

Newsletter October 2018

In last month's newsletter, we completed our study of Chapter 16, wherein we observed seven magnificent angels, who had stepped out of God's Temple in Heaven, pour out seven bowls filled with God's wrath. This action had brought forth total devastation upon the earth, its satanic systems, and its reprobate populace.

This month's newsletter brings us to Chapter 17 in our ongoing study of the Revelation. In verse 19 of Chapter 16, we previously read, "...and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath." At this point, we find a pause in Revelation's overall chronological narrative to expand upon the last phrase of this verse in Chapters 17 and 18, in which we will be provided with additional information regarding this future Babylon and its destruction. This chronological intermission then continues on into Chapter 19, wherein we are informed of great events that had taken place in Heaven pertaining to Babylon's destruction. The main chronological narrative of the Revelation will resume in Chapter 20, where we shall find recorded events concerning the Messianic Kingdom Age on earth.

The future Babylon found in the Revelation is not only a mendacious satanic religious entity, it is also a corrupt commercial system whose dealings are restricted and enforced through the mark of the beast. In Chapter 17, the religious aspect of Babylon is addressed, while next month its commercial aspect will become the focal point of Chapter 18. These are not two different Babylons, but are two aspects of the same deplorably evil city that dominates the entire earth through Satan's Antichrist.

There are also two basic interpretations of this religious aspect of Babylon expressed by various expositors; 1) Babylon represents the apostate ecumenical church of the last days; and 2) Babylon is a conglomeration of all false religions. There is an element of commonality to be found within both of these interpretations, which we shall observe as we proceed into this chapter. Although Babylon speaks of all false religion, the apostate ecumenical church of that day will nevertheless play a major role in the prostitution of the Truth in an effort to encourage the unification of all false religions into its own corrupt form of churchianity.

In an earlier article published in our September 2015 Newsletter, we revealed ancient Babylon as being the source of all false religions that are prevalent in today's world. Here, it seems appropriate to provide a brief summary of that article by way of an introduction to this current chapter:

Following the great flood, Nimrod, a grandson of Noah, along with his followers determined to build a permanent city (i.e. Babylon) on the plain of Shinar, and to build within it a tower that would extend far upward in open defiance of heaven – thus anchoring their resolve to defy God's command for them to spread out over the entire earth (cf. Ge. 11:4). The tower was intended to represent their religious unity and defiance through a satanically contrived religion that openly defied God. In judgment of their rebellion, God confused their speech such that they could no longer communicate with each other (cf. Ge. 11:7), which forced them to first huddle together in smaller groups that spoke a common language, and then it began to drive these groups increasingly farther apart from other groups with whom they could no longer converse. Thus, God had forcibly dispersed them to populate the entire earth.

Although construction of the city of Babylon and the tower of Babel had been halted at that time, each of these people groups carried away with them remembrances of this false religion, which they then used to establish various other false religions. One prominent religion developed in this ancient world around a supposed female deity, Semiramis, and her son Tammuz (cf. Newsletter March 2013). After many years, Semiramis became worshiped in various regions by other names such as "Isis," "Innana," "Osiris," "Isi," "Iswara," "Cybele," "Ostara," "Ashtoreth," "Aphrodite," "Ishtar," "Venus" etc. Tammuz also was worshiped as, "Horus," "Eros," "Cupid," etc.

Prostitution and other forms of sexual immorality attended the worship of these goddesses. From this ancient religion, the corrupt *Roman Catholic Church* later devised the cultic practice of Mariolatry (cf. *CRC Book III*, pages 161-164) in which Mary, the mother of Jesus, was in effect added to the long list of names given to Semiramis. This cult also blasphemously related Jesus to Tammuz, the son of Semiramis, as Mary was worshiped as the lone gateway to gain the favor of Jesus Christ.

This female principal is so deeply embedded into fallen man's religious bent that even after many years following the Reformation Movement, today's evangelical churches are slowly embracing this false female principal through the ordination of women as elders and pastors (cf. Newsletter March 2015). This has further led them to accept fornication, homosexuality, and the abortion of children in the womb, as well as every other

conceivable form of sexual deviation as justifiable Christian behavior. Meanwhile, a strong ecumenical movement is simultaneously afoot to reunite all Protestant denominations within a modified form of Roman Catholicism under a single religious banner in which Christ, the Gospel, and God's Word must be stripped of its meaning and authority in favor of an elite humanistic philosophy that exalts mankind over God.

