

77. The Book of Revelation—17:5-8

A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier
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In our study in the Book of Revelation we are currently studying Chapter 17.

Chapter 17 gives us a look at the *religious* aspects of “*Babylon the Great*”; and Chapter 18 zeros in on the *commercial* aspect of this final world empire.

As we have said, Chapters 17 and 18 form the last parenthesis in the Book of Revelation.

These Chapters are a kind of ‘flashback’ giving us a more detailed look at the fall of Babylon—which has already taken place as recorded in Chapter 16.

Revelation 17:1-5 (NKJV)

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." 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.**

In our studies in Chapter 17 we have first of all been trying to determine just who or what this woman is—who is called “**Mystery Babylon the Great.**”

As we said last time, there are many Protestants and Evangelicals who believe that she is none other than the Roman Catholic Church (RCC). While I believe that the RCC is part of this false religious system called ‘**Mystery Babylon**’—I believe that this harlot is bigger than just the RCC.

She is called the “**Mother of all Harlots**” on the face of the earth. In other words, whoever or whatever this woman is she has been around from the beginning of human history—thousands of years before the RCC started.

As we looked at last time, the first false religious system on the face of the earth was started by a man named Nimrod who built the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11).

As we have said, the place where the Tower of Babel once stood—later became Babylon, the “*Mother of all Harlots*”—the source of all false religious systems on the face of the earth. I believe the final world religion will be a composite of all false religions—but I also believe that the RCC will be instrumental in bringing them all together.

I think Dave Hunt’s book, *A Woman Rides the Beast* is an invaluable resource about the history of the Roman Catholic Church.

Once again, I think that the RCC is going to play a major role in organizing the world into a “world church” bringing people of all faiths together—in fact, she has been positioning herself for that role for some time.

Pope John Paul II who served as pope for 26 years before dying in April of 2005—was without a doubt the most popular pope of my lifetime—and possibly of all time.

Many Catholics revered him and looked at him as a seminal leader—not only of the RCC but also the world. John Paul II definitely saw himself as a *uniter* whose main purpose as pope was to bring the religions of the world together.

In addressing 1500 leaders of the ‘great world religions’ at the International Prayer Meeting in 2001, John Paul II said—*“We can no longer bear the scandal of division”—in other words, “the world’s religions must come together and present to the world a united front (because after all we are all one!)”*

In 2002 Pope John Paul called a meeting for peace in Assisi, Italy. Leaders from the Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic, Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant religions all attended—they all came at the beckon call of Pope John Paul II.

That’s how much the religious leaders of the world held him in high esteem and viewed him as a uniter and the de facto leader of all religions on the face of the earth. At this meeting the name of Jesus Christ was never mentioned, and all Christian symbols including crosses were all covered so as not to offend and promote unity.

Paul said in Galatians 5:11 that only the enemies of God are offended by the Cross (and the preaching of the cross).

If you’re thinking to yourself how the RCC (a supposed Christian denomination) could host such an ecumenical gathering—you don’t understand the RCC’s position on the matter.

Official Catholic doctrine states in Vatican II—

“The Catholic church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in other religions. Their doctrines often reflect a ray of truth which enlightens all men. Let Christians preserve and encourage the spiritual and moral truths found among non-Christians.”

The Catholic Church is sounding more and more like the Mother Church of a One World Religion.

- When asked, *“Can you still get to heaven without Jesus?”*, Nigerian Cardinal, Francis Arinze, the Pope’s (John Paul II) Deputy for Outreach answered, *“Expressly yes! God’s grant of salvation includes not only Christians but Jews, Muslims, Hindus and people of good will.”*

So, this Catholic Cardinal expressed what the Roman Catholic Church believes and teaches on the subject of salvation—that all that’s required to get to heaven is to just be a person of ‘good will’ (whatever that means)!

Now in case you’re thinking that the ‘good’ Cardinal was speaking for himself and not really representing what the RCC actually believes about how a person gets to heaven—I’ll draw your attention to what the current pope said on the subject.

In March of 2013 the current pope (Jorge Mario Bergoglio) was elected the 266th pope of the Roman Catholic Church becoming Pope Francis.

In May of 2013, Pope Francis, in a message he preached in his official capacity as pope said that God has redeemed (not can or will redeem)—has redeemed atheists with the blood of Christ. So, the current pope has gone on record as saying that all people of ‘good will’ no matter what religion they belong to or what they believe—or even if they believe *nothing* that the RCC teaches about salvation have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ and are heaven bound—including atheists!

The RCC has gone on record basically saying that the gospel of Jesus Christ doesn’t save a person—that all that’s required to get into heaven is *sincerity* in whatever you believe—because after all, ‘*all roads lead to heaven*’ right!?

