

THE APOCALYPSE – A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Rev Dr Quek Suan Yew

The City of The Antichrist

(Rev 17:1 - 18)

The Third Vision: Christ and the Victory – 17:1-21:8

The next two chapters will focus on the city of Babylon. It is the final look at man's greatest empire. It summarizes what man's hope and dreams have always been. It is materialism spawned by greed and lust. This has gone on for ages and continues on into our age and time.

Look at Singapore with her emphasis on gay lifestyle and gambling. No matter how sinful man would like to dress sin up sin will always be sin. It is deadly even when we give it a new name. Sugar coating poison will not make poison less poisonous. A final look at man's empire before total destruction and termination of all societies around the world!

1. The Fall of Babylon – 17:1-18:24

a. The Identity of the Great Whore – 17:1-5, 7-13, 15-18

Revelation 17:1-5, *“And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.”*

17:1-2 -- The great whore will rule the whole earth. John is now led by one of the seven angels which had the seven vials to see the destruction of this great whore. The “waters” here is explained for us by **Revelation 17:15**, *“And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.”*

The kings of this earth have committed fornication with her i.e. spiritual fornication. They worship this city. The people of the world who have the mark of the beast on them will also worship this city like their kings. Do not underestimate the worship of idols as a non serious sin. In Gods eyes it is a very heinous sin.

The people “have been made drunk” is a strong charge against the great whore and the gullibility of the people. The great whore deliberately lured the people into the worship of idols. The bait used would be money and lots of money. Wealth, fame and fortune very effective baits over the centuries and these have worked very well in destroying lives and families and nations. Spiritual leaders have also had their entire lives reduced to not when they begin to love money and soon pride set in. The “wine of her fornication” refers to the alluring sin of idolatrous worship coupled with sexual immorality, wickedness and debauchery. Like wine, the person is drunk and becomes oblivious to his surroundings and often makes a fool of himself. He wakes up the next day and finds himself in the deepest sin, naked and ashamed. His life is wasted by the actions done in his state of drunken stupor. No regret will be able undo the wrong and sin. He regrets in shame over the great loss.

The worship of idols with money and sex favours as rewards is the end-time wretched sin that will destroy the whole of mankind. Mankind will be given over to their lust for fame and fortune and sex. They will die in this sinful state of drunken stupor.

17:3-5 – John was carried into the wilderness and he saw *“a woman sitting upon a scarlet coloured beast full of names of blasphemy having seven heads.”* This woman refers to a city. The scarlet beast refers to the antichrist. The antichrist will make use of this woman until the time comes for the beast to destroy her. Once her usefulness is expired, the beast will destroy this city. **Revelation 17:16**, *“And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.”* When that day comes, the false prophet will turn the eyes of the world from worshipping the city of Babylon to the worship of the beast as recorded for us in Revelation 13.

Somehow the existence of a city plays an important role in the lives of man. Here in the kingdom of the antichrist, we have Babylon. In eternity we have the city of Jerusalem (cf. Revelation 21). Why is a capital city important? The capital city represents the seat of power. It is the foundation of a legitimate nationhood. When Israel first became a united nation under King David, the first thing he did was to seek out a new capital city for the new united nation. Jerusalem was chosen and it remained the capital city of the Davidic line for more than 300 years. Without the capital city the nation is incomplete.

Scarlet is the colour of luxury and royalty. The antichrist [the woman who sat on the beast] will be a kingly creature but on him would be all the names of blasphemy. He will be made the king of the world. He will make himself god. The world would love it and the city of Babylon would be his consort for a season. He has seven heads and ten horns.

“Seven heads” -- Revelation 17:9-11, *“And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.”* The seven heads are explained for us. They represent seven mountains. This woman sits on them. Some have said that since Rome sits on seven hills then it must refer to Rome. Babylon is therefore the city of Rome. It may be Rome but the reason for it may be different. For example, the Bible clearly explains for us that the seven mountains refer to seven kings, not seven mountains in the literal sense. The kingdoms that ruled Israel up to that point in time were EGYPT, ASSYRIA, BABYLON, MEDO-PERSIA, GREECE, and ROME. Five of them have past and one remains i.e. in the time of John, it was the Roman Empire. The seventh is in the future for it has *“not yet come.”* When the seventh comes he will rule for a short while i.e. only seven years compared to the other six which ruled for many years. This seventh is none other than the empire of the beast or antichrist. *“He was and is not”* refers to his near death experience where he will be seen as having been raised from the dead by the Dragon. Then he will rule again as it were *“the eight”* ruler i.e. the second phase of his reign. Then he will go into a demonic ramp age and commit great sins becoming the son of perdition by his evil deeds.

