

13 – THE BOWLS & THE PROSTITUTE (REVELATION 16:1-17:19)

Review:

A. The key verse (1:19)

- The key to understanding the book is found in Revelation 1:19

B. A basic outline

1. What You Have Seen (Chapter 1)
2. What is Now (Chapters 2-3)
3. What will take place later (Chapters 4-22)

C. A Basic Mindset

1. Don't be dogmatic about your interpretations.
2. Biblical prophecy only gives us a partial picture.

I. The Bowls of Divine Wrath (Revelation 16:1-21)

A. The Introduction (16:1)

- The seven angels are told to pour out their bowls of wrath upon the earth.

B. The First Bowl (16:2)

- The first bowl produces ugly and painful sores upon followers of the beast.

C. The Second Bowl (16:3)

- The second bowl destroys every living thing in the seas.

D. The Third Bowl (16:4-7)

1. The judgment of the bowl (16:4)

- The third bowl turns the rivers and stream into blood.

2. The praise of the angel (16:5-6)

- An angel praises the Lord for His retribution for the blood of the martyrs.

3. Affirmation of the praise (16:7)

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- Another voice proclaims the justness of God's judgments.

E. The Fourth Bowl (16:8-9)

1. The judgment of the bowl (16:8-9a)

- The fourth bowl causes the sun to scorch the earth and mankind.

2. The response of men (16:9b)

- Mankind will blaspheme God and refuse to repent.

F. The Fifth Bowl (16:10-11)

1. The judgment of the bowl (16:10)

- The fifth bowl is poured out on the beast and his kingdom.
- It causes a darkness and intense pain.

2. The response of men (16:11)

- Once again men refuse to repent and blaspheme God.

G. The Sixth Bowl (16:12-16)

1. The judgment of the bowl (16:12)

- The sixth bowl causes the River Euphrates to be dried up.

2. The gathering of the armies (16:13-16)

a. The task of the three demons (16:13-14)

- Three demons proceed to gather the armies of the world.

b. The Words of Christ (16:15)

- Christ's promise of His return is remembered.

c. The place of the gathering (16:16)

- The armies of the world gather at Armageddon.

Biblical Note: Armageddon

The word "Armageddon" refers to the battleground for the final battle between forces of Jesus Christ and the forces of the Antichrist. The site of the battle has identified with the Valley of Jezreel and the Plain of Esdraelon at the foot of Mount Megiddo. This site has

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been the scene of many decisive incidents in the history of Israel.

H. The Seventh Bowl (16:17-21)

1. The last bowl of judgment (16:17)

- The last bowl is poured in the air.
- A voice proclaims that the judgments are done.

2. The natural disasters (16:18-21)

a. The great earthquake (16:18-20)

- The greatest of all earthquakes destroys most of the earth.

b. The response of mankind (16:21)

- Mankind will continue to blaspheme God.

II. The Fall of the Great Whore (Revelation 17:1-18)

A. The Harlot and the Scarlet Beast (17:1-6)

1. The invitation of the angel (17:1a)

- One of the angels invites John to see the destruction of the great whore.

Biblical Note: The Great Whore

The great whore in the Book of Revelation has provoked much discussion concerning her identity. The passage refers to the whore of Babylon as a mystery means that we cannot be completely certain as to her identity. The passage does give some clues. Revelation 17:9 explains, "This calls for a mind with wisdom. The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits." Some scholars link this passage with the Roman Catholic Church because in ancient times, the city of Rome was known as "the city on seven hills" because there are seven prominent hills that surround the city. However, Revelation 17:10 goes on to explain that the seven hills represent 7 kings or kingdoms, five of which have fallen, one that is and one that is to come. Therefore, the "whore of Babylon" cannot refer exclusively to Rome. Revelation 17:15 tells us, "Then the angel said to me, 'The waters you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations and languages.'" Therefore the whore of Babylon will have great worldwide influence over people and nations. Revelation 17:10-14 describe a series of eight and then ten kings who affiliate with the Antichrist. The whore of Babylon will at one time have control over these kings (Revelation 17:18), but at some point the kings will turn on her and destroy her (Revelation 17:16). So we can gain a partial understanding of her identity. The whore of Babylon is an evil world system, controlled by the Antichrist, during the last days before Jesus' return. The whore of Babylon also has religious connotations – spiritual adultery with the beast being the focus of an ungodly, end-times religious system.

2. The influence of the Harlot (17:1b-2)

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- a. Her geographical influence (17:1b)
 - This evil woman symbolizes the religious system of Babylon.
 - She will have influence over peoples, multitudes, nations, and languages.
 - b. Her political influence (17:2)
 - The political systems of the world will embrace her.
3. The vision of the Harlot (17:3-6)
- a. John is taken to the Harlot (17:3a)
 - John is taken to see the whore in a vision.
 - b. The description of the Harlot (17:3b-6)
 - (1) Sitting on the beast (17:3b)
 - The whore is supported by the Antichrist.
 - (2) Her apparel (17:4)
 - The whore is adorned in the trappings of ritualistic religion and wealth.
 - (3) The name on her forehead (17:5)
 - The character of the whore is revealed in her names.
 - (4) Drunk on blood (17:6)
 - The whore is responsible for the exploitation and deaths of true believers.
- B. The Significance of the Harlot (17:7-14)
1. The angel reveals the whore's significance (17:7)
 - The angel will explain the meaning of the whore and beast.
 2. The beast (17:8)
 - The beast will be empowered by Satan.
 - He will have influence over the world.
 3. The seven empires (17:9-10)

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- The whore is supported by seven kingdoms or governments.
- Five empires have passed. (Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persian, Greece)
- The current king is Ancient Rome.
- There is a future world empire.

4. The eighth king (17:11)

- The Antichrist is the eighth king.

5. The future ten kings (17:12-14)

- The future ten governments will support the Antichrist.
- These governments will make war on the followers of the Lamb.

C. The Punishment of the Harlot (17:15-18)

1. The waters (17:15)

- The whore will have authority over the peoples of the world.

2. The whore is betrayed (17:16-17)

- The kingdoms of the world will turn on the whore and destroy her.

3. The nature of the woman (17:18)

- The whore is a great city of influence.