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Pastor John W. Brown

Calvary Chapel Central Phoenix

REVELATION

Chapter 17 MYSTERY BABYLON

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. We have just finished with the final seven “bowl judgments” of the Lord upon the earth, the seas, and the atmosphere!
1. I want to encourage you to go back and have a second look at those bowl judgements: They are devastating and hard to take in - but the Lord saw fit to include them for our knowledge and understanding.
 - a) Mountains are leveled. Islands are either removed or became a part of the earth’s land mass!
 - b) Even Jerusalem is divided into three parts while every other great nation is destroyed!!
 - c) Babylon, the city of the beast and the false prophet come before the Lord for judgment, and much blood is shed in the final battle!
 - d) During this same timeperiod, men and women are being pelted by stones from the sky with the weight of approximately 100 pounds each!!!!
 - e) But I want you to notice the hardness of men’s hearts: They cursed God instead of repenting!!
 2. The earth is in total chaos and the battle lines are drawn for the final confrontation between the people of the earth under satan’s control, and the Lord Himself.
 3. The river Euphrates has been dried up to make way for the “kings of the whole earth” **16:14** so they can gather in a place called ARMAGEDDON.
 - a) By-the-way - if things continue they way they are - it is estimated that the river will be completely dry by 2040.
 4. It is here that the Lord will defeat His enemies and begin the reestablishing of His kingdom.
 5. In this study, we get a little more information regarding “Mystery Babylon” and “The Mother of Harlots” as they relate to the system of the beast, and everything that opposes Jesus as Lord!
- B. There have been many attempts to explain Babylon as Rome, as New York, and as many other cities other than Babylon itself.
1. It is helpful to remember that *Revelation* means “unveiling” not “concealing”!
 - a) It is the Lord’s intent to help us understand the book of Revelation, not mask it with confusion.
 - b) Therefore, we must assume that the word *Babylon* means the real city of Babylon!
 - (1) In fact, there are 4 specific passages in Revelation that call it a “city”
 - (2) We must also keep in mind that it is not *just* the city, but the whole system of false and ungodly worship that the name represents!
 - c) Babylon is mentioned 6 times in Revelation, but only in **17:5** is she called “**Mystery, Babylon the great**”!

d) Let's take a look!

II. REVELATION 17:1-2 1 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, 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." (NKJV)

- A. In our last study of **chapter 16**, we knew that Babylon was about to undergo some specific judgment of the Lord that would be proportionate to the atrocities she had committed!
1. We also knew from **16:9**, that it would be with all the wrath the Lord could muster!
 - a) John is given a special invitation to come watch.
 - b) The word "whore" and the word "harlot" used in **verse 5** are the same Greek word *porne*!
 - c) *Porneia* is the Greek word for "fornication" and " *pornos*" the word for "fornicator" or "whoremonger".
 - d) It relates to anyone, male or female, who commits ungodly sexual acts!
 - (1) Biblically it is symbolic of spiritual adultery!
 - (a) In other words, anyone who loves and serves any other gods, other than the One and True God!
 2. Babylon is accused of infecting and polluting "**the kings of the earth**".
 - a) This goes back, not just to ancient Babylon under Nebucadnezzar where he reestablished the worship of Marduk as god:
 - b) But all the way back to Nimrod and the first city called *Babel* where pagan worship peaked!
 - (1) Every polytheistic, evolutionary, animalistic, astrological, and idolatrous form of paganism can trace its roots to this ancient city and its culture!
 - (2) You see it is very basic: Nimrod chose satan rather than God as his object of worship!
 - (3) It was Nimrod's desire to rule the world - as it always has been satan's.
 - (4) It was then that the Lord mixed up their languages and scattered them into different parts of the world.
 - (a) But, in all pagan worship, the roots are the same, "spiritual adultery".

III. REVELATION 17:3-6 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. 4 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. 5 AND 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 WITH THE BLOOD OF THE MARTYRS OF JESUS. AND WHEN I SAW HER, I MARVELED WITH GREAT AMAZEMENT. (NKJV)

- A. John is translated back in time and given a panoramic view of the events that have led up to this final judgment of the wrath of God!
1. The Holy Spirit is going to give us the interpretation in **verses 8-18**, but I want to point out a few things first.
 - a) The woman is arrayed in purple and scarlet, and gold and precious stones, and pearls.
 - b) She is represented as royalty, but her title gives her away!
 - (1) She is the “mother of whores”.
 - (2) And her “drug of choice”, is the “**blood of the martyrs of Jesus.**”
 - (a) In other words, she has taken great joy, to the point of being drunk, at the loss of human life and the spilling of blood of those who loved the Lord more than they loved their own life!
 - (b) The proverbs are full of wisdom and advice to avoid the physical as well as the spiritual adulterer. **Proverbs 5:3-5**
3 For the lips of an immoral woman drip honey, And her mouth is smoother than oil; 4 But in the end she is bitter as wormwood, Sharp as a two-edged sword. 5 Her feet go down to death, Her steps lay hold of hell. (NKJV)
 - (c) John was "taken out" by all of this to which the angel replied:

