

## Revelation 17-19

### Revelation 17:1 – The Great Whore of the Earth

One of the most indisputable things about the Apocalypse is the vividness of the symbolism and imagery used by John. The kingdom of Satan, in all its opulent and wicked splendor, is depicted as a harlot, lavishly dressed and riding on a beast. The obvious representation is that of impurity, evil, wickedness. But the symbolism goes much deeper than that. The figure of a harlot as a metaphor for Satan's dominions is appropriate, for Satan prostitutes all that is noble and good.

The ideal relationship between man and God has often been symbolized in scripture as a marriage. In the Old Testament, Jehovah is the husband and Israel the bride. In the New Testament Christ is the bridegroom and the church is the bride (Matthew 25:1–13; Revelation 19:7–9). Whenever his people prove unfaithful to their covenants, they can be likened to a faithless woman who has sold herself to immorality and sin.

*The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles, Chapter 55: "The Kingdoms of This World Are Become the Kingdoms of Our Lord"*

### Revelation 17:1-6 – The woman on a scarlet beast

By carefully reading the revelations of St. John, you will find the apostasy foretold. You will find the Church represented as a woman surrounded by twelve stars. You will also find the history of the bringing forth of the Priesthood, and of the woman going into the wilderness for a season. You will also find the history of the establishment of the church of Satan—which is likewise represented by a woman sitting upon a scarlet colored beast; she was proclaimed the Mother of Harlots—a church that was to hold dominion over all the nations of the earth. John also saw the restoration of the everlasting Gospel, as proclaimed in Revelation, 14th chapter and 6th verse: "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." Now, if the Gospel was upon the earth, there certainly would be no necessity of an angel bringing the Gospel; there would be no necessity for the restoration of any thing that had not been lost.

*Apostle George Teasdale, January 13, 1884.*

### Revelation 17:8 – The Beast That "Was, and Is Not, and Yet Is"

This confusing phrase seems to refer to the devil, or someone who entirely turned himself over to the service of the devil, and sounds like the opposite of what John learned about Jesus Christ in Revelation 1:4, 8. Although the devil

may live forever, he is inconsistent, unstable, and completely untrustworthy (see Alma 30:60). Jesus Christ, however, is God "yesterday, today, and forever" (Mormon 9:9) and is not only powerful, but is consistent and can always be trusted. Consequently, we can center our faith in Him.

*New Testament: Seminary Student Study Guide, Revelation 17*

### Revelation 17:14 – "And the Lamb Shall Overcome"

After painting the picture of the harlot and the beast in all of their power and wickedness, John testifies that they shall be conquered by the superior power of the Lamb of God. Latter-day revelation confirms this. Just before the organization of the Church in this dispensation, the Lord said that because of his obedience to the Father's will he had subdued all things, including "retaining all power, even to the destroying of Satan and his works at the end of the world." (D&C 19:3.)

*The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles, Chapter 55: "The Kingdoms of This World Are Become the Kingdoms of Our Lord"*

### Revelation 18:4 – Come out of Babylon

We live in a wicked world like unto Babylon of old. Our latter-day prophets, like the prophets of old, have cried, "Come out, come out of Babylon" (Rev. 18:4; D&C 133:7). To come out physically presents a problem, but spiritually it is possible, and spiritually we must come out if we are to prosper in the land.

We come out spiritually when we pay honestly our tithes and offerings. We come out spiritually when we attend to our priesthood duties and attend our priesthood, Sacrament, and stake conference meetings.

*William J. Critchlow, Jr., Conference Report, October 1961, pp. 54-57*

Now, then, if we are blessed we have not to thank any man, or any set of men for it. If we are provided for, we have not obtained it from anybody else, but from the Lord God of Israel, who has watched over and protected His people just as He said He would do. He said it was His business to take care of His Saints, but, then, it is our business to be Saints.

And being gathered together as we are under these circumstances, we are organized according to certain laws laid down in the order of God, and given by revelation of God, for our guidance and direction, wherein we are instructed in things pertaining to this world and to the next; ... we are here to learn His laws that we may walk in His paths. We are here that we may build temples unto His name, and that we may administer in those temples. This is the object of our being gathered together, that we may be brought into a closer union and relationship to God our heavenly Father, that we may be instructed in the laws of life, and that we may comprehend the relationship that exists between us and Him.