Henry Morris right observes, *“Though none of these empires ever actually ruled the whole world, each was the greatest kingdom of its own time, particularly in reference to the land and people of Israel and these kingdoms’ opposition to the proclamation of God’s Word and the accomplishment of His purposes in the world . . . These, or course, have not been the only kingdoms that have been at enmity with God and His purposes. In this category could also be placed such kingdoms as Syria, Edom, Moab, Midian, and many others, but none of these empires were of great size and influence. On the other hand, there were other great and powerful empires in the ancient world – China, India, and the Incas, for example – but these had only peripheral contact with the Word of God and the chosen people. There were only six kingdoms that met both criteria up to the time of Christ and the apostles. Furthermore, all six of these were not only legitimate heirs of political Babel but also of religious Babel as well. Babylon, Egypt, Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome were all strongholds of the world religion of evolutionary pantheism and idolatrous polytheism. Thus, they appropriately are represented as six heads on the great beast that supports the harlot.”*

“Ten Horns” -- Revelation 17:12-13, *“And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.”* The ten horns are ten kings. These are probably rulers who will work with the antichrist during the Great Tribulation. The antichrist empire is also known as the empire of *“iron and clay”* feet (see Daniel 2:33-42). Iron represents the Roman Empire. This means that the Babylon Empire has to be related to the old Roman Empire. The present indicators have to point to the United States of Europe. This is rise to power and supersede the United States of America as the next and final super power the world has ever known. These ten kings would then have to refer to the ten nations that make up the United States of Europe.

The mention of “one hour” describes the brevity of their reign. They will rule for a short while and then surrender their rule over to the antichrist. This is the purpose of their rule: to do his will and his will alone. These minion kings will be thrown crumbs from the kingly table of the antichrist who will make use of them. To do that he will give them power for a very short while and then they will bow themselves to the beast and receive him as their king and god.

“**The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour**” refers to her own royalty, nobility and prosperity. She is adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls are copycat of the New Jerusalem. This would give her the semblance of dignity and beauty. Such outward adornment will masquerade her evil dark side. In her hand was a golden cup full of the abominations and filthiness of her fornication as opposed to the censer which was full of the prayers of the saints in Heaven. The contrast is very clear. Donald Grey Barnhouse made this observation, “It is also highly significant that the abominations and filthiness should be spoken of as coming from a golden cup. . . . A French scholar, Salverte, writing on The Occult Sciences, tells of the drinking in connection with these demon ceremonies. ‘To drink of mysterious beverages’ he says ‘was indispensable on the part of all who sought initiation in these mysteries. These mysterious beverages were composed of wine, honey, water, and flour with various other ingredients used locally. From the nature of the ingredients avowedly used, and from the nature of other not avowed, but certainly used, there can be no doubt that they were of an intoxicating nature; and till the aspirants had come under their power, till their understandings had been dimmed and their passions excited by the medicated draught, they were not duly prepared for what they were either to hear or see.”

The name on the forehead of the woman was “*MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.*” The high priest will have a golden mitre on his forehead (cf. Exo. 28:36-38) with the words HOLINESS TO THE LORD. This was symbolic of the actions of the high priest that he is handling holy things. In the case of the beast it was the fact that he was handling all things evil and sinful. From her, stems the source of all immorality and sin.

“**Harlots**” (*porne*) is the root word for “pornography.” She is the mother and source of all sort of sexual sins, physical and spiritual. The epitome of sexual debauchery resides in this city. It is SIN-CITY and immorality incarnate! She spawned all the sexual sins and idolatry of the whole world from the time of the Fall.

“**Abominations**” refer to “detestable idolatries.” The woman is the source of it all. This city will be the citadel of fornication and great idolatry.

“**Mystery, Babylon the Great**” refers to the hidden identity of this creature that will be revealed in due time. It will be a great kingdom, no doubt about that. In terms of power, size and wickedness, the city of Babylon was indeed very great! But this kind of greatness is a fruit of great sins and shame. It should be rejected rather than adored.

17:7-13 -- Revelation 17:7-8, “*And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall*

wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is."

The mysteries of this woman will now be revealed to John. The beast will carry this woman. They will work together with the beast being the dominant player. The antichrist will be so wicked that he will possess the demeanour like one who has come out of the bottomless pit itself. He will be demonic in his character and actions.

The ones who will be deceived are those whose names are not written in the book of life. Judicially they would have their hearts hardened by God. It was a point of no return. Man will be deceived and they will become the pawns of the antichrist doing his every whims and fancies. They will see him before he dies and will worship him after he appears to have risen from the dead.

17:16-18 -- Revelation 17:16-18, *"And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth."*

They will fight against one another. The whore will be destroyed by the kings whose allegiance is to the antichrist only. T his city will be reduced to ashes once her usefulness is over. This has been the mode of operation of the evil one since the beginning of time. He uses people to satisfy his evil desires and to accomplish deadly and diabolical plans.

The ultimate control during this period is still God. God is the one who will cause His will to be accomplished in His time. All may appear out of control and the Devil seems to be winning but it is God who is winning. The city will be destroyed in the end.

b. The Wicked Deeds of the Great Whore – 17:6, 14

Revelation 17:6, *"And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration."* And **Revelation 17:14**, *"These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful."*

The madness and all consuming obsession of the woman will be to kill and murder. Saints will be hunted down like never before. Many of them will die. Many will die for their faith.

When John saw her, he “wondered with great admiration.” What it means is that John was confused, shocked, astonished and perhaps even a little frightened by the ghastly vision. To see God’s people die in great number by the hand of the inhabitants of a crazed city was too much for him.

The ten kings who allied themselves with the antichrist will fight against the Lamb. But the Lamb will overcome them all. They may kill God’s people but they can never hurt the King of kings and Lord of lords.

The persecution of the saints by evil despots is part and parcel of what it means to be a Christian. This is more critical in the Great Tribulation.