

Revelation Chapter 17 – The Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast

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.”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.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.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.⁹ “Here *is* the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits.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.¹¹ 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.”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.”

Introduction

In Chapter 17 and 18 of Revelation we are introduced to “Babylon.”

Babylon was an ancient city in Old Testament times.

The Religious and Commercial world system just before the return of Jesus Christ will be like the “Babylon” in the Old Testament.

Before we get into Chapter 17 we need to understand the background to this end time city and system.

Let us turn back to Genesis Chapter 11: v. 1-9.

Now the whole earth had one language and one speech.² And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there.³ Then they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks and bake *them* thoroughly.” They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar.⁴ And 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.”⁵ But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built.⁶ And 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.⁷ Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.”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.

After the flood, man tried to make a name for himself.

This movement was started by "Nimrod", Noah's great grandson.

Nimrod also built Nineveh, that wicked city that Jonah was sent to preach against.

Nimrod was involved in building the "Tower of Babel"

These towers were known as "ziggurats" and the pagan priests used to climb these towers to chart the stars.

Today we still have this religion in existence.

It involves following the signs of the Zodiac.

Today in most Shopping centres in Japan you will find several ladies willing to tell you your future through the signs of the Zodiac. Beware this is Satan's trick.

Do not go to these ladies for advice about your future.

They are continuing to promote the oldest religion in the world.

In the U.K. we call them fortune tellers. They mainly operate on the internet today.

In Genesis we are told that God heavily judged this "religion" by confusing their languages.

As a result of this rebellion against God people were scattered all over the world. God did this by confusing their language.

No longer was there one language in the world, but many.

There is a sense where all false religions have their origin in Babylon.

In the end times this "**style of Religion**" is going to come back in a big way.

Karl Marx is often quoted as saying that "Religion is like the opium of the people"

What he means by that is that "religion" is like a drug that keeps people going.

There is an element of truth in that statement.

God has created us to be "worshippers".

If we do not worship the one true God of the Bible, then we will worship someone or something else.

In its essence, religion is man's attempt to replace the worship of the one true God with something else.

In Osaka this might mean worshipping the Hanshin Tigers baseball team or Osaka Gamba soccer team, or some other sporting organisation.

I once was called to share the Gospel with people around our Church in London and one man said to me "My Religion is West Ham Football Club" At least he was honest.

Religion can be anything that has first place in your life.

False Religion is going to play a major role in end times.

Therefore, there will be a slow and subtle move both now and in the future to unite all religions of the world.

During troubled times people look towards religion as a means of support and during this period many people will follow false religions.

In Chapter 17 we are introduced to a "Woman dressed in scarlet" and to the "Scarlet Beast".

In order to cover this chapter quite simply, I am going to ask and answer four questions.

These are, Who is the woman?, What is she doing?, What is her destiny? And how can I avoid being seduced by the woman?

1. Who is the woman?

We are told a number of things about this woman that reveal her identity.

In v. 1 she is called the "Great Harlot who sits on many waters."

In some other Bible translations, the word "Prostitute" is used.

In the Bible the word "harlot" or prostitute is often used as a metaphor for false religion, idolatry or religious apostasy.

Isaiah 1: v.21.

²¹ How the faithful city has become a harlot!

It was full of justice;

Righteousness lodged in it,
But now murderers.

Hosea 4: v. 15-16.

¹⁵ "Though you, Israel, play the harlot,
Let not Judah offend.
Do not come up to Gilgal,
Nor go up to Beth Aven,
Nor swear an oath, *saying*, 'As the LORD lives'—
¹⁶ "For Israel is stubborn
Like a stubborn calf;
Now the LORD will let them forage
Like a lamb in open country.

In v. 5 the name of the woman is identified and it is written on her forehead.

⁵ And on her forehead a name *was* written:

MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT,
THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS
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Her name could be shortened to "**Babylon the Great**"

In v. 18 we are told that the woman who John saw was the great city who reigns over the Kings of the earth.

We already know that the woman's name is "Babylon the Great" and this word "Babylon" connects at least 5 times in Revelation chapter 18 as an actual city.

(Rev. 18, v. 10,16,18,19.)

I think that we can safely say that in the end times there will be a great city built which will be the head of the "World Religion."

It will be something like what Rome is today with the Roman Catholic Church.

I am not sure where this great city is going to be built.

It could possibly be built on the old site of the original city of Babylon.

We know that the old Babylon sat on a site of many waters because it was specially designed to water all the beautiful gardens in it.

Many Bible Scholars believe that the city will be Rome and that an empire similar to the old Roman empire will emerge in the last days.

Basically we don't really know, but the identity of the city is not really important.

What is important is that we understand the times in which we live in.

We are living in the last days and more and more people are getting interested in false religions.

Conclusion

The woman is identified as a great city that will be built in the future which will represent the one world religion.

It could possibly be built on the site of the old "Babylon" city and will definitely include many waters, or it could be somewhere else.

