

>>>>>> Lesson 24 <<<<<<<

- 1) When we met last, we had finished thru chapter 16 verse 11.
- 2) Chapter 16 is the chapter that relates the pouring out of the bowls of God's wrath.
- 3) By way of review, I thought it would be appropriate to read the first 11 verses before we pick up with verse 12.

Rev 16:1-10 (NIV)

- 4) Before we continue are there any Questions / Comments on these verses or, for that matter, anything we have covered so far?

Rev 16:12-16 (NIV)

- 1) The sixth bowl is unique in that it actually has no direct horrific impact on mankind.
- 2) Rather, it is a preparation for the greatest battle ever fought – the fight between God and the forces of evil that rule this world.
- 3) The Euphrates river was a natural boundary between the Parthians and the Roman Empire.
 - a) I personally think that this is significant because it clearly gets the point across to John's readers.
 - b) And it gets the point across to us as well – that is, any barriers between God's enemies and this final battle that is to be fought will be removed.
 - c) God wants this done.
- 4) In keeping with the normal amount of bizarreness, John sees three evil spirits (demons) coming from the mouths of Satan, the Antichrist, and the false prophet.
 - a) They are able to perform miracles – one assumes to convince the kings of the east and indeed of the entire world to come and support the upcoming battle.
- 5) This is preparation for the ultimate "hail Mary pass" on behalf of Satan.
 - a) He and his minions know what is coming – God's final and concluding act – banishment of all evil.
 - b) The three have only two choices – surrender or fight to the death.
 - c) They are choosing to fight to the death.
- 6) In the midst of all this preparation, John is given a word of encouragement for those believers who are still fighting the good fight.

15 "Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed."

- 7) The final stage is set – all is ready for the end.

Rev 16:17-21 (NIV)

Revelation – NOTES – 2021

- 1) Again, we must emphasize that these bowls were poured out on the entire earth and in this case, earth's environment.
- 2) Here, I think we can safely infer that the voice we are hearing say, "It is done!" is that of God Himself.
 - a) We can only imagine the joy and rejoicing that will be felt throughout heaven when these words are finally spoken.
- 3) As with the seventh trumpet back in chapter 11, we have flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a severe earthquake.
 - a) John then adds that this is the most devastating earthquake the world has ever known.
 - b) When we look at these results, we can truly see the truth of this statement.
 - i) Islands and mountains disappear.
 - (1) Islands are mountains rising from the sea floor.
 - ii) Cities of all the nations collapse.
 - (1) It is assumed here to be all cities of all nations – total world destruction.
 - c) One commentator assumes that the world is being prepared for the millennial reign.
 - 4) There is a debate regarding the "great city" and the city of Babylon – I mention this only for completeness here.
 - a) Some scholars believe that they are one in the same in this context.
 - b) Others believe the "great city" to be Jerusalem.
 - i) Here, the argument being that Babylon would be destroyed and that Jerusalem would be saved.
 - ii) When we look at the fact that the rest of the cities of the nation's collapse then I can see that point of view. Why would Babylon only be split into 3 parts?
 - 5) Now, consider the hailstones. (Again, only being literal to get an idea of the magnitude of the destruction).
 - a) First, since they are falling, we can assume a velocity of 32ft./s (22 mi/hr.)
 - b) I think we can easily see this would be like being hit by a 100 lb. sack of concrete moving at over 20 mi/hr.
 - c) It will leave a mark!
 - 6) Once more, we see the unrepentant sinners understanding that God is the source of the hail and yet instead of repenting, they shake their fist in God's face and curse Him!

Chapters 17 and 18 are an apocryphal and somewhat poetic description of Satan's kingdom under the leadership of the antichrist and its final state.

Revelation – NOTES – 2021

- 1) These two chapters also lend themselves to quite diverse opinions among scholars as to the true meanings of their content.
 - 2) This diversity led MacArthur to make the comment in his discussion of these chapters that in truth, only those who are alive at that time will see and understand the total meaning of these chapters.
 - 3) The timeline of Revelation actually stops during these two chapters while we look at the target of the judgments, we have just seen in the seven bowls.
 - 4) They are important because, as we sift thru their descriptions, we get a true picture of just how far the world has fallen.
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- 1) Chapter 17 was an especially challenging chapter for me to figure out the best and clearest way to present it.
 - 2) It is difficult from two perspectives:
 - a) There are a tremendous number of opinions about the meanings of the symbology it contains.
 - b) Second and as a result of the first, it becomes difficult to stay on a single interpretation line thru the entire section.
 - 3) To give us an overview of the chapter, I feel we should read the entire thing before we jump into the breakdown and section by section discussion.

