

## The Revelation to St. John

Collect Prayer - After the Creation Reading - the Great Vigil of Easter

O God, who wonderfully created, and yet more wonderfully restored, the dignity of human nature: Grant that we may share in the divine life of Him who humbled himself to share our humanity, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

***Amen***

Are there questions or comments from the last session? For those of you following online you may email Fr. Bart at [frryanssc@frontiernet.net](mailto:frryanssc@frontiernet.net)

II. "Falling into the hands of the Living God"

*<sup>30</sup>For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people." <sup>31</sup>It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

Hebrews 10:30-31

*<sup>26</sup>For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. Their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural, <sup>27</sup>and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in their own persons the due penalty for their error. <sup>28</sup>And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a base mind and to improper conduct.*

Romans Chapter 1:26-

28

C.H. Dodd writes about his passage of St. Paul's letter to the Romans and refers to the reality of allow oneself to fall into the hands of men rather than falling into the hands of God. Falling into the hands of man means, turning away from God and embracing the world

III. The Good News - viewing the judgment from God's Eyes

A. God did not spare His Son

B. King David:

*14Then David said to Gad, "I am in great distress; let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for his mercy is great; but let me not fall into the hand of man."*

II Samuel 24:14

God did punish David for his sins and they were many, but he did not die and understood that God's punishments were for his restoration not for his destruction.

Rev. 16:2-9

*2So the first angel went and poured his bowl on the earth, and foul and evil sores came upon the men who bore the mark of the beast and worshiped its image. 3The second angel poured his bowl into the sea, and it became like the blood of a dead man, and every living thing died that was in the sea. 4The third angel poured his bowl into the rivers and the fountains of water, and they became blood. 5And I heard the angel of water say, "Just art thou in these thy judgments, thou who art and wast, O Holy One. For men have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink. It is their due!" 7And I heard the altar cry, "Yea, Lord God the Almighty, true and just are thy judgments!" The fourth angel poured his bowl on the sun, and it was allowed to scorch men with fire; 9men were scorched by the fierce heat, and they cursed the name of God who had power over these plagues, and they did not repent and give him glory.*

I. The Bowls are another adaptation of the Plagues of Egypt

A. The first three are quick

B. Note that adaptation of the fourth trumpet - instead of darkness we get heat as the sun is effected.

II. The Good News is that even this late in the Revelation God is still working to get peoples attention - the worshippers of the beast of not will to change - vs. 9

Rev. 16:10-11

*<sup>10</sup>The fifth angel poured his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was in darkness; men gnawed their tongues in anguish <sup>11</sup>and cursed the God of heaven for their pain and sores, and did not repent of their deeds.*

I. The fifth Bowl is poured on Rome (The throne of the beast)

Note that this is a prelude to the final judgment - and like Pharaoh the plagues only harden the heart of the unbelievers

Rev. 16: 12-16

*<sup>12</sup>The sixth angel poured his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, to prepare the way for the kings from the east. <sup>13</sup>And I saw, issuing from the mouth of the dragon and from the mouth of the beast and from the mouth of the false prophet, three foul spirits like frogs; <sup>14</sup>for they are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty. <sup>15</sup>(“Lo, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is he who is awake, keeping his garments that he may not go naked and be seen exposed!”) <sup>16</sup>And they assembled them at the place which is called in Hebrew Armageddon.*

I. An echo of rev. 9:14 - the four angels - held bound at the Euphrates

A. The demonic army is the Parthians - Rome's dreaded foe

B. The final assault will be from all direction at once and will be an undirected attack - against Rome and all people, Christians and non-believers

Here we are to understand the real horror of war - Collateral Damage is the Politically Correct Term - drop a bomb and your enemy dies, but also the innocents

II. The timing of this final attack will be unknown - like a thief

III. Like the number of the Beast - Armageddon would have been understood by the readers of the time

The Plains of Megiddo were a flat area perfect for battles and had been the site of many battles, many deaths and much suffering and destruction. For us Pearl Harbor, 911 or Hiroshima would elicit the desired response.

