

AN OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Chapters 16-17

Keys To Chapter Sixteen:

1. Chapter sixteen reveals the actual pouring out of the seven bowls of wrath that represent the seven plagues of chapter fifteen.
2. The bowls are the final pouring out of God's wrath on the enemy—the Roman Empire.
3. The first three bowls use imagery from the plagues against Egypt to signify God's judgment on the nation that opposed the church (vv. 1-7; Ex. 9:9-11; 7:17-21).
4. The fourth bowl deals with God's use of the sun to plague the enemy while the fifth uses darkness, as against Egypt (vv. 8-11; Ex. 10:21-22).
5. The sixth bowl involves the drying up of the Euphrates River to symbolize the opening up of the north for a Parthian invasion (v. 12).
6. Additionally, we are told that the dragon-controlled beast would be active in his opposition to God with demonic activity used to press the battle against the church. The evil forces are pictured as gathering at Har-Magidon (vv. 13-16).
7. Har-Magidon is a Greek transliteration of a Hebrew place name meaning: "the hill of Megiddo," the geographical area where Israel's northern enemies invaded the nation (v. 16). Here, however, it is the invaders who will suffer defeat. Spiritual Israel would not fall (cf. Heb. 12:28).
8. The seventh bowl would bring the defeat of Babylon the Great—Rome, pictured yet another time (vv. 17-21; cf. 14:8; 18:2).

Keys To Chapter Seventeen:

1. This chapter symbolically supplies more information as to the character and identity of the enemy.
2. Rome is here likened to a Great Harlot, corrupter of kings/kingdoms, drunk with the blood of the martyrs, and reigning over a vast empire (vv. 2, 6, 15, 18).
3. She is the archetypical "scarlet woman" (v. 3).
4. She had grown rich through her abominations (v. 4).
5. In fact, she was the "mother of all abominations" (v. 5).
6. She was the primary force behind the murder of the martyrs (v. 7).
7. She represents an immoral sense of prideful greed that drove the Roman Empire.
8. The beast itself is the Satan-empowered Roman Empire.
9. Directing this empire would be one particular emperor who was as one who had come back from the dead (vv. 8-11).
10. The seven heads of the beast represent the seven hills upon which the city of Rome was built as well as seven kings or emperors that ruled over Rome—and a dreaded

eighth that was as though one of the seven had come back from the dead (vv. 9-11).

11. Here, as in 13:18, the reader is told to be especially wise in the interpretation.

12. In 13:18 there was the number 666 that we identified as adding up to Nero.

13. Here in 17:9-11, we are looking for a particular emperor—the emperor of the persecution.

14. Beginning with Augustus, the first actual emperor of Rome, the first eleven emperors are:

Augustus	31 BC - AD 14
Tiberius	14 - 37
Gaius (Caligula)	37 - 41
Claudius	41 - 54
Nero	54 - 68
Galba	68 - 69
Otho	69
Vitilius	69
Vespasian	69 - 79
Titus	79 - 81
Dometian	81 - 96

15. As you will recall, in chapter thirteen where we found the other symbolism in need of special attention, there was a tie in with Daniel chapter seven.

16. Here we will also find a link to Daniel seven.

17. As in chapter thirteen, Revelation will be looking back through history, Daniel, however, looked ahead through time (cf. Dan. 7:3-6; Rev. 13:1-2).

18. Daniel, in dealing with the same persecution as Revelation, saw ten emperors and then an eleventh—the persecutor (Dan. 7:7-8, 20-24).

19. John, on the other hand, saw seven emperors and then an eight—the persecutor (Rev. 17:10-11).

20. But Daniel, looking forward, saw that three of the kings were removed, which would leave seven and an eighth, just like John saw in Revelation seventeen.

21. History records that Dometian was in Rome through a civil war that saw Galba, Otho, and Vitilius all briefly rise up only to fall before they could gain control of the empire.

22. Dometian was actually proclaimed emperor at that time in the place of his father Vespasian who was laying siege to Jerusalem, accompanied by Titus, Dometian's older brother. Vespasian returned to Rome immediately to take his place as emperor.

23. So the book of Revelation has discounted the three emperors that were removed and looks at the five (Augustus—Nero), the one who was emperor at the writing of Revelation (Vespasian), the one who would come, but only reign for a short time

(Titus), and then the eighth (Dometian) who was like one of the seven (Nero) come back from the dead.

24. History and the Bible fit perfectly in a very intricate revelation of truth!
25. Therefore, I believe that the Book of Revelation was written in the latter part of Vespasian's reign, about 78 or 79, just before Titus would come to rule for a short time, thus, just about four years before the persecutor, Dometian, would reign.
26. The ten horns are ten client kings within the Roman Empire—kings allowed to reign as long as they would be subject to Rome. Their hatred against Rome will eventually be part of Rome's undoing (vv. 12, 16-17).
27. The cause of Christ will prevail (v. 14).
28. Rome ruled over vast numbers of people, but she was no match for the Lord (vv. 15-17).
29. The Harlot, the malevolent spirit that characterized Rome, was ruler over earthly kings, but not over the King of kings (vv. 18, 14).