

Things to Come

#21 Babylon Part 1

I. Introduction

- A. Let's pause a moment and take a look at the major events of unfulfilled prophecy...(From Every Prophecy of the Bible by Walvoord)

MAJOR EVENTS OF UNFULFILLED PROPHECY

1. Rapture of the church (1 Cor. 15:51-58; 1 Thes. 4:13-18).
2. Revival of the Roman Empire; ten-nation confederacy formed (Dan. 7:7, 24; Rev. 13:1; 17:3, 12-13).
3. Rise of the Antichrist: the Middle East dictator (Dan. 7:8; Rev. 13:1-8).
4. The seven-year peace treaty with Israel: consummated seven years before the second coming of Christ (Dan. 9:27).
5. Establishment of a world church (Rev. 17:1-15).
6. Russia (?) springs a surprise attack on Israel four years before the second coming of Christ (Ezek. 38-39).
7. Peace treaty with Israel broken after three-and-a-half years: beginning of world government, world economic system, world atheistic religion, final three-and-a-half years before second coming of Christ (Dan. 7:23; Rev. 13:5-8, 15-17; 17:16-17).
8. Many Christians and Jews, martyred who refused to worship world dictator (Rev. 7:9-17, 13:15).
9. Catastrophic divine judgments represented by seals, trumpets, and bowls poured out on the earth (Rev. 6-18).
10. World war breaks out focusing on the Middle East; Battle of Armageddon (Dan. 11:40-45; Rev. 9:13-21; 16:12-16).
11. Babylon destroyed (Rev. 18).
12. Second coming of Christ (Matt. 24:27-31; Rev. 19:11-21).
13. Judgment of wicked Jews and Gentiles (Eze. 20:33-38; Matt. 25:31-46, Jude 14-15; Rev. 19:15-21; 20:1-4).
14. Satan bound for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1-3).
15. Resurrection of Tribulation saints and Old Testament saints (Dan. 12:2; Rev. 20:4).
16. Millennial kingdom begins (Rev. 20:5-6).
17. Final rebellion at the end of the Millennium (Rev. 20:7-10).
18. Resurrection and final judgment of the wicked: Great White Throne judgment (Rev. 20:11-15).
19. Eternity begins: new heaven, new earth, New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:1-2).

- B. Chronologically, chapter 17 may have occurred during the first half of the tribulation. Notice that the pouring of the 7th bowl is directly followed by the return of Christ (see 19:11).

- C. Chapter 17 reveals details about the spiritual nature of the Antichrist's reign. It describes the destruction of the ecclesiastical "Babylon". Chapter 18 will focus on the more material or physical destruction of "Babylon" as an evil empire.
- D. The chapter might be divided:
 - Vs. 1-6: The vision of the great harlot
 - Vs. 7-18: The interpretation of the vision

II. The Harlot

- A. The story of Babylon (this term may apply to the Babylonian region, the old city of Babylon, the empire of Babylon, all false religions, the evil spiritual empire or the final world religion).
 - The tower of Babel (see Genesis 11:1-9)
 - Babylon in history:
 - It rose to prominence in the time of Hammurabi (1726-1668).
 - Its glory days were under Nebuchadnezzar (600 years before Christ). This was when the book of Daniel was written.
 - The wife of Nimrod (Semiramis) started all the idol worship and mysterious religious activities. She was known as the "queen of heaven." Tammuz was her son and Baal is often identified as Tammuz.
 - The worship of Ishtar: goddess of love, war and sexuality (see Jer. 44:15-27 and Ezek. 8:14)
- B. Her Identification: "Mother of Harlots"
 - Note that other cities have been called "harlot" cities (Nineveh: Nahum 3:1, 4; Tyre: Isa. 23:15-17 and Jerusalem: Isa. 1:21).
- C. Her Authority: "Sits on many waters"- the entire world is committed to false worship of the Antichrist and his demons.
- D. Her Alliances:
 - "Kings of the earth": She has a worldwide influence
 - "Rulers": She draws allegiance from military, economic and political leaders
 - "All those who dwell on the earth": All the unbelievers will participate in her immorality.
- E. Her Apparel:
 - She is "sitting on the beast"- "The beast and the woman will coexist for a while; that is the religion will be separate from the kingdom of the Antichrist at first. But eventually (vs. 16), the false prophet will make the whole world worship the Antichrist and everything will be one in the beast's universal and comprehensive rule." (Walvoord, pg. 163)

F. Her Abominations:

She identifies herself (prostitutes in the Roman world wore their names across their brow): "the mother of all harlots."

III. The Scarlet Beast

A. Seven headed monster

The seven mountains upon which she sits: Some see these are the 7 hills surrounding Rome and thus look for a revived Roman Empire

Some see these as seven major governments/kingdoms or governmental systems. Five are in the past (Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persian and Greece), the one that existed in John's day: Rome and the seventh is yet to come-a future world power.

On the other hand, it may only refer to the "fullness of evil power that resides in this beast," not to a specific number of kingdoms.

B. Ten Horns

Some see these as a ten-nation confederation of a revived Roman Empire. Others see these "kings from the east" (16:12-14) as random kingdoms that unite against the Lamb. (The battle of Armageddon)

They receive power "for one hour"- their reign will be short lived.

The alliance the Antichrist has with this false religious system crumbles. He will discard the false religion and all its trappings.

IV. So What?

Don't miss the significance of this entire chapter. God will not tolerate anyone who tries to rob Him of His glory.

Isa. 42:8 "I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not yield my glory to another or my praise to idols."