Rev. 16:17-21

*<sup>17</sup>The seventh angel poured his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" <sup>18</sup>And there were flashes of lightning, voices, peals of thunder, and a great earthquake such as had never been since men were on the earth, so great was that earthquake. <sup>19</sup>The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and God remembered great Babylon, to make her drain the cup of the fury of his wrath. <sup>20</sup>And every island fled away, and no mountains were to be found; <sup>21</sup>and great hailstones, heavy as a hundredweight, dropped on men from heaven, till men cursed God for the plague of the hail, so fearful was that plague.*

I. **It is done!** vs. 17 the plagues, the bowls the trumpets - all are done

A. The Last judgment has cosmic consequences

remind 1. Lightening, earthquakes, the city split into three - Does this us of anything? - The moment of Christ Sacrifice

2. The hail of Egypt is magnified now to a hundred weight

B. Despite the unprecedented violence and destruction - men still fail to respond. Remember Pharaoh

II. The Good News is that like in the Time of pharaoh God wishes His people to be free to know Him and to Follow Him

A. God is at work even in the world that seems to be consumed with sin

B. Our challenge is not to be discouraged or to embrace the cultural norms

### **Revelation 17:1-18**

*<sup>1</sup>Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who is seated upon many waters, <sup>2</sup>with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and with the wine of whose fornication the dwellers on earth have become drunk.” <sup>3</sup>And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns. <sup>4</sup>The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and bedecked with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her fornication; <sup>5</sup>and on her forehead was written a name of mystery: “Babylon the great, mother of harlots and of earth’s abominations.” <sup>6</sup>And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.*

*When I saw her I marveled greatly. <sup>7</sup>But the angel said to me, “Why marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman, and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns that carries her. <sup>8</sup>The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is to ascend from the bottomless pit and go to perdition; and the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will marvel to behold the beast, because it was and is not and is to come. <sup>9</sup>This calls for a mind with wisdom: the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated; <sup>10</sup>they are also seven kings, five of whom have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he comes he must remain only a little while. <sup>11</sup>As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to perdition. <sup>12</sup>And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received royal power, but they are to receive*

*authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast. <sup>13</sup>These are of one mind and give over their power and authority to the beast; <sup>14</sup>they will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.”*

*<sup>15</sup>And he said to me, “The waters that you saw, where the harlot is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues. <sup>16</sup>And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will hate the harlot; they will make her desolate and naked, and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire, <sup>17</sup>for God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by being of one mind and giving over their royal power to the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. <sup>18</sup>And the woman that you saw is the great city which has dominion over the kings of the earth.”*

## I. The Fall of Babylon (Rome)

### A. Another part of the Vision

1. We see the effects of the seven bowls visited upon Babylon
2. Rome is a harlot, because of her wealth and her emperor worship

B. The desert is a symbol of many things - need, a place of rest, a place of prayer and contemplation - a place of evil and temptation

1. For John it is place that allow him to see Rome for it's true nature
2. Despite his knowledge he is awed by the grandeur of Rome

## II. The angel reveals the truth of the vision

A. The seven - the seven hills of Rome - the emperors of Rome - Nero being the last the eighth - One more than the perfect number - the anti - christ

B. The Ten horns are the Ten Kings - from Daniel 7:24 these Kings belong to the future when they will be given authority for one hour - to show the futility of earthly rulers

C. The whole world - only those people whose names are not found in the Lamb Book of Life

D. The beast rises from the abyss - it rises only to go down to final destruction

E. The faithful followers of the Lamb will share in the final

III. Now we see the kings of the earth turn on the Harlot

A. The Kings purpose is not their pleasure of pursuit of power

B. The Kings like all the created order is under God's order and Perfect Will

IV. The Good News is for us a challenge

While many can identify with the disadvantaged most of the western world would identify more quickly with Rome. We are rich and wealthy compared with the rest of the world. What do we do with our wealth, do we own things or are we owned by them? What of our actions reflect Gospel Values and what reflect actions taken to maintain or even increase of wealth?

Is American Idol a television show or is our idol our wealth?

Jesus preaching of the Beatitudes is not poetry but reality in the Final Judgment.

