

## ***The Harlot Babylon: Introducing the Basic Themes (Rev. 17:1-7)***

### **I. THE GREAT FALLING AWAY FROM THE FAITH AT THE END OF THE AGE**

- A. One of the greatest challenges for the Church in the End-Times is the falling away from the faith. (Mt. 24:9-13; 2 Thes. 2:3; 1 Tim. 4:1-2; 2 Tim. 3:1-7; 4:3-5; 2 Pet. 2:1-3).

<sup>1</sup> *Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons... (1 Tim. 4:1)*

<sup>3</sup> *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables... (2 Tim. 4:3-5)*

<sup>1</sup> *But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves ...5 having a form of godliness but denying its power (reality). (2 Tim. 3:1-5)*

- B. Paul gives two of the most significant signs of the nearness of Jesus' Second Coming. They are the falling away and the revealing or the appearing of the Antichrist on the stage of history.

<sup>3</sup> *Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin (Antichrist) is revealed, the son of perdition... (2Thes. 2:3)*

### **II. THE HARLOT BABYLON: HER JUDGMENT AND SEDUCTION (REV. 17:1-7)**

<sup>1</sup> *One of the seven angels...talked with me, saying to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the Great Harlot who sits on many waters (v. 15), 2 with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication." 3... I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast (Antichrist) which was full of names of blasphemy... 4 The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold...having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. 5 On her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. 6 I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints...and when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement. 7 But the angel said to me, "Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast (Antichrist) that carries her..." (Rev. 17:1-7)*

- A. In Rev. 17-18, John received one of the most significant prophecies related to the End-Times that gives much insight into the End-Time falling away from the faith. In this passage, an angel revealed to John part of Satan's strategy to seduce the Church, Israel, and the nations.
- B. John saw the nature, history and judgment of the Babylonian Harlot religion (Rev. 17) and its economic power (Rev. 18). The Harlot will have the power to seduce and deceive the most powerful leaders on the earth including the kings and the great merchants (Rev. 17:2; 18:3, 23).
- C. A Harlot will be raised up across the earth that has two powerful expressions that operate simultaneously. First, a religious network and second, an economic one. They will have an in-depth and complex inter-connection with each other.

### III. THE IMPORTANCE AND DIFFICULTY OF REV. 17-18

- A. Rev. 17-18, is the longest prophecy in Revelation (42 verses). The second longest prophecy is about the New Jerusalem (33 verses; Rev. 21:1-22:5). The longest prophecy in the OT is Jer. 50-51 (110 verses) and, it also focuses on Babylon in the End-Times. Another long prophecy in the OT is Isa. 13-14 (54 verses) which also focuses on the role of Babylon in the End-Times.
- B. The main message of Rev. 17 is easy to understand. The three primary themes in Rev. 17-18 are the emergence of the Antichrist, his ten-nation confederation, and the Great Harlot Babylon. Revelation 17 focuses on religious or spiritual Babylon as a worldwide network. Revelation 18 focuses on economic Babylon as a literal city that is one of the main economic centers on earth.
- C. Rev. 17 is the most symbolic passage in Revelation with many intricate details making it the most difficult chapter in Revelation to understand in all its detail. Since the angel gave John the meaning of the symbols, we have a solid foundation for understanding this passage.
- D. Why is this most important prophecy veiled in such cryptic language? Because the Lord wants us to diligently pour over every line of it and discuss it often so as to understand its every nuance.
- E. Rev. 17 is essential to understand because its theme concerns the coming worldwide religion that will powerfully seduce and deceive Israel, the Church, and all the religions on earth. Those who are fully deceived by it will end up in the Lake of Fire. Thus, Rev. 17-18 deserves much careful study and dialogue. The prophetic Church must be familiar with its truths and principles.

### IV. THE HARLOT WILL SIT WITH AUTHORITY AND CONTROL OVER MANY NATIONS

- A. A Great Harlot will rise up with great dominance and influence over many nations. She will bring together two vast global institutions (religious and economic) that will work closely to deceive and control many kings, economic leaders (Rev. 18:23) as well as the masses across the earth. The Great Harlot will appear as good and very beneficial. The kings will knowingly commit adultery with her and the people will be become drunk or intoxicated with her benefits.  
*<sup>1</sup> Come, I (angel) will show you (John) the judgment (sure defeat) of the Great Harlot who sits on many waters, 2 with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication. (Rev. 17:1-2)*  
*<sup>15</sup> Then he (angel) said to me, "The waters which you saw, where the Harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. (Rev. 17:15)*  
*<sup>23</sup> For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived. (Rev. 18:23)*
- B. We must be aware of the emergence of this religious and economic Harlot since the majority will not perceive her as demonic. She will be spiritually dangerous causing many to deny the faith.

