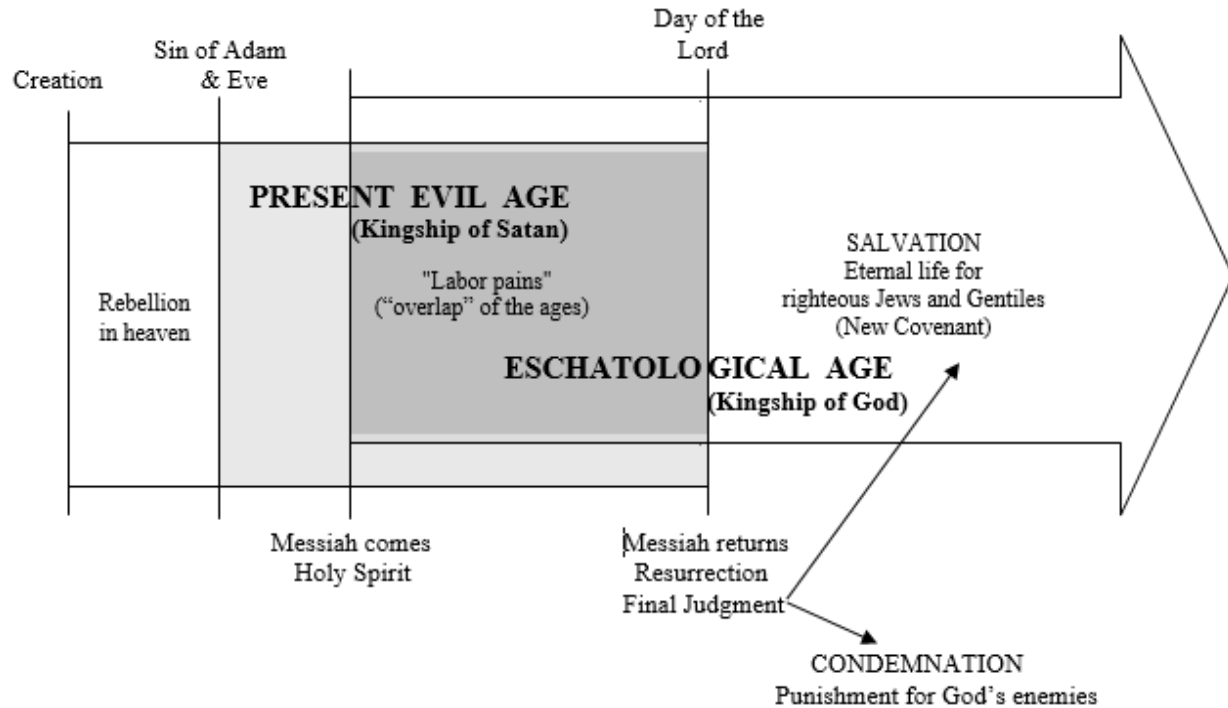


APOCALYPSE OF JOHN

Session 20: The Whore of Babylon and Bride of Christ (Revelation 17-19)

STRUCTURE OF JOHN'S THIRD VISION OF THE FUTURE (Rev. 12:1-22:6)



A. The “Labor Pains” (Revelation 12-13):

1. Satan (the dragon) makes war against Christ (the male child) and is defeated (Revelation 12)
2. Satan (the dragon) makes war against Christians (the rest of the woman’s offspring) through:
 - a. Political powers (the beast from the sea) (Revelation 13:1-10)
 - b. Religious powers supporting the political (the beast from the land) (Revelation 13:11-18)

B. Images of the Final Judgment, which brings the Salvation of God’s covenant people and the Destruction of his enemies (Rev 14:1-22:6)

1. Salvation: The song of the redeemed and announcement of the Final Judgment (14:1-13)
2. Destruction: The harvest of the earth and grapes of wrath (14:14-20)
3. Destruction: The seven last plagues or seven bowls of God’s wrath (Revelation 15-16)
4. Destruction: The fall of Babylon (17:1-19:4)
5. Salvation: The wedding supper of the Lamb (19:5-10)
6. Destruction: The victorious Christ and great supper of God (19:11-21)
7. Destruction and Salvation: Climax (20:1-22:6)

THE PROSTITUTE AND THE SCARLET BEAST (Rev. 17:1-18)

A. Revelation 17:1-6a, 18:

¹One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute, who sits on many waters.

