

SCENE 5 : The Seven Bowls

¹Then I heard a loud voice from the temple telling the seven angels, 'Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God'.

²So the first angel went and poured his bowl on the earth, and a foul and painful sore came upon those who had the mark of the beast and who worshipped its image.

³The second angel poured his bowl into the sea, and it became like the blood of a corpse, and every living thing in the sea died.

The voice from the temple recalls the following from Isaiah:

A voice from the temple! The voice of the Lord, dealing retribution to his enemies.

– Isaiah 66:6

John uses traditional language in speaking about the terrible effects of evil as God's punishment, an expression of God's anger.

Pour out your wrath on the nations that do not know you.

– Jeremiah 10:25

Therefore wait for me, says the Lord, for the day when I arise as a witness. For my decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out upon them my indignation, all the heat of my anger; for in the fire of my passion all the earth shall be consumed.

– Zephaniah 3:8

If I send a pestilence into that land, and pour out my wrath upon it with blood.

– Ezekiel 14:19

As noted earlier (see commentary on 6:16-17), we must not think of this as a kind of cosmic tit for tat in which a vengeful god gets even with the wicked. Evil brings its own punishment and it is self-inflicted. This self-destruction does, however, demonstrate God's justice.

The foul and painful sore recalls the sixth plague of Egypt.¹ Waters becoming blood recalls the first plague.² The Roman empire dominated the Mediterranean. Violence and injustice are destroying it and bringing about chaos.

Those who suffer these plagues are those who bear the mark of the beast and worship its image³: those who have chosen to enslave themselves to the oppressive value system of the dominating Roman Empire and are responsible for the persecution and martyrdom of Christians (16:6).

¹Exodus 9:10-11; See also Deuteronomy 28:35.

²Exodus 7:17-21. See also Psalm 78:44.

³See 13:14-17; 14:9; 14:11.

Notice the absence of the words ‘is coming’ in verse five: ‘who are and who were’.¹ There is nothing now to come, for the final trumpet has sounded and we are being presented with God’s ultimate judgment.

The justice of God’s judgment is axiomatic:

The ordinances of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether.

– Psalm 19:9

You are righteous, O Lord, and your judgments are right.

– Psalm 119:137

All your judgments are true.

– Daniel 3:27²

Those who have inflicted death will die. They must suffer the consequences of their causing the death of the innocent martyrs (6:10). We are reminded of the words of Genesis:

I will require a reckoning for human life. Whoever sheds the blood of a human, by a human shall that person’s blood be shed; for in his own image God made humankind.

– Genesis 9:5-6

We are reminded, too, of the imagery of Isaiah:

I will make your oppressors ... drunk with their own blood as with wine. Then all flesh shall know that I am the Lord your Saviour, and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.

– Isaiah 49:26

The fourth plague is that of the fire of God’s judgment. John highlights the basic problem clearly. They are suffering the consequences of their own obstinate behaviour: they ‘did not repent’ (see 9:20); they did not manifest in their lives the radiant beauty of God’s liberating action in history; they chose, rather, to refuse liberation and remain enslaved to false gods.

⁴The third angel poured his bowl into the rivers and the springs of water, and they became blood.

⁵And I heard the angel of the water say, ‘You are just, O Holy One who are and were, for you have judged these things;

⁶because they shed the blood of saints and prophets, thou have given them blood to drink. It is what they deserve!’

⁷And I heard the altar respond, ‘Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, your judgments are true and just!’

⁸The fourth angel poured his bowl on the sun, and it was allowed to scorch them with fire;

⁹they were scorched by the fierce heat, but they cursed the name of God, who had authority over these plagues, and they did not repent and give him glory.

¹Compare 11:17 with 1:4

²In the Greek text. In the NRSV this text is found in the Prayer of Azariah, verse 4.

¹⁰The fifth angel poured his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness; people gnawed their tongues in agony,

¹¹and cursed the God of heaven because of their pain and sores, and they did not repent of their deeds.

¹²The sixth angel poured his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up in order to prepare the way for the kings from the east.

