

GOD SCHOOL WITH THE FORERUNNER SCHOOL OF MINISTRY

STUDIES IN THE END-TIMES (2007) – MIKE BICKLE

Session 16 The Harlot Babylon: The One-World Religion (Rev. 17:1-6)

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

- A. Paul emphasized the reality of a falling away from the faith at the end of the age. This prophetic theme is one of the greatest challenges for the Church in the End-Times (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). A doctrine of a demon is a teaching that is inspired by demons that will visit people in supernatural experiences to convince them of false teachings that minimize the call to wholeheartedness (holiness, purity, discipline, etc.).

¹ *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)*

- B. Sound doctrine on wholeheartedness requires endurance. To turn the ear away means that the people will no longer hear what God intended in various Bible passages.

³ *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. 4:3-4)*

- C. 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.

³ *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... (2 Thes. 2:3)*

II. THE COMING GREAT HARLOT: BABYLON THE GREAT

- A. In Rev. 17-18, an angel gave John one of the most significant prophecies related to the End-Times because it gives us insight into Satan's strategy to seduce Israel and the nations while causing many Christians to fall away from the faith.

- B. John saw a great Harlot that will have two global networks. First, it will be a worldwide religious network of great tolerance (Rev. 17) that will bring together the major world religions into one unified network including Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, etc. teaching that every road will lead to God and that everybody is good. Second, it will be a global economic network.

¹ *I will show you the judgment of the Great Harlot who sits on many waters... ⁶ I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints... ¹⁵ He said, "The waters...where the Harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes...and tongues." (Rev. 17:1, 6, 15)*

- C. The Harlot will be drunk (intoxicated) with the blood of the saints who expose her. She will be drunk in their blood meaning that the more she kills the bolder she will become in killing.

- D. The Harlot will sit on many nations or will have great authority over the nations by seducing the most powerful leaders on the earth (i.e., kings and merchants; Rev. 17:2; 18:3, 23). This Harlot will appear good as she uses her 2 networks to control kings, economic leaders and the nations.

- E. The Harlot will depend on the Antichrist who will carry her (provide resource and protection).
³ *I saw a woman sitting on a Beast (Antichrist) which was full of names of blasphemy...7 I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the Beast that carries her... (Rev. 17:3, 7)*
- F. Surprisingly, the Harlot worldwide religion will be destroyed by the jealousy of the ten primary kings that serve the Antichrist (Dan. 7:7, 20, 24). They will burn the Harlot in the middle of the final 7-year period. Satan's kingdom is a kingdom of hatred not unity.
¹² *The ten horns which you saw are ten kings... 16 The ten horns...on the Beast will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. (Rev. 17:12, 16)*
- G. In the middle of the final 7 years of this age, the Antichrist's plan is to replace the Harlot religion of tolerance with Antichrist worship. This new worldwide religion will be very strict (without any toleration). All who refuse to worship the Antichrist will be killed (Rev. 13:4-18). Satan's purpose for the Harlot religious system will be to weaken the convictions of the people of the major world religions to prepare them for Antichrist worship. Instead of going from Christianity, Buddhism or Islam to Antichrist worship they go from that to the Harlot religion. The one great enemy of the Harlot religion will be the saints of Jesus in the prophetic Church.

III. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PROPHECY OF THE HARLOT IN REV. 17-18

- A. The prophecy of Rev. 17-18 is one of the most important End-Time prophecies. It is the longest prophecy in the NT (42 verses). The longest prophecy in the OT is Jer. 50-51 (110 verses) and also focuses on Babylon in the End-Times as does Isa. 13-14 (54 verses). This prophecy is so long because God wants us to understand its significance and danger. The second longest prophecy in the NT is focused on the New Jerusalem (33 verses; Rev. 21:1-22:5) which pictures the Bride of Christ in her glory. The Harlot is the counterfeit of the Bride of Christ.
- B. This prophecy is essential to understand. 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. It is worth the effort.
- C. The main message of Rev. 17 is easy to understand. The main themes are the emergence and destruction of Harlot Babylon. Revelation 17 focuses on religious Babylon. Revelation 18 focuses on economic Babylon as a literal city that will be a great worldwide economic center.
- D. Rev. 17 is the most symbolic passage in Revelation with many intricate details which makes it the most difficult chapter in Revelation to understand in all its intricacies. Since the angel gave John the meaning of the symbols, we have a solid foundation for understanding this passage. ***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. I want to know the details of this prophecy that gives us insight into the Harlot who is the counterfeit of the Bride that the Holy Spirit is raising up.

