

Adult Faith Formation – Lent 2022
The Apocalypse or The Revelation to John
Week – 6 Conclusion (Rev. 17-22)

The Final Bowl of Wrath (16: 17-21)

- 7th bowl is poured into the air indicating that this final judgment will strike all
- The object of God's judgment is not on people, but on their persecutor, Babylon = the great city

The Harlot and the Beast (17: 1-18)

- Babylon is a symbolic city represented by the image of a prostitute, seducing other nations to corruption
- The description of the woman reveals her character: seated on a scarlet beast, wearing purple and scarlet, jewels. (First impression is of someone rich and beautiful)
- She holds a gold cup: filled with the abominable and sordid deeds of her harlotry. She is drunk on blood
- Angel explains the meaning of the Beast and the Whore to John but it is difficult to understand
- 7 kings: 5 have already fallen, 1 lives, and 1 has not yet come
- 10 horns: 10 kings who have not yet come to power, but will receive power for 1 hour. They wage war against God's people and the Lamb comes to do battle with them
- Babylon is destroyed by the very beast on which she is seated: evil destroys evil

Judgment of Babylon (18: 1-24)

- Judgment of Babylon has already been foretold 3 times and now will comprise the 18th chapter
- Angel announces: "Fallen, fallen is Babylon" The city is in total ruins, inhabited only by wild animals
- Babylon has seduced 3 groups: 1) all the nations have drunk the wine of her passion, 2) the kings of the earth (political leaders) have had intercourse with her, 3) the merchants of the earth have become rich on her luxury. Primary focus is an inordinate desire for material goods that leads to doing anything for money.
- Voice
- heaven warns God's people to stay away and keep a spiritual distance
- Kings, merchants, and seafarers lament for fall of Babylon
- Angel confirms Babylon's judgment and there is celebration in heaven

Chapter 19

- The wedding announcement of the Lamb and his Bride is presented
- The wedding of the Lamb to which all God's people are invited

Part 2 of the Conclusion begins with Chapter 19

- The judgment of the 2 Beasts and their allies
- The 2nd coming of Christ is presented with OT imagery (Isaiah: coming as a warrior to vindicate his people)
- Rider is called Faithful and True, he rides a white horse, a name is inscribed that no one knows but himself, he wears a cloak dipped in blood, he is accompanied by the armies of heaven.
- King of Kings and Lord of Lords is written on his cloak and thigh

The Last Battle: Destruction of the Beast and his allies (19: 17-21)

- Images of this battle drawn from Ezekiel (38-39)
- The outcome of the battle is certain, the angel is only concerned with the clean up as he calls to the birds of prey to feast on flesh
- No sooner have the enemies gathered than the battle is over, the Beast is captured with the False Prophet and both thrown alive into the pool of fire and Sulphur
- All the rest are killed with the sword (fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah 11)
- Before the new creation can begin, 2 adversaries must be destroyed: Satan and Death

Chapter 20: The Millennium, the Dragon's defeat, and the final judgment

- Babylon has fallen, Christ has returned, the Beast and its allies have been destroyed...what's left?
- The most ancient enemy: Satan. And his story is told through salvation history
- Angel comes down from heaven, binds Satan with a heavy chain, and throws into the abyss. The abyss is locked and sealed over for 1000 years
- The thousand-year reign of the martyrs and saints: the First Resurrection (the souls of those killed for their witness to Christ)
- This is the only place in Scripture that refers to 2 resurrection (this is a difficult theology and not completely understood) Reference to the Catechism 1030-1031

Judgment of Satan (20: 7-10)

- Satan is released to deceive the nations and gather them for battle
- Reference to Gog and Magog indicates that this battle is the fulfillment of Ezekiel's vision (Eze. 38-39) in which Gog gathers the nations to fight against Israel
- Fire comes down from heaven and consumes them: several places in The Rev. depict an extraordinary unleashing of evil against the church before the End
- Satan is thrown into the pool of fire and Sulphur. This is not an annihilation – Satan will be tormented forever in complete spiritual suffering

Judgment of the Dead, Death destroyed (20: 11-15)

- Vision of the final judgment
- The dead are raised and stand before the throne (2nd resurrection)
- Scrolls are opened and all are judged
- We are saved by grace but we are also judged by our works (II Cor. 5: 10)
- The Book of Life is opened
- Death and Hades are thrown into the pool of fire

The New Creation and the Bride of Christ (Chapter 21)

- When all the adversaries of God have been defeated and every human being has rendered an account of his/her life before Christ, then the fulfillment of God's plan will occur
- Chapter 21 consists of a series of visions: new heaven and new earth, a new Jerusalem is created and comes down from heaven
- God's ultimate plan is not that we dwell in heaven, but that heaven comes to a re-created earth
- The new Jerusalem appears as a bride because she is the church, the bride of the Lamb
- God announces a new order: He affirms his eternity, he offers water freely but it is contingent on the choices that the individual makes, all are invited to be victors and inherit the gifts of God,

the alternative is the pool of fire and Sulphur. (Again a list of qualities that will result in eternal fire: coward is at the top of the list!)

- The new Jerusalem is both a place and the people of God as the bride of the Lamb
- The new Jerusalem is described in tangible terminology: human language, architectural measurements, no temple, no sun or moon, with the “wealth of the nations”
- River of life giving water flows through its streets, the tree of life is present and in abundance
- God’s people will, for the first time, be able to see him face to face
- 4 Biblical images sum up the state of God’s people:
 - 1) they live in a new creation
 - 2) they are the bride of the Lamb
 - 3) they inhabit the new Jerusalem that has become God’s temple on earth
 - 4) God’s original plan reaches fulfillment as the Garden of Eden is restored

Epilogue (Chapter 21)

- Several different speakers engage in a divine conversation
- Jesus speaks of his “coming soon”
- A final warning is given
- 7th and last Beatitude: Blessed are those who have washed their robes
- Those in heaven are not there because of a perfect moral record, nor is that even possible for humanity. They are there because they have turned from evil to God and have received cleansing and grace through the sacrifice of Christ....through baptism and ongoing repentance
- Although the love between the Lamb and his Bride awaits consummation, the Lamb’s grace is, in the meantime, upon all.

Conclusion: Are we living in the End Times?