²With her the kings of the earth committed adultery and the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries."

³Then the angel carried me away in the Spirit into a desert. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns. ⁴The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and was glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls. She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries. ⁵This title was written on her forehead:

**MYSTERY
BABYLON THE GREAT
THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES
AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.**

^{6a}I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus. . . .

. . . ¹⁸The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth."

1. The woman symbolizes _____ (v. 18)
2. Gold, precious stones, pearls:
3. Prostitute, adultery:
4. Drunk on the blood of the saints:
5. Mystery (compare Revelation 1:20)

Babylon the Great

The golden cup (compare Jeremiah 51:6-14: "Babylon was a gold cup in the LORD's hand . . . the nations drank her wine . . . live by many waters . . . rich in treasures"):

6. Key verse: "Come, and I will show you the _____ of the great prostitute." (v. 1)

B. Revelation 17:6b-14:

^{6b}When I saw her, I was greatly astonished. ⁷Then the angel said to me: "Why are you astonished? I will explain to you the mystery of the woman and of the beast she rides, which has the seven heads and ten horns. ⁸The beast, which you saw, once was, now is not, and will come up out of the Abyss and go to his destruction. The inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast, because he once was, now is not, and yet will come.

⁹"This calls for a mind with wisdom. The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits. ¹⁰They are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; but when he does come, he must remain for a little while. ¹¹The beast who once was, and now is not, is an eighth king. He belongs to the seven and is going to his destruction.

¹²The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but who for one hour will receive authority as kings along with the beast. ¹³They have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the beast. ¹⁴They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings—and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers."

1. The seven-headed beast from the Abyss:
2. "The seven heads are seven hills" (v. 9):
3. "The beast . . . once was, now is not, and yet will come" (vv. 8, 11)
4. The eight kings (vv. 9-11):
 - a. "[The seven heads] are also seven kings":
 - b. "Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; but when he does come, he must remain for a little while."
 - c. "The [scarlet] beast who once was, and now is not, is an eighth king. He belongs to the seven and is going to his destruction.

5. The ten horns (vv. 12-18):

¹²"The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but who for one hour will receive authority as kings along with the beast. ¹³They have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the beast. ¹⁴They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings—and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers."

¹⁵Then the angel said to me, "The waters you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations and languages. ¹⁶The beast and the ten horns you saw will hate the prostitute. They will bring her to ruin and leave her naked; they will eat her flesh and burn her with fire. ¹⁷For God has put it into their hearts to accomplish his purpose by agreeing to give the beast their power to rule, until God's words are fulfilled.

a. "The waters you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations and languages" (v. 15):

b. "The beast and the ten horns will hate the prostitute. They will bring her to ruin" (vv. 16-17; compare Romans 1:18-32):

THE FALL OF BABYLON (Revelation 18:1-19:4)

A. This vision is somewhat patterned after the oracle against _____ in Jeremiah 50-51 and the lament for idolatrous _____ in Ezekiel 27.

B. Revelation 18:1-3:

¹After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven. He had great authority, and the earth was illuminated by his splendor. ²With a mighty voice he shouted: "Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great! She has become a home for demons and a haunt for every evil spirit, a haunt for every unclean and detestable bird. ³For all the nations have drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries. The kings of the earth committed adultery with her, and the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries."

C. Revelation 18:4-8:

⁴Then I heard another voice from heaven say: "Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues; ⁵for her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes. ⁶Give back to her as she has given; pay her back double for what she has done. Mix her a double portion from her own cup. ⁷Give her as much torture and grief as the glory and luxury she gave herself. In her heart she boasts, 'I sit as queen; I am not a widow, and I will never mourn.' ⁸Therefore in one day her plagues will overtake her: death, mourning and famine. She will be consumed by fire, for mighty is the Lord God who judges her.

Compare Jeremiah 51:45, 47: "⁴⁵Come out of her, my people! Run for your lives! Run from the fierce anger of the Lord...⁴⁷For the time will surely come when I will punish the idols of Babylon; her whole land will be disgraced and her slain will all lie fallen within her."