Rev 17:1-18 (NIV)

- 5) O.k. let's start at vs. 1 and 2 and break this down.

Rev 17:1-2 (NIV)

- 6) Obviously, here, the term prostitute or harlot is not referring to an actual person but, instead is a metaphor referring to false religion, spiritual defection, idolatry, and religious apostasy.
- 7) Even farther reaching, it symbolizes any economic, political, or military system that is hostile to God.
- 8) In addition to Babylon, several cities are designated "harlot cities" in Scripture – Nineveh, Tyre, and even Jerusalem.

Isa 1:21 (NIV)

- 9) To John's readers, their mind would most likely take them immediately to the Roman Empire with its many gods and blood of Christian martyrs on its hands.
- 10) Unfortunately, this situation will continue for several more hundred years until Constantine shortly after 300 CE became a Christian and made Christianity the religion of the Empire.
- 11) As the angel describes here, this corruption has led to an eventual worldwide system that has encompassed more evil than has been seen thus far in the world.

Rev 17:3-6 (NIV)

- 1) Once again, John is “carried away in the Spirit” to a desolate place – desert.
 - a) Basically, transported in a vision to a place different than where he was.
- 2) Once there, he describes a woman that he sees before him – a very different woman indeed.
 - i) Sitting on a scarlet beast and, from the description;
 - (1) It is covered in blasphemous names with seven heads and ten horns
 - (2) – she is setting on satan and/or the antichrist.
 - (a) 12:3 applies this description to Satan
 - (b) 13:1 applies it to the antichrist – with blasphemous names
 - b) The woman is dressed in purple and scarlet, gold, precious stones, and pearls
 - i) As with prostitutes thru the ages, she is dressed to attract men.
 - ii) Additionally, the adornments indicate wealth which is inferred to come from her ill-gotten gain.
- 3) The golden cup represents her inner self – extremely immoral.
 - a) Beautifully clothed but obscene and impure.
 - b) This picture shows the evil power that will envelop the world.
 - c) It will look attractive and glorious on the outside — wealthy, prosperous, beautiful, luxurious — but the inside will be nothing but rebellion against God
 - d) The rebellion leads to total impurity.
- 4) She is branded on her forehead with the inscription:

MYSTERY
BABYLON THE GREAT
THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES
AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.
- 5) The harlot is called MYSTERY BABYLON to indicate that BABYLON in this context does not refer to a geographical location.
- 6) This is not ancient Babylon, the Babylon of John's day, or the rebuilt city of Babylon in the end times. **(Peter – Babylon = Rome)**
- 7) The details of this vision can't be applied to any actual city.
- 8) Here is a previously undisclosed Babylon, a secret reality to be revealed in the end times.
- 9) This BABYLON is the symbol of all worldly resistance to God; it is described as THE GREAT because of its far-reaching influence.
- 10) In fact, so great will be its influence that it is called THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

Revelation – NOTES – 2021

- 11) Babylon will be the source of all the false, idolatrous, blasphemous worship in the end times.
- 12) Her designation as the MOTHER OF HARLOTS is appropriate, since harlotry in Scripture often symbolizes idolatry.
- 13) So Babylon, the city that spawned the system that corrupted the world with false religion, will do so again.
- 14) Like many harlots, this woman was drunk, but not from drinking alcohol.
- 15) This is a graphic indictment of her for her murderous persecution of God's people.
- 16) She is pictured as drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus.
- 17) Some commentators see the saints and the witnesses of Jesus as two distinct groups, the former being the Old Testament saints and the latter the New Testament saints.
- 18) More likely, however, the two descriptions refer to the same group and describe God's people throughout history.
- 19) The important point here is that false religion, represented here by the harlot, is a murderer.
- 20) It has killed millions of believers over the centuries.