



Looking ahead to Scenes 5 & 6

- ❖ **Attacks on the Beast are renewed**
 - Seven plagues in seven bowls of wrath, emptied by seven angels
 - We will hear of Armageddon!
- ❖ **We will meet the Great Whore of Babylon, who rides upon the beast.**
 - She will be in stark contrast to the woman in Chapter 12 who gave birth to the Messiah!
 - There won't be any real mystery about who she is! The whole thing is heavy on the satire. Like all of Revelation, John draws upon a wealth of OT images and references in his depiction of the Whore.
- ❖ **Babylon falls and is mourned!**
- ❖ **We will come to the passage that Handel set to music in the Hallelujah Chorus.**

Looking back to Scene 4

- ❖ **Scene 4 began the story, "The Defeat of Satan"**
- ❖ **Satan, the dragon, chases after a woman and her child, but in vain. He loses a cosmic battle against Michael and the angels of God. Satan is hemmed in on earth.**
- ❖ **Satan brings forth the beast from the land and the false prophet (the beast from the sea). They take complete control of earth, except for God's people. All those who do not bear God's mark, bear the mark of the beast.**
- ❖ **Jesus and his angels come to judge those who oppose God. They are harvested and pressed in the wine press of God.**
- ❖ **After the judgment, God's people sing a song of praise, glorifying God.**

Looking ahead – Scenes 5 & 6

Scene 5 – Punishment for the World

- **The wrath of God lies behind the veil in the temple. Seven angels come out bearing the bowls of wrath**
- **Seven bowls of wrath are poured out upon the world!**
- **But finally . . . This will be the end of it!**
- ❖ **Scene 6 – Babylon the Whore**
 - **This scene is organized around seven "words": seven times John will hear and then see.**
 - **We will meet the Great Whore who rides the beast.**
 - **Babylon will fall and be judged and be mourned.**

The Two Worlds of Revelation (of the Bible!)

- ❖ Reading Revelation with an eye on two worlds, two parallel universes
 - One is the world you and I can touch and see and smell; the world of “earth”
 - The other is the world of the unseen – every bit as real, but unseen; this is the world of “heaven,” of the Kingdom of God.
- ❖ In the Lord’s prayer, when we pray that God’s will be done on earth as it is in heaven, we are praying for the “marriage” of heaven and earth; for the “merger” of the parallel universes . . . the seen and the unseen.
- ❖ In Revelation, we have to always keep these two worlds in mind. John is speaking as much to us about the “unseen world” as he is the “seen world.” The struggle is really against Satan . . . Rome is only Satan’s agent.

The Seven Bowls of Wrath (beg. in 15:4)

- ❖ Rather than bowls of incense carrying upward the prayers of the saints (ch. 5), seven angels come forward bearing seven bowls of God’s wrath.
- ❖ Like the first four trumpets, the first four bowls deal with the land, the sea, the rivers, and the sun. The fifth trumpet and fifth bowl deal with the destroyer and beast. The sixth deals with demonic armies.
- ❖ Again, the bowls are meant to strip away our pretensions to self-security. What is the point of all the wrath . . . to move the people to repentance (16:9 & 11). Notice that the punishment is actually restrained -- though the wicked kill, they are not killed.

Armageddon (16:16)

- ❖ “Harmagedon” is actually the spelling. *Har* is Hebrew for mountain. *Megiddo* is a place in northern Israel. Thus, this seems to be a reference to Mt. Megiddo.
- ❖ But . . . there is no mountain at Megiddo, not even much of a hill. It is in the middle of a plain.
- ❖ Does John use Megiddo symbolically or literally? He refers to Jerusalem as “Sodom and Gomorrah” but refers to Laodicea literally.
- ❖ Megiddo is mentioned several times in the OT and is a place where God’s adversaries meet their doom (see Judges 5:19; 2 Kings 9:27; Zechariah 12:11)
- ❖ Before the great battle can take place, the seventh bowl brings a massive earthquake. Babylon is destroyed – again! (see 14:8)

The Great Whore

- ❖ In contrast to the woman with child who was chased by the dragon (ch. 12), John (who is taken to the wilderness!) draws a satirical portrait of a drunken harlot who rides astride a seven-headed beast. Her cup is filled with unimaginable sewage.
 - What is she drunk on? . . . The blood of the saints!
- ❖ Think of the portrait as a political cartoon – it is even labeled for us! In the OT several cities were portrayed as prostitutes, e.g., Tyre (Ezek. 27:3) & Nineveh (Nahum 3:4)
- ❖ Why Babylon? Babylon, under Nebuchadnezzar, was the destroyer of the Temple and the Ark in 587BC.
- ❖ The portrait calls people to see through the lovely appearance and wealth of Rome and grasp the inner rot!
 - In the end, evil turns upon itself as the beast devours the whore!

