

The Apocalypse

Chapter 17, part 1

- I. Introduction
 - a. Our previous lesson ended with a declaration that God's wrath was about to turn toward Babylon
 - i. Today's lesson will begin our study of the destruction of the religious Babylonian system

- II. Commentary
 - a. **Verse 1**
 - i. *"One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls"* shows John a vision of the *"judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters"*
 - 1. This great harlot is religious Babylon
 - a. This religious system began with Nimrod at Babel (**Gen. 11**)
 - b. Today, she operates under the veil of Roman Catholicism
 - c. During the Tribulation period, Catholicism will undergo some metamorphosis into a system that unites all pagan religions
 - i. She will have to adapt to some extent to convert the other religious systems
 - d. This great harlot is to be contrasted with the chaste virgin Bride of Christ
 - 2. This judgment will involve all pagan religions as they will be united under one head during the Tribulation period
 - 3. The fact that this harlot woman *"sits on many waters"* is all the more reason to see her as dominated by Roman Catholicism
 - a. She has been set up as the state church in many countries – oftentimes by force and great persecution
 - b. **Verse 2**
 - i. *"the kings of the earth"* have taken part in the sins of this great harlot
 - 1. Even during this present age, she is the most dominant form of apostate Christianity in most parts of the world
 - 2. During the Tribulation period, the kings will use her by enforcing her antichristian laws enacted by the false prophet such as the mark of the beast
 - ii. The world will be made drunk by the religion of Rome during the Tribulation period
 - 1. Under this system, the world will become Satan worshippers
 - a. This is the spiritual fornication spoken of in this verse
 - c. **Verse 3**
 - i. John is given a vision of this harlot woman riding a beast
 - 1. The description of this beast fits what we have previously seen of the dragon and the first beast (the antichrist)
 - 2. The beast has used this harlot religion to promote the worship of himself

3. Scarlet is one of the dominant colors of Roman even today

d. **Verses 4-5**

i. A description is given of this harlot woman

1. It's simply impossible to miss the similarities between her and Catholicism

- a. Vatican City and Roman churches fit this description perfectly
- b. Since her establishment around the 5th century, abominations and heresy has been her doctrine

ii. Her name is given

1. *"MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH"*

- a. We know the Lord's church is often spoken of as a mystery as she was unknown during the OT dispensation
- b. This antichristian is to be contrasted with the Lord's true churches by calling it a *"MYSTERY"* here
- c. She is the mother of many harlots
 - i. Since Babel, many false religions have arisen from this common ancestor
 - ii. Even Rome has produced several offspring that are copies (at best) of the Lord's churches
 1. Even Protestantism must trace its roots through Rome

e. **Verse 6**

i. John sees this harlot woman *"drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus"*

1. Conservative estimates calculate that Rome murdered 25 million Baptists throughout the past 1600 years

- a. Some have estimated as many as 70 million
- b. Books such as Foxes Book of Martyrs and The Trail of Blood record some specifics about many of these murders

2. Even Rome's Protestant daughters took part in much Baptist persecution following the so-called Reformation

3. In early America, many Baptists were jailed for the charge of "preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ"

4. During the Tribulation period, this harlot woman will murder many believers for refusing to worship the Antichrist and take his mark

ii. John *"marveled with great amazement"* at this vision of this woman

1. John marvels at such an obvious abomination which has deceived billions into believing she is a Christian church

2. John, no doubt, marvels that the Christianity he knew in the infancy of the church has become this perversion in many areas of the world

- a. That said, we know that Jesus promised His church would remain faithful and true until His return (**Mat. 16:18**)