

## Revelation 19. 1-16. Bethany, Filton, Bristol. 27 February 2010.

My subject for this evening is that of our Lord's Second Advent, when He returns – not to the air – but to the earth – and on the events which will immediately precede that Advent.

As you no doubt know, the closing chapters of the book of Revelation are largely dominated by detailed accounts of two 'great' cities : first, the city of Babylon – described as 'great' no less than 12 times between chapters 14 and 19<sup>1</sup> – and, second, 'the holy city', the New Jerusalem – described as 'great' just once, in chapter 21 verse 10.

In one sense, therefore, I guess you might say that, to borrow a book title from Charles Dickens, these chapters tell 'A Tale of Two Cities'. And it is the first of these, 'Babylon the Great, Mother of harlots' – and her fall – which provides the background to the opening section of our reading this evening.

### **[Read from the Bible Revelation 19. 1-16]**

It is then the destruction of Babylon which provides the background to the opening section of our reading this evening. For Revelation chapters 17 and 18 speak of the fall of that grand *religious* and *commercial* system of the end times – 'Babylon the Great' – which system is to enjoy, for a period, the support and patronage of a notable *political* and *military* leader (spoken of as 'the Beast'<sup>2</sup>), together with that of his subordinates – but which system will, at God's appointed time, suffer God's own judgement at the hand of that same 'Beast' and the kings confederate with him.

Chapter 18 notes the widespread weeping and lamentation *on earth* over Babylon's destruction – referring (i) to the kings of the earth with their 'Woe, woe, ('Alas, alas', KJV) the great city', Rev. 18. 10 – (ii) to the merchants of earth with their 'Woe, woe, the great city', 18. 11, 16 – and (iii) to the men of the sea with their 'Woe, woe, the great city', 18. 17-19. That is, we are told, earth's monarchs, merchants and mariners unite in voicing their lament over Babylon's fall. And I would draw attention also to the stony silence which settles on fallen Babylon, described for us in verses 22-23: 'the sound of harpists, musicians, flutists, and trumpeters shall not be heard in you anymore ... the sound of a millstone shall not be heard in you anymore ... the voice of bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore'. No more sound of music, industry or joyful celebration.

But in the opening section of Revelation 19 – verses 1-8 – the apostle John's camera sweeps up from earth to heaven. Not that this is in any way unusual in the Book of Revelation – ever since chapter four the focus has been switching back and fore between heaven and earth.

And now our attention is directed from the sudden and unexpected fall of Babylon (likened to a great millstone thrown into the sea, Rev. 18. 21) to heaven's response to that fall ... where the same event is viewed *very* differently! For John's vision directs us from *a scene of weeping* to *a scene of rejoicing* – from *lamentation* to *jubilation* – from *the still silence of the grave* to *the thunderous sound of the massed choir of heaven* – from *the dirgeful 'woes' of earth* to *the euphoric 'Hallelujahs' of heaven*.

And in verses 1-8 we read a series of songs punctuated by the word 'Hallelujah'. And these four 'Hallelujah choruses' are altogether unique in the New Testament – the word 'Hallelujah' occurring nowhere else there – although there are many Old Testament psalms which either begin or end<sup>3</sup> – or, in some cases, both begin *and* end – with that word – 'Hallelujah' – which, as no doubt we all know, is well translated 'Praise the Lord'.<sup>4</sup>

And, in response to the invitation, 'Rejoice over her, O heaven', issued back in verse 20 of chapter 18, the first three 'Hallelujahs' focus on and celebrate the fall of Babylon. Viewed on the human level, this sudden and dramatic fall came about at the hand of the Beast and his subordinate kings, as we read in chapter 17 verse 16, 'the ten horns (ten kings, that is) and the Beast ... will hate the harlot; they will make her desolate and naked, and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire'. But, on the spiritual level, and ultimately, this was God's doing. For, as heaven saw most clearly, in the final analysis, the Beast was – as so many earthly rulers and despots before him<sup>5</sup> – but an unwitting instrument of judgement in God's hand. And chapter 18 repeatedly stresses this for us: 'God has remembered her iniquities (against her, that is)', 18. 5; 'she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is *the Lord God* who has judged her', 18. 8; 'Rejoice over her, O heaven, O saints and apostles and prophets, for *God* has avenged you on her!', 18. 20. And so we hear the heavenly singers ascribe to God the glory for the fall of Babylon.

