

## Behold | Sermons through the Revelation

Sermon #34 | Revelation 17:1-8 | The Judgment of Babylon

### Revelation 17:1-2 | Introduction to the Judgment

- Note: for a fuller explanation of verses 1-2, see sermon #33.
- John is called to see **the judgment** (singular) of the **great whore** who will be named in verse 5 as **Babylon the Great**.
- The whore **sitteth upon many waters**, which are defined in verse 15 as the peoples of the earth, thus she represents a “collective force” of all the nations.
  - As far as I can tell, nothing good has ever come from a uniting of nations.
  - Babel of the past was and Babylon of the future will be a true “international city.”
  - *Current events note:* Until the Trump administration, the only international city recognized by the USA was Jerusalem. In 2017 the city lost its international status by the USA and was recognized as the capital of Israel. As of this week (Oct. 29), U.S. citizens born in Jerusalem will be recognized as born in Israel. Thus no international cities exist today.
- The city will provide many benefits to the **kings of the earth** and **the inhabitants of the earth**, and thus will be a popular destination and center of world commerce. It will likely be a tariff-free city, such as the *Free City of Cracow* (1815-1846).

### Revelation 17:3-6 | The Description of the Woman

- She was in the **wilderness** (v. 3).
  - The word ἔρημος [eramos] means “desert.” We get the word *hermit* from this root.
  - The exact location is not given, but the ancient location of Babylon fits the description.
- She sat on a **scarlet colored beast** (v. 3). Since the beast is described in verses 8-11, we will save our understanding of the beast until those verses. Here alone we are told that the beast is **scarlet**. This is the same color as the mock robe put upon our Lord at His crucifixion (Matt. 27:28), and likely pictures royalty.
- Because the description of names, heads, and horns (v. 3) is the same description of the Antichrist in Revelation 13:1, and because the **beast** is the term used exclusively for the Antichrist in Revelation, the identity of the **scarlet colored beast** is unquestionable.
- The woman herself (Babylon) is **arrayed in purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls** (v. 4). Again, likely a simple description of her royalty and splendor, probably the likes of which the world has never seen.

- The city is a sensual, sin-filled city. This is one of several reasons that I do not believe that Islam will play a major (if any) role in end times, and will not play *any* role in Babylon.
- It is without merit that **mystery Babylon** (v. 5) is disconnected with physical Babylon.
  - Beginning in v. 7 the angel reveals all **the mystery of the woman** and declares her to be **the great city** in v. 17.
  - The interpretation of **mystery Babylon** as the apostate church or the Roman Catholic church is built upon these two words alone (without context), followed by eisegesis. Furthermore, neither the city of Rome nor the Papal system are **the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth**. In fact, both are more the recipient than the originator.
- The woman *drunk on blood* (v. 6) –
  - The last days will not only see a rebuilding of Babylon, but a renewed fervor of antisemitism.
  - Humanism is always secular, and secularism is always threatened by Judaism and Christianity.
  - **Saints** refers to redeemed Israel.
  - Compare Psalm 83:1-5 for a fuller picture of this coming day.

### Revelation 17:7 | The Promise of Interpretation

- Since John is explicitly told that the angel **will tell him the mystery** both of the woman and the beast, we do not need to speculate.
  - There is *no need to re-interpret the divine interpretation*. Our job is to *believe* the interpretation.
  - In verse 7 we have the *promise* to interpret. The interpretation comes in verses 8-18.
- It is important to *see beyond the woman* to the reality. A similar picture is given in Proverbs 9:13-18. The woman is the city. Her immorality is the story.

### Revelation 17: 8 | The Book of Life (a preview)

- The people on the earth **whose names are not written in the book of life** will be amazed at the beast. The book is also mentioned in connection with the beast in Revelation 13:8.
- In Revelation 20:12, those whose names are not in the book of life are cast into the lake of fire.
- The evangelical view of the book is that it contains *the names of the saved*. If this be the case, Calvinistic predestination is almost a necessity, for their names are written **from the foundation of the world** (v. 8).
- The knowledge of the book comes from the Old Testament: Exodus 32:32, Deuteronomy 29:20, Psalm 69:28, Daniel 12:1, Revelation 3:5, 21:7.
- It appears that the book of life is a book of *those elect Jews who will enter the Kingdom*.