As we observed in Chapter 7 verse 9, as the true Church was removed from the earth into Heaven, a still functioning apostate church was left behind upon the earth. This earth-bound temporal church can be metaphorically equated with the first-century church of Laodicea – a rich proud church that had effectively locked Jesus out of their midst (cf. Re. 3:14-22). As the Church was caught up, the False Prophet was immediately called forth by Satan to reorganize this remaining apostate church along with all other false religious systems into one unified religious system designed to worship the Antichrist (cf. Re.13:11-15). Therefore, we find that this future religious Babylon spoken of in Chapter 7 will likely represent a combination of ancient goddess-religions, corrupt Roman Catholicism, a ritual Islam, every conceivable religious cult, as well as an apostate Protestant church that had once held captive the now raptured Church – which was earlier represented in type by the first century church of Philadelphia in Revelation Chapter 3 verses 7-13. In assembling this corrupt aggregation of false religions into one system, the False Prophet will have in effect restored the false satanic religion of ancient Babylon, fully revitalized, unified, and perpetuated over the entire face of the earth.

With this preliminary summary of religious Babylon in mind, we now turn to our study of the text of Revelation Chapter 17:

“And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication” (Re,17:1,2).

John is approached by one of the seven angels that now held one of the seven empty bowls and spoke to him, thus connecting his words with the seven bowls of God's wrath. The “great whore” (Greek *porne*, an idolatrous harlot), with which the kings of the earth had committed fornication, could be speaking of the ancient mystery religion headed by Semiramis and the long line of other goddesses of her reputation to which the kings of the earth as well as the earth's great population of that day (represented as many waters; cf. Verse 15) had paid homage and had become intoxicated with her vile acts of fornication. However, as we shall see, this metaphoric “harlot” represents far more than the false religion of that long ago series of goddesses of the ancient world.

“So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns” (Re.17:3).

John again emphasizes that he is carried away “in the spirit” by the angel through a great extensive expanse of time and space (i.e. a wilderness) whereupon he saw this “woman” sitting upon a scarlet colored beast. This “woman” that he saw is the brazen harlot of verse 1, who metaphorically symbolizes all the false religions of the world that oppose God and his Christ. Scarlet describes the sinful and shameful nature of this beast. The disgraceful beast having seven heads and ten horns upon which she rests is the Antichrist (cf. Re.13:1), who as we have already seen is filled with every kind of blasphemy that can be named (cf. Re. 13:6).

“And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: and upon her forehead *was* a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” (Re.17:4,5).

The corrupt ecumenical apostate church that had denied Christ, and had thus remained upon the earth following the rapture of the true Church, had earlier established a symbiotic relationship with the Antichrist as he came to power. Her power and notoriety will increase along with that of the Antichrist, since she rides upon his back. The purple color with which she is arrayed is the color of Roman nobility and scarlet is the color worn by Cardinals of the Roman church. The golden cup in her hand “full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication” speaks of the blasphemous practice of Roman Catholic priests allegedly calling the risen Jesus Christ down out of Heaven to be repeatedly sacrificed through the Eucharist in the blasphemous Roman mass. This corrupt “woman” of the last days has “Mystery Babylon” emblazoned upon her forehead which, identifies her as the ultimate manifestation of ancient Babylon. She is correctly identified as the “mother of harlots,” for she is the “mother” of all false religious abominations to be found upon the earth, which have prostituted the Truth.

“And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns” (Re.17:6,7).

Here we find that this metaphoric “woman” has become drunk with the blood of saints and the martyrs of Jesus. All forms of false religion hate the Truth and seek every means to destroy those who hold to that truth, quite often through bloodshed. In many lands today Jews and Christians are being slaughtered by the devoted followers of Muhammad to enforce the false religion of Islam upon them. Historically, the corrupted Roman church of the middle ages also persecuted and killed many devout Jews, here identified as “the saints,” as well as having been directly responsible for the cruel painful martyrdom of many of the true followers of Jesus. So savage was the insatiable appetite of this “woman” in the past and within this ecumenical manifestation of the apostate church of this future age, it caused John to wonder of her insatiable evil appetite for innocent blood with great astonishment. The angel, seeing John’s puzzled amazement, begins to reveal the hidden mystery within the vision of the woman and the beast that John had been observing with such astonishment. John recorded this revelation for our edification in the verses that follow:

“The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is” (Re.17:8).

The beast that John saw “was and is not and yet is.” In Revelation 13:3 we saw that the Antichrist had received a fatal head wound, but, the deadly injury was apparently healed. In our earlier commentary on this verse, we concluded that the Antichrist had probably faked his death. In the verse above we find that a demon out of the bottomless pit, whose destiny was Perdition (i.e. Hell, the lake of fire), had either replaced him, assuming he had actually died, or had come to indwell the Antichrist as he reappeared upon the scene. Either way, this comprises “the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.” “And all that dwell upon the earth shall ignorantly worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Re.13:8).

“And here *is* the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. and there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, *and* the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space” (Re.17:9,10).

