

Chapter 17

Mystery Babylon

- Some have said this is possibly the most difficult chapter of Revelation to understand, and possibly the most difficult in all the Bible. **Note:** It is a parenthetical chapter, an interruption in the order of events in order that something might be farther explained.

I. The Great Whore (vs.1,2). We have discussed the 'seven angels which had the seven vials' (bowls), filled with the 'wrath of God'. And now, one of those angels says to John, 'Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters'. **Note:** In Bible symbolism, a 'harlot', 'whore', or 'prostitute', speaks of one who is unfaithful to God and is guilty of 'spiritual fornication'. The Apostle John said, 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him' (**I Jn.2:15**). The Christian who loves the world is committing 'spiritual fornication'.

- The time of this fulfillment takes place in the midst of the 7-year tribulation (middle of Daniel's 70th Week). The 10 kings give their power to the 'beast', and, together, they turn on the 'great whore' to destroy her so that the 'beast worship' of chapter 13 may be established.

Ex. In Ezekiel 23, we have the Parable of Aholah and Aholibah. **Read vs.2-4.** Aholah (Samaria) played the harlot, committing whoredom with the Assyrians. And when her sister, Aholibah (Jerusalem) saw what Aholah had done, she was even more corrupt, committing whoredom with the Babylonians. 'Thus saith the Lord God; thou shalt drink of thy sister's cup deep and large . . . Thou shalt be filled with drunkenness and sorrow, with the cup of astonishment and desolation, with the cup of thy sister Samaria' (vs.32,33). God declared judgment upon Israel and Judah because they had forsaken Him and turned to other gods. And from these scriptures we can see that 'spiritual fornication', 'unfaithfulness', and 'adultery' have to do with 'false worship'.

The 'great whore' represents an amalgamation of Christianity (so-called), cults, and the many pagan religions of the world. She is 'organized religion', the 'world church'. **Note:** The Church of Thyatira only allowed Jezebel to 'teach' (**Rev.2:20**), but the 'world church' of the great tribulation is a harlot more evil and frightful than was Jezebel.

- A. John is shown a 'woman (the great whore) sitting upon a scarlet coloured beast' (v.3). But notice, the 'woman' is not part of the scarlet-colored beast. She will help boost the 'beast' (Antichrist) to power.
- B. Her sins and lovers (v.2).
 - a. Kings of the earth. (World leaders have come under the control of her power.)
 - b. Inhabitants of the earth. Her influence has reached around the globe.

C. Her dominion (v.3).

Sitting upon the scarlet colored beast, which had 7 heads and 10 horns. (Chapter 13)

Note: She is supported and assisted by the beast (Antichrist). In fact, she will play an important role in bringing the Antichrist to power. **Ex.** Evangelicals in Germany were instrumental in bringing Hitler to power in the 1930s, believing him to be the 'savior' of their day.

D. Her attire (v.4).

- a. Decked with gold, precious stones, and pearls. Robed in such a manner in order to call attention to herself.
- b. Having a golden cup in her hand. The cup is made of gold, and indicates her wealth; yet, it is filled with filth, abominations, and lewdness of her fornication. (**Jer.51:7**) In 1825, on Jubilee, Pope Leo III struck a medal, bearing on one side his own image, and on the other, that of the Church of Rome symbolized as a 'woman', holding in her left hand a cross, and in her right a cup, with the legend around her, 'SEDET SUPER UNIVERSUM' - 'The whole world is her seat'.

E. Her drunkenness (v.6).

- Drunk with the blood of saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. (The saints she has put to death through the centuries, and those martyred during the first three and one-half years of the tribulation.)

F. Her name (v.5).

- a. Mystery
- b. Babylon the Great
- c. Mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.

The 'great whore' is called 'Mystery Babylon', and is the 'bride of Antichrist'. Therefore, she is not a literal city, but a 'system', an 'apostate corrupt religious system'. And just as the 'Church' is the 'Bride of Christ', composed of regenerated followers of Christ, so, 'Mystery Babylon' (bride of Antichrist) will be composed of the followers of many false religions.

Note: Babylon is the Greek form of the Old Testament Hebrew word: Babel. In **Gen.10,11**, we are told that Nimrod, the great-grandson of Noah, began to be a mighty one in the earth ... and the beginning of his kingdom was Babel (Babylon). Too, it's the first Bible account of man's organized rebellion against God. Actually, Babylon began in idolatry, paganism, and in human pride against God's commands. And because of this idolatry, God confounded their languages. Therefore, Babel (Babylon) means 'confusion'. **Note:** To Nimrod, and those of his day, Babel was the 'Gate of God'. But, in reality, it is 'Confusion at the Gate of God'.

Note: Two Babylons are to be distinguished in Revelation: (1) 'Ecclesiastical Babylon', which is 'Apostate Christendom', and 'Political Babylon', which is the confederated empire of the 'beast' (Antichrist), the last form of Gentile world-dominion.