2. What is the woman doing?

The passage identifies 5 things that the woman is actively engaged in.

a) The first thing we notice in v. 2 is that the woman is involved in seducing the world leaders.

In the end times world leaders are going to be seduced into false religion. The leaders of the world are going to become intoxicated with this one world religion.

Today our world leaders are a mixture of people who do not believe in God and those who follow a false religion. There are very few Christian leaders in the world today. There are at least 50 leaders of their country in the world today that follow Islam. Their countries are totally intoxicated with a false religion.

Satan has already deceived these people.

In the U.K. today, we have a Muslim Mayor of London and 4 serving members of parliament in the British system of government.

It is the teaching of Islam to have world domination and they will do this, by force, or by deception.

It is not hard to see that this chapter could be a reality in about 20 years' time.

Our job is to rescue people from being seduced into any false religion.

Q. Are you up for that challenge?

I hope so.

- b) The next thing we discover is that the woman will also be involved in seducing unbelievers v.2. We are told in v.2 that the inhabitants of the world would be made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

So everybody in the world is going to be seduced into believing in this one world religion.

In Jeremiah Chapter 51: v. 7 there is a prophecy that fits well into this situation.

⁷ Babylon was a golden cup in the LORD's hand,
That made all the earth drunk.
The nations drank her wine;
Therefore the nations are deranged.

The verse explains that it will seem as if the whole earth has gone mad by following this false one-world religion.

It is not difficult to imagine how the whole world could be seduced into this religion.

Today about 25% of the world have been seduced into a false religion called Islam.

In the U.K. they estimate that by 2020 there will be more Muslims worshipping in their prayer meetings than Christians worshipping in Church.

Sadly, the U.K. has sold out to Islam already.

This is largely due to the leadership of the country.

Everything that happens in the world, even in our life time is moving steadily towards this one world "Religion".

In the U.K over the last couple of years, 500 Churches have closed and they have been replaced by 500 Mosques.

There is a great challenge in our world today, and that is for Christians to present the gospel clearly to those who will listen.

This includes us here at O.I.C.

Prayer and the proclamation of the gospel are our two powerful weapons. We will spend some time praying for the area around this building after my message.

- c) Thirdly we are told that the woman is going to be working with the "Anti-Christ".

In v. 3 we are told that the woman was sitting on a scarlet beast.

We have already met the "Beast" in chapter 13 and 14.

He is the "Anti-Christ" who will initially unite people through religion.

For a period of time the woman and the beast will coexist, but then we are told in v. 16 that the relationship will end.

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.

So we see here that the anti-Christ and the world leaders of countries will be united as never before in human history.

- d) Fourthly we are told that the woman will work hard on being attractive. – v. 4.

In v. 4 we are told that the woman will be dressed in purple and scarlet which are the colours of “Royalty”, “Prosperity” and “Wealth”. (Judges 8:26, Prov. 31:22)

- e) Finally, we are told in v.6 that the woman will be murdering believers.
False religion is a murderer because Satan is behind false religion.

John 8: v. 44.

⁴⁴You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it.

The history of the Church since the beginning in the book of Acts has demonstrated that the false religions have been very hard hitting to those who hold a true faith in Jesus Christ.

900,000 Christians have been “Martyred” for their faith over the last 10 years.

The devil is very active today through Islam.

The woman is already at work in our world today.

This is why we need to pray for Christian Believers in Islamic controlled countries.

3. What will happen to the woman?

We are told that the beast will eventually destroy the woman – v. 16.

That may be good news, but the Anti-Christ will set himself up as god to be worshipped.

4. How can we avoid being seduced by the woman?

Humanly speaking, if you don't want to be seduced by a prostitute, then don't go to the places where prostitutes hang out.

Today a lot of prostitutes hang out on the internet, so beware of the seduction of the internet.

I think that in the end days the internet is going to play a big part in seducing people into the one world false religion.

Young people today can't live without spending time on their smart phones or tablet.

There is a lot of false religion on the internet.

I would advise people to study the Bible from the Bible and definitely not from the internet.

Always check out the sources of your information.

The question you need to ask is, who is influencing your faith, the Bible or somebody else?

There are many genuine Bible Scholars that can help us to understand God and the Bible.

However, letting the Bible teach you the Bible is the best way.

Other people can help you to do this, but there is no short cut for actually reading the Bible and interpreting it from other parts of the Bible.

If your faith is deeply rooted in the Bible, then you are less likely to be seduced with another religion.

It might surprise you to know that the false religion that is called the “Jehovah’s Witness” was actually started by a professing Christian and over the years they have recruited many people, who began as professing Christians.

However, they were seduced by false teaching.

As we have been told from scripture, the woman is very attractive.

As this message is a little shorter than normal, I would like us to spend some time in prayer, together. I would like us to pray for the community around this area of Tamatsukuri / Morinomiya. We have a couple of events coming up in June and July that need prayer.

Ladies Meeting – Sunday 18th June – give all the details.

9th July as part of our morning service and outreach event for the community.

25 young people will attend our service and give a musical presentation on their hand bells. A Gospel message will follow.