In saying that “here is the mind which hath wisdom,” the angel is saying that it requires spiritual understanding given by God to comprehend the true meaning of what he is about to tell John. Here the angel explains to John that the seven heads are seven mountains. “Mountains” is translated from an obsolete Greek word *oros* which means “to rise above.” This obsolete word is derived from *hopou*, which means a particular place or spot. Put altogether they can be translated to mean “a high or risen place – or historically a high risen kingdom. The angel is saying that these “heads” are seven “high places” on which the woman resides. Many have interpreted this phrase to mean that the “woman” (the harlot) is the *Roman Catholic Church* which resides in the Roman Vatican. Rome is built upon seven hills – for which it is renown. However, this interpretation could be far too narrow. These “high places” are related to “seven kings:” five of whom are fallen, while one is, and the other is not yet come.” In Revelation 13:1 we saw that the Antichrist had seven heads upon which were written the name of blasphemy. We had determined that these seven heads likely represented the leaders of seven great empires, which most probably portrayed the Pharaoh of Egypt, Sennacherib of Assyria, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, Cyrus of Medo-Persia, Alexander of Greece, Caesar of Rome, and lastly the future seventh world empire headed up by the Antichrist.

“And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition” (Re.17:11).

This beast that “was and is not” constitutes an eighth ruler, the Antichrist, after his reappearance following the healing of the deadly head wound inasmuch as his character had been vastly altered by the demon from the abyss who will indwell him for the last 3 ½ years of Daniel’s seventieth week. Nevertheless, in the human sense the Antichrist is still the same earlier world ruler who was the last of the seven. Both of these satanic manifestations of the Antichrist must ultimately go together as one into perdition (i.e. Hell, the lake of fire; cf. Re.19:20;20:10).

“And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast” (Re.17:12,13).

Having revealed the meaning behind the seven heads, the angel now addresses the ten horns (cf. Re.17:7). These ten horns represent ten kings who have not yet received their kingdoms. Their titles and realms will be given to them by the Antichrist when he comes to power, perhaps over ten regions of the earth. For that reason, these ten kings will with one mind pledge their sole allegiance to the Antichrist. The power they have obtained will be altogether dedicated to the Antichrist to enforce his edicts and maintain his rule. Nevertheless, their power as kings is said to last but “one hour.” Hour in the Greek text is *hoŕa*, which can literally mean one hour or can be used figuratively to mean a very short time, as is the most probable meaning here.

“These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him *are* called, and chosen, and faithful” (Re.17:14).

These ten kings will be incited by the three demons, who as frogs had leaped out of the mouth of Satan, the Antichrist and the False Prophet, to engage against God and his Christ in the great battle of Armageddon (cf. Re. 16:13-16). This great slaughter of the earth dwellers will promptly end in the total defeat of these ten great satanic armies by the “called, and chosen, and faithful” of the Church (cf. Re, 19:14; Mt.22:14), which will be personally led by Jesus Christ, the unchallenged “Lord of Lords and King of Kings” (cf. Re. 19:16).

“And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues” (Re.17:15).

Here the angel tells us that the “waters” upon which the harlot religion had perched (cf. Re,17:1) is in fact being used as a metaphor for a multitude of peoples, living in many nations, and speaking many languages. This blasphemous religion had grown to become an unchallenged world-wide religion of all the reprobate earth dwellers without exception.

“And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled” (Re.17:16,17).

Perhaps it was inevitable that the religious edicts of the great harlot religion would interfere with the political and commercial aspirations and activities of the ten kings and their great populations such that the anger of the kings was stirred against her. All false religions are intent upon promoting itself, seeking power and control, and amassing great material wealth extracted from its subjects (cf. 17:4). This harlot religion most likely will have used that wealth to build temples and palaces for her own aggrandizement as did the *Roman Catholic Church* of a previous age.

The False Prophet had once used her to unify the earth to worship the Antichrist, but Instead of worshipping the Antichrist she soon worshiped only herself. Here it is said that the ten kings “shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.” This highly figurative language emphasizes the extreme violence and vast extent of her destruction. She will become a wasteland, stripped of her wealth, absorbed by her own hunger, and her religious places of worship are burned to the ground. We find that God had put it in the hearts of these future kings to yield to Him in fulfilling his will when they destroyed the satanic religion of Babylon and had given their total allegiance and power over to the political Antichrist – until the words of God concerning Jesus Christ’s great Millennial Kingdom age shall be fulfilled in glorious reality.

“And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth” (Re.17:18).

The “great city” presented to John here in this vision was presented as an adulterous blood-thirsty woman representing the religious structure of Babylon, within that great future city of the Antichrist. It had reigned over the kings of the earth, until she had eventually become hated and utterly destroyed by her own once-loyal subjects. What remains on earth after her demise is a secular political Babylon, which is the one-world government unencumbered by any vestige of religion that is so diligently sought after by today’s humanist globalists. Yet, it will not long survive; God will immediately deal with this secular Babylon, the destruction of which we shall read all about in the very next chapter of the Revelation. © Arthur J. Smith October 2018