

SESSIONS 6—“Things Which Will Be Hereafter” (Part 4)

Friday, October 14, 2016

Revelation 17-18 speaks of the destruction of the world’s religious & commercial systems characterized by the titles “*Babylon*” and “*the great whore*” which is the “*woman*” sitting on the beast.

I. Religious Babylon (ch. 17)

v. 1 – “*the great whore*” speaks of a the very immoral system which focuses on whatever a person wants to do.

A. The History of this Religious System

“*Babylon the great*” (v. 5) – The Bible is full of information about Babylon as the source of false religion, the record beginning with the building of the tower of Babel (Genesis 10-11). The name “Babel” suggests “confusion” (Genesis 11:9). Later the name was applied to the city of Babylon which itself has a long history dating back to as early as 3,000 years before Christ. One of its famous rulers was Hammurabi (1728-1686 b.c.). After a period of decline Babylon again rose to great heights under Nebuchadnezzar about 600 years before Christ. Nebuchadnezzar’s reign (605-562 b.c.) and the subsequent history of Babylon is the background of the Book of Daniel.

Babylon was important not only politically but also religiously. Nimrod, who founded Babylon (Genesis 10:8-12), had a wife known as Semiramis who founded the secret religious rites of the Babylonian mysteries, according to accounts outside the Bible. Semiramis had a son with an alleged miraculous conception who was given the name Tammuz and in effect was a false fulfillment of the promise of the seed of the woman given to Eve (Gen. 3:15).

Various religious practices were observed in connection with this false Babylonian religion, including recognition of the mother and child as God and of creating an order of virgins who became religious prostitutes. Tammuz, according to the tradition, was killed by a wild animal and then restored to life, a satanic anticipation and counterfeit of Christ’s resurrection. Scripture condemns this false religion repeatedly (Jeremiah 7:18; 44:17-19, 25; Ezekiel 8:14). The worship of Baal is related to the worship of Tammuz.

After the Persians took over Babylon in 539 b.c., they discouraged the

continuation of the mystery religions of Babylon. Subsequently the Babylonian cultists moved to Pergamum (or Pergamos) where one of the seven churches of Asia Minor was located (cf. Revelation 2:12-17). Crowns in the shape of a fish head were worn by the chief priests of the Babylonian cult to honor the fish god. The crowns bore the words “Keeper of the Bridge,” symbolic of the “bridge” between man and Satan. This handle was adopted by the Roman emperors, who used the Latin title *Pontifex Maximus*, which means “Major Keeper of the Bridge.” And the same title was later used by the bishop of Rome. The pope today is often called the *pontiff*, which comes from *pontifex*. When the teachers of the Babylonian mystery religions later moved from Pergamum to Rome, they were influential in paganizing Christianity and were the source of many so-called religious rites which have crept into ritualistic churches. Babylon then is the symbol of apostasy and blasphemous substitution of idol-worship for the worship of God in Christ. In this passage Babylon comes to its final judgment.—**Bible Knowledge Commentary**

B. The Characteristics of the Religious System (v. 1-6)

- 1. She is drunk with fornication / immorality (v. 2)
 - 2. She is clothed with the wealth of this world (v. 4)
 - 3. She is covered with the filth of hell (v. 4)
 - 4. She is drunk [addicted] with the blood of saints (v. 6)
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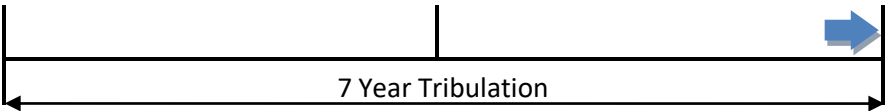
C. The Mystery of the Religious System and the Beast (v. 7-18)

1. The Woman is sitting on 7 Mountains / Kings (v. 9-10)

The five *past* kingdoms would be ***Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Greece***. The *present* kingdom [of John’s day] would be ***Rome***, and the *future* kingdom would be that of “the beast.”—Warren Wiersbe

2. The Beast and the 10 Kings War with the Lamb (v. 12-14)

D. The Future of this Religious System (v. 15-18)



1. Its influence—over the whole world (v. 15)
 2. Its destruction (v. 16-17)
 3. Its identity—the great city (v. 18)
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II. Commercial Babylon (ch. 18)

A. The Announcement—Babylon is fallen (v. 1-3)

Note: This angel is “**another**” angel and **should not be confused with one of the seven angels with the bowls**. He is a powerful angel who has great authority.

v. 2 – Babylon has become demonic

Announcement: Both the religious & commercial systems are destroyed

B. The Accusation—Sex & Immorality (v. 4-8)

1. A Call for Separation (v. 4)

Note: God calls for His people to **separate** themselves from this ungodly, immoral world system.

2. A Characteristic of Rebellion (v. 5-7)

3. A Coming Judgment (v. 8)

C. The Anguish (v. 9-19)

1. World Leaders: their source of pleasure is lost (v. 9-10)

Note: when they see the destruction will mourn over their loss as if someone close to them had died. But it is mainly a selfish grieving.

2. Merchants: their source of wealth is lost (v. 11-17a)

Note: they are not so much saddened at the loss of the city, as much as at the loss of their income.

Note: Notice that the merchandise includes human slaves (v. 13).

3. Shipmaster: their source trade is lost (v. 17b-19)

D. The Acclamation (v. 20-24)

1. The Call for believers to celebrate (v. 20a)

2. Cause for celebration (v. 20b-24)

a. God has answered their prayer (v. 20b)

Note: Cf. Rev. 6:9-10 – The 5th Seal – martyrs ask God to avenge their blood.

b. God has destruction of the immoral world system (v. 21-23)

Note: The destruction of the system will be complete. The great city of Babylon which represents all on the earth that defies God will be thrown down.

v. 22

- No celebrations
- No Work

v. 23

- No lights
 - No marriages
 - No leaders
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c. God has avenged their blood (v. 24)