¹³And I saw three foul spirits like frogs coming from the mouth of the dragon, from the mouth of the beast, and from the mouth of the false prophet.

¹⁴These 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.

¹⁵(‘See, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, and is clothed, not going naked and exposed to shame’)

¹⁶And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Harmagedon.

Darkness recalls the sixth plague of Egypt (Exodus 10:22). Note the constant failure to repent (see 9:20; 16:9).

The Euphrates (see 9:14) is dried up, thus making way for the barbarians from the east to invade the empire. The much acclaimed *pax romana* is shown to be fragile.

Frogs recalls the second plague of Egypt (Exodus 8:3).¹ Their evil is being spewed out from the mouths of Satan (12:3,9), the Roman power (13:1) and the false prophet in Asia who, through deceptive signs (13:13) is encouraging the emperor cult (13:11).

Verse fifteen is the first time that the risen Jesus has addressed the assembly in the first person since the opening verse of chapter four. He repeats a warning already given to the church in Sardis (3:3), but this time he follows it with a beatitude.² The unexpected direct address from Jesus highlights the critical importance of the message. We cannot read history properly without being aware of the constant presence and action of the risen Jesus in history. We must be alert to this and we must remain clothed, that is to say, we must stay in communion with Jesus and others must see us as belonging to him.

Harmagedon is the plain of Megiddo, famous in Jewish literature as the place where King Josiah was tragically killed by the Egyptian army.³ It was believed that one day God would reverse this defeat in a final victory over evil.

¹See also Psalm 78:45 and Psalm 105:30.

²For other beatitudes see Apocalypse 1:3; 14:13; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7; 22:14.

³2 Kings 23:29.

The seventh bowl

When the seventh seal was broken (8:1), the final meaning of history was revealed by Christ. This consisted of seven announcements. The final announcement came with the sound of the seventh trumpet (11:15). It concerned the final judgment of God, dramatised by the pouring out of blood from seven sacrificial bowls. We have now come to the seventh bowl, and so 'It is done!'. The description is to follow, but we are told here that this is the end.

The announcement comes in a loud voice, out of the temple, from the throne. According to John's use of these symbols, we understand that it is the transcendent God who, through the risen Christ, is responding to the prayers of the saints in a judgment which consists in the ultimate vindication of the good and the final destruction of the wicked.

This bowl is poured over the air, the realm of the evil spirits (9:2).¹ The cataclysmic signs are a climax of a gradual crescendo which we have observed from 4:5 to 8:5 to 11:19 to 16:18. We have come to the climax of judgment, to something so awesome that it 'had not occurred since people were upon the earth' – a phrase which echoes the following from the Old and New Testaments:

There was hail with fire flashing continually in the midst of it, such heavy hail as had never fallen in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.

– Exodus 9:24

There shall be a time of anguish, such as has never occurred since there nations came into existence.

– Daniel 12:1

In those days there will be suffering, such as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, and never will be.

– Mark 13:19

Babylon is Rome (11:8, 11:13, 14:8, 14:20); in fact, any earthly power that opposes the creator and oppresses God's people. It will suffer the consequences of its obstinate injustice (= 'God's wrath', 6:16-17, 14:10). God's judgment reaches to the extremities of the earth ('islands' and 'mountains', see 6:14). The hailstones (11:19) remind us of the seventh plague of Egypt (Exodus 9:24).

¹See 1 Thessalonians 4:17 and Ephesians 2:2.

¹⁷The seventh angel poured his bowl over the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple, from the throne, saying, 'It is done!'

¹⁸And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and a violent earthquake, such as had not occurred since people were upon the earth, so violent was that earthquake.

¹⁹The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. God remembered great Babylon, and gave her the wine-cup of the fury of his wrath.

²⁰And every island fled away and no mountains were to be found;

²¹and huge hailstones, each weighing about a hundred pounds, dropped from heaven on people, until they cursed God for the plague of the hail, so fearful was that plague.