“Mystery”

- ❖ In the Bible, a “mystery” is not a “puzzle” in need of a solution.
- ❖ An example from Paul (Ephesians 3:3-6)
 - “you have heard . . . how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, [what I wrote] will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, [but] it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. [This is the mystery:] the Gentiles have become fellow heirs . . .”
- ❖ A “mystery” is something that we would not know unless it is revealed to us . . . revealed by God.
- ❖ What might this tell us about the mystery of the harlot and John’s use of symbols in general?
 - Seven heads = seven hills and seven kings ???

The Fall of Babylon

- ❖ The beast “who was, and is not, and is about to ascend” comes from the bottomless pit to destroy Babylon the Whore. Evil can only destroy – even if that means destroying itself. The classic theological definition of evil is nothingness -- evildoers seek only to destroy.
- ❖ The people are called to “come out” of the city. Is this a message only for residents of Rome? Of course not. They aren’t even reading the letter! This is a message for all Christians who go too far in accommodating themselves to the opponents of the one, true God.
 - Babylon’s wealth and luxury was made at the expense of innocents. She will be repaid double for what she has taken.

The Funeral of Babylon

- ❖ Three groups of mourners
 - The kings of the earth – the mighty city has fallen (is their own to be next?)
 - The merchants of the earth
 - “The fruit for which your soul longed has gone from you.”
 - In one hour all their wealth has been wasted.
 - Notice the reference to the slave trade (v.13)
 - The shipmasters and seafarers
 - In an hour, their wealth too is lost.
- ❖ Violent Babylon will herself be destroyed by violence
 - Babylon is not only responsible for the blood of the saints, but for all who have been slaughtered on earth.

The Great Hallelujahs

- ❖ In a rising crescendo, hallelujahs are offered in praise of God – the Holy Judge who judges with truth and justice.
 - Righteousness is an expression of God’s character (Isaiah 5:16; Psalms 89:14-18)
 - What is right? What is just? Look to God.
 - Jesus as judge
 - The Jews expected the Messiah to be a righteous judge (Jeremiah 33:15-16). Thus, Jesus says the Father gave him authority to judge (John 5:22-23,27,30). In Revelation, it is Jesus who judges (19:11).
 - But Jesus is also our Advocate and Counselor! (1 John 2:1)
- ❖ Then the multitude sing out like the sound of many waters and mighty thunder.
 - “Hallelujah! For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!” as used in Handel’s Messiah
 - Hallelujah is a Greek word (*allelouia*) that is based on the Hebrew words for “Praise the Lord.” In the NT, it is found only here in Revelation 19.

Marriage and the Bride

- ❖ In the OT, the relationship of God and his people is offered symbolized by the marriage of a man and a woman.
 - See Isaiah 62:5; Jeremiah 2:2; Hosea 2:19-20; 2 Cor 11:2; Ephesians 5:25-32; John 3:29
- ❖ Here, in the Hallelujah the Lamb is the groom and the church, God's people, is the bride.
- ❖ Who will be invited to the marriage banquet?
 - Jesus told many parables about feasts and banquets. When he ate with assorted "sinners" he was enacting the truth that all would be invited – even those we least expect!
- ❖ The contrasting images of the Harlot and the Bride are relational images. Will it be unrestrained debauchery or the commitment of marriage?
- ❖ Worship God!

What's up Next? (Rev 19:11 - 21:8)

- ❖ Seven visions of the drama behind history
 - See these as visions of the ultimate reality
- ❖ Key things to look for:
 - Jesus on the white horse leading God's armies to victory => our victorious Lamb of God in the Rose Window
 - The millennial reign of Christ
 - The book of life and the second death
 - The new heavens and the new earth (be sure to read Isaiah 65:17-25 & 66:22-24)

