# TABLE OF CONTENTS

I  Acknowledgements  
II  Dedication  
III  Summary  

## Chapter 1: ORIENTATION
1. Title  
2. Problem Statement  
3. Purpose of Research  
4. Approach to the Problem  
   4.1. Outside Pressures and Influences  
   4.2. Evil Self-destructs; Good Triumphs  
   4.3. The Worship of God  
   4.4. Understanding God’s Design  

## Chapter 2: CHAPTERS 17:1 - 19:10 IN HISTORICAL AND LITERARY CONTEXT  
2.1. HISTORICAL CONTEXT:  
   2.1.1. Geographical and Historical Context  
   2.1.2. Economic Context  
   2.1.3. Political Context and Religious Context  
      2.1.3.1. Emperor Worship and the Persecution of Christians  
      2.1.3.2. The Development of Emperor Worship in the Roman Empire  
      2.1.3.3. The Development of Emperor Worship in Asia Minor  
      2.1.3.4. The Persecution of Christians  
      2.1.3.5. The Condition of the Churches in Asia Minor  
         2.1.3.5.1. The Church at Ephesus  
         2.1.3.5.2. The Church at Smyrna  
         2.1.3.5.3. The Church at Pergamum  
         2.1.3.5.4. The Church at Thyatira  
         2.1.3.5.5. The Church at Sardis  
         2.1.3.5.6. The Church at Philadelphia  
         2.1.3.5.7. The Church at Laodicea  
   2.2. LITERARY CONTEXT:  
      2.2.1. Old Testament Influence  
      2.2.2. John’s Use of the Old Testament  
      2.2.3. New Testament Influence  
         2.2.3.1. Jesus’ Eschatological Teachings  
            2.2.3.1.1. Life After Death  
            2.2.3.1.2. Christ’s Parousia  
            2.2.3.1.3. Christ’s Teaching on Judgement  
            2.2.3.1.4. The Total Destruction of Evil and its Forces  
               2.2.3.1.4.1. Satan  
               2.2.3.1.4.2. The Anti-christ  
               2.2.3.1.4.3. The Signs that will precede the end
2.2.3.2. Paul's Eschatological Understanding
  2.2.3.2.1. Paul's Involvement in Asia Minor
  2.2.3.2.2. Paul's Jewish Heritage
  2.2.3.2.3. Jesus' Influence on Paul's Eschatology
    2.2.3.2.3.1. Paul's Understanding of Life After Death
    2.2.3.2.3.2. Paul's Understanding of Christ's Parousia
    2.2.3.2.3.3. Paul's Understanding of Judgement
    2.2.3.2.3.4. Paul's Understanding of Evil & its forces
      2.2.3.2.3.4.1. Satan
      2.2.3.2.3.4.2. Antichrist
      2.2.3.2.3.4.3. Evil
      2.2.3.2.3.4.4. Paul's understanding of the signs that will precede the end

2.2.3.3. John's Eschatological Understanding
  2.2.3.3.1. Authorship of the Apocalypse
    2.2.3.3.1.1. Internal Evidence
    2.2.3.3.1.2. External Evidence
    2.2.3.3.1.3. Concluding Remarks
  2.2.3.3.2. Jesus’ Influence on John’s Eschatology
    2.2.3.3.2.1. John’s Understanding of Life After Death
    2.2.3.3.2.2. John’s Understanding of Christ’s Parousia
    2.2.3.3.2.3. John’s Understanding of Judgement
    2.2.3.3.2.4. John’s Understanding of Evil’s Total Destruction
      2.2.3.3.2.4.1. Satan
      2.2.3.3.2.4.2. Antichrist

2.2.3.4. The Eschatology of Revelation
  2.2.3.4.1. Life After Death
  2.2.3.4.2. Christ's Parousia
  2.2.3.4.3. Judgement
  2.2.3.4.4. Evil's Total Destruction

Chapter 3: FURTHER EXEGETICAL SURVEY (Rev. 17:1 – 19:10)
3.1. Introductory Remarks

3.2. The Judgement of Babylon (17:1 – 19:5)
  3.2.1. The Prostitute on the Beast (17:1-6a)
  3.2.2. The Meaning of the prostitute and the beast (17:7-14)
  3.2.3. The Fall of the Prostitute (17:15-18)
  3.2.4. The Fall of Babylon Announced (18:1-8)
  3.2.5. Mourning over the fall of Babylon (18:9-20)
    3.2.5.1. The Weeping Kings (vv. 18:9-10)
    3.2.5.2. The Weeping Merchants (vv. 18:11-17a)
    3.2.5.3. The Weeping Sailors (vv. 18:17b-20)
  3.2.6. The Fall of Babylon Completed (18:21-24)