And the first Hallelujah chorus not only celebrates God's saving work, His glory and His power as demonstrated by Babylon's fall ... it not only vindicates His every judgement as 'true' (perhaps in the sense of 'certain'<sup>6</sup>) and 'just'<sup>7</sup> ... but it takes up that thought of 'avenging' from chapter 18 verse 20 – closing with the words, 'He has avenged the blood of his servants at her hand', Rev. 19. 1-2.<sup>8</sup>

And I note that the description of Babylon in chapters 17 and 18 more or less opens and closes with references to her guilt in connection with 'the blood' of God's people: 'I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and the

blood of the martyrs of Jesus', 17. 6; 'in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints', 18. 24. These are the hideous bookends which John uses to describe her fall.

In the second joyful outburst, the same group praised God additionally that His judgement on Babylon was final and permanent. They commemorate the fact that Babylon will never rise again – 'her smoke goes up for ever and ever', v. 3. Babylon's punishment shall never be forgotten. Her fate shall remain an eternal monument of the righteous judgment of God. God's fiery judgement on Sodom and Gomorrah of old was but a foreshadowing of His judgement on Babylon the Great.<sup>9</sup>

At this point, the twenty-four elders<sup>10</sup> and the four living creatures make their contribution, prostrating themselves, and voicing their enthusiastic approval and assent to all that heaven's massed choir has just sung. But not content with simply acquiescing in all that has been done by crying out their 'Amen', they add their own 'Hallelujah'. And here these two groups of heavenly beings closest to God and His throne worship God together, not as the Holy and Eternal God who created all things for His pleasure, as they had at the close of chapter 4<sup>11</sup>, but as the Judge and Avenger of His suffering people.<sup>12</sup>

In verse 5, the Throne itself is then heard to voice an exhortation for added and continuous<sup>13</sup> praise from all of God's servants.

And, quite likely in response to this summons, in verse 6 the heavenly singing rises to a crescendo in the last of these four Hallelujah choruses – which chorus resounds with even greater volume than those before – sounding not only 'as the voice of a great multitude'<sup>14</sup> – as in verse 1 (the same expression) – but, unlike in verse 1, also as the roar of many waters and as loud claps of thunder, v. 6.

And this deafening song of praise is distinguished from the earlier songs not only by its volume, but also in that, in verse 7, it looks – not back, as they – but forward<sup>15</sup> – from a *worldly system* opposed to God – from 'the great whore (harlot, prostitute)' of Rev. 17. 1 and 19. 2, who has no husband – to a *heavenly company* greatly loved and cherished by God – to the 'wife' of no-one less than the Lamb Himself, 19. 7 – to the wife of Him, who, as the worthy Executor of God's purpose for the earth and for men, has, from the outset of chapter six, been progressively opening the seven seals of the scroll – Himself the unseen cause and source of the many fearful judgements which have been falling throughout the period.

In passing, it is worth noting that, under Roman law, official documents were often sealed by seven witnesses<sup>16</sup>, and that these seals could only be broken by someone with due/proper authority to do so. Oh yes, the Lamb certainly had the authority! His undisputable credential lay in His having been slain! And *His* opening of the seven seals shows that, in every case, God's judgements on the earth are triggered by the Lamb in heaven.

I should perhaps point out that the word in verse 7 is the usual word for 'wife' – and not that for 'bride'. And the reason she is described as a 'wife' before the actual marriage ceremony is that, according to the marriage customs of the Ancient Near East, betrothal took place when a young woman and young man were first promised to each other – a relationship sealed in the presence of witnesses – and, from that moment on, they could – and would – be described properly as 'husband' and 'wife' – as were, for instance, Joseph and Mary at the other end of our New Testament.<sup>17</sup> And, for this reason, we read a little later, in the early verses of chapter 21, that John says, 'I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned (not 'for her bridegroom', but) for her husband', v. 2, and again, that 'one of the seven angels ...talked with me, saying, Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife', v. 9.

