

Session Twenty: Revelation 17:1-18 “Babylon The Counterfeit Bride”

I) Introduction

- A) **Revelation 17** and **18** create the longest unfulfilled prophecy in the New Testament and it revolves around a yet future, emerging, social, political, economic and religious system in direct partnership with the beast (antichrist) of **Revelation 13**.
- B) This future Babylonian system will be a revived evil antichristian system that’s unbowed to God and unrepentant in its brash evil and persecution of Jews (Naturally Jewish non-believers), Christians (Jew and Gentile believers) and all those that speak out against it.
- C) Babylon is mentioned in 18 of the 66 books in the Bible and the longest Old Testament prophecy (**Jeremiah 50-51**) is centered around Babylon past/future.
- D) **Revelation** chapters **17-18** make up the 4th Parenthetical/Explanation section in the **Revelation**. They are an explanation of why the judgments (7 bowls) are so severe throughout the 4th Chronological section, **Revelation 15-16**.

II) John’s Vision Of The Great Harlot (Babylon) (Revelation 17:1-6)

- A) **Revelation 17:1-2** *“Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.”*
 - 1) Babylon is no cheap lady of the night. On the contrary the Holy Spirit describes her as a high class harlot by referring to her as “The great harlot...who sits on many waters.”
 - 1. **Revelation 17:15,18** *“Then he said to me, the waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues...and the women that you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.”*
 - 2) Here are the primary qualities that make up the great harlot Babylon;
 - 1. She is originator and progenitor of false religion (**Rev. 17**)
 - 2. She intoxicates the nations (**Rev.17:2b**)
 - 3. She is empowered by and paves the way for the antichrist (**Rev. 17:3**)
 - 4. She becomes obsessed/drunk with persecuting God’s saints (**Rev. 17:6**)
 - 5. She is enthroned upon the nations (**Rev. 17:15**)
 - 6. She is center of global commerce (**Rev. 18:3b**)
 - 7. She is the ultimate symbol of human rebellion against God (**Rev. 18:7**)
 - 8. Her destruction comes quickly and completely (**Rev. 18:10**)
 - 3) Babylon is referred to as a harlot because like a prostitute they do whatever is morally incorrect if the right price is paid. Babylon will export harlotry for commercial gain.

- 4) The kings of the earth (heads of countries and states) are willingly entering into partnership with her to share in her wealth, but they will also share in her vices and immorality.
 - 5) The primary fornication that she is committing is calling the earth to worship the beast. As she captures the heart of the kings, she will capture the heart of the nation.
 - 6) The harlot's twofold drunkenness is; **1) Alcohol and 2) Indulgent lifestyles with life in this age.** The wine of alcohol and the wine of this age clouds the mind and impairs our judgment.
 1. **Ephesians 5:15-18** *"See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be (being) filled with the Spirit."*
- B) **Revelation 17:3** *"So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns."*
- 1) This is the 3rd time in the **Revelation** that John has made clear to his readers that he was in the Spirit when witnessed this harlot (**Rev. 1:10; 4:2**).
 - 2) For the majority of the earth the harlot Babylon system will emerge from obscurity (the wilderness) onto the world stage seemingly overnight. This emergence will take place through a partnership between Babylon and the Beast.
 - 3) It's not that Babylon is ruling over the Beast but that Babylon is supported by the Beast.
 - 4) Babylon is both a system and a city.
 1. As a religious system Babylon will be used as a pawn in the beast's hand to move humanity away from traditional values. She is an apostate church that's bent on stealing from Jesus His beautiful bride.
 2. As a city Babylon will be the Antichrist's capital from which he will establish a political, social and economic system that touches the ends of the earth and make's way for allegiance to the Beast.
- C) **Revelation 17:4-5** *"The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. And on her forehead a name was written: **MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.**"*
- 1) Both Babylon and the Bride of Christ are personifications of a two-fold reality.
 1. **Babylon** is a counterfeit religious system and a physical capital city (Iraq) of a earthly king (the Antichrist) that impacts life in every sphere.
 2. **The Bride Of Christ** is the true Church of Jesus Christ and a physical capital city of a heavenly King (Jesus Christ) that impacts life in every sphere.
 - 2) Babylon will be an earthly New Jerusalem built with great splendor and opulence appealing to the sinful eye of humanity. It will be everything that glitters and is golden (**Rev. 18**).