3.3. Rejoicing Over the Fall of Babylon (19:1-5)
3.3.1. The Heavenly Multitude of Saints Rejoice (vv. 1-3)
3.3.2. The Twenty Four Elders and the Four Living Creatures Rejoice (v. 4)
3.3.3. The Voice from the Throne (v. 5)

3.4. The Marriage of the Lamb Announced (19:6–10)
   3.4.1. The Heavenly Multitude responds (19:6-8)
   3.4.2. The Wedding Supper of The Lamb (19:9)

3.5. The Command to Worship God (19:10)
3.6. Concluding Remarks

Chapter 4: THE FUNCTIONAL POSITION OF SONGS WITHIN WORSHIP

4.1. Singing in Worship: A Historical Overview
4.2. The Worshipping of God through the Songs of Revelation
   4.2.1. Worship Terminology in Revelation
   4.2.2. Discussing the Message/s of the Songs of Revelation
      4.2.2.1. God’s Sovereignty and Omnipotence
      4.2.2.2. God’s Holiness
      4.2.2.3. God’s Infinity
      4.2.2.4. God’s Love
      4.2.2.5. God’s Justice
      4.2.2.6. The Deity of the Son and the Trinity
      4.2.2.7. The Saints’ Victory and Hope
   4.3. Establishing the Functional Role of Singing
      4.3.1. Singing: How can it contribute to the believer’s belief system?
      4.3.2. Bringing Down Walls Through Song

Chapter 5: THEOLOGICAL ISSUES IN Rev. 17:1-19:10

5.1. THEOLOGY
   5.1.1. The Sovereignty of God
   5.1.2. Worship: Directed to God

5.2. CHRISTOLOGY
   5.2.1. Christ: The Lamb
      5.2.1.1. The Identity of “The Lamb” in Revelation
      5.2.1.2. The Divinity of the Lamb
      5.2.1.3. The Lamb’s Sovereignty over Evil
   5.2.3. Christ: The Saviour
   5.2.4. Christ: The Shepherd
   5.2.5. The Lamb: The Bridegroom

5.3. PNEUMATOLOGY
   5.3.1. Understanding the “seven Spirits”
   5.3.2. The Deity of the Spirit
   5.3.3. The Spirit’s Working
5.4. COSMOLOGY
   5.4.1. Angels: God’s Special Agents
       5.4.1.1. The Status of Angels
       5.4.1.2. The Activity of Angels
   5.4.2. Satan and his Forces
       5.4.2.1. The Satanic Triumvirate
       5.4.2.2. The Identity of the Beast
   5.4.3. The Termination of this Cosmos

5.5. ECCLESIOLOGY
   5.5.1. The Believer’s Status: Earthly vs. Eternal
   5.5.2. The Challenge to Overcome
   5.5.3. Martyrdom
   5.5.4. Holiness
   5.5.5. Worship
   5.5.6. The Church: The Bride

5.6. ESCHATOLOGY:
   5.6.1. Some Introductory Remarks
   5.6.2. Eschatological Hope in Revelation 17-19:10

Conclusion

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II. DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this thesis to the following people who have made an impact in my life:

1. To my darling wife, Hazel, and our lovely children, Caleb Terah, Rebekah-Grace, and Gabriel Steven;

2. In memory of my dad, Manikam Patchipan (1920-1987); my mum, Ruthammah Manikam (1935-1999); and my father-in-law, Dayadharum Atchannah (1937-2001), who are with the LORD. Praise God for their valuable input into my life;

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III. SUMMARY

The Bible teaches that God is the Creator of this world and all that is in it. It teaches us further that God’s creation was perfect. Lucifer, or Satan, corrupted perfection and ultimate goodness in creation by wanting to become like God. This resulted in the introduction of evil in God’s creation. Satan enticed Eve with a similar proposition in Genesis 3. Eve introduced the idea to her husband and they both agreed to the satanic lie: to become their own god – resulting in disobedience and every kind of evil that is found in the world up to the present.

Evil is a real problem in this world. At the root of every kind of suffering, lies evil. Evil abounds, for man has rejected his nature as a created, limited, finite being, and tries to be what he could never be – divine. This was man’s original sin: he wanted to be god. Man often repeats this sin to this day. The Apocalypse presents to the reader God’s plan of salvation to redeem humanity back to its state of ‘goodness.’

