

THE END OF THE GREAT SOCIETY

Revelation 18-19

Difficulty of grasping significance of final chapters of Revelation.

Our reality far removed from reality of original readers.

Fulfillment seems far removed from our concerns and our experience.

Sometimes we may even find ourselves questioning whether we want to give up “the good life” we enjoy for this future “pie in the sky bye and bye” stuff!

We’re pretty comfortable now—why change?

The generation John is writing to, . . .

The generation of final days John is writing about, . . .

... isn’t vacillating about whether *they* want God to interrupt “*the good life*”!

There’s nothing good about what they’re going through!

It’s worse than we could ever imagine!

It’s worse than any generation has ever endured until now!

—and some have had some pretty rough times!

Revelation was written to God's people in suffering to encourage them by helping them understand God's perspective on what’s happening

John writes for 3 reasons:

–to encourage God's people when we’re suffering on account of our faith

–to inform us of outcome of conflict

–to motivate us to remain faithful

To accomplish purposes, John presents God's perspective on events:

Christ as Judge of the universe is judging His creation.

God controls the world!

Although we may suffer for Him, God even controls those in rebellion.

He will be victorious.

The faithful will participate in His great victory.

Key: Vision of the Judge 1:9-20

The things you have seen: Christ the Judge 1

The things which are now: Judge judges the church 2-3

The things which shall be later: Judge judges the nations 4-22

Predominant theme: JUDGMENT

God is in control.

Though the nations rage, their struggle is futile (cp. Ps. 2)

He will judge them. He will win the conflict.

Those who are faithful will see the day of vengeance.

Wave after wave of JUDGMENT!

SATAN'S PROGRAM 12-18

Repeats description of judgment from different perspective.

People have chosen to submit to Satan's authority rather than God's; divine program requires judgment.

Satan's program presented 12-13

Satan's program recompensed 14-18 God's response

Judgment of all people 14-16

2 specific effects of the judgment:

Judgment of the prostitute 17

Judgment of the prosperous city: Babylon the Great 18

JUDGMENT OF BABYLON THE GREAT 18

Devastation 1-8

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

This Babylon is described as great commercial center. **18:1-2a**

Although great society was built around the economy, only what's built on God lasts forever!

Judgment now comes against city in which prostitute functioned.

Again, city where prostitute dwells may refer to lit., restored Babylon, or to fig. "Babylon" that assumes the role.

Rome or Jerusalem are candidates for fig. fulfillment in light of contemporary history.

=> Commercial center?

Why do we explain this as U.S. or Europe?

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

Wealth is middle-east style!

Lamentation 9-19

Nations that did business with her mourn **18:9-11, 17b-24**

Motivation 20-24

Why is she judged? **8, 20, 24**

God isn't asleep!

He observes suffering of His people

He judges those who have afflicted the saints.

He wins! And we triumph with Him!

CLIMAX OF CONFLICT (Results of judgment) 19-22

After earthly events of Tribulation, esp. as they relate to God's program and Satan's program, author depicts climax of conflict.

Picks up where ch. 11 let off—2 threads come together

Spirit of victory in the air as final scenes begin.

RESPONSE FROM HEAVEN 19:1-10

Glimpse of heavenly preparations for final scene.

Praise for God 19:1-6

God is praised by multitude in heaven.

Because of His just judgment (17/18)

He has judged those who persecute His people.

He wins! Victory is His; hosts of heaven praise Him.

Those who triumph in the world rejoice because of what they've accomplished.

But someone greater comes along later.

Olympic runner who broke 4 min. mile—how many even remember his name?

Someone greater comes along and breaks his record!

But HE reigns forever! No one greater to come!

Wedding Celebration 19:7-10

Time arrives for wedding of the Lamb to His bride, the church. 7-8

Prepare for celebration of wedding feast.

2 groups of blessed (content/satisfied) people:

His bride 7-8

His invited guests 9 (cp. Matt. 25)

John's response 10

He acknowledges that this is right—he wants to worship

Mystery is resolved—It's good! *Let's worship God for He is good!*

As John sees the event unfolding, he is tempted to worship before the messenger but is warned not to. 10

Only God is to be worshiped!

PREPARATION FOR MILLENNIUM 19:11-20:3

Heavens open and Christ descends to prepare earth for establishment of His kingdom.

Second coming of Christ 19:11-16

His coming pictured 11-13 He completes work He began.

Accompanied by heavenly armies 14

Ready to judge the nations 15-16

He speaks with authority

He strikes down the nations

He rules with an iron scepter

He administers God's judgment

He is King of kings and Lord of lords

Victory over the nations 19:17-21

Vultures gathered to prepare to clean up 17-18

Nations turn to fight against Him. 19

Christ triumphs over the nations by *spoken* command

Beast and the false prophet are cast into lake of fire. 20

Remaining armies killed by sword out of Christ's mouth 21a

Vultures enjoy great feast! 21b

Binding of Satan 20:1-3

Satan taken captive.

He's taken to Abyss.

He's chained so as not to deceive nations for 1000 years.

SO WHAT?

We can look at God's victory/ destruction of city and respond, "That's nice!"

We can look at heavenly praise and say, "Won't that be a wonderful worship service?"

"I don't want to 'sleep in' that Sunday a.m.!"

—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 real significance of our pain,
until we understand the significance of our praise!*

1 Peter 1:3-7 Rom. 8:18

Christ Wins! The faithful triumph with Him

"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!"

Let's rejoice! Let's celebrate! Let's give Him glory!"

Whose side are WE on?

=> Who Is on the Lord's Side?