

The Book Of Revelation

Week 7

Chapters 14 to 19

Chapter 14. The Three Angels

Chapter 14. The Great Harvest

Chapters 15 and 16. The 7 Bowl Judgements

Chapters 17 to 19 verse 10. Mystery Babylon.

The Three Angels. Revelation Chapter 14 Verses 6 To 12.

Just imagine for a minute that you have lived through the extreme persecution of the seal judgements, and then the cosmic disasters of the trumpet judgements. Half the earth's population has been wiped out.

Do you honestly think that those who remain alive are going to blame climate change, and not for one moment wonder if the prophecies of the bible are coming to pass, that judgement day is speeding towards us, that we are at the end of the age?

Yes some will be completely hardened, even if they recognize that God is judging the earth, and they will hate him because they still do not fear him.

Revelation chapter 9 verse 20 says that the rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands, their murders, witchcraft, sexual immorality and theft. They will still reject what God is doing.

But evidently this does not mean that all who remain are completely hardened. And for this reason, God sends three angels.

The First Angel. Verse 6 and 7.

The first angel preaches the gospel to every nation, tribe, language and people. The remaining population will not doubt that God is real. When an angel appears in mid-air, preaching the gospel, you cannot doubt the existence of God. You can foolishly reject Him, but you will know that He is real.

The Second Angel. Verse 8.

The second angel has another message. Fallen is Babylon the Great, that great city, because she made all the nations drink the wine and the wrath of her fornication. Most likely this is speaking of spiritual unfaithfulness.

In the Old Testament, God many times accused the Israelites of unfaithfulness, meaning that they were being seduced by other gods and religions. So we understand that the city of Babylon will most likely represent a major false religion which deceives many.

The Third Angel. Verses 9 to 11.

The third angel has one last message, you might think that this is like locking the gate after the horse has bolted. The angel says with a loud voice. If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead, or on his hand, he himself shall also drink the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of his indignation.

He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment rises forever and ever, and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.

Twice the third angel warns about the mark of the beast. To what avail? Hasn't the mark already been rolled out to the masses? Remember that God is not confused. He has the chronology worked out perfectly. It is we who make assumptions and so get the timing of events wrong.

The conclusion to draw from the third angel is this. Evidently the mark of the beast is being rolled out at this point. After the trumpets, but before the bowls.

The Great Harvest. Revelation chapter 14 Verses 14 to 20.

Here we find that the great harvest is in fact two harvests. The first harvest, although not explicitly stated, appears to be a harvest of the righteous. The second harvest is definitely a harvest of the wicked, as the reaped fruit is thrown into the winepress of God's fury.

It is no coincidence that directly before this great harvest, the three angels have completed their preaching, surely causing widespread conviction. The 144,000 who are described at the beginning of this chapter singing a new song before the throne in heaven, have surely been active witnesses for Jesus prior to the harvest. It says that they follow the Lamb wherever he goes.

We know that Jesus always reaches out to sinners. Luke 5 verse 32 says "It is not the healthy who need a doctor but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

The First Harvest.

Verses 14 to 16.

I looked, and there before me was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one like a son of man with a crown of gold on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand.

Then another angel came out of the temple and called in a loud voice to him who was sitting on the cloud, "Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe". So he who was seated on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was harvested.

So here is the question. Does this harvest represent souls being brought up to Heaven, or souls being brought into the Kingdom of God? Is it souls being raptured? Or souls being saved? Let's use a passage in John chapter 4 to hopefully shed some light. Here Jesus said to the disciples, "Open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest". This did not mean that people were ready to be raptured, instead it means that people were ready to be saved.

Using this analogy in chapter 14 of Revelation, it is most likely that the first harvest represents souls being saved.

The One Like A Son Of Man.

Here is another question. Who is the one like a son of man in verse 14? It appears to be Jesus, but verse 15 tells us that another angel called to the first, "Take your sickle and reap, because the harvest is ripe". We have to ask, when do we see an angel instructing Jesus in scripture? Furthermore, the angel who gives this instruction is called "another angel", implying that the first was also an angel, even though he looked like a son of man, and wore a crown of gold.

The Second Harvest.

Verses 17 to 20.

