

Revelation 17-18

Scene: we have just read about the pouring of the seven bowls of God's wrath upon the enemies of God's people. (ch 16) They parallel the Seven Letters to the Churches in Asia (ch 1-3) Seven Seals (ch. 6-7) and the Seven Trumpets (chapters 8-11) which have already declared the return of Christ.

*note the similar plagues wrought by Moses in Egypt

*these four sets of seven are all actions sent from Heaven to do the following

- a. announce the Mind of God against evil
- b. to destroy that which has become corrupted or evil
- c. To show what is to come
- d. to show evil for what is really is
- e. The reflect the sufferings of the Church at the hands of the Empire, and of all

Christians who suffer unjust persecution by tyrants in every generation

1. The Seven Bowls (ch 16)

- a. Earth: Festering sores for those who worship the beast
- b. Sea: turned to Blood, as if from a corpse
- c. Rivers and springs: turn to blood
- d. The sun: so the unrepentant people are burnt and scorched
- e. Throne of the Beast: kingdom plunged into darkness
- f. River Euphrates: paves the way for assembly of evildoer at Armageddon
- g. The Air: lightings, thunder, earthquakes, hailstones

Nb. This pretty much covers the whole of the Earth

2. We meet the "harlot" (aka "whore" of Babylon) Greek: *eporneusan* – note: "porn"

- a. * deserted place (Patmos?) from a safe distance
- b. Titles of the Emperor (varies) eg blasphemous names
 - i. Augustus: *Imperator Caesar Divi Filius Augustus*, Princeps Senatus, and Pontifex Maximus
 - ii. Nero: **Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus**
 1. **In Egypt** 'Emperor Nero, Ruler of rulers, chosen by [Ptah](#), beloved of [Isis](#), the sturdy-armed one who struck the foreign lands, victorious for Egypt, ruler of rulers, chosen of [Nun](#) who loves him'
- c. Blood: association with red wine is an old one, analogy with Mass of Mass
- d. Seven heads (Caesars) Ten horns (vassal kings or governors)
- e. Jewelry: sewn into cloths not in a crown (yet)
- f. Scarlet beast: evangelical writers associate with League of Nations, UN
- g. Text says it seems to come in and out of existence
 - i. Power comes and goes
 - ii. provincial revolts plagued the Caesars
 - iii. the Great City: Rome v. 9
 - iv. we are reminded that God is in charge even here: v. 17
 1. note that the clients hate their Masters v. 16

3. The ruined city: a traditional Lament

- a. Compare with Lamentations (here for an enemy)

The Lord is like an enemy; he has swallowed up Israel. He has swallowed up all her palaces and destroyed her strongholds. He has multiplied mourning and lamentation for Daughter Judah.

6 He has laid waste his dwelling like a garden; he has destroyed his place of meeting. The LORD has made Zion forget her appointed festivals and her Sabbaths; in his fierce anger he has spurned both king and priest.

7 The Lord has rejected his altar and abandoned his sanctuary. He has given the walls of her palaces into the hands of the enemy; they have raised a shout in the house of the LORD as on the day of an appointed festival.

8 The LORD determined to tear down the wall around Daughter Zion. He stretched out a measuring line and did not withhold his hand from destroying. He made ramparts and walls lament; together they wasted away.

9 Her gates have sunk into the ground; their bars he has broken and destroyed. Her king and her princes are exiled among the nations, the law is no more, and her prophets no longer find visions from the LORD.

10 The elders of Daughter Zion sit on the ground in silence; they have sprinkled dust on their heads and put on sackcloth. The young women of Jerusalem have bowed their heads to the ground.

11 My eyes fail from weeping, I am in torment within; my heart is poured out on the ground because my people are destroyed, because children and infants faint in the streets of the city.

12 They say to their mothers, "Where is bread and wine?" as they faint like the wounded in the streets of the city, as their lives ebb away in their mothers' arms.

13 What can I say for you? With what can I compare you, Daughter Jerusalem? To what can I liken you, that I may comfort you, Virgin Daughter Zion? Your wound is as deep as the sea. Who can heal you?

*We note the use of the past tense here to indicate a completed action which has not happened yet (Similar to Future Perfect tense)

*compare with Nahum's prophesy against Nineveh
v. 9 the seven hills

*Isaiah 51: note drinking the wine of destruction and folly

*note the warning call (18:7) do not think that God fails to notice wickedness

*v. 11 we note the wealth of trading power: this is Rome you can buy anything
Center of almost all trade routes

Most of these are raw materials, even the human slaves, things
that might have had a future

*v. 17: note sea captains lamenting. The real Babylon is landlocked

V 22 ff note that: music, craftsmen, lamps, sound, bride & grooms, merchants

All of these are community activities brought to an end