And so the fourth 'Hallelujah' looks, not *back* to a *worldly system* which is portrayed both as a city and a woman, but *forward* to a *heavenly company* which is also portrayed both as a city (the New Jerusalem) and a woman.

And this Hallelujah points therefore, *not back* to the Great Prostitute, once 'arrayed' in the most gaudy and flashy manner, 17. 4-5, and now stripped and naked, 17. 16, *but forward* to the bride/wife of the Lamb 'arrayed' (the same word) in her simple – but radiant – wedding dress, 19. 8.

Yes, true – both are said to be 'arrayed' in 'fine linen', 18. 16; 19. 8. But there all similarity ends – for the fine linen of the Harlot is accompanied with purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, precious stones and pearls, Rev. 18. 16, whereas the fine linen of the Bride stands alone, unadorned – simply 'clean' and 'white' ('bright', 'glistening') – as is fitting for the chaste – the pure – Bride of Christ, 19. 8.

And I note that this, the first mention of the Lamb's wife – together with the announcement of the forthcoming marriage<sup>18</sup> – follows only *after* the account of the great Prostitute's fall and destruction. As if the Holy Spirit insists on the removal of what we might loosely label 'the false – the counterfeit – church', before introducing us to the true church – to the real thing!<sup>19</sup>

Babylon had asserted, 'I sit a queen ... and shall see no sorrow', Rev. 18. 7 – but she was wrong! How blessed then are we who form part of the Bride of Him who is truly King of kings, and part of that city where we are assured

there shall be no sorrow, Rev. 21. 4! And what joy shall be ours then. Although I do note that the 'marriage' is described, not as 'the marriage of the wife or of the bride' – or even as 'the marriage of the Lamb and His wife/bride' – but simply as 'the marriage of the Lamb' – suggesting, perhaps, that the chief joy will be *His* when the time comes for Him to take His glorious bride into His eternal embrace. And what a thought that is! For we know it was for the 'joy set before Him' that our Lord Jesus 'endured the cross', Heb. 12. 2. Well then could the 18<sup>th</sup> century German hymn writer, Gerhard Tersteegen, pen the words, 'He and I in that bright glory one deep joy shall share, mine to be forever with Him, His that I am there'.<sup>20</sup>

And so the four Hallelujahs *ring out* the old and *ring in* the new. Back in verse 20 of chapter 18, heaven had been summoned to 'rejoice' at God's judgement on Babylon, and now heaven calls on itself to 'rejoice' at the coming of the marriage of the Lamb – mentioned explicitly only here in the Bible, and expressing, I suggest, the deep love, intimacy and formal union between our Lord Jesus and His church<sup>21</sup> – whom He loved and for whom He once gave Himself. Indeed, I imagine the thunders of the fourth Hallelujah chorus pealing out<sup>22</sup> as heaven's wedding bells just prior to the marriage. So the Harlot dies but the Bride enters on a new stage of her life – as the wife of the Lamb. And what a tremendous adventure that will be!

'His wife has made herself ready', we read, in part at least, I suggest, in that she is seen arrayed in her wedding dress – the meaning of which dress being interpreted for us – namely, the 'righteous acts of the saints'. From one standpoint, she has made her dress herself – she has, we read, 'made herself ready (literally, 'she has prepared herself') for the wedding – for the deeds are truly those of the saints. But, from another standpoint, she has been 'granted' – been 'given' – by God clearly – to clothe herself in this way. For as we all well know, it is, in the final analysis, as Paul informed the Philippians in chapter 2 of his letter, 'God who works in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure', Phil. 2. 13 – and any fruit of the Spirit evident in our lives is just that – the fruit which the Holy Spirit produces in us.

Following the great multitude's announcement of the marriage of the Lamb, the angel who has been speaking to John since the opening of chapter 17, now – in the central of seven beatitudes recorded in the book<sup>23</sup> – the angel pronounces a blessing on all who receive invitations to the Lamb's marriage-supper, 19. 9 – a 'marriage-supper' being distinct from – and following – an actual marriage, of course.<sup>24</sup> But who are we to understand by 'those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb'? Frankly, I do not know.

