

78. The Book of Revelation—17:8-10

A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier
(5-4-22)

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Revelation 17:1-8 (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. 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.

Revelation 17:7-8 (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. 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.**

Let me review briefly from last week's study.

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."** Understand, that the angel's explanation takes us back to chapter 13—and in particular to verse 3 where it tells us that someone is going to try to assassinate the Antichrist.

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 (the Antichrist) is 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).

And 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)!

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...**

This takes us back to chapter 9 and the first time we are introduced to this **'bottomless pit'**—the Greek is *'abysos.'* The only place on earth that is 'bottomless' is in the very center of the earth where all directions are up.

Revelation 9:1-3 (NKJV)

¹ Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him [this 'star'—some kind of angel] was given the key to the bottomless pit. ² And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. ³ Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth [i.e., 'demonic creatures']. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

This bottomless pit seems to be a prison (it's locked) for the worst demonic creatures and fallen angels (Jude verse 6) in existence. Out of this bottomless pit a demon enters the Antichrist and possesses him.

Revelation 11:7 (NKJV)

⁷ **When they finish their testimony [talking about the Two Witnesses], the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them.**

This reference to the '**beast**' seems to be talking about the demonic power *behind* the beast or the demonic power *possessing* the beast.

I believe that the beast (the Antichrist) will be a literal, physical man born on the earth that will show up at the beginning of the Tribulation Period (Revelation 6:1-2).

This creature (a very powerful, vicious demon) arises out of the abyss to inhabit the Antichrist around the midpoint of the Tribulation Period, giving to him supernatural power—

2 Thessalonians 2:9 (NKJV)

⁹ The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders...

Revelation 11:7, I believe, coincides with Revelation 13:1-4 where the Antichrist, after his 'resurrection' and some very powerful demon entering into him—will be able to kill the Two Witnesses which no one has been able to do for 3 ½ years. I believe that after the Antichrist slaughters these Two Witnesses he goes directly to the Temple and sets his image up in the Holy of Holies and demands to be worshipped as God—

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 (NKJV)

³ Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away 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.

This is also when the beast (Antichrist) turns on the woman who John sees as riding (and controlling) the beast (the Antichrist's one-world government) in Revelation 17, and he will destroy her (the world church)—and establish a new religion where he is God.

This will all take place around the mid-point of the 7-year Tribulation Period.

The Antichrist will have satanic supernatural powers, charisma, brilliance, and eloquence—
Someone has said concerning this man:

- *He will have the oratorical skill of a John F. Kennedy*
- *The inspirational power of a Winston Churchill*
- *The determination of a Joseph Stalin*

- *The vision of a Karl Marx*
- *He will have the respectability of a Gandhi*
- *The military prowess of a Douglas MacArthur*
- *The charm of a Will Rogers*
- *And the genius of a King Solomon*

But make no mistake about it—he is a son of hell and will eventually go into perdition (be cast into the lake of fire) when Jesus returns to establish His Kingdom upon the earth—

Revelation 19:20 (NKJV)

²⁰Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.

Revelation 17:8 (NKJV)

⁸The 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.

Revelation 13:8 (NKJV)

⁸All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Okay, this begs the question “*How does a person get written into the Book of Life?*”—the two main answers to that question are:

1. God before He created anyone (in eternity past) simply chose those who would be saved, He sovereignly elected a group of people to salvation, wrote their names in the Book of Life—and the others He simply denied ever having a chance to receive Christ and go to heaven.

Theologians call this ‘*reprobation*’—the doctrine of reprobation is where God sovereignly chose to send most of the people He would create to hell without ever giving them a chance to be saved. In other words, before God made anyone, He choose a group of people that would go to heaven (the ‘elect’)—and the rest were predestined (reprobated) to go to hell.

That is a Calvinist and Reformed doctrine which I thoroughly reject!

2. God knew everyone He was going to create, He knew their hearts, He knew that when the Gospel was presented to them (maybe not the first time but at one point) they would receive Jesus into their heart (of their own free will)—and based on that *foreknowledge* (1 Peter 1:2) He chose them and wrote their name into the Lamb’s Book of Life.

I don’t believe that anyone goes to hell that hasn’t had a fair and legitimate opportunity to receive Jesus and go to heaven.

I don’t believe anyone in eternity past was ‘*reprobated*’ to spend eternity in hell without ever having a fair chance to hear the gospel and be saved—in other words, I believe that God gives *all* mankind a free will.

I believe that everyone who winds up going to hell (those whose names are not written in the Lamb's Book of Life)—goes there because they and they alone rejected the *'love of the truth that they might be saved.'* (2 Thessalonians 2:10)

Even though God is inviting them to be saved—even though He is reaching out His hand to them to be saved and wants them to be saved and sent His Son to die for them that they might be saved—yet they of their own free will reject God's offer of salvation and wind up in hell.

But make no mistake about it—if a person winds up in hell, they do so out of their own free will and not because God reprobated them to hell without ever giving them a chance to be saved.

As Paul said:

1 Timothy 2:4 (NKJV)

⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

2 Peter 3:9 (NKJV)

⁹ The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

→ **Ezekiel 18** *"Please turn from your sin for why will you die?! I get no pleasure out of sending someone to hell..."* (that invitation is appealing to the free will of man—and not presenting a God who is forcing people to do things.)

