

THE DESTRUCTION OF RELIGIOUS BABYLON
Revelation 17:1-18
3/25/07 PM

People are incurably religious because God created us to be worshipers.

People invariably worship something or someone.

If not the true God, then false gods of their own making.

False religion is an attempt to satisfy mankind's longing for the spiritual realm without bringing him under God's authority.

During the Tribulation all of mankind will be united in on great world religion.

This false religion will transcend the world's cultural diversity and unite the world under the Antichrist.

This false religious system is referred to as Babylon the Great, the mother of Harlots. v. 5

There is a reason for that name.

Some have referred to the Bible as the Tale of Two Cities.

Babylon is referred to through in the Bible, second only to Jerusalem.

Babylon was started by Nimrod in Genesis 10.

It became the sight of the sight of the first rebellion against God and the first false religion in Genesis 11.

It was the capital the Babylonian Empire 600 years before Christ and was later conquered by the Medo-Persians in 539 BC.

The great city eventually fell into ruins and is the sight of several small towns today.

Saddam Hussein began the restoration of Babylon in the late 1980's, but the reconstruction was halted by the first Gulf War.

When the book of Revelation refers to Babylon, it may refer to a rebuilt Babylon, or the name Babylon may be used

metaphorically of the final world empire and religious system that rebels against God.

1. The Great Harlot Is A False World Religion. 17:1-7, 15, 18

1a A great harlot- a false religious system

The word harlot is frequently used metaphorically in the Bible of idolatry and false religion.

It refers to spiritual adultery of God's people going after other gods.

Hosea 1-2; Jeremiah 3:6-9; Revelation 2:22

1b Sits on many waters- multinational cf v.15

Worldwide influence

2-3 Has tremendous political power

2 Her evil influence seduces many national rulers

Jeremiah 51:7 Babylon has been a golden cup in the hand of the LORD, Intoxicating all the earth. The nations have drunk of her wine; Therefore the nations are going mad.

3 Sits on the beast

The harlot appears to be in control.

But in actuality the beast uses the harlot to accomplish his goal of world control during the first half of the tribulation.

4 Is extremely wealthy

In regal attire

The cup of abominations looks good on the outside, but is full of spiritual poison.

5 Is the mother of harlots- the source of many false religions

Nimrod organized the first false religion in Genesis 10.

His wife Semiramis bore a son, Tammaz and claimed they were claimed to be the woman and child of Genesis 3:15.

This is the beginning of the counterfeit mother-child cult.

Semiramis was called the queen of heaven. Cf Ezekiel 8:12ff; Jeremiah 44:15ff;

The mother and son were worshiped by different names in various near eastern religions.

Babylon- Semiramis and Tammuz (Adonis)

Phoenicia- Asheterah and Baal

Egypt- Isis and Osiris

Greece- Aphrodite and Bacchus (Zeus, Eros)

Rome- Venus and Cupid (Attis)

The harlot may be a false form of Christianity that simply substitutes the names of Mary and Jesus.

6 Persecutes God's people

The real Christians

16-17 Is destroyed by the beast and his allies

This will happen in the middle of the tribulation

When the Antichrist sets himself up in the temple to be worshiped cf 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4

The Abomination of Desolation cf Daniel 9:27

Cf Daniel 11:36-39; Revelation 13:4,8,12,15

17 The irony is that when they destroy the religious harlot they are unwittingly executing the purposes of God.

18 Is associated with a city

The great city in John's day was Rome?

Is the city here referring to Rome? Jerusalem Mecca?

It most likely refers to a rebuilt Babylon because of many Old Testament descriptions of Babylon's destruction which must yet be fulfilled. (See MacArthur pp. 167ff)

2. **The Beast Is The Ruler Of The Final World Empire. 17:8-14**

8a The beast was, is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss

This refers to the Antichrist's "death and resurrection" in 13:3,12

He comes to power during the first half of the tribulation

8b It will cause the unsaved to marvel

9 Its seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits

Many believe that this refers to Rome because it was described by the Latin poets as sitting on seven hills

This may also represent seven seats of power i.e. capitol

10-11 The seven heads also represent seven kings

5 fallen, 1 is, 1 to come

These are kings who conquered Israel

Past- Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece

Present- Rome

Future- The Antichrist's kingdom

The beast is the eighth and one of the seven

Rome?- ie the restored Roman empire cf Daniel 9

Babylon? Some believe that the Antichrist moves his capitol from Rom to Babylon in the middle of the tribulation. Cf Zechariah 5:5-15

12-13 The 10 heads are ten kings who will give over their authority to the beast during the last days.

The 10 toes of Daniel 2

The 10 horns of Daniel 7

Cf 7:20-27

14 They will seek to stop Christ's coming and will be destroyed by Him

Cf Psalm 2

Matthew 24:30-31

Revelation 19

Insights For Living

1. Co-operation with false religious is spiritual adultery.

Cf 2 John 7-11

Many in the so-called Evangelical movement are spiritual harlots

The Emergent church movement is rife with false teachers.

2. Examine the scriptures to discern truth from error. Cf Acts 17:10-11

In every age there is pressure to conform to the “popular religion” and to abandon the fundamentals of the faith.

1 Timothy 4:1 But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons

2 Timothy 3:13 But evil men and impostors will proceed *from bad* to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

Choose churches carefully