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

- A. Before the angel shows John the wealth and counterfeit beauty of the Harlot religion, he shows him her inevitable judgment and sure defeat (v. 1). This system will fail and be utterly destroyed.
- ¹ *Come, I 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)*
- B. The Harlot's system will deceive the inhabitants of the earth by offering them great benefits including humanitarian aid, unified religion (that minimizes wars) and a prosperous world economy. The nations will rejoice in her "goodness" and get drunk (intoxicated) with her "good promises and theology" that will be based in deception. It is easy to deceive one who is drunk.
- C. The kings (political leaders) will know that the Harlot system is deceiving their people, yet will support her agenda to gain her wealth. In this way, they will knowingly prostitute themselves or commit fornication with her as they participate with her deceptive agenda for money.
- D. The Harlot will deceive the nations by sorcery which is a combination of drugs and demonic power (witchcraft). Her dark supernatural power will fascinate people and appear to be good.
- ²³ *For by your sorcery all the nations were deceived. (Rev. 18:23)*
- E. The Harlot religion will have great prominence. It will be arrayed in purple (royal status) and will be greatly respected by the aristocracy or the elite financial leaders of the earth. The kings of the earth will honor her values and doctrines. They will pledge allegiance to her. It will be a time of great confusion and great difficulty across the earth.
- ⁴ *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 Harlot will be adorned with gold. It will be the wealthiest religious network in all history.
- G. The Harlot will have a golden cup in her hand in which she "serves" the people. It will appear as golden or as something valuable and good to the people. She will offer the nations unprecedented humanitarian service in helping the poor. Abomination refers to being filled with demonic activity and filthiness points to being filled with moral perversions. In the OT, abominations refer to idolatrous (demonic) activity. She will be an evil cup (abomination/filth; Mt. 23:25-28).
- H. War will disappear as the Harlot emerges resulting in world peace (1 Thes. 5:3). After a short season of prominence and prosperity, she will be burned by leaders of the Antichrist's empire.
- I. The grid for measuring a mega-ministry is its message and the lifestyle it produces not how fast it grows or how much money they have. Because serving the poor and walking in unity is foundational to preaching the gospel many will think that she will be one true religion.

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

- J. The prophetic Church will expose the Harlot for who she really is. The Church will be despised among the nations for this. The Lord will use this pressure to purify the End-Time Church.
³³ *Those of the people who understand shall instruct many.... 35 Some of those of understanding shall fall (martyrdom), to refine them (other saints), purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time. (Dan. 11:33-35)*
- K. The Harlot's name was a mystery. In other words, the angel gave John new information that had not yet been clearly revealed in Scripture. Her name surprised John.
⁵ *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)*
- L. The angel revealed her name as Babylon. This name linked her to her origin which goes back to the tower of Babel (where Babylon began). This reveals her true nature to us as we understand what happened at the tower of Babel. 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.
⁴ *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." (Gen. 11:4)*
- M. The residents of Babel sought to build a tower whose "top is in the heavens." This refers to reaching into the spirit realm (not to the height of the building made of mud bricks).
- N. Nothing they proposed to do would be withheld from them (v. 6) in terms of the progression of sin reaching its full potential. (NAS/NIV says nothing which they plan to do "will be impossible for them" instead of "withheld from them"). This refers to their unity in sin that reaches into the demonic realm (top in the heavens). The End-Time Harlot Babylon will be full of sin.
⁶ *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." (Gen. 11:6)*
- O. God was not referring to their architectural abilities having no limit but to their progression in evil. He knew that if they reached deeper into the spirit realm (demonic) that they would have a synergism in their sin. It would escalate faster than God's plan in unfolding human history.
- P. In Gen. 1:28, the Lord told the people to multiply and fill the earth. The people of Babel wanted to stay together so they could accomplish more. The Harlot Babylon is the context in which the nations will reach heights of sin and their experience of the demonic realm. With shared knowledge through technology, the nations can learn about perversion and occult realities far faster. In Gen. 11, God scattered their language to slow down the escalation of sin.
⁷ *Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language..." 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. 11:7-9)*

