

Revelation 17

Review of Rev. 16:

List the 7 bowls of wrath:

1. Sores
2. Sea became blood
3. Rivers and springs became blood
4. Scorching sun
5. Darkness
6. Euphrates dried up
- Pause--
7. Fall of Rome (Battle of Har-magedon)

Revelation 17.1-6

V1 – The "judgment"? The punishment that God has decreed for the Empire

-**"On many waters"**? Shows the vastness of the Empire

V2 – "**Committed acts of immorality**"? Encouraged the abuse and persecution of Christians

-**"Made drunk"**? Lost their senses – impressed with Rome's power

V3 – Scarlet beast = beast from the sea (*Rev. 13*) = emperor

-**How do we know this?** Blasphemous names, 10 heads (great intelligence), 7 horns (much power)

-**Why scarlet?** Color of royalty

V4 – Purple – **Who was a seller of purple material?** Lydia (*Acts 16.14*)

-**"Gold cup"** – we would expect some great drink

-**But what was in the cup?** Abominations (hateful things)

V5 – **Other things on foreheads in Rev.?** 666 and mark (seal) of God on 144,000

-**What was on the forehead of this woman?** "Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth"

V6 – **What is the harlot drinking?** The blood of the saints

-The true nature of the Empire is now fully revealed

-Attired lavishly (red, purple, jewels), but drinking the blood of God's people

-**What did John call the Roman Empire "Babylon"?** – to keep the prison censors from understanding the meaning of this book

-**But why the name Babylon?** Because in the Old Testament it represented the worst of all governments

Revelation 17.7-13

V7 – The angel is going to explain this to John

V 8 – The beast – 2 theories:

1. Satanic power – defeated at the cross, but coming back to persecute the first century Christians

2. Nero redivivus myth – that Nero was going to return with the Persians to conquer the Roman Empire

[Note to the teacher: *redivivus* is pronounced: *re-de-vi-us* (accent on third syllable)]

-Definition: brought back to life, reborn

-**Who will be impressed with all of this?** Not the Christians (because the names of the Roman leaders were not in the Book of Life, but the names of the Christians were)

V 9 – 7 heads = 7 hills

-This is a direct reference to Rome, which was known in ancient times, as well as today, as "*The City of Seven Hills*"

-No doubt, the Christian readers would have recognized Rome as this city

-**Why then did John use this description (that might have been recognized by the prison censors)?** – Probably because by this time they were thoroughly confused by this letter and would have already given up reading it

-For verification of the ancient use of "City of Seven Hills" as a reference to Rome, see: *New International Commentary, Rev.*, 314]

The 7 hills also have stood for the 7 worse emperors the Empire ever had:

-Augustus

-Tiberius

-Caligula

-Claudius

-Nero

-Vespasian

-Titus

V 10 – There has been much discussion on this verse

-The sixth of the 7 emperors would have been Vespasian (69-79 AD)

-But it seems as if *Revelation* was written later than this, when Domitian was emperor

Another theory: 7 kingdoms:

-Egypt

-Nineveh

-Babylon

-Persia

-Greece

-Rome

-the Christian age

Best theory: 7 = completeness

-John was saying: The persecution is almost over – a new day is about to dawn

V 11 – Eighth Emperor: Domitian

V 12 – Believed to be 10 senators, or lesser rulers of Rome, under the Emperors

Revelation 17.14-18

V 14 – Cheerful to the first century Christians
-10 horns = power of the Roman Empire

V 15 – **What did the "waters" represent?** People and nations who supported the Empire

V 16 – Revolt among Roman provinces
(In the book of *Acts*, we see the great fear that Rome had of a rebellion from its outlying possessions – See *Acts 21.38*)
-Principle of international politics (still true today): Power has in it the seeds of its own destruction

V 17 – God was using people as his instruments

V 18 – A reference to the capital city of Rome

Revised 2013-01-28