D. Revelation 18:9-20 (compare Jeremiah 51:60-64):

⁹"When the kings of the earth who committed adultery with her and shared her luxury see the smoke of her burning, they will weep and mourn over her. ¹⁰Terrified at her torment, they will stand far off and cry: "Woe! Woe, O great city, O Babylon, city of power! In one hour your doom has come!"

¹¹"The merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her because no one buys their cargoes any more—¹²cargoes of gold, silver, precious stones and pearls; fine linen, purple, silk and scarlet cloth; every sort of citron wood, and articles of every kind made of ivory, costly wood, bronze, iron and marble; ¹³cargoes of cinnamon and spice, of incense, myrrh and frankincense, of wine and olive oil, of fine flour and wheat; cattle and sheep; horses and carriages; and bodies and souls of men.

¹⁴"They will say, 'The fruit you longed for is gone from you. All your riches and splendor have vanished, never to be recovered.' ¹⁵The merchants who sold these things and gained their wealth from her will stand far off, terrified at her torment. They will weep and mourn ¹⁶and cry out: "Woe! Woe, O great city, dressed in fine linen, purple and scarlet, and glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls! ¹⁷In one hour such great wealth has been brought to ruin!"

"Every sea captain, and all who travel by ship, the sailors, and all who earn their living from the sea, will stand far off. ¹⁸When they see the smoke of her burning, they will exclaim, 'Was there ever a city like this great city?' ¹⁹They will throw dust on their heads, and with weeping and mourning cry out: "Woe! Woe, O great city, where all who had ships on the sea became rich through her wealth! In one hour she has been brought to ruin! ²⁰Rejoice over her, O heaven! Rejoice, saints and apostles and prophets! God has judged her for the way she treated you."

²¹Then a mighty angel picked up a boulder the size of a large millstone and threw it into the sea, and said: "With such violence the great city of Babylon will be thrown down, never to be found again. ²²The music of harpists and musicians, flute players and trumpeters, will never be heard in you again. No workman of any trade will ever be found in you again. The sound of a millstone will never be heard in you again. ²³The light of a lamp will never shine in you again. The voice of bridegroom and bride will never be heard in you again. Your merchants were the world's great men. By your magic spell all the nations were led astray. ²⁴In her was found the blood of prophets and of the saints, and of all who have been killed on the earth."

E. Revelation 19:1-4:

¹After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting: "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, ²for true and just are his judgments. He has condemned the great prostitute who corrupted the earth by her adulteries. He has avenged on her the blood of his servants."

³And again they shouted: "Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever."

⁴The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who was seated on the throne. And they cried: "Amen, Hallelujah!"

THE WEDDING SUPPER OF THE LAMB (Revelation 19:5-10)

A. Revelation 19:5-9 (compare Hosea 2:13-23; Luke 14:12-24):

⁵Then a voice came from the throne, saying: "Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, both small and great!"

⁶Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: "Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. ⁷Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. ⁸Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)

⁹Then the angel said to me, "Write: `Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!'" And he added, "These are the true words of God."

1. God's consummated Kingdom as a "banquet" (e.g. Luke 14:12-24)
2. Israel under the Mosaic Covenant as the "bride" of God (e.g. Isaiah 62:5; Jeremiah 2:1-3; Hosea 2:13-23)
3. Christians under the New Covenant as the "bride" of Christ (e.g. Mark 2:19-20; John 3:29; 2 Corinthians 11:2-5; Ephesians 5:22-33; Revelation 21:2, 9):

B. Revelation 19:10:

¹⁰At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus (compare Revelation 1:2, 9; 12:17) is the spirit of prophecy."

THE VICTORIOUS CHRIST (Revelation 19:11-16)

¹¹I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. ¹²His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. ¹³He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. ¹⁴The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. ¹⁵Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. ¹⁶On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

THE GREAT SUPPER OF GOD (Revelation 19:17-21)

¹⁷And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, "Come, gather together for the great supper of God, ¹⁸so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and mighty men, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great."

¹⁹Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. ²⁰But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. ²¹The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.

(Compare Ezekiel 39:4-5, 17-22; cf. Zephaniah 1:7-9)

CONCLUSION (REVELATION 17-19)