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### 1 THE TITLE of SECTION VI

#### ***THE INESCAPABLE JUDGEMENT OF THE GODLESS WORLD AND SATAN'S HELPERS***

*“THE WORLD AND ITS DESIRES PASS AWAY.” (1 JOHN 2:17)*

### 2 THE DIVISION of SECTION VI

The visions in the book of Revelation depict what happens between Christ's first coming and Christ's second coming in seven parallel sections. Each of the seven sections *begins* with Christ's first coming, is characterised by *a long main period*, is followed by *a short period* of violent persecution and *ends* with the final judgement day (Christ's second coming).

Section 6 of the book of Revelation consists of chapters 17 to 19 and covers the whole New Testament period between Christ's first coming and Christ's second coming.

#### **a. The beginning of the New Testament period (17:1,3)**

Section 4 begins with a woman (the bride) associated with Christ throughout the whole New Testament period. Section 6 also begins with a woman (the prostitute) associated with the beast throughout the whole New Testament period. She sits on the beast on many waters in the desert and operates during the same period as the beast in section 4 operates (17:1,3; cf. 13:5). She is only brought to ruin (17:16-17) during the reign of the eighth or final manifestation of the beast (the final antichrist and his kingdom) just before he himself goes to his destruction (17:9-11). Thus, section 6 is evidently parallel to section 4.

Section 5 begins with the seven angels with the seven bowls (15:1) and ends with the final judgement day (16:17-21). Also section 6 begins with one of the seven angels with the seven bowls (17:1) and ends with the final judgement day (19:11-16). Therefore section 6 is probably parallel to section 5.

#### **b. The long main period (17:1-10,12-15)**

The beast out of the sea carries the prostitute forward. Satan's antichristian political powers carry Satan's antichristian seductions in the kingdom of the world forward throughout the whole New Testament period. The reverse is also true: Satan's antichristian world and its seductive culture determine how the rulers of this world and their inhabitants live. That is, the rulers and people of this evil world are seduced to live in an anti-Christian and immoral way.

The prostitute sits on many waters (17:1), which represent the chaotic and oppressing multitudes of the nations in the world (cf. Isaiah 8:7; Daniel 7:3,17). This means that she has terrible seductive power over people and how they live on earth (17:15) and also over the rulers of the earth (17:18).

The beast out of the sea is clearly past, present and future: he “was and is not and is on the point of coming up from the Abyss” (17:8). During the Old Testament period “five have fallen” (five notable empires). During the time of John “one is” (the sixth empire, the Roman Empire). After John “another has not yet come, but when he does come, he must remain for a little while” (17:10). This seventh empire with its king probably represents all the manifestations of the beast throughout the whole New Testament period (cf. 1 John 2:18,22; 4:3; 2 John 7). Thus it is clear that throughout world history and also throughout the New Testament period the beast has had many historical manifestations. However each manifestation remains but for a little while and is on its way to destruction! This fact is a great encouragement for Christians!

The ten horns represent ten kings or rulers in every sphere of life (business, finance, commerce, industry, military, police, law courts, education, religion, etc) who for one hour will receive authority as kings along with the beast. They also will remain only for a little while! Also that fact is very encouraging for Christians!

The beast and all the rulers of its kingdom make war against Christ and Christians throughout the whole New Testament period until they are finally overcome (17:14; cf. John 16:33).

The enemies of Christ and Christians begin to turn against one another. The beast and his ten minor rulers in every sphere of life will turn against the woman and eventually destroy her (17:16-18). The political powers will eventually destroy the seductive-pleasure powers, because the seductive powers had completely undermined the political powers. But then it will be too late!

Although this happens throughout the whole New Testament period, it will reach its climax in the period of the great tribulation just before Christ’s second coming.

#### **c. The short period (17:11,16-18; 19:17-19)**

The eighth king represents the final antichrist and his final kingdom of the world. Also he will reign for a little while and also he is destined to be destroyed (17:11).