- 'Ecclesiastical Babylon', represented by the 'great whore' (v.1), is destroyed by 'Political Babylon' (vs.15-18), making it possible for Antichrist to be the lone object of worship. And, remember, 'Political Babylon' will be destroyed by the return of the Lord from heaven at Armageddon.

Note: There are differences of opinion as to 'when' 'Ecclesiastical Babylon' (Apostate Church) will be destroyed by the 'beast' and the 'Revised Roman Empire' (v.16). But I believe it will be some time near the middle of the 7-year tribulation. Too, I believe the 'Apostate World Church' (the millions of religious people left behind at the rapture of the True Church), will be headed up by leaders of Roman Catholicism and latter-day apostate Charismatics.

II. Mystery of the woman (great whore) revealed (vs.9,15-18).

- She professes to be Christian, but has roots in Babel (Babylon). And there are several reasons why I believe 'Roman Catholicism' is a leader in the 'Apostate World Church':
 - A. It is a 'world-wide religion', which has deceived the kings and rulers of the earth, leading them into 'spiritual idolatry'.
 - B. It is a 'false religion', making much to do of the colors purple and scarlet. (The papal throne is scarlet. It is borne by 12 men clad in scarlet. Too, the Cardinal's hats and robes are scarlet.)
 - C. This 'woman' is symbolic of a Christian/religious organization with enormous riches and treasures.
 - D. Mother of religious harlotry and abominations in the earth:
 - a. Forbids clergy to marry - which has resulted in fornication and pedophilia.
 - b. Changed baptism from immersion to sprinkling.
 - c. Invented the doctrine of purgatory.
 - d. Began offering prayers to Virgin Mary.
 - e. Salvation obtained through rites, ceremonies, and works - instead of by simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and the cross.
 - E. Drunk with blood of martyrs:
 - a. Bohemia in 1600s, population - 4m, with 80% Protestant. When Hapsburg and Jesuits had completed their work, only 800,000 (a fifth of the original population) remained, all Catholics.
 - b. Austria & Hungary. Half of their populations were Protestant. But under Hapsburg and Jesuits, they were all slaughtered.
 - c. St. Bartholomew's Massacre. The king's mother, a Romanist tool of the Pope, gave an order (Aug.24,1572) to massacre all Protestant believers. And on that night, 70,000 Huguenots were put to death.
 - d. Spanish Inquisition. Multiplied thousands of Protestants were killed as heretics.
- And the list goes on, continuing even unto today (2018).

III. Beast out of the Bottomless Pit (vs.7-11). Important.

- A. Has 'seven heads'. The seven heads are seven mountains, and the seven mountains are seven kings (kingdoms) which have been co-existent with the nation of Israel from Israel's beginning until the 8th kingdom (that of the Antichrist). Here, five of the seven kingdoms 'are fallen' (Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece), and 'one is' (the 6th, the old Roman Empire), and the other is 'not yet come' (7th, made up of the 10 kingdoms that are yet to be formed). They are represented by the 'ten toes' of Nebuchadnezzar's dream (**Dan.2:42,43**).

Note: Some teach that this 'beast out of the bottomless pit' is a human spirit, that of a person who at one time lived here on earth, died, and was consigned to the 'pit' (Abyss). But remember, nowhere in Scripture do we read of human spirits going to the bottomless pit at death. Human spirits of the ungodly go to 'hell' at death; and the spirits of the righteous go to be with the Lord (**Lu.16:22,23**).

This 'beast' (v.8) is a 'supernatural evil prince' under the guidance of Satan, dominating and exalting Antichrist as the earthly ruler (king) over the 8th and final kingdom before the rule of Christ, Himself. This 'spirit prince' (beast) ruled one of the first 5 world kingdoms, but had fallen before John's day (v.10), and is represented by one of the first five heads of the 7-headed beast. When this 'kingdom' fell, its 'spiritual prince' was cast into the Abyss, and continued there during the reign of the 6th kingdom (Rome), which was in existence in John's day. Too, he will remain in the Abyss until the 7th World Kingdom (Revised Roman Empire). At that time, he will ascend out of the bottomless pit, assist in the rise of Antichrist out from among the 10 kingdoms, and, will revive the 'Kingdom of Greece' (the nation he ruled before the 6th and 7th world powers). Notice **Rev.13:2**.

- This kingdom, that of Antichrist, will become the 8th world kingdom, and will meet defeat at Armageddon when Jesus returns to earth (**Rev.19**).
- It is this 'beast out of the bottomless pit' that will make war with the two witnesses, through Antichrist (**Rev.11:7**). **Note:** The kingdoms of the world have always been controlled by supernatural powers; and the things that transpire on earth, are, in reality, the results of those battles which take place in the atmospheric heavens - between good and evil spirits, those of God and those of Satan.
- According to my understanding of **Dan.8:15-25**, the Antichrist will come from the Syrian division of the divided Grecian Empire, and the 'Prince of Grecia' will be the 'spirit' out of the abyss. The 8th kingdom will be that of revived Greece, led by Antichrist, the man.