Further, the Apocalypse teaches that God is Sovereign and that He is in control of His design. The book presents hope in the midst of suffering for the believer. At the same time, another message of judgement upon the evil inhabitants of the earth, the cosmos and evil is presented. God is holy and all that He stands for is good. Evil contradicts God’s nature and has to be destroyed for good to triumph. It is for this reason that we need to survey Rev. 17:1-19:10, for here we will witness the self-destruction of evil which is God’s design. We will also witness the triumph of good as evil is destroyed.
The Apocalypse of John presents to the reader God’s design of allowing evil to run its course. Much emphasis is placed upon the Christ-event of Jesus’ sacrificial atonement as the “Lamb of God.” This event allows mankind a way out of following the path of wanting to be his own master and god. It shows to man his utter helplessness and hopelessness in saving himself from evil’s grip. It is only those that recognize their state of human depravity and their inability to save themselves, who find a release from evil’s grip through Christ’s atoning work alone. Only then will believers experience their true humanity – in God.

Revelation 17 and 18 presents evil in two spheres. Firstly, evil is personified as a prostitute who seduces people away from God into idolatry. Idolatry is witnessed in organized religion and even unorganized religion (e.g. Marxism, atheism, science, etc.). Any argument for redemption from a problem, and an argument for salvation from these problems, ultimately leads to a belief system or religion. This will mean that all persons are religious, for they subscribe to some form of belief system which liberates them from something that they would deem oppressive - whether it includes a personal deity or not. Our argument is that every belief outside of the Christ revealed in the Scriptures, is idolatry. Idolatry finds its root in the Beast, or the Anti-Christ, symbolized by the prostitute’s prominent position on the beast (Chapter 17). She is described as “sitting” on the beast, signifying her unity with the beast and her representation of the beast on earth as his ambassador. The beast is identified as the great persecuting power that rules by brute force and is the supreme enemy of Christ and the Church. In chapter 13, the beast’s influence is discussed. To ascertain the identity of the beast, John writes, “This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man’s number. His number is 666”
We are of the opinion that the Book of Revelation has to be understood from an Old Testament perspective, for it is quoted extensively and its prophetic symbolism often repeated. The only instances that the number “666” is used in the Old Testament, is found in 1 Kings 10:14 and 2 Chronicles 9:13, both describing the weight of gold that Solomon received annually. We read in 1 Kings 11 of Solomon’s downfall where he took for himself “… seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines” (v.3). These marriages helped him to develop commercial ties with the rest of the world, which soon resulted in Solomon following after many gods. Solomon’s alliances, through commercial security, led him away from God. Now his trust was placed in worldly alliances and not on God for prosperity. Secondly, those links soon led him into idolatry. John uses Solomon’s downfall to help his readers identify the beast. This beast of chapter 13 is further described in chapter 17 as the one who leads the inhabitants of the earth into idolatry through the prostitute. In chapter 18, the beast is portrayed as the one who seduces people into commercialism, through the prostitute. The seducing of humanity into idolatry and commercialism is still the beast of modern times. This beast prevents man from acknowledging God and entering into a relationship with Him. It is this beast of Idolatry and Commercialism that Revelation reveals as the seducers of mankind, pointing them away from the living God. Revelation 17-18 outlines the final judgement and destruction of the beast’s evil system.

The Apocalypse describes God’s complete eradication of the evil beast and his accomplices, ushering in a new heaven and a new earth, with a once again, perfect humanity to fellowship with Him for all eternity. Revelation 17:1 to 19:10 outlines how God goes about in ridding His creation of evil. It teaches evil’s self-destruction - which
is God’s design. It further describes the lost-ness of those that indulge in evil, little realizing that they are also responsible for evil’s demise – which is God’s design. It culminates with the joy of the righteous over evil’s destruction and their permanently restored fellowship with their Creator.

The outworking of God’s design regarding the demise of evil needs to be viewed in the light of the Sovereignty of God (to which the Apocalypse provides an excellent understanding). We will witness the worldly system’s influence on humanity in John’s day, which is not much different to the present, for history has a way of repeating itself. We will discuss how believers are to respond to the influences of Idolatry and Commercialism (CHAPTER 2). Secondly, an exegetical analysis of the pericope chosen will prove the ultimate triumph of God in the destruction of evil, and will also describe the eternality of the believer’s position in Christ (CHAPTER 3). Thirdly, a correct understanding of the sole worship of God is necessary for believers, therefore the theology and content of worship teachings and practices (as witnessed in the songs of Revelation) will be discussed in Chapter 4. Finally, a correct understanding of God, and His role as Creator and Sustainer of creation, will be dealt with under the broad headings of GOD, MAN, SIN, COSMOS (CHAPTER 5).