As I see it, there are only two possibilities. First, that God's people are viewed in this passage under two separate symbols; namely, on the one hand, *collectively* as the Bride/Wife of the Lamb, and, on the other hand, *individually*, as the guests who receive invitations to the marriage-supper. And, if that is how you interpret that passage, you might plead, for example, that, at the end of chapter 7, our Lord Jesus is pictured, in effect, as both a shepherd and the Lamb in the very same verse – where we read that, 'the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters', v. 17. And, of course, there is chapter 5 – where He, our Lord Jesus, is described both as 'Lion' and as 'Lamb'. In both of which chapters, the one Person, our Lord Jesus, is pictured by two very different symbols.

The only other possibility I can see is that the invited guests represent companies *other* than the church – whether angels, or, I guess rather more likely, Old Testament believers such as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – and including, possibly, even John the Baptist – who once likened his relationship to the Lord Jesus to that of '*the friend of the bridegroom*', John 3. 29.<sup>25</sup> And it goes without saying that, if even the guests at the marriage are counted 'blessed', how much more must be the bride!

But I have neither right nor wish to be dogmatic on the point.

What we do know is that this is the first of two very different 'supper invitations' issued in our chapter. According to verses 17 and 18, the second is issued to the birds of prey, which are summoned to 'the great supper of God' – a gruesome feast of human 'flesh' (the word being used six times in all, vv. 18, 21) at which they are to gorge themselves on the corpses of those slain by the sword of the mighty Warrior King – by our Lord Jesus, v. 21.

Those at the Lamb's marriage supper enjoy one feast; the birds of the air another. As believers, we rightly relish the prospect of being at the one, but we certainly have no wish to be at the other – for all those at *that* feast find themselves on the menu!

The angel who had been speaking to John from the opening of chapter 17 then added, 'These are true words of God' – referring, I suggest, to all that he has been revealing throughout.<sup>26</sup> And John, overawed no doubt by all he had seen and heard, and also by the angel-messenger who had revealed them to him, responded – exactly as he did again in chapter 22 after an angel had concluded another lengthy revelation with similar words, 'these words are faithful and true', 22. 6 ... the apostle responded by falling before the angel's feet to worship him.<sup>27</sup> On *this* occasion, John's action followed the angelic revelation of the shameful end of Babylon; on the later occasion, that of the angelic revelation of the glories of the New Jerusalem.

But, on both occasions, the apostle was immediately corrected, 'Do it not!' – with the angel adding here, 'I – angel though I may be – am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who have the testimony of Jesus' – those latter words presumably meaning 'the testimony which the Lord Jesus Himself had given to them' to maintain for Him. Indeed, as the angel then pointed out, *all* true prophetic proclamations are sourced in Him – the Lord Jesus – and are simply communicated *through* others – His servants – whether they are angels or men. So 'Worship God! – not His messenger!' And, needless to say, this speaks volumes about the divine status and dignity of our Lord Jesus, who is worshipped by all in heaven and on earth in chapter 5.

I suspect that the rebuke which John received, both here and in chapter 22, also spoke volumes to John's readers in the Roman province of Asia Minor for another reason – for we know that, not only was angel worship actually practised throughout the area, but that this had even infiltrated at least one of the churches there. I refer to the apostle Paul's warning in Colossians 2 verse 18 against those who taught 'the worship of angels' there.

Having seen *the Bride* and how *she* is dressed for the marriage, we would probably expect John next to be shown *the Bridegroom* and how *He* is dressed. But John does not in fact see our Lord Jesus Christ as the Bridegroom. He sees Him rather as a mighty Warrior-King, and is shown how He – as the Warrior-King with four names – is dressed, 19. 13 – 'clothed', we read, 'in a vesture (a garment) dipped in blood', the same word used of the Bride being 'clothed' in fine linen, 19. 8.

I say 'Warrior King with four names', because that is what He is.