Mother Theresa (a Roman Catholic nun), who took care of some of the world’s poorest people in Calcutta India said that her goal was “*to help Christians to be the best Christians they can be, and Buddhists to be the best Buddhists they can be, and Muslims to be the best Muslims they can be...*” because apparently in her mind—every religion will lead to God if those practicing their faith are sincere (‘people of good will’)!

Proverbs 14:12 (NKJV)

¹² There is a way *that seems* right to a man, But its end *is* the way of death.

Matthew 7:13-14 (NKJV)

¹³ "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. ¹⁴ Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

The wide gate is not marked “*this way to hell*”—no, it’s marked “*this way to God/heaven.*”

What makes it so appealing to people?—

- it’s broad,
- it’s tolerant,
- it’s inclusive,
- it makes no demands on a person’s life (they can live however they want and still get to heaven)—and
- unfortunately, as Jesus said, ***many are going down its path to destruction*** (to hell)!

Whereas the ‘*narrow way*’ is the way of the cross—the way of Christ (John 14:6).

Again, if sincerity was all God is looking for—what was the Great Commission all about?

- If people from all faiths get to heaven by simply being sincere—then why didn’t Jesus tell us that?
- Why did Jesus command His Church to go into all the world and preach the Gospel?

For that matter why did millions of Christian missionaries have to die throughout the centuries as martyrs of the faith if the gospel was simply—‘*be sincere in whatever you believe?*’

The reason was because the RCC is not preaching the true gospel of Jesus Christ—theirs is the message of the apostate church—the coming world church—the ‘Mystery Babylon’ church that Paul said would rise up during the last days.

Apostasy means ‘*a departure from the truth.*’

There has always been those who have departed from the truth of Christianity to follow heresy (1 John 2:19).

The Church has always had apostates that stayed for a while but then showed their true colors by departing from the Christian faith (sometimes to start or to join Christian cults).

But this will be something different—this will mark a wholesale departure (exodus) from biblical Christianity (unlike anything the Church has ever seen before) to an apostate religious system that claims to represent the true God but is in fact a *harlot* who is unfaithful to God.

Luke 18:8 (NKJV)

⁸ ...when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith [‘the faith’] on the earth?"

This ‘departure’ from the true faith is something Paul warned us about in 2Thess. 2—

2 Thessalonians 2:1-4 (NKJV)

¹ Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, ² not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. ³ Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away [apostasia = apostasy] comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

I believe this will happen right after the true Church of Jesus Christ is Raptured off of the earth—

- ➔ Explain that the “falling away” (*apostasia*) is not the Rapture but is connected to the Rapture of the Church—

Getting back to how the RCC will spearhead a great ecumenical movement uniting all the religions of the world in a ‘world church’ (except of course biblical Christianity)—please listen to the following quote:

“John Paul II on more than one occasion gathered together for prayer with doctors, spiritists, animists (Animism is the belief that objects, places, and creatures all possess a distinct spiritual essence), Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, and other leaders of world religions—and declared that they were all “*praying to the same God,*” and credited their prayers with generating “*profound spiritual energies*” that would create a “*new climate for peace (in the world).*”

We can see how all of this ecumenism is being used by the devil to bring the world religions together.

And after all true believers in Jesus Christ are removed from the earth at the Rapture what will be left will be a mixture of apostates from Christianity (Roman Catholics, Protestants and even independent Bible churches); along with pagan religions, cults and other “isms.”

Together they will join this great global religious movement which I believe will be headed by the RCC—that may call itself a ‘church’ but the Bible calls “**the great harlot.**”

Revelation 17:6 (NKJV)

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.

“**I marveled with great amazement**” translates a Greek phrase that is literally—“*I marveled a great marvel*” which can also be translated, “*I was greatly astonished.*”

The New Living Translation puts it this way—*“I stared at her in complete amazement.”*

Now, many Catholic apologists claim that what John was seeing is *‘pagan Rome’* not *‘Roman Catholic Rome.’*

Well, if John was seeing pagan Rome—he would not have been *astonished* or **“marveled with great amazement.”**

Why?—because John knew pagan Rome, and in John’s day pagan Rome was *already* killing Christians—and so that would not have amazed or shocked him. *This is something different*—this is *not* pagan Rome killing Christians.

No, what shocked John down to the core of his being was that—he sees the so-called Christian Church (RCC) killing the true saints (Tribulation Saints during the Tribulation Period)—all under the banner of Christ and Christianity!

In other words, those killing God’s true people are doing so thinking they’re serving God! (John 16:2-3)

Ray Stedman—

“Remember the last line in verse 6: “When I saw her, I was greatly astonished.” Why was John so astonished? At the time John recorded his vision the church in Rome was the church of the catacombs. It was a persecuted and suffering church, having no earthly power and no worldly influence. Undoubtedly it came as a great surprise to John to see that the suffering church he knew in Rome would one day become a great and powerful force, dominating the kings of the earth while prostituting its own truths.”

