasize the powerlessness of Satan in the presence of God. Now, Satan is thrown into the abyss, and will lose access not only to heaven, but to wandering upon the face of the earth. Now the angel is able to bind him with a chain and has laid hold of him to put him away in the spiritual dungeon that is the abyss where he will serve a “thousand-year sentence.” **(2)** We also see how the list of Satan’s names is repeated in both instances: the dragon, the serpent of old, who is called the devil and Satan. The word dragon is also used in Isaiah and Revelation in the context of prophecies, and here in Revelation the dragon of the prophecies connects to the serpent of old, which is to say the serpent of (**Gen 3:1-4**). Satan, in the form of a serpent, has been deceiving mankind from the very beginning. Referencing the serpent of old when describing the dragon that is being thrown into the abyss helps the audience remember all the evil things Satan has done and why he deserves to be sealed in the pit. The Old Testament identifies the enemy by a Hebrew word, “satan” that is transliterated rather than translated. It means “opponent.” Satan’s opposition includes accusing believers (**Rev 12:10**). Satan is also God’s adversary. Devil translates the Greek “diabolos” which is almost exclusively translated as “the devil” in the New Testament. **(3)** Now, at long last, Satan the accuser is bound and thrown into the abyss, which is then shut and sealed. He is not going to be allowed to accuse and deceive the nations any longer. Satan is going to stay in the pit until the thousand years were completed. Satan is sealed in the abyss so that he will not deceive the nations any longer. Then Satan will be released for a season, defeated again, then the old heaven and earth will be replaced with a new one (**Rev 20:7-10, 21:1-2**).

The End of the World

20:11-15

(11) The judgment seat of Christ is different from the Great White Throne Judgment. Believers will appear before the judgment seat of Christ. This will be the final judgment of the wicked prior to their being cast into the lake of fire. **(12)** Appearing before the Great White Throne will be unbelievers. **(15)** If a person’s name had been inscribed in the Book of Life, he would have already been a part of the first resurrection. The word throne translates the Greek word “thronos” which occurs over forty times in Revelation, highlighting Revelation’s emphasis on establishing the ruling authorities of the heavens and earth (**see handout**). It was the face of God that earth and heaven fled away from. That heaven and earth have fled away from the face of God indicate at this point heaven and earth have been destroyed (**2 Pet 3:7; Rev 21:1**) which would mean that all who were alive on earth are now passed into the spirit realm. Many are now in God’s presence. It would seem that Jesus’s presence has melted heaven and earth in the fire of His unveiled glory. (**2 Pet 3:10**) **But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the**

heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

Overview of New Creation

21:1-8

In the new creation the faithful will experience the salvation blessing of intimate communion with God, but the unfaithful will be excluded from this blessing. **(1)** The sea is one of seven evils John speaks of as being no more, the others being death, mourning, weeping, pain (v. 4), curse (22:3) and night (22:5). **(2)** Heaven will come down to earth.