IV. REVELATION 17:7 7 BUT THE ANGEL SAID TO ME, "WHY DID YOU MARVEL? I WILL TELL YOU THE MYSTERY OF THE WOMAN AND OF THE BEAST THAT CARRIES HER, WHICH HAS THE SEVEN HEADS AND THE TEN HORNS. (NKJV)

- A. We can almost sense a rebuke in the angel's reply!
1. Perhaps John, like so many Christians had been so involved in his own personal needs and activities that he had missed much of this.
 - a) Sometimes we too get so caught up in life that we miss the overall plan of the Lord and how we need to be participating in that plan!

V. REVELATION 17:8 8 "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. (NKJV)

- A. The beast is more than just a man!
1. You see . . . **it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, Hebrews 9:27 27(NKJV)**
 - a) Yet this “beast” was in the past, was not at the time of John, and yet will be again!
 - b) The city of Babylon fits the description!
 - (1) It was once great, not much in John's time, and yet will rise again to be the center of the earth's social and religious power!
 - (2) The Christians will not be taken by this: but the earth dwellers will be caught under the Babylonian spell!
 - (a) ...By the queen and all her riches!

VI. **REVELATION 17:9 9 "HERE IS THE MIND WHICH HAS WISDOM: THE SEVEN HEADS ARE SEVEN MOUNTAINS ON WHICH THE WOMAN SITS. (NKJV)**

- A. The only mind that has wisdom is a Godly mind!
1. In other words, Christians should know what is coming before the world has a clue.
 2. Many interpreters think the 7 "hilled city" is Rome and the woman is the Roman Catholic church.
 - a) But the Roman church does not sit on the seven-hills of Rome. In fact, its' churches are all over the world.
 - b) Also, the word used here is actually the word for "mountains", not the "hills" that are in Rome!
 - (1) In other words - the picture here is much bigger than just one church or group of churches!
 - (2) The next verse helps us out.

VII. **REVELATION 17:10 10 "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. (NKJV)**

- A. You see there are 7 kings who rule over these 7 mountains.
1. Mountains in Scripture, most often represent earthly kingdoms!
 - a) **Isaiah 2:2 2 Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the LORD's house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And all nations shall flow to it. (NKJV)**
 - b) **Daniel 2:44 44 And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. (NKJV)**
 2. These 7 mountains are 7 kingdoms that comprise political Babylon and they all support the harlot!
 - a) In other words, they are all in support of the pagan idol worship in rebellion against the true God!
 - (1) 5 of these great kingdoms have come and gone.
 - (a) According to Daniel and our history books they are **Persia, Greece, Egypt, Assyria**, and of course, **Babylon!**
 - (2) One of these kingdoms was in existence at John's time. It was the **Roman Empire!**
 - (3) The other is "yet to come" and will last only "for a short time."
 - (a) This 7th and last kingdom corresponds with the *toes* in Daniel's image and as we know most feet consists of 10 toes!
 - (b) It is most likely that this yet future "kingdom" will be the 10-nation confederacy comprising the **European Common Market** established in 1957.
 - (i) It evolved into the **European Community** and is now called the **European Union** since (1993).

- (c) This Last great “kingdom” will last only through the 1st 3 1/2 years of the tribulation!

VIII. **REVELATION 17:11-14** **11** "AND THE BEAST THAT WAS, AND IS NOT, IS HIMSELF ALSO THE EIGHTH, AND IS OF THE SEVEN, AND IS GOING TO PERDITION. **12** "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. **13** "THESE ARE OF ONE MIND, AND THEY WILL GIVE THEIR POWER AND AUTHORITY TO THE BEAST. **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." (NKJV)

A. Now we see an eighth head - which is “of the seven”.

1. In other words, the Babylonian system is resurrected in the system of the anti-christ, powered by satan himself!
 - a) He, as the beast, will be head over the other 10-nation European Common Market.
 - b) They will be of “**one mind, and give their power and authority to the beast**”.
 - (1) It will be with this political power and authority that the “system” will become strong enough to think they can win a war against the Lord Himself!
 - (2) They will lose!!!

IX. CONCLUSION

A. **Revelation 17:15-18** **15** Then he said to me, "The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. **16** "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. **17** "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. **18** "And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth." (NKJV)

1. The spiritually adulterous system (represented by the harlot) - will have the support of most of the world. FOR A WHILE!
 - a) You see there will be a truce in Jerusalem, and the Temple will be rebuilt.
 - b) The spiritual harlotry will be world-wide.
2. But eventually the 10 nations will abolish all forms of worship except the worship of the beast.
 - a) They will think that this was all their own idea, but all the while the Lord is using their decisions to fulfill His own purposes for His people and kingdom!
 - b) In other words, “He is even using satan against himself, to accomplish His own purposes!