INTERLUDE: The Fall of Rome

¹Then 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 whore who is seated on many waters,

²with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and with the wine of whose fornication, the inhabitants of the earth have become drunk'.

^{3a}So he carried me away in the spirit into a wilderness.

1. The judgment is announced

This scene is a flash-back, focusing on the most significant element of the judgment which has just been completed. What John is about to be shown¹ needs to be comprehended in the light of revelation; hence the expression 'in the spirit'.² John is taken into the wilderness: a place of deeper perception and interiorisation.

The image of a whore is used in the Old Testament for infidelity towards Yahweh,³ with special reference to the achieving of commercial greatness through the exercise of injustice.⁴

The whore seated on many waters is Rome whose empire was largely based on her maritime strength. The kings of the earth (1:5) have gone along with the value system of Rome and are besotted with the benefits which they have derived from it. The imagery used in this passage had been used of Babylon:

You [inhabitants of Babylon] who live by many waters, rich in treasures, your end has come, the thread of your life is cut.

– Jeremiah 51:13

Babylon made all the earth drunken; the nations drank of her wine and so the nations went mad. Suddenly Babylon has fallen!

– Jeremiah 51:7

When John says that he was carried into a wilderness, he may also be referring to the desolation that he is about to witness:⁵

As whirlwinds in the Negeb sweep on, it comes from the desert, from a terrible land. A stern vision is told to me; the betrayer betrays, and the destroyer destroys.

– Isaiah 21:1 (re Babylon's fall)

¹See 1:1; 4:1; 21:9,10; 22:1,6,8.

²See 1:10; 4:2; 21:10.

³For example, Hosea 1-3; Isaiah 1:21; 57:7-13; Jeremiah 3:1, 4:4; Ezekiel 16:23-63; Psalm 73:27.

⁴Tyre: Isaiah 23:16; Nineveh: Nahum 3:1-7.

⁵See 17:16. Also 12:6,14.

2. Rome is to be destroyed

The woman in this symbolic scene is named Babylon the great, but we are told that we are dealing with a mystery. We will need wisdom, therefore, to interpret the revelation.¹ Two verses in particular indicate that the author has Rome in mind. The city is said to be drunk with the blood of the witnesses to Jesus; and it is called the great city which rules over the kings of the earth.² Other indications will emerge from the following commentary.

The beast full of blasphemous names (13:1) stands for the Roman Empire as the incarnation of Evil, for it claims divine status for its emperor and its law. Scarlet is the colour of pomp and luxury associated with the powerful mercantile empire, and obtained sinfully: the cup she is holding in her hands is full of abominations and the impurities of her fornication.

Gold symbolises her false claims to divinity (1:12). The jewels and pearls symbolise her merchant wealth.³ The golden cup symbolises the pagan Roman cult.

The seven heads are interpreted as the seven hills of Rome (17:9) and the full number of its ruling emperors (17:10). The ten horns (2:10; 5:6) stand for the kings of the earth who share in Rome's power for a brief time (17:12).

The incarnation of evil is described as something that 'was and is not and will be present'. The language is a caricature of the true God 'who is and who was and who is to come' (1:4). This may also contain an allusion to the superstition that Domitian was really the emperor Nero returned to life (13:3-4). John makes it clear that the end of every historical realisation of evil is destruction.

¹ Compare Daniel 2:19,28,29).

²For the symbolism of the 'kings of the earth', see 1:5; confer also Psalm 2:2; 89:28; Isaiah 24:21.

³See Ezekiel 28:13 re Tyre.

^{3b}And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns.

⁴The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her fornication;

⁵and on her forehead was written a name, a mystery: 'Babylon the great, mother of whores and of earth's abominations'.

⁶And I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the witnesses to Jesus. When I saw her, I was greatly amazed.

⁷But the angel said to me, 'Why are you so amazed? I will tell you the mystery of the woman, and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns that carries her.

⁸The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to ascend from the bottomless pit and goes to destruction. And the inhabitants of the earth, whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will be amazed when they see the beast, because it was and is not and *will be present*.