**Please note that I am proceeding quickly now, because the pace of the vision increases. There is no longer any need to delay - God has spoken it is finished**

Revelation 18:1-8

*<sup>1</sup>After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority; and the earth was made bright with his splendor. <sup>2</sup>And he called out with a mighty voice, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! It has become a dwelling place of demons, a haunt of every foul spirit, a haunt of every foul and hateful*

*bird; For all nations have drunk the wine of her impure passion, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich with the wealth of her wantonness.”*

*<sup>4</sup>Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues; for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. Render to her as she herself has rendered, and repay her double for her deeds; mix a double draught for her in the cup she mixed. As she glorified herself and played the wanton, so give her a like measure of torment and mourning.*

*Since in her heart she says, ‘A queen I sit, I am no widow, mourning I shall never see,’ so shall her plagues come in a single day, pestilence and mourning and famine, and she shall be burned with fire; for mighty is the Lord God who judges her.”*

I. The Fall of Rome has been proclaimed, and now we witness the reality

A. Babylon is present in the past tense, because the last plague has destroyed her

B. Her punishment was the result of idolatry - note her arrogance vs. 7 " I sit here as Queen"

C. Now we witness God calling His people from the city - For those who are reading John we are to understand that we are to flee from Rome rather than being contaminated by her or sharing in her destruction

II. The Good News is even in this late hour men are still encouraged to resist the culture and seek the God who calls them

Rev. 18:9-19

*<sup>9</sup>And the kings of the earth, who committed fornication and were wanton with her, will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning; <sup>10</sup>they will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say, “Alas! alas! thou great city, thou mighty city, Babylon! In one hour has thy judgment come.” <sup>11</sup>And the*

*merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo any more, <sup>12</sup>cargo of gold, silver, jewels and pearls, fine linen, purple, silk and scarlet, all kinds of scented wood, all articles of ivory, all articles of costly wood, bronze, iron and marble, <sup>13</sup>cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and slaves, that is, human souls. “The fruit for which thy soul longed has gone from thee, and all thy dainties and thy splendor are lost to thee, never to be found again!” <sup>15</sup>The merchants of these wares, who gained wealth from her, will stand far off, in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud, “Alas, alas, for the great city that was clothed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, bedecked with gold, with jewels, and with pearls! In one hour all this wealth has been laid waste.” And all shipmasters and seafaring men, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off <sup>18</sup>and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning, “What city was like the great city?”*

*<sup>19</sup>And they threw dust on their heads, as they wept and mourned, crying out, “Alas, alas, for the great city where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth! In one hour she has been laid waste.*

I. The Fall of Rome is lamented by those who most profited from her sin

- A. The Kings who participated in her idol worship
- B. The Merchants who have lost their income
- C. The Seafarers who gained from trade with Rome

We should also note who does not lament her fall - the faithful and those who were exploited

Rev. 18:20-24

*Rejoice over her, O heaven, O saints and apostles and prophets, for God has given judgment for you against her!” Then a mighty angel took up a stone like*

*a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "So shall  
 Babylon the great  
 city be thrown down with violence, and shall be found no more;  
 and the sound  
 of harpers and minstrels, of flute players and trumpeters, shall  
 be heard in  
 thee no more; and a craftsman of any craft shall be found in thee  
 no more and  
 the sound of the millstone shall be heard in thee no more; and  
 the light of a  
 lamp shall shine in thee no more; and the voice of bridegroom  
 and bride  
 shall be heard in thee no more; for thy merchants were the  
 great men of the  
 earth, and all nations were deceived by thy sorcery. And in her  
 was found the  
 blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on  
 earth."*

I. The Last Verse gives us the chief reason for her destruction - the suffering of God's people - their blood is upon her

A. The dirges are sung by the three groups who were focused on their own self interest

B. The rejoicing comes when we recognize the challenge of this passage. Babylon falls because her self interest, her idolatry and the suffering she forced upon the least the lost and poor.

## II. The Good News

This is precisely the message of the Beatitudes and is a challenge to any religious organization. How can we focus not on the idol that is building or a style or worship or our own wealth, power or membership numbers? Rather focus upon the ministry of Jesus, feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty and preaching through our actions.

Can you understand how Rome = the Roman Catholic Church = Babylon is an easy transition for those reading and studying the Revelation of St. John. Especially in the time before WWI when the Papal States were lost (The remnant of the Roman Empire)