Another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. Still another angel, who had charge of the fire, came from the altar and called in a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, "Take your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from the earth's vine, because its grapes are ripe".

The angel swung his sickle on the earth, gathered its grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God's wrath. They were trampled in the winepress outside the city, and blood flowed out of the press, rising as high as the horses' bridles for a distance of 1,600 stadia which equates to nearly 182 miles..

Here it is explicit that there are 2 angels involved, one with a sickle, and the other who calls to the first angel. Exactly the same format as the first harvest. This is further evidence that the one looking like a son of man in the first harvest is most likely an angel.

There is no mention that the fruit is bad, or rotten. Yet it says that this second harvest gathers grapes to be trampled in the winepress of God's fury. So evidently this is a harvest of the wicked. Those who have permanently hardened their hearts towards God.

So To Conclude.

The first harvest most likely does not represent the return of Jesus, or the rapture. Jesus returns in chapter 19. Instead, it appears to represent the final decision of the people of the world, regarding the gospel of the kingdom of God. Those who respond humbly will be saved.

Similarly the second harvest most likely does not represent the battle of Armageddon itself, which happens in chapter 19. Rather, it seems to represent the final decision of those who reject the preaching of the gospel. This permanent hardening against the gospel means that they are destined to be slaughtered in the battle of Armageddon.

So even at this late stage, God is seeking to save souls. As the bible says in Joel chapter 3 verse 14, Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision.

The Bowl Judgements. Revelation chapters 15 and 16.

Since the bowl judgements are described as the wrath of God, mid-trib rapture adherents may teach that the church is raptured before the bowl judgements. However the actual text says this. "Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, Seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete".

If the bowls complete the wrath of God, then you could conclude that the wrath began earlier. It is possible that the wrath of God starts with the first bowl, and ends with the last bowl. Equally it is possible that the wrath of God starts with the first seal, and ends with the last bowl, so that all 21 judgements are God's wrath.

But remember when Habakkuk prayed, "in wrath remember mercy". So we do know that wrath can co-exist with mercy.

Here is how the bowl judgements unfold. Seven angels come out of the heavenly temple, and each one is given a golden bowl full of the wrath of God. Then John hears a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth".

The First Bowl.

This causes foul sores to appear on those who received the mark of the beast, and worshipped his image. The text is clear. If you have taken the mark, then this judgment is for you, so a serious warning. Do not take the mark.

The Second Bowl.

This is poured on the sea, which all turns to blood, causing every living creature in the sea to die. When the world sees the oceans turned to blood, they will surely remember the story of the plagues of Egypt. They will be reminded again that this is a judgement from God.

The Third Bowl.

This is poured on the rivers, which all turn to blood, so that fresh water is no longer available, and people will most likely have to drink blood. An angel remarks that this is a just judgement, because these people shed the blood of the saints, therefore blood is their portion and reward. Without fresh water nothing is going to live long. Another hark back to the Exodus story. People will not be able to escape the thought that God is judging them.

The Fourth Bowl.

This is poured out on the sun, most likely causing an unprecedented solar storm. People are scorched, but they refuse to repent. It is amazing to see how even after such pain, peoples hearts refuse to turn to God.

The Fifth Bowl.

This is poured out on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom becomes full of darkness. Is this a darkening of the sun, or a darkening of peoples' minds? We don't know, but we do know that the sores of the first bowl, and presumably the burns from the fourth bowl are still causing great pain, but still people refuse to repent.

The Sixth Bowl.

This is poured on the great river Euphrates, which dries up, so preparing the way for armies of the East to mobilize towards the Valley of Megiddo.

Demonic spirits come out of the mouth of the antichrist and the false prophet to deceive the kings of the Earth to gather their armies for battle in the day of the Lord. Some teach that these armies are coming to fight against the antichrist, but there are two problems with this theory.

Firstly, these kings have been deceived by the antichrist to come to this battle. Why would the antichrist deceive nations to come and fight against him? We know that the antichrist is completely deceived, but surely he is not foolish enough to plan his own defeat?

Secondly, the account of Jesus's return in chapter 19 tells that John sees the beast, and the kings of the earth with their armies, gathered together to make war against the rider of the white horse, our Lord and Messiah, and the future King of Israel.