⁹This calls for a mind that has wisdom: the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated;

¹⁰also, they are seven kings, of whom five have fallen, one is living, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain only a little while.

¹¹As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth, but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to destruction.

¹²And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast.

¹³These are united in yielding their power and authority to the beast;

¹⁴they 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”.

¹⁵And he said to me, “The waters that you saw, where the whore is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages.

¹⁶And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will hate the whore; they will make her desolate and naked; they will devour her flesh and burn her up with fire.

¹⁷For God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by agreeing to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God will be fulfilled.

¹⁸The woman that you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth’.

That only one more ruler is to come and that he must remain only a little while reinforces the ultimate weakness of a power that opposes God. The time of the power of Rome, though still present, is fast running out.

The victory of the risen Christ is declared in verse fourteen. Those with him are the 144,000 of 14:1-5: those who, here on earth, are faithful to the call and the choice to be disciples of Jesus in effecting the reign of God. ‘Lord of lords’ and ‘King of kings’ are titles taken from the Old Testament.¹

The waters of verse fifteen represent all the subject peoples of the empire.

John takes many of his images from the Hebrew Bible: ‘desert (see Ezekiel 26:19 in reference to Tyre); ‘naked’ (see Ezekiel 16:39 in reference to Jerusalem); ‘hate’: (see Ezekiel 23:29); ‘devour her flesh’ (see Psalm 27:2 and Micah 3:3); ‘burn her with fire’ (see Jeremiah 34:22).

He declares that the power of Rome will be broken through revolt from within the empire (17:16).

¹‘Lord of lords’: Deuteronomy 10:17; Psalm 136:3; ‘king of kings’: 2 Maccabees 13:4; (Also, ‘Lord of kings’, Daniel 2:47).

A dramatico-liturgical enactment of the destruction of Rome : Apocalypse 18:1-24

1. From heaven: an announcement of judgment

John has just announced the inevitable destruction of Rome and of any power that raises itself up against God. He now offers a dramatic-liturgical enactment, drawing heavily on prophetic literature from the Hebrew Scriptures.

His description of God's messenger recalls the following from Ezekiel:

And there, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the east; the sound was like the sound of mighty waters; and the earth shone with his glory. The vision I saw was like the vision that I had seen when he came to destroy the city.

– Ezekiel 43:2-3

We have already heard the announcement of Babylon's fall (see 14:8). It echoes the following:

Fallen, fallen is Babylon; and all the images of her gods lie shattered on the ground.

– Isaiah 21:9

Suddenly Babylon has fallen and is shattered; wail for her!

– Jeremiah 51:8; also 51:49

Fire will come upon her from the Everlasting for many days, and for a long time she will be inhabited by demons.

– Baruch 4:35

Wild animals will lie down there, and its houses will be full of howling creatures; there ostriches will live, and there goat-demons will dance. Hyenas will cry in its towers, and jackals in the pleasant palaces; its time is close at hand, and its days will not be prolonged.

– Isaiah 13:21-22; see also Jeremiah 50:39

This terrible fate will come upon Rome because she has seduced the whole world into worshipping the false gods of arrogance, violence and economic exploitation.

Babylon was a golden cup in the Lord's hand, making all the earth drunken; the nations drank of her wine, and so the nations went mad.

– Jeremiah 51:7¹

¹See Apocalypse 14:8; 17:2,4; also 2:14,20,21; 9:21.

[Narrator]:

¹After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority; and the earth was made bright with his splendour.

²He called out with a mighty voice,

[Angel]:

'Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!

It has become a dwelling place of demons, a haunt of every foul and hateful bird, a haunt of every foul and hateful beast.

³For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxury'.