During his reign, Babylon, the great prostitute, the haunt for every evil spirit, is finally inescapably, irrevocably and completely destroyed by fire (17:16-18; 18:1-24). This happens shortly before the beast himself goes to his destruction (17:9-11).

The beast and his minor allies (the ten kings) will completely destroy the prostitute of his day, but it will be too late! She had already been allowed to corrupt the society and culture of his kingdom and has turned it into an uncontrollable chaos.

Then, just before Christ’s second coming, the beast (the final antichrist), the false prophet, the kings of the earth and their armies will gather together for the final battle against Christ and his army of angels. But they will be completely destroyed (19:17-19).

The last three sections of the book of Revelation all end with the final battle of Armageddon, called “THE battle” (16:14,16; 19:19; 20:8; cf. 13:7). This clearly shows that the last three sections of the book of Revelation are not chronologically consecutive, but parallel!

#### **d. The end of the New Testament period (18:1-24; 19:11-16,20-21)**

The New Testament period ends with the last judgement. First the fall of the great prostitute (17:15-18) or Babylon (18:1-24) and then the final battle in which also the beast, the false prophet, the kings of the earth and their armies are defeated and thrown into hell (the fiery lake of burning sulphur)(19:17-21). These events take place at Christ’s second coming (19:11-16).

The last three sections of the book of Revelation picture in different visions the last judgement of God’s enemies: Section 5 pictures God’s judgement of all the unrepentant people who worship the beast (16:2), living symbolically in the great city and all the cities of the world (16:19). Section 6 pictures God’s

judgement of Satan's three helpers: the great prostitute called Babylon, the beast and the false prophet. Section 7 pictures God's judgement of Satan (the one standing behind the great prostitute, the beast, the false prophet) and of all people that ever lived (20:10-15). This clearly shows that the last three sections of the book of Revelation are parallel!

#### **e. The eternal state (19:1-10)**

The great multitude in heaven praises God's completely just judgement and rejoices in the destruction of the kingdom of the world (19:1-5). Then the marriage of the Lamb takes place (19:6-10).

#### **Conclusion**

Babylon, the great prostitute, represents throughout the whole New Testament period Satan's antichristian seductions. She is upheld and finally destroyed by Satan's antichristian political-economical power.

The sixth section of the book of Revelation consists of Revelation chapters 17 to 19 and covers the whole New Testament period from Christ's first coming to Christ's second coming. It also gives insight into the eternal state beyond Christ's second coming (19:1-10).

### **3 THE STRUCTURE of SECTION VI**

#### **a. The downfall of the great prostitute, the false prophet and the beast**

The book of Revelation describes the rise of Satan's allies in this order: first the beast (13:1-10), then the false prophet (13:11-18) and finally the great prostitute (17:1-18). The book of Revelation then describes their downfall in reversed order: first the great prostitute (18:1-24) and then the beast and his false prophet (19:11-21).

The vision in chapter 17 depicts the relationship between the great prostitute and the beast (17:1-6), the various historical forms of the beast throughout history (17:7-11) and the alliance between the beast and all minor leaders in the world in their effort to destroy the Church (17:12-14). It also depicts how Satan's allies destroy one another. The great prostitute is finally destroyed by the beast and the minor leaders of the kingdom of the world (17:15-18). The vision in chapter 18 depicts the final downfall of the great prostitute, the great Babylon.

The vision in chapter 19 depicts the joy in heaven at the fall of Babylon (19:1-5) and the joy in heaven at the wedding of the Lamb when finally the Church is visibly united to Christ (19:6-10). The next vision takes a step back and depicts the second coming of Christ when he destroys the beast and the false prophet in the final battle, the final historical event in which also the great prostitute was destroyed (19:11-21).

#### **b. Section 6 is parallel to section 5 and to section 7. They have the same end**

Section 5 (chapters 15 to 16), section 6 (chapters 17 to 19) and section 7 (chapters 20 to 22) are parallel to one another.

They all depict the final battle as the beginning of the final judgement: section 5 (16:14,16), section 6 (19:17-21) and section 7 (20:7-10).

They all end with the final judgement day: section 5 (16:17-21), section 6 (19:11-21) and section 7 (20:11-15).