And while we are looking for calamity and trouble—wars, pestilence and famine, and all those things that have been spoken of by the holy Prophets—yet there is to be a voice heard before that day crying: “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues”—that is, speaking of a certain something that is called Babylon. ... We have come here that we may enter into covenants that are eternal, and which continue behind the veil.

*President John Taylor, November 30, 1884.*

You need an endowment, brethren, in order that you may be prepared and able to overcome all things; and those that reject your testimony will be damned. The sick will be healed, the lame made to walk, the deaf to hear, and the blind to see, through your instrumentality. But let me tell you, that you will not have power, after the endowment to heal those that have not faith, ...

But when you are endowed and prepared to preach the Gospel to all nations, kindreds, and tongues, in their own languages, you must faithfully warn all ...

*Scriptural Teachings of Joseph Smith, 91-92*

The endowment was to prepare the disciples for their missions unto the world.

*Scriptural Teachings of Joseph Smith, 274*

Marriage, is also a principle or ordinance of the Gospel, most vital to the happiness of mankind, however unimportant it may seem, or lightly regarded by many. There is no superfluous or unnecessary principle in the plan of life, but there is no principle of greater importance or more essential to the happiness of man—not only here, but especially hereafter, than that of marriage.

*Elder Joseph F. Smith, Sept. 30, 1877*

### **Revelation 19:10 – The Testimony of Jesus**

What is the testimony of Jesus? And what must we do to be valiant therein?

“Be not ... ashamed of the testimony of our Lord,” Paul wrote to Timothy, “... but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel.” (2 Tim. 1:8.) And to the Beloved John came this divine message: “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” (Rev. 19:10.)

The testimony of our Lord! The testimony of Jesus! What a glorious and wondrous concept! It opens the door to glory and honor with the Father and the Son forever! The testimony of Jesus is to believe in Christ, to receive his gospel, and to live his law.

*Be Valiant in the Fight of Faith, Elder Bruce R. McConkie, October 1974*

A testimony is a most precious possession because it is not

acquired by logic or reason alone, it cannot be purchased with earthly possessions, and it cannot be given as a present or inherited from our ancestors. We cannot depend on the testimonies of other people. We need to know for ourselves. President Gordon B. Hinckley said, “Every Latter-day Saint has the responsibility to know for himself or herself with a certainty beyond doubt that Jesus is the resurrected, living Son of the living God” (“Fear Not to Do Good,” Ensign, May 1983, 80).

The source of this sure knowledge and firm conviction is divine revelation, “for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Revelation 19:10).

We receive this testimony when the Holy Spirit speaks to the spirit within us. We will receive a calm and unwavering certainty that will be the source of our testimony and conviction irrespective of our culture, race, language, or socioeconomic background. These promptings of the Spirit, rather than human logic alone, will be the true foundation upon which our testimony will be built.

*The Power of a Personal Testimony, Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf, October 2006*

### **Revelation 19:11–16. Why Did John See Jesus Riding on a White Horse?**

Interestingly enough, just before his crucifixion, Christ made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem on a donkey (Matthew 21). Traditionally, riding into a city on a donkey signified that the rider came in peace. Who could imagine a conqueror riding to battle on a donkey? John’s vision of Christ’s second coming showed the Lord as riding on a white horse (Revelation 19:11–16). That does not mean that Christ will actually come riding on a horse, but seems to symbolize that his second coming will be that of the conqueror of all evil, as King of kings and Lord of lords.

### **Revelation 19:13. “A Vesture Dipped in Blood”**

It is a common misconception that Christ shall be clothed in white at his coming. Here and also in the Doctrine and Covenants it is clear that he shall be dressed in red apparel, symbolic of his taking upon himself the sins of the world and of coming in his judgment. (Read D&C 133:46, 48, 50, 51.)

### **Revelation 19:21. “Slain with the Word” of God**

The Inspired Version changes the word sword in this verse to word. This suggests that the wicked are condemned by the word of God (Hebrews 4:12, D&C 14:2). Men should learn to live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, for his word is truth (D&C 84:44, 45).

*The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles, Chapter 56: “Behold, I Come Quickly; and My Reward Is with Me”*

### **Revelation 19:15, 21—“Out of His Mouth Goeth a Sharp Sword, ... and He Shall Rule Them with a Rod of Iron”**

The sword and the rod of iron both refer to the word of God (see Hebrews 4:12; 1 Nephi 15:23–24). Although it may

sound harsh, the rule of Jesus is not harsh, but firm, powerful, and cuts to the center of man to help him permanently change or to perfectly know his guilt (see 1 Nephi 16:2; Alma 31:5; 3 Nephi 11:3).