[Narrator]:

**⁴Then I heard another voice
from heaven saying,**

[Voice from heaven]:

**‘Come out of her, my people,
so that you do not take part in
her sins, and so that you do not
share in her plagues;**

**⁵for her sins are heaped high as
heaven,
and God has remembered her
injustices.**

**⁶Render 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.**

**⁷As she glorified herself and
lived luxuriously, so give her
a like measure of torment and
grief. Since in her heart she
says,**

**“I rule as a queen; I am no
widow, and I will never see
grief”,**

**⁸therefore her plagues will
come in a single day -
pestilence and mourning and
famine -**

**and she will be burned with
fire;**

**for mighty is the Lord God
who judges her’.**

God is calling to his people to resist the seduction
of Rome. John is echoing Jeremiah:

Flee from the midst of Babylon, save your
lives, each of you! Do not perish because of
her guilt, for this is the time of the Lord’s
vengeance; he is repaying her what is due.

– Jeremiah 51:6

Also the prophet of the exile:

Go out from Babylon, flee from Chaldea,
declare this with a shout of joy, proclaim it,
send it forth to the end of the earth; say, ‘The
Lord has redeemed his servant Jacob!’

– Isaiah 48:20

Depart, depart, go out from there! Touch no
unclean thing; go out from the midst of it,
purify yourselves.

– Isaiah 52:11

To avoid the destruction that is coming upon
Rome, they must avoid Rome’s sins.

We tried to heal Babylon, but she could not
be healed. Forsake her, and let each of us go
to our own country; for her judgment has
reached up to heaven and has been lifted up
even to the skies.

– Jeremiah 51:9

There is an allusion here to the tower of Babel
(Genesis 11:4).

Rome’s arrogant claim echoes that of ancient
Babylon:

You said, ‘I shall be mistress forever’, so
that you did not lay these things to heart or
remember their end. Now therefore hear
this, you lover of pleasures, who sit securely,
who say in your heart, ‘I am, and there is no
one besides me; I shall not sit as a widow, or
know the loss of children.’

– Isaiah 47:7-8¹

¹Likewise Tyre (Ezekiel 27:3).

2. Rome's cronies lament

As we have seen on numerous occasions, the kings of the earth are the rulers of subject peoples who are falling over themselves to embrace the Roman yoke and to benefit from the advantages of Roman patronage.¹ They lament the fall of Rome. John is echoing Ezekiel:

All the inhabitants of the coastlands
are appalled at you; and their kings are
horribly afraid, their faces are con-
vulsed.

– Ezekiel 27:35

Those also lament who have profited economically from the exploitation upon which Roman trade was based. Once again, Ezekiel is John's model:

The merchants among the peoples hiss
at you; you have come to a dreadful
end and shall be no more forever.

– Ezekiel 27:36

The cargo list in verses twelve and thirteen has a number of parallels with that found in Ezekiel 27:12-24. Besides luxury goods it contains basic foodstuffs. Rome had the power to force subject states to organise production to suit, not the needs of their own people, but the needs of Rome. People themselves are a commodity. Not only their bodies, but their very souls, are subject to Roman exploitation. All Rome's wealth has been laid waste:

Your riches, your wares, your mer-
chandise, your mariners and your
pilots, your caulkers, your dealers in
merchandise, and all your warriors
within you, with all the company that
is with you, sink into the heart of the
seas on the day of your ruin.

– Ezekiel 27:27

¹Compare Ezekiel 27:33; Psalm 2:2; Isaiah 24:21. Also Apoc. 1:5; 6:15; 17:2,18; 18:3.

[Narrator]:

⁹And the kings of the earth, who
committed fornication and lived in
luxury with her, will weep and wail
over her when they see the smoke of
her burning; ¹⁰they will stand far
off, in fear of her torment, and say,

[Kings of the earth]:

'Alas, alas, the great city, Babylon,
the mighty city! For in one hour
your judgment has come'.

]Narrator]:

¹¹And the merchants of the earth
weep and mourn for her,
since no one buys their cargo any
more,

¹²cargo 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 mar-
ble,

¹³cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh,
frankincense, wine, olive oil, choice
flour and wheat, cattle and sheep,
horses and chariots, slaves - and hu-
man souls.

¹⁴'The fruit for which your soul
longed has gone from you, and all
your dainties and your splendour
are lost to you, never to be found
again!'

