

October 29, 2023 - Revelation 17:7-18 - "Mystery of the Harlot Explained"

Introduction:

In Revelation 17, we learned that the world is headed toward a one world religion. All the diverse ideologies will come together into one. This one world religion coexists with a global world government controlled by the Antichrist.

This article appeared in the Catholic Review written over 20 years ago, "The unity of religion promoted by the Holy Father and approved by His Holiness the Dalai Lama is not a goal to be achieved immediately, but a day will come when the love and compassion which both Buddha and Christ preached so eloquently will unite the world in a common effort to save humanity from senseless destruction, and leading toward the light in which we all believe." The Dalai Lama, who is considered God by most Tibetan Buddhists, has been well received by Roman Catholic leaders around the world.

I stress again to you that the force that will unite the world during the tribulation will be a religious force a satanic deception of global proportions.

We left off the last time at verse 7. This is the introduction to an Angelic explanation. "The angel said to me, 'Why do you marvel / wonder? I shall tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her which has the seven heads and the ten horns.'" Verse 8 begins...

I. Angelic Description of the Woman vv.8-15

1. The angel makes reference to the beast that was, and is not, and yet is (17:8). Most Bible scholars refer to this as the Antichrist's faked death and resurrection. He will use that alleged miracle to deceive the entire world into worshipping him as God as I referred you to 2 Thess. 2. His fabricated resurrection literally convinces the whole world that he is the great leader, that he is not only to be followed but he is to be worshiped. Chapter 17 and chapter 13 both talk about the supposed resurrection. Chapter 13 tells us that it amazes the whole world, and the whole world starts to worship him.

We note the Bible says that he comes up out of the abyss, at this point in time this man will literally be indwelt by a demon from the abyss. He'll conquer the world by his power and certainly he'll be energized in some ways by Satan. The Lord permits the ecumenical church to develop to the point that the entire world will be under its influence. Note the individuals that are swayed by this evil force.

2. This angel speaks applying a very unusual phrase *"here is the mind which has wisdom,"* It is a call for spiritual discernment an invitation to a closer inspection and it introduces a very difficult aspect of this vision. You have to do your homework, investigate, study or just wait.

3. “The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth” (17:9). I believe there is a suggestion here to the seven heads being seven hills. The Greek word “o'-ros” also means mount or hill. “History knows of only one city which is so designated. It is Rome, called “the lofty city of seven peaks.” The first implication of the “seven heads” is geographical, or territorial. Throughout the history of the city of Rome it has been described as a city of seven hills which rise from the banks of the famous Tiber River.

The false religious system that exists in the first half of the Tribulation period is going to be linked to Rome. We note this is the seat of the woman's power is in this city, it is the location of the harlots headquarters; others believe it is a revive Babylon that could a metaphor for Rome or both.

4. In verse ten we see the comparing of mountains with kings, this is not uncommon in the Bible. For example, while prophesying about the messianic kingdom Isaiah used this language in Isaiah 2:2. Daniel foretold of four of these kingdoms while interpreting the Kings dream.

History has shown us that five Gentile empires have fallen during this time. So going way back to the beginning of history, in the biblical frame of reference we have Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome, that takes us up to six. As John writes, five are fallen. Five have gone out of existence. They are Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece. John writes, there is still one in existence, what is it? Rome. It is also obvious which one existed at that time, which was Rome. The one yet to come is the Antichrist world empire, the final empire.

5. Verse # 11 is a mind bender. How can there be eight when there is only seven? It can only be if seven is eight and that can only happen if this king dies and comes back to power as the resurrected eight! The middle of verse 11 says he will eventually go perdition...to destruction. It means eternal damnation. King seven and eight are one and the same.

6. Remember Daniel described the image of King Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon as having ten toes. Therefore it is believe that the final form of the Antichrist's rule he's going to divide the world into ten zones and he's going to give certain men authority to rule on his behalf in those zones. In some way they will be a part of the federation with the Antichrist. They haven't received a kingdom yet, that's because Antichrist hasn't taken over and apportioned out the world and assigned them to their responsibility.

According to 17:12-14, this eighth king will rule over a ten-kingdom federation that will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them. You note how short a time this kingdom exist. Verse 15 we explain last week that this implies a global religious system.

II The Doom of Ecclesiastical Babylon vv.16-18

1. An account of the doom of “ecclesiastical Babylon” is given in 17:16. Commercial Babylon turns on Ecclesiastical Babylon and destroys her (Rev. 17:16). The beast will see her as a challenge to himself and with a federation of ten nations, will completely annihilate her. He then will set himself up to be worshipped. The apostate church loses her influence. The words naked, eat, and burn refer to the utter destruction of the harlot. She is strip and depleted of all wealth and power.

2. There's not a vestige of the former false religious system left on the face of the earth. He is the new God, the new king, the new ruler, the new idol. There's nothing left. And even what may be the residue, the bones, if you will, of the consumed harlot are burned with fire.

Application:

Verse #17 is a wonderful verse for us to make a personal application to this passage. We see that God used the extremity of man depravity to carry out His own purposes (Rev. 17:17). God's will is done regardless of what man proposes.

Psalms 75:7 - But God [is] the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.

Matthew 24:35 -Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

I John 2:17 -And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

--- Romans 12 :2

3. Finally, the angel said to John, *And the woman which thou sawest is that great city ...* (Rev. 17:18a). Apparently, the world religion of the harlot will be centered in a great city with such power that it reigneth over the kings of the earth. This further identified her with an actual city, a real city, a rebuilt Babylon type of city; very possibly modern day Rome which will likely be the capital of Antichrist's empire.

Summary

The seven-year period of Tribulation begins just after the rapture of the church. The Antichrist rides in, as it were, on a white horse, conquering, he has a bow but no arrows, it's a peaceful kind of conquering. He brings the world a false peace, he takes over the world. At the same time a false religious world, global form of religion and worship grows up and the two exist...the harlot, the religion riding along supported by the beast.

Then at the midpoint the beast doesn't tolerate that anymore. He consumes the false religious system and demands that the whole world worship him. He then becomes the world leader, and has his ten sub-kings ruling on his behalf.

Conclusion:

It is interesting to note that the world council of Churches and the Economic Community of Europe now the EU both started in 1948. Having said that look at the Biblical prophecy of Ezekiel 37:21-23. When did this finally happen? --- 1948. Could the Lord rapture His Bride the church soon?

If we are going to convince a cynical world that the message of Jesus Christ is real, we are going to be intentional about living the Christian life. We are going to have to be consistent in our obedience.