

The Doom of Religious Babylon

Revelation 17
April 23, 2023

I. Introduction

- A. Babylon was mentioned in 14:8 and 16:19
- B. Chapters 17 and 18 elaborate on these earlier references
- C. Spiritual compromise always leads to a moral collapse
- D. Many religious groups today focus on:
 1. Power vs. Purity
 2. Man vs. God
 3. Works vs. Grace
 4. Holy Spirit vs. Father & Son
 5. Causes versus Christ

II. The Doom of Babylon

- A. General Information on Babylon
 1. Chapter 17: the fall of religious Babylon, and 18: the fall of commercial Babylon
 2. Babylon is both a system and a city
 3. Babylon is referred to in scripture about 300 times, second only to Jerusalem
 4. Nimrod (Genesis 10:8-10) founded Babylon
 5. The Tower of Babel (Genesis 11) was the birth place of idolatry
 6. Babylon's greatest period was under Nebuchadnezzar as recorded in Daniel.
 - a. It stood for *all man could be without* God.
 7. Babylon's walls were 100' high and wide enough for four chariots to race on.
- B. John's Observation of the Judgment of the Great Harlot – vs. 1-6
 1. One of the seven angels involved in the Bowl Judgments (most likely the 7th one), showed John the judgment to come (see also 21:9) – vs. 1a, b
 2. The false religious system of the Tribulation is referred to as a "harlot" v. 1a, b

- a. Revelation 17:1, 5, 15, 16; 19:2
3. Prostitution frequently symbolizes idolatry and apostasy. – vs. 1a, b
 - a. See Jeremiah 3:6-9; Hosea 4:15; 5:3
4. Religion will flourish during this time - vs. 1, 15
5. "Who sits on many waters" = according to v. 15 this means her evil influence is worldwide – vs. 1c, 2
6. John is carried by the angel of v. 1 into the wilderness – v. 3
7. The harlot is sitting on a "scarlet beast" – v. 3
8. The beast is the Antichrist (13:1-10; Dan. 7:7,8; 24-28) – v. 3
 - a. The beast uses this false religious system to set himself up as God. See II Thess. 2:3,4; Rev. 13:4,5
9. "Purple & scarlet" = colors of royalty and nobility and wealth. – v. 4
 - a. See Proverbs 7:10
10. "Golden cup" = wealth; immorality = *porneia* – v. 4
11. "On her forehead" – it was customary for Roman prostitutes to wear a headband with their name on it. = v. 5 Jeremiah. 3:3
12. "A mystery" = It is, therefore, a counterfeit of the real mystery the NT church. (Ephesians 3:1-10; 5:32) – v. 5
 - a. The true church is seen as a virgin. Revelation 19:7, 8; II Corinthians 11:2
13. "The mother of harlots" = refers to her forming a federation, or ecumenical gathering. – v.5
14. David Jeremiah says, "The scarlet woman represents an apostate religious system that will combine weak Protestantism with Catholicism, spiritualism, humanism, and the occult into one great satanic connection." – v. 5

15. John's readers saw the harlot as the Roman Empire. Readers in the Middle Ages saw her as the Roman Ecclesiastical system.
 16. This harlot is an enemy of the "witnesses of Jesus." – v. 6
 17. John had seen much but this shocks him : "I wondered greatly." – v. 6
 18. During the Inquisition (1540-1570), over 900,000 believers were killed.
- C. John's questions are answered – vs. 7-18
1. John has questions about the women and the beast – v. 7
 2. The beast, though alive and on the world scene, does not rise to power until the midpoint of the Tribulation (see 11:7; 13:11). This would place the events of this chapter in the first half of the Tribulation (C.C.R. study Bible, note on 17:8). – v. 8
 3. In the mind and heart of the Father, Jesus was crucified before the foundation of the Earth. – v. 8
 4. The beast identified
 - a. He comes up out of the abyss (11:7)
 - b. The seven heads are identified as seven mountains
 - i. This could be Rome
 - ii. The seven heads are also identified as kings – v. 10
 - iii. "Five have fallen" (Julius Caesar 44 BC; Tiberius 14-37 AD; Gaius 37-41 AD; Claudius 41-54 AD; Nero 54-68) – v. 10
 - Some see verse 10 to be speaking of nations not their rulers. Thus Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, MedoPersia, Greece, & then Rome (John MacArthur).
 - iv. "One is." = Domitian 81-96 AD – v. 10
 - v. "The other has not yet come." = The antichrist – v. 10
 - vi. Both the seventh and eighth king are the antichrist. He is fatally wounded and comes back to life. – v. 11 See 13:1-3
 5. The ten kings (future) have authority for a brief time ("one hour") and are loyal to the Beast. – vs. 12, 13
 6. "These" (ten kings) will make war with the Lamb. This is a reference to Armageddon. The Lamb always overcomes! – v. 14
 7. The Harlot (verse 1) has a worldwide influence. – v. 15
 8. The ten kings and antichrist will use the harlot (false religious system) to build the kingdom and set up the antichrist for the Abomination of Desolation . – v. 16
 - a. Matthew 24:15; Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:1
 9. They will destroy her when they are done with her. – v. 16
 10. The beast is like "the tiger"
 - a. There was a young lady from Niger
 - b. Who smiled as she rode on a tiger.
 - c. They came back from the ride with the lady inside,
 - d. And the smile on the face of the tiger.
 11. See II Kings 9:30-37 to compare Jezebel's death
 12. Verse 17 is a great example of how our Lord uses the evil intentions of men to accomplish His will. – v. 17
 - a. See Genesis 50:20
 13. "The Beast uses three cities in his reign upon the earth. He will begin in Rome (as head of the revived Roman Empire); then he will jet to Jerusalem to carry out his plan for the Jews (establishing himself as the supreme high commander); finally, he will move his command base to Babylon, the economic and political hub of his empire." D.J. – v. 18