

The End

Week 52: December 24-30 — *Revelation 18-22*

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100% Complete - The End

Helpful Resources

Progressive Revelation (p.33), Interpretative Challenges (p.71), Order of End Time Events (p.73)

Making Sense of It All

- The Big Picture

Like the end of a book or a movie, the final scenes bring closure to the story. The conflict is resolved, the tension between characters is alleviated, the bad guys are locked up, and the good guys live happily ever after. The end of the book of *Revelation* is no different. The entire narrative of the Old and New Testaments is wrapped up in several major events, such as the fall of Babylon (when the bad guys' plot is foiled), the Marriage of the Lamb (when the good guys are reunited), the Second Coming of Christ (when the bad guys are defeated), the Great White Throne Judgment (when the bad guys are locked away for good), and the new heavens, new earth, and New Jerusalem (where the good guys live forever).

But the book of *Revelation* is different in one way. One of the characters in the story, John, has been given a vision of the future. Thus, the readers know how the story will end. Though we feel the tension of the conflict now, and the storyline becomes more tangled, we don't have to fear or be dismayed because the Author has given us His assurance that all will be okay. So then, while we endure the crazy plot twists today, we carry on with confidence knowing that the story ends well. In this review, let's take another look at the exciting finale.

- The Grand Finale

1. **The Fall of Babylon (18:1-24)** — When the Bad Guys' Plot Is Foiled

Babylon the Great (a.k.a. the Mother of Harlots) is the one world political, economic, and religious system which worships the Anti-Christ and kills the saints. Though it is impressive and powerful, Babylon's authority is short-lived. She is abandoned and devoured by the nations and ultimately destroyed by the Lamb (17:1-18).

2. **The Marriage of the Lamb (19:1-10)** — When the Good Guys Are Reunited

Just as Jewish marriages include a betrothal period, a dowry, a returning groom, and a wedding feast, so the Church, or Bride, will be married to Her Groom (Christ). We are betrothed by faith. We've been bought with the dowry of His sacrificial death. Now, He is gone, preparing a place for us to live, but when He returns, we will be reunited forever.

3. **The Second Coming (19:11-21)** — When the Bad Guys Are Defeated

Prophets foretold of a King who would establish an everlasting kingdom (*Isa. 9:6, 7*). But Jesus, the Messiah, has two advents (arrivals). His first advent was humble and lowly, and His mission was to secure our salvation. However, His second advent will be mighty and triumphant. He will return as a conquering King, defeat His enemies, and reign forever. Read *Daniel 2:25-45*. How is Jesus' Second Coming described in this prophecy?

4. **The Great White Throne Judgment** (20:1-15) — When the Bad Guys Are Locked Up

Once the bad guys are either killed or captured, they are locked up for good. Satan is thrown into the lake of fire (hell), along with death, Hades, the Anti-Christ, and the False Prophet, where “they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.” Then, all the dead of the earth will be resurrected to judgment (called the second resurrection). They will stand before the Great White Throne, where they will be held accountable for their deeds (recorded in the books), then sentenced forever to the lake of fire. Those whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life will be passed over in this judgment.

5. **All Things New** (21:1-22:5) — Where the Good Guys Live Forever

The current heavens and earth are destroyed in the judgments of the end times. Thus, God will replace them with a new heaven and a new earth. Also, He will build a New Jerusalem, the holy city, in which His people will live with Him forever. In that city, there is no sin, no fear (the gates are always open), no darkness, no death, no pain or suffering, no crying, only pure joy. The city is massive and remarkable, with pearly gates, streets of gold, brilliant light, and vibrant colors. Its inhabitants will enjoy their inheritance together, sustained by the river and tree of life (symbols of their salvation).

- The End

As the last book of the Bible, *Revelation* resolves all the tension or conflict in the story, as well as presents the fulfillment of all the types along the way. For example, though God’s perfect creation was cursed by the fall of man, He restores it by making all things new. Though we see Satan have his way with men from the very beginning, he is now bound up forever and will never again cause trouble. The marriage of the first Adam to Eve is fulfilled perfectly in the marriage of the second Adam (Jesus, the Lamb) and His Bride (the Church). The Tree of Life, which was kept from mankind in the beginning, is now fully accessible so that men can live forever. All the prophecies, including the first one in *Genesis 3:15*, have been fulfilled. God has kept His word and done all that He has promised.

When John stood at the foot of the cross, he heard Jesus say those immortal words, “It is finished” (*John 19:30*). Now, he hears a voice tell him, “It is done” (*Revelation 22:6*). The Author is finished. He puts down His pen. The story is over, for now. Although we will have many more tales to tell in eternity, the story of the first earth has reached its end.

The Bottom Line

We endure crazy plot twists now, but we carry on with confidence knowing that the story ends well.

Questions to Consider

1. Who is Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots? Is it/she rising to power today?
2. Why is a one world political, economic, and religious system a bad idea?
3. Are the Rapture and Second Coming of Christ the same or different events? Explain.
4. How is the Great White Throne Judgment different than the judgment of believers? See *Matt. 10:41, 42; Lk. 19:11-26; Jn. 5:24; Rom. 8:1; 14:10; 1 Cor. 3:10b-15; 2 Cor. 5:10*.
5. What excites you most about the end times?
6. Did reading *Revelation* make you fearful or give you hope? Explain.
7. Take some time to reflect on your reading through the New Testament this year. What are your big takeaways? How was your faith challenged and encouraged?