### **4 THE MESSAGE of SECTION VI**

#### **a. Humanity that has turned away from God is threatened from the inside and from above<sup>1</sup>**

The city Babylon with its inhabitants is depicted as the great prostitute and represents humanity that has turned away from God from the beginning of history until the present time. She enjoys the attention and

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<sup>1</sup> cf. Bavinck pp. 171-276

support of kings, merchants and sea captains. The leaders (beast and kings) may be depicted as masculine, but the picture of humanity as a whole with its culture and science, its artful buildings and lighted plains, its bioscopes and theatres, and all its show of beauty is characteristically feminine (a prostitute). This means that humanity as such is not completed as long as humanity has not found God! God created humans for an eternal marriage with God (Ezekiel 16:1-3,8-11,15; cf. Romans 11:36; Colossians 1:16). But this woman is depicted as a flirt without conscience, the great prostitute, because she had thrown herself away to political and commercial leaders of the world. She had given herself to endless meaningless activities, pleasures of the flesh and a show of materialism. She has thrown her greatest ability away: the ability to respond to God, to give a warm welcome to God, to completely belong to God. She is depicted as the modern city with its airports, radar installations, searchlights, skyscrapers, warehouses, flickering advertisements and theatres. By right she belongs to God, but she has thrown herself away for wealth and pleasure and has forgotten who her Lord, the King, is!

The kingdom of the world with all its seductions (Babylon) will not be threatened from the outside. The only threat it will face will have to come from above, from God or from the inside. Moral and spiritual decay will cause the downfall of the kingdom. The prostitute seduced the kings and merchants and sea captains and irreparably damaged the kingdom of the world (the kingdom of natural man) so that beast and kings will turn against the prostitute and destroy her. The kingdom of the world is indeed threatened from the inside, which is at the same time a threat from above. God will strike the kingdom of the world with its own madness (cf. Romans 1:18-32; Galatians 6:7-8). The beast and his allies will eventually hate the prostitute and bring her to ruin. God's enemies will finally destroy one another: *the political power (the antichrist and his allies: the antichristian government) will destroy the great prostitute (humanity that has turned away from God)*. God's words will be fulfilled! Although the kingdom of the world (the antichrist, the false prophet and the people bearing the mark of the beast) appears strong and invincible, it apparently has insuperable contradictions (like mistrust, jealousy, fear, competition and hatred) that cause her to crack. Opposition against the government will arise: strikes, terrorism and civil war. And the government will strike down its own citizens!

#### **b. God is all the time accomplishing his purpose (17:17)**

“God has put it into their hearts to accomplish his purpose” (17:17). Throughout the history of the world the God of the Bible is on the throne (chapter 4; cf. Psalm 9:7; 145:13; 146:10). It is the God of the Bible who determines how long his political and religious enemies may remain in power on earth (cf. Psalm 75:6-7; Daniel 2:21; Romans 9:17)! He puts it into the hearts of his enemies to accomplish his purpose. Even when the antichristian government (the beast and kings) unanimously decides to destroy the antichristian seductive culture (Babylon, the great prostitute), they do not realise that without their knowledge or consent they are accomplishing God's eternal purpose! God works out everything for his own ends – even the wicked for a day of disaster (Proverbs 16:4; 2 Chronicles 34:24; Romans 9:17). Man may regard himself as autonomous – thinking that he is not led by anyone or anything; making his own decisions; acting in his own power – but it is the God of the Bible who sits on the throne! And thus, God gives man over to reap the consequences of his own decisions and actions (Romans 1:24,26,28; Galatians 6:7-8).