V. JACOB'S LADDER: ANGELS ASCENDING AND DESCENDING

- A. In Jacob's dream he saw a ladder that gave him access to the heavenly realm in the will of God. Jesus prophesied of Jacob's ladder where the angels would interact with the earthly realm.
¹² 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)
⁵¹ 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)
- B. In the Harlot church, there will be a "ladder of access" to the demonic realm enabling the nations to escalate in their experience of sin and demons. The people of Babel sought this. In the Babylonian language, Babel means the "gate of heaven" (in Hebrew it is "confusion"). The people of Babel were attempting to reach a demonic open heaven (Gen. 28:12; Jn. 1:51).
- C. Satan and billions of demons will be dislodged from their place in heaven and cast to earth. They will appear to people and interact with them at a level never known in history.
⁷ War broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon...8 but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven...9 The great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil...was cast to the earth, and his angels...with him. (Rev. 12:7-9)
- D. The people in Gen. 6, walked in a "counterfeit" open heaven as demons interacted with humans in the natural realm in an evil way (Gen. 6:4; 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6). At this time, there was an unprecedented connection between the natural and demonic realm. It resulted in great violence causing God to destroy the earth with the flood in Noah's day (Gen. 6:1-7).
⁵ The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶ The LORD...was grieved in His heart. ⁷ The LORD said, "I will destroy man...from the face of the earth." (Gen. 6:5-7)
- E. In the End-Times, there will be an unprecedented interaction between the demonic and human realm leading to a worldwide judgment. The time before Jesus' Second Coming is compared to the days of Noah which includes the demonic realm touching the earth leading to murder, etc.
³⁷ But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. (Mt. 24:37)
- F. God scattered the people of Babel (v. 8-9) 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.
²³ 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)
- G. Daniel saw two things that will help reverse the dynamics that resulted from Babel's scattering of human resources, understanding, and energy and thus their potential to mature in evil.
⁴ 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)

- H. Daniel saw communication (technology) and travel greatly developed. Technology allows us to share knowledge. What Daniel saw has both a positive and negative dimension.
- I. These two will reverse the dynamics that occurred when Babel was scattered and given different languages so they could not work together. This will result in an unprecedented synergism of demonized people sinning together. Until this time, they could not bring their evil knowledge together so as to more quickly escalate in wickedness. The “masters of evil” can share their knowledge which will be greatly increased as it is compounded. The result will be that several billion children will have full access to perversion and occult knowledge.
- J. John was surprised that 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. Her offspring (false religion through history) will crescendo and set the stage in the End-Times.
⁵ ***BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. (Rev. 17:5)***
- K. The Harlot will kill those who resist her. She will be drunk on the blood of the saints because she will spill so much of it. She will have a murderous heart despite her humanitarian appearance.
⁶ ***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)***
- L. John marveled at this 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. As we understand this prophecy, we will marvel like John as we feel the weightiness of what is in God’s heart.
- M. The prophetic Church will not be afraid of her or the 10-nation confederation who burns her. The saints will speak out boldly and fearlessly against the harlot and the ten kings. The Church will be faithful to Jesus’ leadership in the midst persecution.
¹⁴ ***The Lamb will overcome them (ten-nation confederation), for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful. (Rev. 17:14)***