Once the antichrist and false prophet are captured and thrown alive into the lake of fire, the rest are killed with the sword which proceeds from the mouth of the rider on the white horse. Why would Jesus kill armies who had come to fight against the antichrist?

So we conclude that the armies of the kings of the East have not come to war against the antichrist, but against Israel. Remember that although the antichrist invades Israel half way through the seven year period, a good percentage of people in Judea escape to the desert.

This is the antichrist's final attempt to eradicate these Jews. The antichrist enlists the support of nations east of the river Euphrates, not realising that he is planning their defeat.

The Seventh Bowl.

This is poured out into the air, and a loud voice from the heavenly temple shouts "it is done!". This is the final act of judgement, and it unfolds with catastrophic results.

The strongest earthquake in history is unleashed, overshadowing the quakes of the sixth seal and seventh trumpet. This quake causes the cities of the nations to fall. Given that three quarters of the earth's population are currently predicted to be living in cities, then given the strength of this quake which flattens mountains and causes islands to disappear, it is possible that a great percentage of the remaining population will die in this earthquake.

Of the initial population of 8 billion, 2 billion are killed by the pale horse of the fourth seal, a further 2 billion are killed by the army of the sixth trumpet, and now this final bowl judgement could wipe out a further 3 billion, if in fact it reduces all cities to rubble.

This is not an exaggerated conclusion given that the seventh bowl also unleashes hailstones each weighing approximately fifty kilogrammes. Whoever escapes the quake is crushed by huge hailstones. And still those who survive blaspheme God.

Potentially then, there could be around 1 billion people left on Earth. However a significant number will make up the armies of the antichrist and the nations who he has deceived to come against Israel, and these will all be killed at the battle of Armageddon.

Therefore the final conclusion of the judgement events of seals, trumpets and bowls, is that the earth's population of 8 billion will be well and truly decimated.

This prediction should only cause the fear of God to fall on us, as we consider that the end of this age will not be a smooth transition. The beginning of the kingdom of God on earth is birthed in extreme trauma and pain.

Babylon the Harlot. Revelation Chapters 17 And 18 And Into 19.

It is so important in these days for believers in the Church to get an accurate perspective of end time events, the antichrist, the rapture or the mark of the beast. And to clear up confusion of Babylon the Great.

God has given us such detail in the bible, of Babylon the Great. It was not intended to be left on the shelf of weird and wonderful prophetic details, never to be understood, never to be considered worthy of our attention. Rather, this detail is given because it is lifesaving.

There is a clear warning in chapter 18 verse 4. Come out of her my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. And then in verse 8 of the same chapter, God describes exactly how this city will end. Therefore shall her plagues will come in one day.

Death and mourning and famine. She will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord who judges her.

Whose lives will this warning save? Those who work for, or otherwise support, or live in the city known as Babylon the Great, and heed the warning given.

You might wonder what difference it really makes whether people remain in Babylon, or leave, since the judgement on her comes at a time when billions of people are killed through various judgement events. In other words, you could flee the city of Babylon, only to be killed in another judgement event.

However, we should not over think this. Yes, billions will die during the great tribulation, but when God says that a single city is a definite target of judgement, those who live there are wise to take heed. In a similar way, those who live in Judea, when they see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, should remember the words of Jesus and flee for the desert.

Therefore, we would be wise to start learning who Babylon the Great could be. A specific answer is not possible, but our telescope can at least be pointing in the right direction, even if the object is out of focus.

Chapters 17 and 18 do give us some definite detail about Babylon the Great.

Chapter 17 verse 18 says that the woman described as Babylon the Great, and the mother of harlots, is in fact a great city that reigns over the earth. In the end times, we should have our eyes open, to watch out for a city that will usurp financial and religious power over all nations.

Chapter 17 verse 1 says that this city sits on many waters. This could mean that the city is surrounded by many seas. Or it could mean that the city is seated on many enemy nations, meaning the antichrist empire.

Chapter 17 verse 3 says that the woman described as Babylon the Great sits on a scarlet beast, whose description matches that of the antichrist empire. This picture tells us that Babylon is in one sense being carried or supported by the antichrist system.