*New Testament: Seminary Student Study Guide, Revelation 19*

## Revelation 20-22

### Revelation 20:1 – What is the bottomless pit?

The bottomless pit is outer darkness, the future dwelling place of Satan and the sons of perdition (see D&C 76:31–38).

*New Testament: Seminary Student Study Guide, Revelation 20*

### Revelation 20:2, 3. How Is Satan Bound?

“Many other scriptures refer to the thousand years of wonderful, glorious conditions on the earth, because Lucifer, Satan, the devil, will be bound.

“The scriptures say he will be ‘bound with a chain’ and ‘put into a bottomless pit.’ To me, these are symbolical terms. I cannot quite conceive of steel chains or pits that could hold Satan. The only power I know of that will bind Satan, or render him powerless, is righteous living.

“The war that started in heaven has not ended yet and shall not end until everyone has proved the extent of his ability to resist Satan. Even Jesus Christ had to bind Satan when he was tempted in the wilderness. Satan had no power over him, because Jesus resisted his temptations. Then the record says, ‘... he departed from him for a season.’ (Luke 4:13.)”

*Eldred G. Smith in Conference Report, Apr. 1970, p. 142; see also 1 Nephi 22:26.*

### Revelation 20:7–10. The Battle of Gog and Magog

John tells us clearly that after the Millennium Satan shall be loosed again, and one last great battle shall be fought between the forces of good and evil. Michael the archangel (who is Adam) shall gather the armies of God together to do battle with Satan and his armies, and Satan and his hosts shall be defeated and cast into their own place for the rest of eternity (D&C 88:110–16).

John calls the hosts who follow Satan, Gog and Magog. These terms cause some confusion, for they are also used to refer to the leader of the final battle before the Millennium begins, which is commonly called the battle of Armageddon. The terms themselves come from Ezekiel 38, 39, where the battle of Armageddon is described in some detail. Most scholars believe that Ezekiel chose these names as symbols of great military prowess and wickedness.

Joseph Fielding Smith clarifies the difference between the battle of Armageddon and the battle of Gog and Magog: “Before the coming of Christ, the great war, sometimes called Armageddon, will take place as spoken of by Ezekiel, chapters 38 and 39. Another war of Gog and Magog will be

after the millennium.” (Doctrines of Salvation, 3:45.)

### Revelation 20:14. What Is the Lake of Fire?

“A man is his own tormentor and his own condemner. Hence the saying, They shall go into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. The torment of disappointment in the mind of man is as exquisite as a lake burning with fire and brimstone. I say, so is the torment of man.” (Smith, HC, 6:314.)

*The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles, Chapter 56: “Behold, I Come Quickly; and My Reward Is with Me”*

### Revelation 21:1. “And I Saw a New Heaven and a New Earth”

“We discover from the word of the Lord that the earth, like mankind upon it, is passing through various stages of development, or change. It was created and pronounced good. It partook of the decree of mortality coming through the fall. It is now passing through the telestial condition, in which telestial beings predominate and rule. It will then pass into the ‘renewed,’ or restored state, for a thousand years as a terrestrial earth and the abode of terrestrial inhabitants. Then comes the end. The earth like all creatures living on it must die. Then it will, like all creatures, receive its resurrection and be celestialized because it obeys its law.”

*Smith, Church History and Modern Revelation, 1:295.*

### Revelation 21:2. The New Jerusalem

The New Jerusalem spoken of in Revelation 21 is not the same city that is to be built on the American continent as part of the last days and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (see Articles of Faith 1:10). It refers to the celestial kingdom.

*New Testament: Seminary Student Study Guide, Revelation 21*

### Revelation 21:8. What Is the Second Death?

“After the separation of the body and spirit, which is the natural death, the wicked and ungodly die a second death, a spiritual death, meaning they are cast out of the presence of the Lord and are dead as pertaining to the things of righteousness, which are the things of the Spirit. [Read D&C 63:17, 18.]