We read first in verse 11 that He 'is called Faithful and True' – 'Reliable and Real', if you like;

Then we read in verse 12 that 'He has a name written that no one knows except Himself'. It is a fact – strange but true – that magicians in the ancient world claimed they could influence (and even control) spirit beings if they knew their names. And it is possible, I suppose, that John is making it clear here that no-one has power over the Lord Jesus. But I suspect that the point is rather that there are – and always will be – hidden depths to the person and glories of our Lord Jesus – that there is that of Him which transcends all human and angelic understanding – and which no-one will ever be able to exhaust. As Josiah Conder has taught us to sing, 'The higher mysteries of Thy fame the creature's grasp transcend; the Father only Thy blest name of Son can comprehend'.<sup>28</sup>

And then we read in verse 13 that 'His name is called the Word of God' – not now, as in John 1, God's revelation in creation, but His revelation in judgement.

And finally we read in verse 16 that 'on His garment and on His thigh He has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords'.

And so, if *Babylon* had a fourfold name emblazoned on *her* forehead – 'Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of the harlots, and of the abominations of the earth', 17. 5 – and if the mighty Monarch of evil was also known by four names, 'the dragon, the ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan', both in 12. 9 and 20. 2 – so heaven's Champion – the majestic Rider on the White Horse<sup>29</sup> – has *His* four names.

Back in the opening of chapter 4, John had seen 'a door opened in heaven' – through which he had been invited to *enter in*. But now he sees – not a door – but *heaven itself* opened and the Conquering King *riding out* at the head of heaven's armies. And the might and majesty of the Warrior-King is awesome. Back in chapter 13, the worshippers of the dragon had issued the challenge, 'Who is like to the Beast? Who can make war with him?' Well, they are about to find out! For, according to verse 20 of our chapter, the Beast is soon to be seized and cast into the lake of fire. And, if I understand the beginning of chapter 6 correctly, it was the Beast who was there depicted as also seated on a white horse, going forth conquering and to conquer<sup>30</sup> – but who was not said, I note, as our Lord here, to have come out of heaven. But *his* conquering days are over ... for ever!

Now here in chapter 19. 11-16, we see something of the greatness and the power of the mighty Conquering King.<sup>31</sup>

Yes ... but we remember that it is not with His power or His weapons that He won His bride. The Lamb did not secure His wife by sword or iron rod! Far from it.

Before ever there could be a marriage in the ancient world, the terms of a dowry had to be settled and the dowry had to be paid.<sup>32</sup> And to discover the costly dowry which the Lamb paid for His bride, we must refer back, not to the apostle John's Book of the Revelation, but to his gospel.<sup>33</sup>

1. Where we do not read of 'a white horse and He who sat on it', but that 'Jesus found a young ass and sat on it; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on an ass's colt!'; so reads John 12. 14-15. The 'King' had come to die!

2. Where we do not read of One 'Faithful and True' in His *judgement* ('faithful' in contrast, perhaps, to the Beast who broke his covenant with Israel half way through Daniel's Seventieth Week, and 'True' in contrast to the False

Prophet – both of whom are shortly to be overcome and cast into the lake of fire, v. 20), but ‘Faithful and True’ in His *witness* – as He titles Himself in his letter to the angel of the church in Laodicea, ‘*the faithful and true witness*’, Rev. 3. 14. And we remember both the words of Paul concerning ‘Christ Jesus who *witnessed* the good confession before Pontius Pilate’, 1 Tim. 6. 13, and of John in his gospel, when Jesus answered Pilate, ‘For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear *witness* to the truth’, John 18. 37.

3. Where we do not read that ‘in righteousness He judges’, but that Pilate – the unrighteous judge – ‘brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement’, John 19. 13.

4. Where we do not read that He ‘makes war’, but that Jesus ‘answered Pilate, My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but *now* my kingdom is not from here’, John 18. 36.

5. Where we do not read that ‘His eyes are a flame of fire’, but that, from His cross, ‘when Jesus saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, Woman, behold your son!’, John 19. 26. His eyes were certainly not blazing then!

6. Where we do not read that ‘on His head are many diadems’, but that ‘the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head ... Therefore Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns’, John 19. 2, 5.

7. Where we do not read that ‘He is clothed’ in a garment ‘dipped in blood’ – the blood, I believe, not that of the Conqueror, but of His foes, of whom He says in Isaiah 63 verse 3, ‘I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury: and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments’ – but that ‘the soldiers ... put on Him (‘clothed’ – the same word as in Rev. 19. 13 – ‘Him in’) a purple garment (in all likelihood, some discarded military cloak – in mock imitation of the short purple cloak worn by the Caesars) ... Therefore Jesus came out ...wearing the purple garment’, again John 19. 2, 5.

