

Sent: Wednesday, March 30, 2022 5:10 PM  
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Revelation 17

"Let no one deceive you in any way! For that day (the Second Coming of Christ) will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god, or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself as being God!" (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4)

Remember last week's lesson on Revelation 16:17-21? When John, the beloved disciple, still exiled on the Isle of Patmos, saw in another vision, the seventh angel pouring out the seventh bowl judgment "on the air" (the atmosphere surrounding the earth), the last domain of Satan, who's called the "prince and power of the air"! Giving a sense (says MacArthur) that, as part of this, His last judgment on the earth, He was actually cleansing the domain where Satan last ruled in preparation for the coming of Christ back to the world, to set up His Millennial reign!

John wrote, you'll remember, that he heard a "loud voice coming out of the temple from the very throne of God, saying, 'It is done'! The final judgment! And there were "flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder" and then a great earthquake, "such as there had not been since man came to be upon the earth, so great was it, and so mighty"! Just like what occurred (in Revelation 8:15) when God sent the seventh seal judgment, and then (in Revelation 11:15-19) when He sent the seventh trumpet judgment! Only this one (in John's vision) was so much, much greater!

So great was the rumbling and shaking, in fact, that it caused cataclysmic changes in both the heavens and the earth causing (presumably) great movement of the earth's "tectonic plates," resulting in a total re-configuration of the topography of the earth as we know it, with all the islands of the sea and mountains of the earth's surface totally disappearing; and huge (never even closely seen, or possible) hundred-pound hailstones (would you believe) falling from the heavens on those who blasphemed God! And John writing how even the great city of Jerusalem was actually "split into three parts" (in a good way, as it will turn out), while the rest the cities of the nations "fell" and were crumpled (in a very bad way) with God remembering Babylon, in particular, by pouring out on them "the full cup of the wine of His fierce wrath"! Wow!

And then, our lesson last night, on Revelation 17, where we expected, with the last judgment now given, things to move forward in a chronological sequence of "things to come"! But finding, instead, the scene shifting, and actually reverting back again to an earlier part of the tribulation, this time, to more revelation concerning the judgment of Babylon (one aspect of the bowl judgments) and the "mystery" of the "scarlet woman and the beast who carries her"!

John writes, in Revelation 17:1, that "Then, one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came to him" and told him to "come," and that he would "show him the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality"! And, as he's "carried away in the Spirit into the wilderness" (on a kind of "guided tour") he sees "a woman...clothed in scarlet and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, with a gold cup full of abominations in her hand...and with a name 'BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER

OF HARLOTS...' written on her forehead...drunk with the blood of the saints, and the witnesses of Jesus," sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns"! Wow! What, in the world, is he talking about?

Don't be so surprised! John also "wondered"! (The angel told us so, in verse 7!) And so, the angel told him about the "mystery of the woman and the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the seven horns"! Ready?

The woman (or the "harlot") represents Babylon, which is not only a city but, even more so, a symbol of the "world system" apart from God! Barclay says, it's "the personification of spiritual fornication and idolatry"! MacArthur calls it a metaphor for false religion, spiritual defection, idolatry, and religious apostasy"! And, in Old Testament discourse, the imagery of the harlot is commonly used to denote religious apostasy, or idolatry! And, of course, the original city of Babylon, with the Tower of Babel, was the birthplace of idolatry! (Isn't it ironic that, in the end, false religion will come back to where it started!)

And "she" was "sitting on many waters," which John's writings explain! Verse 14 says, "The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues"! And so, the influence of Babylon "system" and culture and religion will dominate the unredeemed people of the world! And kings will commit "acts of immorality...and those who dwell on the earth (ordinary people) will be made drunk with the wine of her immorality!

The "beast" that John saw (in his vision), he says (in verse 8), "was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss...and those who dwell on the earth, whose name is not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world (speaking of Tribulation saints) will wonder (they too!) when they see the beast, that was and is not, and will come"! This is the same "beast" that we read about in Revelation 13. The one who "came out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads...who was like a leopard, with feet like a bear, and the mouth like a lion... (with apparent charismatic brilliance!) to whom the dragon (Satan) gave power and authority"! The Antichrist! The one who staged (or will stage!) a "fatal wound and was healed"! And with whom, Revelation 13:3 says, "the whole earth will be amazed and follow"! And he will be assisted by "another beast," the false prophet who (remember?), Revelation 13:13 says, will "perform great signs," even making "fire come down out of heaven," and deceive those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform"! And he will "bring back religion to the world" (and use it for his purpose) requiring all the people of the world to "make and worship an image of the beast" (the Antichrist) and even require that people be given a "mark of the beast" for the right to buy and sell! And it's about this time that the Antichrist will commit the "abomination of desolation" (prophesied in Daniel) desecrating the temple of Jerusalem, as foretold by Jesus to His disciples, in Matthew 24:15, as one of the signs of the "end time"!

And so, it appears, as MacArthur notes, that "our increasingly irreligious world is, in the end, going to become intensely religious, but in a false religious way, for all the wrong reasons, for a short time, until it isn't! Walvoord believes that "the woman represents the ecumenical, or one-world, church that will embrace all Christianity religiously but that the Antichrist's alliance with the false religious system won't last! And this helps explain the "mystery" of verse 16 (in going back to our text) of how "the ten horns (or the nations of the world aligned with the Antichrist),

and the Antichrist himself, will "hate the harlot" (and will turn on her when they no longer need her), and then dispose of her! So that all that's left is the "beast" (or Antichrist) and his world empire which, we know Christ will soon destroy!

And, interestingly, while it might have been a great mystery and wonder to John, and certainly to us, it certainly wasn't (and isn't) to God! Verse 17 says, "For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose! Our God is in control over all!

I can't help but see 2 Peter 3:11 as a good passage to quit on! "Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought we to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of the Lord...!"

O the wonder of it all!

Lowell