“But when those here designated have suffered for their own sins, after they have paid the utmost farthing in hell, after they have suffered ‘the wrath of Almighty God, until the fulness of times,’ they shall come forth in the second resurrection and receive their inheritance in the telestial kingdom. (D. & C. 76:103–106.) That is, the allotted period of their spiritual death shall cease; death and hell shall deliver up the dead which are in them; and all men, except the sons of perdition, shall receive their part in the kingdoms which are prepared. Thus these vessels of wrath are ‘the only ones on whom the second death shall have any power after the resurrection. (D. & C. 76:37.)” (McConkie, DNTC, 3:583–84.)

### Revelation 22:7. “I Come Quickly”

“Not soon, but in a quick manner; that is, with speed and suddenness after all of the promised conditions precedent have occurred. ‘I am Jesus Christ, who cometh quickly, in an hour you think not.’ (D. & C. 51:10.)” (McConkie, DNTC, 3:590.)

*The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles, Chapter 56: “Behold, I Come Quickly; and My Reward Is with Me”*

### **Revelation 21:11–25—The Description of the City of God**

If you took the time to figure out the measurements John gave of the city of God, you would understand that he was describing a city whose size was larger than anything man had ever created. Furthermore, the description of precious metals and stones communicates a beauty beyond description. But the most glorious part is the very presence of God, which eliminates the need for a temple or even for light (see vv. 22–23).

*New Testament: Seminary Student Study Guide, Revelation 21*

### **Revelation 22:18, 19. Do Modern Revelations “Add unto These Things”?**

“Some people have used Revelation 22:18–19 to defend the idea that there can be no more revelation or scripture after the Bible because that would be adding to the Bible. In this way they try to discredit the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price.

Moses, however, wrote the same about his books (see Deuteronomy 4:2). If those words of Moses were interpreted in the same way some have interpreted what John wrote, then there would be no Bible after the first five books. John, like Moses, was simply referring to what God had directed him to write—the book of Revelation.

*New Testament: Seminary Student Study Guide, Revelation 22*

“[I]n warning against additions to the book of Revelation [John the Revelator] spoke of that book only, insisting that no one attempt to change or corrupt what he had said. The Bible was not compiled when John wrote the book of Revelation, so he could not possibly have referred to it.

“Furthermore, scholars tell us that the Gospel of John was written after the book of Revelation, and if this be true it becomes another indication that John had no thought of precluding other writings but only of protecting this particular book of Revelation from change or corruption.” (Mark E. Petersen in CR, Oct. 1964, p. 121.)

*The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles, Chapter 56: “Behold, I Come Quickly; and My Reward Is with Me”*

### **Saints should prepare for the time spoken of in Revelation**

When John the Revelator was banished to the Isle of Patmos, a voice from heaven said, “Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.” (Rev. 4:1.) The angel of the Lord showed John many wonderful things. He showed him the coming of a new heaven and a new earth when there would be no more sickness and no more pain, no more sorrow and no more death; when we would no more need the sun by day nor the moon by night, for the glory of God would be upon the earth; when no man would say, “know ye the Lord,” for every man would walk in the light of the Lord his God. (See Rev. 21:1, 4, 23–24.)

When John saw all of that, he wanted to kneel down and worship the angel who showed it to him. And the angel said, “See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets.” (Rev. 22:8–9.)

Earlier, the angel had showed him the dead, small and great, standing before God, and the books were opened and every man was judged according to the things written in the books, according to their works. Death and hell delivered up the dead that were in them. (See Rev. 20:12–13.) Then the angel said, “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God ... and shall reign with him a thousand years.” (Rev. 20:6.) Wouldn’t that be a wonderful thing, to be worthy to come forth in the morning of the first resurrection? ...

Today in our natural, routine patterns of life, our children go to school as we did for twelve to twenty years, to learn how to have a richer life here in mortality, to earn a better living and enjoy the cultural and refined things of life. If it is worth spending twelve to twenty years to prepare for a life of seventy-five to a hundred years, what is it worth to prepare for a life that never ends?

*“Be Ye Prepared”, Elder LeGrand Richards, October 1981*

### **Saints Should Be Optimists**

[O]f all people, we as Latter-day Saints should be the most optimistic and the least pessimistic. For while we know that ‘peace shall be taken from the earth, and the devil shall have power over his own dominion,’ we are also assured that ‘the Lord shall have power over his saints, and shall reign in their midst.’ ([D&C 1:35–36](#).)

*Ezra Taft Benson in Conference Report, Oct. 1974, p. 90.*