

WHERE IS THIS TURMOIL HEADED?

Revelation 14-18

How could God allow bad things to happen to people He loves?

Some people think there's no answer—give up in despair.

A loving, all-powerful God couldn't let it happen!

Therefore, God must be less than loving.

Or, God must be less than all-powerful

Revelation's written to answer our doubts.

Our reality far removed from reality of original readers.

Fulfillment seems far removed from our experience.

Generation John's writing **to**, & those he's writing **about**...

Worse than any generation ever endured until now!

Rev.'s written to God's people suffering because of their faith to encourage them by helping them understand **God's** perspective on what's happening

It shows us the end of the story

—no question about His love!

—no question about how it all turns out!

Addressed to God's people suffering for His sake.

Purpose:

1. To encourage us when we suffer for our faith.
2. To inform us of outcome of conflict
3. To motivate us to remain faithful

Theme:

Christ, Judge of Universe, judges creation.

God's in control! HE WINS!

Although His people may suffer,

God even controls those in rebellion.

He'll be victorious.

Faithful participate in His victory.

Structure of his message:

I. Things you've seen:

Christ the Judge 1

II. Things which are now:

Judge judging the churches

2-3

III. Things which shall be later:

Judge judging the nations

4-22:5

When we think of Rev we focus on God's plan

4-11 God's Program for the future

=>12-18 Cause of God's Judgment:

Satan's Program

Satan's program presented 12-13

Satan's opposition to God & His people

Satan's attempt to destroy God's "anointed One"

Satan's expulsion from heaven

=> his vengeance on earth.

Satan as head, his "anointed one" (the beast) & his prophet (who glorifies the beast)

Imitates God's plan: Father, "anointed One" & Holy Spirit (who glorifies the anointed One)

Satan's program recompensed

14:1-18:24

=> God's response to Satan's program

Judgment of participants in Satan's program

After judgment on all people, John sees 2 specific effects of judgment (17-18).

1st deals with Babylon the Great, mother of prostitutes.

–God answers suffering church:

What's God going to do about their suffering?

JUDGMENT OF PROSTITUTE 1-6 **1-2** *"Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute, who sits by many waters. ²With her the kings of the earth committed adultery, & the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries."*

John sees what God does to the prostitute.

God judges great prostitute who commits adultery with pagan kings & peoples.

Parallels other passages that point to Babylon (Shinar)

Origin of human religions which oppose God's plan.

Its role has been significant since beginning (Gen. 10).

Whether you consider this restored Babylon or other modern city –pro-ststitute city proposes tribute to man – self-centered religion which exalts our abilities & leaves God out!

Seduced by power . . .

Seduced by possessions and pleasure . . .

Seduced by worship of self & "I-can-do-it-myself" philosophy...

Description of Prostitute 3-6 *"I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names & had 7 heads & 10 horns. ⁴The woman was dressed in purple & scarlet, & was glittering with gold, precious stones & pearls. She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things & the filth of her adulteries. ⁵The name written on her forehead was a mystery: Babylon the Great, the mother of prostitutes & of the abominations of the earth."*

⁶I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of God's holy people, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus."

Supported by political world system 3**Dressed in fancy garments 4a**

–external appearance looks great!!

Wealthy supporters treat her well!

Identified as mother of all abominations 5 –religious & otherwise!**Drunk with shed blood of martyred saints 6**

Religious system, composed of ecumenical & syncretistic union of religions.

She's had her fill of the blood of faithful people

–but now, *the Judge has the last word!*

Explanation of Prostitute 7-18

Prostitute is supported by political world system of nations descended from Rome

7b-14 –the beast

Pagan nations support man-centered religion

7 heads represent 7 pagan empires that have ruled over the earth 9-10

Final world power involves cooperative alliance of 10 kings 12-14 *"The*

10 horns you saw are 10 kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but who for 1 hour will receive authority as kings along with the beast. ¹³They have 1 purpose & will give their power & authority to the beast. ¹⁴They will wage war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will triumph over them because he is Lord of lords & King of kings—& with him will be his called, chosen & faithful followers.”

Their authority is associated with the beast

They attempt to defeat the Lamb 14

They make war against Him 14a (Ps. 2)

They want to destroy Him—& His faithful followers!

The Lamb defeats them 14b

Because He is Lord of lords and King of kings!

He's greater than all the kings of the earth!

The faithful triumph with Him! 14c

They will be destroyed.

Before that happens, God uses them to judge and destroy the religious system

Prostitute destroyed by political world system 15-18

She sits in midst of the pagan peoples 15

Beast turns and destroys her 16

Beast is God's instrument to fulfill His purpose 17 (Zech. 5)

Beast wants nothing to do with any religious system—except that which worships HIM!

Prostitute who controls kings of world will be destroyed by those kings 18

That's answer to nagging question: how could God allow His people to suffer like that?

God's plan to overcome the world includes this beast –world's political system becomes means by which God judges man's religious system.

It turns on itself!

God wins—the faithful triumph with Him!

Affliction we're going through isn't the end of the story.

In comparison to eternal glory which will be ours, the momentary light affliction –though it seem incredibly hard—in contrast to that glory—it's NOTHING!

Danger of being sucked in by world's religious system.

It always looks impressive.

It's end is destruction.

Those who are faithful to the Lamb will be opposed & oppressed by world religions & political pressure.

But—the Lamb wins!!!

Prostitute & world system are destroyed.

Those who're faithful triumph with Him!

=>FAITHFULLY FOLLOW THE LAMB!

Judgment of the prosperous city: Babylon the Great 18

Devastation 1-8

After destruction of religious system, different description's given of destruction of great city, also called "Babylon."

Described as great commercial center. **18:2-3**

"Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!" She has become a dwelling for demons & a haunt for every impure spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean & detestable

animal. ³For all the nations have drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries. The kings of the earth committed adultery with her, & the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries.”

Judgment comes against city where prostitute functioned.

Again, city may refer to lit., restored Babylon, or to fig. “Babylon” that assumes role. => Commercial center?

Why do people see this as U.S. or Europe?

Nothing like it today! But, remember 1948? Brasilia?

Wealth is middle-east style!

Lamentation 9-19

Nations doing business with her mourn

Motivation 20-24

Why is she judged? 20, 24

“Rejoice over her, you heavens! Rejoice, you people of God! Rejoice, apostles & prophets! For God has judged her with the judgment she imposed on you.”

²⁴*In her was found the blood of prophets & of God’s holy people, of all who have been slaughtered on the earth.”*

God isn’t asleep!

He observes suffering of His people

He judges those who afflicted saints.

He wins!

We triumph with Him!

In a couple of weeks we’re going to come back & look at...

CLIMAX OF CONFLICT

–Results of judgment 19-22

19:1-2 *“After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting: ‘Hallelujah! Salvation & glory & power belong to our God, ²for true & 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.’”*

SO WHAT?

We can look at God’s victory/ destruction of city

We can look at heavenly praise and say,

“Won’t that be a wonderful worship service?”

–and walk away saying, “So what?”

“How will this change my life tomorrow a.m.?”

We don’t get it!!!

We will never understand the intensity of their praise, until we understand the intensity of their pain!

“Persecution Books”–

U.S. church doesn’t get it!

Daniel–**“How can you let this happen?!!”**

Ezekiel–bitter/sweet

Habakkuk–“How long?

How could you?”

John’s record.

We will never understand the significance of our pain, until we understand the significance of our praise!

Christ Wins!**The faithful triumph with Him**

However bad things may look now, don't lose your perspective! We know how the story ends!

"Amen! Hallelujah! Praise our God All you who serve Him All you who fear Him—small and great alike!"

"Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns!"