**How do you make sure that your name is written in the Book of Life?
—By receiving Jesus into your heart as your Lord and Savior!**

This is the third time the **'Book of Life'** is mentioned in Revelation up until this point (3:5; 13:8; 17:8)—it will be mentioned four more times before the end of the book (20:12, 15; 21:27; 22:19)—needless to say, this is a very important subject!

There is a debate as to whether a true child of God can lose their salvation—and based in part on Revelation 3:5 some say *'yes'*—

Revelation 3:5 (NKJV)

⁵ He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

So the idea that some hold to with regard to this is—*"If Jesus promises He won't blot their names from the Book of Life—it means they can be blotted out under the right circumstances and lose their salvation."*

One author had this to say about this verse—

"Is there a warning here that a true believer might lose his salvation? I don't think so. It would appear that God's "Book of Life" contains the names of all the living, the wicked as well as the righteous—as Psalm 69:28 tells us: "Erase their names from the Book of Life; don't let them be counted among the righteous." (NLT2)

Revelation 13:8 and 17:8 suggest that the names of the saved are written in the book from the foundation of the world—that is, before they had done anything good or bad. By God’s grace, they have been chosen in Christ before the beginning of time (Ephesians 1:4; see also Matthew 25:34).

Jesus told His disciples to rejoice because their names were “written in heaven” (Luke 10:20). The Greek verb is in the perfect tense, which means it can be translated (as Greek scholar Kenneth Wuest does in his Expanded Translation of the NT), “*Your names have been written in heaven and are on permanent record up there.*” It is not likely that Jesus would contradict Himself in this important matter!

As unbelievers die, their names are removed from the book; thus, at the final judgment, the book contains only the names of believers (Revelation 20:12–15)—and it then becomes “*the Lamb’s Book of Life*” (Revelation 21:27), because only those saved by the Lord Jesus Christ have their names in it.

All the others have been blotted out, something God would never do for any true child of God (see Exodus 32:32; Romans 9:3). It is a book of *life*, and lost sinners are *dead* (Ephesians 2:1).”

Warren Wiersbe—

“We are enrolled in heaven because we have been born again (Hebrews 12:23), and no matter how disobedient a child may be, he or she cannot be ‘unborn.’”

I believe that the names of those who God knew (in eternity past thru His foreknowledge) would receive Jesus at some point in their lives—were written into the Book of Life *before* the foundation of the world. Whereas the names of all those who wouldn’t receive Jesus as their Savior are written in the Book of Life at birth and blotted out when they die.

Eventually, the Book of Life becomes the “*Lamb’s Book of Life*” containing only the names of the redeemed.

Revelation 17:8-9 (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. ⁹ **Here is the mind which has wisdom...**

The angel prefaces his explanation of who or what the beast represents with the words—“**Here is the mind which has wisdom...**”

This indicates that we need wisdom from the Holy Spirit to understand what follows—something that God has promised to give us if we truly believe He will and ask for it in faith without doubting. (James 1:5-8)

Revelation 17:9 (NKJV)

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

Many associate the *seven mountains* with Rome and the Papacy—because Rome is well known for being the city on ‘*seven hills*’ (you can go online and read their names!). However, the Greek word used by John here means **mountains**—not *hills*.

Let’s focus on what verses 1, 9, and 15 say about what this woman is sitting on that will help us correctly interpret what the mountains represent:

Revelation 17:1 (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...”

Revelation 17:9 (NKJV)

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

Revelation 17:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ Then he said to me, "The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.

Therefore, the **seven mountains** that the angel says the harlot is sitting on—are not literal 'hills' (Rome)—they are associated with "*peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues.*" Or more specifically they refer to *kingdoms* or *empires*—

Revelation 17:9-10 (NKJV)

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...**

Let me stop and say that the word '**There**' at the start of verse 10 isn't there in the Greek. This means that the actual flow of thought starting again with verse 9 and running into verse 10 should be as follows:

Revelation 17:9-10 (NKJV)

⁹ Here *is* the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. ¹⁰ **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.**

The NASB better captures what John is saying by translating verses 9 and 10 this way:

Revelation 17:9-10 (NASB)

⁹ "Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits, ¹⁰ and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while.

Alright, even that translation is still difficult to interpret—so let's try to unravel this a bit. Mountains are often used figuratively in the Bible to represent *governments* or *kingdoms*—I'll give you 2 examples:

Psalms 30:7 (NKJV)—a Psalm of David

⁷ Lord, by Your favor You have made my mountain stand strong [i.e., 'my kingdom']...

Daniel 2:31-35 (NKJV)

³¹ "You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor *was* excellent, stood before you; and its form *was* awesome. ³² This image's head *was* of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, ³³ its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. ³⁴ You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. ³⁵ Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

It's probably best to see the '**seven mountains**' as seven *kins* and *kingdoms* described in verse 10—and not as referring to the Roman Catholic Church headquartered in Rome.

Now, as I've already said—I personally think that *Mystery Babylon* (Revelation 17:3-5) is bigger than just the Roman Catholic Church (RCC).

Remember, Mystery Babylon has been around since Nimrod and the Tower of Babel—thousands of years before the RCC came into existence. We are told that she spawned all false religions on planet earth (“**mother of all harlots of the earth**”)—including the RCC.

I think that the RCC is going to play a major role in organizing the world into a one world church bringing people of all faiths together—but it won't be limited to just the Roman Catholic Church.

We'll need to stop there and pick it up next week.

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