- C. Before the angel shows John the wealth and false beauty of the Harlot, he shows him her inevitable judgment and sure defeat. This system will fail and be utterly destroyed.

<sup>1</sup> *Come, I will show you the judgment of the Great Harlot...* (Rev. 17:1)

- D. The Harlot will be carried or empowered by the Antichrist for a short season.

<sup>3</sup> *I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet Beast (Antichrist) which was full of names of blasphemy (Rev. 17:3)*

<sup>7</sup> *I (angel) will tell you the mystery (a plan hidden in God's heart) of the woman and of the Beast (Antichrist) that carries her... (Rev. 17:7)*

- E. The Harlot will have great prominence (royal status) and vast wealth. She will have great respect and esteem as well as financial power. This will help her seduce and deceive the nations.

<sup>4</sup> *The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet (royalty), and adorned with gold...having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. (Rev. 17:4)*

- F. The paradox of the Harlot is that she will be “lovely but very dark” which is exactly opposite of the Bride of Christ (Song 1:5). The cup will be golden or it will appear as something very valuable and good. Yet it will be filled with abominations (demonic) and filthiness (moral perversity). In the OT, abominations refer to idolatrous or demonic activity. In other words, she will appear to be very good as she offers much humanitarian aid and services yet her true nature will be evil (abomination and filth). People will be ecstatic or intoxicated (drunk) about the good that she will appear to accomplish for benefit of all mankind.

<sup>15</sup> *For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God. (Lk. 16:15)*

- G. Her name will be a mystery. The angel was giving John new information that had not ever been clearly revealed to the human race until it was revealed to John. This is surprising information.

<sup>5</sup> *On her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. (Rev. 17:5)*

- H. Her roots and origin are established in what happened at the tower of Babel in the plains of Shinar (Gen. 11). Babel was the city in which the first organized religion in history developed resulting in the first organized rebellion and war against God by mankind.

<sup>4</sup> *They said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth." 5 But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. 6 And the LORD said, "Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. 7 Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." 8 So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. 9 Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth. (Gen. 11:4-9)*

- I. Nothing they proposed to do would be withheld from them in terms of the progression and momentum of sin reaching its full potential. The golden cup will be full of sin. This refers to their unity in sin that reaches into the heavenly demonic realm (not the height of their buildings). In the Babylonian language, Babel means the “gate of heaven” in Hebrews it means “confusion.” They were attempting to repeat the counterfeit of Gen. 28: and Jn. 1:51 as was done in Gen. 6 when demons illegally acted with humans in the natural realm (Gen. 6:1-7; 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6)
- <sup>12</sup> ***He (Jacob) dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. (Gen. 28:12)***
- <sup>51</sup> ***He (Jesus) said to him (Nathanael), "Most assuredly, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." (Jn. 1:51)***
- J. God dispersed the people of Babel so that they would not reach man’s full potential for evil until God’s timing. Sin will be allowed to reach its fullness in the End-Times and not before.
- <sup>23</sup> ***In the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their fullness, a king (Antichrist) shall arise...who understands sinister schemes. (Dan. 8:23)***
- K. Daniel saw two things that will help reverse the dynamics that resulted from Babel’s dispersion of human understanding, energy and thus potential for evil. Daniel saw communication (technology) and travel being developed to great heights. This will restore the ability for humans to work together like they did at the tower of Babel. This will result in an unprecedented synergism of demonized people sinning together (thus providing a greater open door for demons to come into the earthly realm) and working together.
- <sup>4</sup> ***But you, Daniel...seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro (travel), and knowledge (especially via technology) shall increase. (Dan. 12:4)***
- L. The Harlot will be the mother of harlots (source) of false religion through history as well as the primary source of false religion and abominations in the End-Times. Thus, she will have offspring (false religion through history) that crescendos with abominations in the End-Times.
- <sup>5</sup> ***BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. (Rev. 17:5)***
- M. The Harlot will kill those who resist her. The prophetic Church will not be afraid of her. They will speak out against her boldly and fearlessly. The Church will be faithful to Jesus’ leadership in the hour of the Harlot. She will be drunk and frenzied on the blood of the saints because she will spill so much of it. She will have a raging and murderous heart despite her humanitarian appearance. She cannot be bargained with since her nature is beastly like the Antichrist.
- <sup>6</sup> ***I saw the woman, 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. (Rev. 17:6)***
- N. John marveled at this important and complex plan that had been hidden in God’s heart throughout the ages. This mysterious plan will result in bringing forth the salvation of Israel, as it purifies and empowers the Church to be used in the End-Time revival while bringing justice to evil men. We want to marvel like John as we feel the weightiness of what is in God’s heart.