¹⁵The merchants of these wares, who
gained wealth from her, will stand
far off, in fear of her torment, weep-
ing and mourning aloud,

[Merchants of the earth]:

¹⁶'Alas, alas, the great city, clothed
in fine linen, in purple and scarlet,
adorned with gold, with jewels and
with pearls!

¹⁷For in one hour all this wealth has
been laid waste'

[Narrator]:

And all shipmasters and seafarers, sailors, and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off ¹⁸and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning,

[Sailors]:

'What city was like the great city?'

[Narrator]:

¹⁹And they threw dust on their heads, as they wept and mourned, crying out,

[Sailors]:

'Alas, alas, the great city, where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth! For in one hour she has been laid waste'.

.....

²⁰Rejoice over her, O heaven, you saints and apostles and prophets! For God has given judgment for you against her.'

The kings and merchants are joined by those who ply the seas. They join in the chorus of lament. John continues to draw upon Ezekiel who is lamenting the fall of Tyre, the greatest seafaring power of his day:

Down from their ships come all that handle the oar. The mariners and all the pilots of the sea stand on the shore and wail aloud over you, and cry bitterly. They throw dust on their heads and wallow in ashes; they make themselves bald for you, and put on sackcloth, and they weep over you in bitterness of soul, with bitter mourning. In their wailing they raise a lamentation for you, and lament over you: "Who was ever destroyed like Tyre in the midst of the sea? When your wares came from the seas, you satisfied many peoples; with your abundant wealth and merchandise you enriched the kings of the earth. Now you are wrecked by the seas, in the depths of the waters; your merchandise and all your crew have sunk with you.

– Ezekiel 27:29-34

.....

3. The liturgical assembly breaks into shouts of joy

Those who lament the fall of Rome are those who have joined in the profiteering. The vast multitude of subjects who have suffered exploitation are delighted at its fall. John is inviting the Christian community to rejoice that the oppressor (the whore, the slaughterer and the economic exploiter) has fallen. Justice has prevailed.

Praise, O heavens, his people, worship him, all you gods! For he will avenge the blood of his children, and take vengeance on his adversaries; he will repay those who hate him, and cleanse the land for his people.

– Deuteronomy 32:32

4. A symbolic action by the angel

The millstone and the haunting refrain remind us of Jeremiah:

When you finish reading this scroll, tie a stone to it, and throw it into the midst of the Euphrates, and say, 'Thus shall Babylon sink, to rise no more, because of the disaster I am bringing on her.

– Jeremiah 51:63-64

Compare the following from Ezekiel, writing concerning Tyre:

I will bring you to a dreadful end, and you shall be no more; though sought for, you will never be found again, says the Lord God.

– Ezekiel 26:21

The cult of false gods will be no more:

I will banish from them the sound of mirth and the sound of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the lamp.

– Jeremiah 25:10

The mirth of the timbrels is stilled, the noise of the jubilant has ceased, the mirth of the lyre is stilled.

– Isaiah 24:8

I will silence the music of your songs; the sound of your lyres shall be heard no more.

– Ezekiel 26:13

Rome's seductive power is evil, founded on sorcery.¹

The final statement reminds us of Jesus' accusation against 'the city that kills the prophets':

Upon you will come all the righteous blood shed on earth.

– Matthew 23:35

¹On sorcery see Isaiah 47:9 (concerning Babylon) and Nahum 3:4 (concerning Tyre).

[Narrator]:

²¹Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying,

[Angel]:

'With such violence Babylon the great city will be thrown down , and will be found no more; ²²and the sound of harpists and minstrels, and of flutists and trum-peters will be heard in you no more; and an artisan of any trade will be found in you no more; and the sound of the millstone will be heard in you no more; ²³and the light of a lamp will shine in you no more; and the voice of bridegroom and bride will be heard in you no more; for your merchants were the magnates of the earth, and all nations were deceived by your sorcery'.

[Narrator]:

²⁴And in *her* was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slaughtered on earth.