#### **c. The people in power in the kingdom of the world will mourn, but the people of the kingdom of God will rejoice (18:9,20)!<sup>2</sup>**

Babylon is the centre of the kingdom of the world and represents humanity living without God. But Babylon falls! The kings, merchants and sea captains will mourn (Revelation 18:9-19), but the saints, apostles and prophets will rejoice (Revelation 18:20)! The fall of Babylon is the result of the obstinate unwillingness of man to obey God and his uninhibited abandonment to the shallow outward life: whether it is giving one's life to making a career (ambition) or whether it is giving one's life to do what one loves (fun and pleasure). Babylon's choice and consequent attitude is the result of an unending aversion against the God of the Bible, his character and will, and the result of never stopping to flee from the God of the Bible. The kingdom of natural man (the kingdom of the world) glorifies science and technique and splurges wealth. It fancies that it rules the world and leads its people. But that delusion will abruptly come to an end! And the reality as the God of the Bible designed it to be will break through!

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<sup>2</sup> cf. Bavinck pp. 277-280

#### **d. The song about the wedding of the Lamb (19:1-10)**<sup>3</sup>

Revelation 19:6b-7 in the original language says: “Hallelujah! God has *once for all time* assumed the final kingship.<sup>4</sup> His bride (the Church) has made herself ready” and “The wedding of the Lamb (Christ) has come.”<sup>5</sup>

Was God not always the King? Yes, God has always been the King! But he was the enshrouded King. It always looked as if man was the stronger and God was weak. It always seemed as if Satan was the ruler, who could incite the politicians of the world together with their economic, military and religious cronies to persecute the Church into fleeing and hiding. But that was only an illusion. Things on earth were not what they really are in God’s eyes. The reality was quite different! God was behind the earthquakes and disasters in nature and laughed at man’s technical accomplishments. God stood behind the self-destruction of proud man. No one saw God’s face. Until the end *God was enshrouded, the unknown traveller under the guise of the poor and the helpless* (cf. Matthew 25:34-46). When God entered his creation and human history in Jesus Christ two thousand years ago, he did not come in an overwhelming manifestation of power and glory. He emptied himself, took on the human nature, became the servant of all and gave his life as an atoning sacrifice for our sins (Philippians 2:5-8). The first glimpse of his triumph was when he rose from the dead. Against all appearance of this triumph the Church proclaimed his death and resurrection. They proclaimed that Jesus is Lord, and that his kingdom has come and was about to be manifested in all its power and glory.

Then will happen what the Old Testament prophets had been waiting to happen and what the New Testament Church is still proclaiming. The heavens tear open and God in Christ appears on the clouds. Christ will be visibly united to his Bride, the Church.

#### **e. The second coming (Revelation 19:11-21)**<sup>6</sup>

Between Christ’s first coming and his second coming God in Christ was enshrouded, disguised, and for many people the mysterious unknown. But now at his second coming the sun, moon and stars crash. Now the trumpets sound.

Now everyone on earth will see the Rider on the white horse riding in final and complete triumph. Now he no longer comes with a bow to hit and conquer people with his arrows of love (6:2), but he comes with a sword to strike down the nations who opposed him (19:15). Now he no longer comes under the guise of apostles and Christian workers, but he comes himself and he comes completely visible. Now the history of this world with the restless nations rising up to make war is coming to an end and eternity is about to commence! The final historical act on earth is the final battle in which the kings of the earth and their armies, the antichrist and the false prophet, the dragon himself and everyone who worshipped the beast will be conquered and thrown into hell forever. The history of the world comes to an end when it smashes itself to pieces against the God of the Bible who revealed himself in Jesus Christ.

Christians proclaim, “Prepare to meet your God!” (Amos 4:12). That moment had now arrived! Everyone will stand before God and face him! The enchantment disappears; the blindfold is ripped from the eyes; the fog clears. The things that never seemed to be what they really were are now seen in all its glaring reality. The final word in the history of the world will not be ‘man’, but for unbelievers the terrifying word ‘God’! At that moment time will flow away into the embrace of eternity.

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<sup>3</sup> cf. Bavinck pp. 280-281

<sup>4</sup> οτι εβασιλευσεν (viaa) κυριος ο θεος ο παντοκρατωρ

<sup>5</sup> οτι ηλθεν (viaa) ο γαμος του αρνιου, και η γυνη αυτου ητοιμασεν (viaa) εαυτην

<sup>6</sup> cf. Bavinck pp. 282-284