8. Where we do not read that ‘the armies of heaven<sup>34</sup> ... followed Him on white horses’, but that He needed to forewarn His own disciples, ‘the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave me alone’, John 16. 32. So much for Peter’s recent protest, ‘Lord ...I will lay down my life for your sake’, John 13. 37.

9. Where we do not read that ‘out of His mouth issues a sharp sword’,<sup>35</sup> but that, when ‘Pilate ... said to Jesus, Where are you from? ... Jesus gave him no answer’, John 19. 9 – the Lamb, silent before His shearers, as the Ethiopian eunuch read from Isaiah 53, according to Acts 8. 32.

10. Where we do not read that ‘*He will strike* down the nations’, but that ‘one of the officers (of the Jewish council) who stood by *struck* Jesus with the palm of his hand’, John 18. 22; and that ‘the soldiers (of the Governor) ... *struck* Him with their hands’, John 19. 3.

11. Where we do not read that ‘He treads the winepress of *the wine* of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty’, but that He ‘said to Peter ... Shall I not drink the cup which my Father has given me?’, John 18. 11 – for He had come to drink *the wine* of God’s judgement Himself!

12. Where we do not read of ‘a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords’, but that ‘Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was: Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews’, John 19. 19 – and that His own nation disowned even *that* title. For when ‘Pilate said to them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar!’, John 19. 15.

And *that* is how He secured His Bride/Wife! Truly, as the apostle Paul expressed it in Ephesians 5, ‘Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for her ... that He might present her to Himself, a glorious church’, Eph. 5. 25-27.

To obtain a wife for himself, the patriarch Jacob needed to *serve* – to serve his uncle Laban, Gen. 29. 20, 28 ... and young David needed to *slay* – to slay Philistines and produce their foreskins as evidence, 1 Sam. 18. 25 ... but, to obtain a wife, our Lord Jesus needed – neither to *serve* nor to *slay* – but to *suffer*!

I close with a quote from one of the former writers of Our Daily Bread, Mr. Vernon Grounds, Chancellor of Denver Seminary. Mr Grounds wrote :

*‘A friend told me of an incident that happened while he was in seminary. Since the school had no gymnasium, he and his friends played basket ball in a nearby public school.*

*Nearby, an elderly janitor (‘caretaker’, that is) waited patiently until they finished playing. Invariably he sat there reading his Bible. One day my friend asked him what he was reading. The man answered, ‘The book of Revelation’. Surprised, my friend asked if he understood it.*

*'Oh, yes,' the man assured him. 'I understand it!' 'What does it mean?', my friend enquired. Quietly, the janitor answered, 'It means that Jesus is going to win'.*

Mr. Grounds concluded, 'That's the best commentary I have ever heard'.<sup>36</sup>

And this evening, without in any way allowing ourselves to get complacent, let us take encouragement from the sure and certain knowledge that, in the words of that old school caretaker, 'Jesus is going to win' – and that, by God's grace, we have most certainly enlisted on the right side.

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Revelation 14. 8; 16. 19 (twice – although the first occurrence may refer to Jerusalem); 17. 1, 5, 18; 18. 2, 10, 16, 18, 19, 21; 19. 2; 21. 10.