Remember, John is a first century guy that God transports 2000 years into the future. With that in mind, the first century church that John knew was a poor and persecuted church (hiding in the catacombs there in Rome), it was small and suffering.

But the church that John is looking at in Revelation 17 is a wealthy church—wealthy beyond imagination! She is 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. (verse 4)

She is a powerful church (she’s riding the beast—i.e., she is controlling the world government of the Antichrist)—she is a worldwide church. Most shockingly of all—she is **“drunk with the blood of the true saints of Jesus”**—in other words, she is killing the true followers of Jesus Christ by the thousands and hundreds of thousands!

I’m sure John was thinking to himself—*“How is this possible? What kind of hideous aberration of the Church of Jesus Christ am I looking at!? How can this be?! This is not the Church I remember!”*

No, but it is the church that Jesus warned us about—

Matthew 13:31-32 (NKJV)

³¹ Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, ³² which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."

Revelation 17:7 (NKJV)

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.

The angel asked John, "**Why did you marvel?**" in response to what John said at the end of verse 6—"**And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.**"

Then the angel gives to John (and by extension all of us) the explanation of what the 'beast' is that John sees the harlot riding—

Revelation 17:8 (NKJV)

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.

Now, thank the Lord we have an angel to come to John's aid and '*clear up*' any confusion on the subject of who or what this beast is. The problem is, the angel's 'explanation' seems to raise more questions than it answers! In fact we're kind of left scratching our heads and going—"*say what?!*"

Part of the answer lies in what we have been saying in that—sometimes the word "beast" is used to represent the final world *empire*; sometimes the word "beast" is used to represent the *leader* of that kingdom or empire—and sometimes it's used to represent *both*.

Here both are in view—the "beast" represents the final world empire *and* its leader the Antichrist.

The reason is because Scripture views the final world empire as inseparable from its leader—much as Hitler was inseparably linked to his Third Reich.

So, it's hard to separate the two—sometimes they are used almost interchangeably with one another—but not always so read the context carefully to determine is the Antichrist in view, his one-world government—or both.

Getting back to the angel's explanation—don't let the language confuse you.

When the angel says at the beginning of verse 8: "**The beast that you saw was, and is not...**" and then at the end of the verse "**the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.**"

- You may be thinking to yourself—"*What in the world is he talking about?!—the beast that was and is not and yet is?!—what does that mean?!*"

Understand, that the angel's explanation takes us back to something that has already happened—to something we have already studied in Chapter 13—

Revelation 13:1-3 (NKJV)

¹ Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. ² Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like *the feet of a bear*, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. ³ And *I saw* one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast.

Now because of the personal pronoun in the phrase “**his deadly wound**” (verse 3)—it indicates that what’s in view here is the leader (Antichrist) and not the empire as a whole.

Many commentators believe that someone is going to try to assassinate the Antichrist based on Revelation 13:3 and Zechariah 11:17—

Zechariah 11:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ "Woe to the worthless shepherd, Who leaves the flock! A sword *shall be* against his arm And against his right eye; His arm shall completely wither, And his right eye shall be totally blinded."

So, most evangelical scholars believe that someone is going to try and assassinate the Antichrist—which shocks us because we think that the whole world will be enthusiastically behind this guy. But understand that not everyone is going to love this world leader—just like not everyone loved Hitler (there were upwards of 20 assassination attempts on his life).

The same will be true with the Antichrist—not all unbelievers will love him or follow him—and one of his enemies (or a group of his enemies) will try to take him out (probably a gunshot wound to the head) leaving his right eye blinded and his right arm paralyzed.

I believe that this assassination attempt will take place right the end of the first 3 ½ years of the Tribulation Period—and will look to the people of the world that he is in fact—dead.

We are not told how long he will appear to be dead (my guess will be 3 days)—when suddenly he is miraculously “resurrected” (as Satan tries to counterfeit the resurrection of Jesus).

Now, I personally don’t believe he is really going to be dead because I don’t believe the devil has the power to raise the dead. However, it isn’t going to matter because Satan will present such a convincing *counterfeit* death and resurrection that the whole world will believe it was genuine.

So, in Chapter 17 when the angel tells John, “*The beast was and is not and yet is*”—he is talking about how the Antichrist was alive, then “dead” (assassinated) and then alive again (pseudo resurrection)!

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower—please reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

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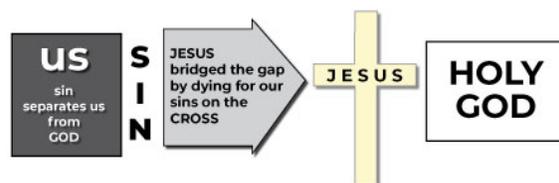
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THE WRONG WAY TO GOD



“I AM the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to The Father except through Me.” John 14:6

THE ONLY WAY TO GOD



“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” John 3:16