- 3) You will be able to participate in Babylon (that which you can see) today and not have to wait for the New Jerusalem (that which you can only see by faith) tomorrow.
 - 4) Babylon's foundation is built upon deceptive materials. They are the counterfeit materials that God has called His Church to build their lives upon;
 1. **Babylon's Foundation** = *"The women was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with precious with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup...and saying, alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls(Rev. 17:4;18:16)!"*
 2. **The Bride's Foundation** = *"For no other foundation can anyone lay that that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones...(1st Cor. 3:11-12; Rev. 21:18-21)."*
 - 5) Here's a short list of how Babylon and the New Jerusalem are contrasted;
 1. *Jerusalem is the chaste bride, the wife of the Lamb (Rev. 21:2,9)*
 - (a) *Babylon is the harlot with whom the kings of the earth fornicate (Rev. 17:2)*
 2. *Jerusalem's splendor is the glory of God (Rev. 21:11-12)*
 - (a) *Babylon's splendor comes from the exploiting of her empire (Rev. 17:4)*
 3. *In the New Jerusalem the nations walk by her light, which is the glory of God (Rev.21:24)*
 - (a) *Babylon corrupts and deceives the nations (Rev. 17:2)*
 4. *In the New Jerusalem the kings of the earth bring their glory into her (Rev. 21:24)*
 - (a) *Babylon rules over the kings of the earth (Rev. 17:18)*
 5. *In the New Jerusalem uncleanness, abominations and impurities are excluded (Rev. 21:27)*
 - (a) *In Babylon uncleanness, abominations and impurities are included (Rev. 17:4,5; 18:23)*
 6. *In the New Jerusalem the water of life and the leaves heal the nations (Rev. 21:6; 22:1-2)*
 - (a) *In Babylon, the wine makes the nations drunk (Rev. 14:8; 17:2; 18:3)*
 7. *In the New Jerusalem there is life and healing (Rev. 22:1-2)*
 - (a) *In Babylon there is only the blood of slaughter (Rev. 17:6; 18:24)*
 8. *In The New Jerusalem the people of God are called into her (Rev. 22:14)*
 - (a) *In Babylon the people of God are called out of her (Rev.18:4)*
 - 6) The splendor of the external cup Babylon will serve to the nations will blind them from the demonic deception that's alive internally leading them into a drunken stupor (**Genesis 27:20-27; Revelation 13:11**).
 - 7) The reason her name is on her forehead is because she is brash, bold, aggressive and unashamed in her sinful delusion. She's a boldfaced harlot who's not ashamed about her immorality.
- D) **Revelation 17:6** *"I saw the women, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement."*
- 1) The idea of being drunk with blood is an ancient idiom for the sword to be overtaken in the death of many (**Isa. 34:5;49:26**). They are called saints because they belong to God and their called martyrs because they have shed their blood for Christ.
 - 2) John is marveling because of the partnership between the Beast and Babylon.

III) The Partnership Between Babylon And The Beast (Revelation 17:7-14)

A) **Revelation 17:7-8** *“But the angel said to me, why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the women (Babylon) and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.”*

- 1) The angel confirms that John is marveling (look closely) because of the partnership between Babylon and the Beast.
- 2) For John to marvel at this demonic partnership speaks to the seriousness of what’s taking place.
- 3) The seven heads that will carry Babylon in partnership with the Beast are 7 historic empires that include; Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, ancient Rome and a still future revived Roman Empire (**Dan. 2:41-42; 7:7,22,24; Rev. 12:3; 17:3-16**).
- 4) The reason the whole earth marvels (*whose names aren’t written in the Book of Life*) is because of the antichrist’s deadly wound that’s been healed (counterfeit resurrection).
- 5) Here is the meaning of the beast that was, and is not and yet is;
 1. **The Beast That Was** = The Antichrist will be the full manifestation of the spirit of the antichrist which has been at work in the earth for thousands of years (**1st John 2:18**).
 2. **The Beast That Is Not** = The Antichrist will stage a counterfeit resurrection where he will physically die, causing him to not be.
 3. **The Beast That Is** = The Antichrist will be seen publically resurrected from the dead giving him the status “that he is.”

B) **Revelation 17:9-13** *“Here is the mind which has wisdom: the seven heads are seven mountains on which the women sits. There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time. The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition. The ten horns which you saw are ten kings, who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast.”*

- 1) **Revelation 12 and 17** are among the most difficult chapters in the Revelation to interpret because of the heavy symbolism.
 1. **The Ten Horns Are Ten Kings** = “This speaks of a future ten-nation confederation of ten kings who will each enthusiastically come under the Antichrist’s authority (**Dan. 2:39-42; 7:7,20,24; 11:36-45; Rev. 12:3; 13:1; 17:3,7,12,16**).”-Mike Bickle
 - 2) We aren’t to think that they literally rule for just one hour. It’s speaking of a short season that they receive power, and it’s not for themselves but rather for the Beast and His involuntary worship system .

C) **Revelation 17:14** *“These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.”*

- 1) The Antichrist will be telling powerful lies about Christ that will be attested to by lying signs and wonders. The purpose of this is to deceive the nations into thinking their earthly champion, the Antichrist can actually fight and win against the Heavenly Champion, Jesus Christ.
- 2) **Revelation 17:15-17** speaks about the destruction to the Babylonian religious system. **Revelation 18** speaks about the destruction of the capital city of Babylon and **Revelation 19** speaks about the destruction of the false prophet, the Antichrist and everyone who takes the mark of the beast.

1. **John 16:8-11** *“And when He (the Holy Spirit) has come He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you will see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.”*

IV) The Beast Burns Babylon (Revelation 17:15-18)

A) **Revelation 17:15-17** *“Then he said to me, the waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled.”*

- 1) The waters that the harlot sits upon speak of her global influence as she impacts peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues.
- 2) What happens here in **Revelation 17:16** will be the great shocker in the middle of the eschatological drama. 3 ½ years into the tribulation the Antichrist will totally separate himself from the religious system of Babylon.
- 3) This ten nation confederation will partner with the beast to utterly burn this religious Babylonian system to make way for the abomination that leads to desolation (**Matthew 24:15**).
- 4) Because the devil, like Jesus, won't share his worship with anyone or anything (Babylon) the Babylonian voluntary religion must be replaced with the Antichrist's involuntary religion.

B) **Revelation 17:18** *“And the women whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.”*

- 1) **Revelation 17:18** is a beautiful bridge into **Revelation 18** which speaks not of the Great City Jerusalem but of the pomp, darkness, deception, filth and immorality of Babylon the capital city of the Antichrist.
- 2) Beloved, we must not underestimate the influence, power and opulence of this currently emerging system Babylon, whom the Holy Spirit says *“...reigns over the kings of the earth.”*