<sup>2</sup> 'We are shown, in the seventeenth chapter of the Apocalypse, that the power symbolized by the beast would, after a temporary lapse, be resuscitated. The apostle John received a vision of a beast with seven heads and ten horns, and carrying a woman. The identification of this beast with the fourth of Daniel's vision is established by the facts that each had ten horns, and that each becomes the object of divine judgment at the manifestation of the Son of God for the setting up of His Kingdom. The three periods relating to the power of the beast are thus indicated: "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and is about to come up out of the abyss"; and again, "he was, and is not, and shall come" (Rev. 17:8). This does not mean that it existed prior to John's time and was then nonexistent. The language is prophetic rather than historic, and simply implies (1) an existence, (2) a discontinuance, (3) a reappearance ... We must notice that the symbol of a beast represents both the kingdom and its final ruler. This is the case in both the 7th of Daniel and the 17th of Revelation. In the former chapter the interpretation is as follows: "These great beasts which are four are four *kings*.... The fourth beast shall be a fourth *kingdom*" (Dan. 7:17, 23). In the Revelation the beast is seen with seven heads and ten horns (v. 3). Here the whole animal is termed a beast. In verses 9–11, however, the beast is symbolically identified, not with the whole animal, but with one of the heads. Moreover, the seven heads are described first topographically and then personally. "The seven heads are seven mountains ... and they are seven kings; ... and the beast ... is himself also an eighth, and is of the seven." Clearly the beast again represents two distinct yet closely associated things. In the first eight verses of the chapter the language is indicative of dominion. Then the scope of the symbol is narrowed and the individual ruler comes into view. Thus the entire animal represents, not merely the ruler, but his kingdom, as in Daniel 7:23', W. E. Vine, 'Touching the Coming of the Lord', chapter 8.

Also see A. W. Pink's extensive notes on the so-called 'Antichrist';

[http://www.pbministries.org/books/pink/Antichrist/anti\\_06.htm](http://www.pbministries.org/books/pink/Antichrist/anti_06.htm)

<sup>3</sup> It occurs twenty-eight times altogether – twenty-four in the Old Testament. In seven Psalms, once each (civ. 35; cv. 45; cxii. 1; cxii. 1; cxv. 18; cxvi. 19; cxvii. 2). In seven Psalms, twice each (cvi. 1, 48; cxiii. 1, 9; cxlvi. 1, 10; cxlvii. 1, 20; cxlviii. 1, 14; cxlix. 1, 9; cl. 1, 6). In one Psalm three times (cxxxv. 1, 3, 21). If we add the four in Revelation, we have twenty-eight times.

<sup>4</sup> The very first occurrence of the twenty-eight occurrences of the word comes at the close of Psalm 104, 'Sinners shall be consumed out of the earth, and the wicked shall be no more. Bless the Lord, O my soul. Praise the Lord ('Hallelujah')!' In one sense at least, the fall of Babylon the Great represents a partial fulfilment of that verse!

<sup>5</sup> Such as, in the Old Testament, the Assyrian and Nebuchadnezzar – 'my servant'.

<sup>6</sup> See the use of the word in Rev. 19. 9. Also see TDNT, volume 1, page 249.

<sup>7</sup> Compare Rev. 15. 3; 16. 7.

<sup>8</sup> For the expression 'at her hand', compare the words of 2 Kings 9. 6-7, spoken by God to Jehu, 'I have anointed you king over the people of the Lord, over Israel. You shall strike down the house of Ahab your master, that I may avenge the blood of My servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the Lord, at the hand of Jezebel'.

<sup>9</sup> See Gen. 19. 28; and compare Isa. 34. 10 of the nation of Edom.

<sup>10</sup> Presumably, some exalted form of spirit being. 'It is far more sensible to understand the elder (of Rev. 5. 5) to be a literal individual than it is to maintain that 1/24<sup>th</sup> part of a symbolic group held conversation with the apostle', Gerald B. Stanton, 'Kept from the Hour', page 307. (Yet see the contradicting statements at the top of page 261.)

<sup>11</sup> And the Lamb as the One who has purchased men for God by His own blood, Rev. 5. 7-9.

<sup>12</sup> This is the last time the elders and the living creatures are mentioned. We read of them first when 'the Throne' was 'set' ... 'set' for judgment, I take it. Now that the judgement has been executed we read of them no more.

<sup>13</sup> The present tense.

<sup>14</sup> Although John heard 'as the loud voice of a great multitude', v. 1, clearly it *was* the voice of a great multitude; see the 'they' of verse 3.