On the other hand, it could also be that Babylon rides or controls the antichrist system. We should be aware that the city of Babylon is closely related to the antichrist system.

Chapter 17 verse 4 says that the woman described as Babylon the Great, is dressed in purple and scarlet. Purple is the colour of royalty, so we may expect this city to be located in a country ruled by a royal family.

Chapter 17 verse 6 says that the city of Babylon is drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. Therefore, we are looking for a city which is famous for the persecution of Christians.

Chapter 17 verse 16 says that the beast on which Babylon the Harlot rides, will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and consume her with fire. This tells us that ultimately, the antichrist system will turn on the city of Babylon and destroy her.

Chapter 18 verse 3 says that the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury. So we are looking for a city famed for paying exorbitant rates to those who do business with her.

Chapter 18 verse 23 also says, "For your merchants were the great men of the earth".

Chapter 18 verses 17 and 18 indicate that this city could be a port, because at the sight of the smoke from the city on fire, ships stay at a distance. At the sight of this destruction, ship owners and merchants mourn, saying, "Alas, the great city in which all who had ships became rich by her wealth! For in one hour she is made desolate".

Chapter 19 verse 2 says "True and righteous are His judgements, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication".

This indicates that the city of Babylon could be the epicentre of a false religion. In the Old Testament, when God accused the Israelite nation of adultery and fornication, He was usually speaking of spiritual unfaithfulness, of worshipping other gods and following other religions.

The bible describes the following characteristics about Babylon.

1. Revelation 17 verse 18 "A great city that reigns over the earth".
2. Revelation 17 verse 2. "Peoples have become drunk with the wine of her immorality".

3. Revelation 17 verse 5. Head of false religion "The Mother Of Harlots And Abominations Of The Earth". She is called a harlot probably because she peddles false religion.
4. Revelation 17 verse 6. Persecutes the saints, Jews and Christians.
5. Revelations 18 verse 15 A place of great wealth, merchants grew rich from her.
6. Revelations 17 verse 4. A place of Royalty, purple and scarlet, the colours of royalty.

Over the years, the following suggestions for Babylon the Great have been made.

1. The Illuminati.
2. The United States.
3. Jerusalem.
4. Rome.
5. The ancient city of Babylon in Iraq.
6. The Catholic Church.

The problem is that for each of the above suggestions, there are numerous criteria that do not match the descriptions of Babylon in the book of Revelation.

There is one speculative idea that matches all the descriptions perfectly. This is Saudi Arabia. This country is becoming increasingly powerful in the Middle East.

Saudi Arabia has significant oil reserves, and controls oil prices via OPEC, making it very powerful.

Unlike many Western countries, In 2023, Saudi Arabia's debt is only 26 point 5 percent of their gross domestic product G.D.P. compared to USA at 123 percent that is nearly 5 times the amount.

It is home to Mecca, an iconic Islamic city where Muslims are called to travel at least once in their lifetime.

Additionally, Saudi Arabia is involved in the BRICS monetary system, moving away from the dollar system. New futuristic cities are expected to be functioning within the next 10-20 years. The country is ruled by a royal family, they have cities with ports along the coast line, and many people in the world make money from the country.

So to conclude, we need to focus on a city that is most likely the centre of a false religion that has deceived and corrupted not just a few, but the whole earth, a port city who has made those who deal with her very rich, a city famed for the persecution of Christians, and finally a city who is used by and uses the antichrist for their respective purposes.

We cannot be certain at this stage, but considering the country's Islamic context, and the opulence of their wealth, Saudi Arabia seems a good fit.

So to conclude, keep adjusting the focus, until an answer becomes clear. Let your focus be guided by the words of these chapters in the book of Revelation. And finally, if you discover that the city happens to be your place of work or your home, remember the initial warning from God. "Get out of her".

What Do You Think?

The 3rd Angel in Chapter 14 warns against taking the Mark of the Beast.

Do you think the mark is rolled out at this point, i.e. after the trumpets?

Do we think that the elect will be on earth during the bowl judgements, and if so what could the impact be?

Do you think the bowl judgements are exclusively aimed at those who have submitted to the antichrist? And why?

If Saudi is Mystery Babylon, discuss whether you think that currently they have risen to the height of influence described in chapters 17-18?