<sup>15</sup> In Revelation, the term '*the Lord God Almighty*' occurs seven times and conveys something of God's greatness, power and sovereignty. (Rev. 1. 8; 4. 8; 11. 17; 15. 3; 16. 7; 19. 6; 21. 22. It is, in effect, 'Jehovah, Elohim, Shaddai'. And, whereas on earth in John's day the Roman Emperor Domitian was honoured as 'Lord and God', the heavenly chorus sings in triumph that it is God alone who occupies the true seat of power. The reign of which they speak almost certainly looks on to outcome of the confrontation later in the chapter. Compare, 'The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!', Rev. 11. 15. With the destruction of Babylon, the world is but a hair-breadth away from the institution of God's manifested kingdom. All that remains is the destruction of the Beast, the False Prophet, the kings of the earth, and their assembled armies.

<sup>16</sup> 'Legal documents were sealed, often with seven seals imprinted with the attestations of seven witnesses. (The wax seals would have to be broken to loose the strings beneath them, which wrapped the scroll and guaranteed that it had not been opened and thus altered.) This form was used for contract deeds and wills; it became increasingly common in Roman documents of the period, and some Palestinian Jewish documents of this sort have been recovered', *The IVP Bible Background Commentary : New Testament*. InterVarsity Press.

<sup>17</sup> Matt. 1. 19, 20, 24.

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<sup>18</sup> God's first social institution. All that remains is the destruction of the Beast, the False Prophet, the kings of the earth, and their assembled armies.

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<sup>18</sup> Matt. 1. 19, 20, 24.

<sup>18</sup> God's first social institution.

<sup>19</sup> This strongly suggests that 'the marriage of the Lamb' must take place sometime during the second half of Daniel's 'Seventieth Week' of seven years – after the Beast has violated his covenant and turned on the Great Harlot, and Babylon has been destroyed – but, before, of course, His (the Lamb's) second advent as the great Warrior-King of verses 11 to 16. For what it is worth, with my eye on the requirement of Deuteronomy 24 verse 5, I should not be surprised if there will be an interval of at least one year between His marriage and His return to earth to 'make war'.

<sup>20</sup> Hymns of Light and Love, number 184 – 'Midst the darkness, storm, and sorrow'

<sup>21</sup> See Rom. 7. 4; Eph. 5. 31-32; Rev. 22. 17.

<sup>22</sup> That is, the 'pealing' of thunder doubles as the 'pealing' of wedding bells.

<sup>23</sup> Rev. 1. 3; 14. 13; 16. 15; 19. 9; 20. 6; 22. 7, 14.

<sup>24</sup> See, for example, Esther 2. 16-18. See also ... [http://www.bibleprophecyblog.com/2013/10/marriage-of-lamb-and-marriage-supper.html?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+BibleProphecyBlog+%28Bible+Prophecy+Blog%29#axzz2gXsg08fu](http://www.bibleprophecyblog.com/2013/10/marriage-of-lamb-and-marriage-supper.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+BibleProphecyBlog+%28Bible+Prophecy+Blog%29#axzz2gXsg08fu)

<sup>25</sup> 'He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease', John 3. 29-30. The Lord Himself implied that He was the Bridegroom, Matt. 9. 15.

<sup>26</sup> Compare Rev. 22. 6.

<sup>27</sup> Compare Rev. 22. 8-9.

<sup>28</sup> Hymns for the Little Flock, number 150; 'Thou art the everlasting Word'.

<sup>29</sup> Roman princes customarily rode white horses in military triumphs; the emperor Domitian had himself ridden one behind his father and brother in their Judean triumph after the Jewish war of 66–70.

<sup>30</sup> See *Bibliotheca Sacra*; V153 #610—Apr 96—212 ff.

<sup>31</sup> The world has not seen our Lord since Golgotha – nor will they until they see Him in judgement.

<sup>32</sup> See Gen. 24. 53; 34. 11-12; 1 Sam. 18. 25.

<sup>33</sup> The world has not seen our Lord since Golgotha – nor will they until they see Him come in judgement.

<sup>34</sup> I take these to be comprised of believers; see Rev. 17. 14 with Rev. 19. 14, 19-20.

<sup>35</sup> And I note that the armies of heaven which follow Him wear no armour and bear no weapons; He carries the only sword, and He alone uses it.

<sup>36</sup> Morning Glory, January 4, 1994, p. 9. [http://www.bible.org/illus.php?topic\\_id=243](http://www.bible.org/illus.php?topic_id=243)