

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bible with me to Revelation 17

Today we are going to see the fall of the counterfeit church.

Turn with me to Rev 2

[Rev 2:12-16 NKJV] 12 "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, 'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: 13 "I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne [is]. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas [was] My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. 14 "But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. 15 "Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. 16 "Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.

Jesus warns the church and us about compromise.

Those who proclaim Jesus Christ but also include the worship of other gods.

They worship the god of prosperity

They worship the god of pleasure

Here we find out what happens to the church that compromises.

Let's pray...

[Rev 17:1-18 NKJV] 1 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the **great harlot** who sits **on many waters**, 2 "with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the **wine of her fornication.**"

So I first asked you to make a note of the word "harlot"

That word "harlot" or "prostitute" refers to a woman who sells herself for personal gain.

Now, that brings up two questions.

Why is the word "harlot" used???

And who does it refer to???

So in order to understand what the angel is showing John here – we have to understand the covenant that God made with His people.

In the Old Testament – after the fall of man and the flood, God was the first to initiate a relationship with His people.

And that happened when He made a covenant with Abram.

Later on, God reaffirmed the covenant with Isaac and then Jacob and then his descendants forever.

As part of this covenant / contract, God agreed to be faithful and promised to set the nation of Israel apart as His holy people.

And in doing so, the Children of Israel were instructed to concentrate themselves and serve Him alone.

That is why God gave them the Ten Commandments when He delivered them out of Egypt – and why the first 4 all have to do with being faithful to Him. Not having other gods - not having other idols – not worshipping other gods, etc

The people of Israel, however, frequently broke their vows and walked away from their contract with God to serve other gods (like Baal and Molech) and they did this to pursue their own interests.

But in every betrayal, God remained faithful and never broke His promise to His people.

And then when we get to the Book of Hosea.

Hosea is a beautiful love story.

And through the prophet Hosea, God delivers a message to His people regarding their unfaithfulness.

God tells his prophet Hosea to take a prostitute as his wife. Her name was Gomer.

After having a few children, Gomer became unfaithful to Hosea as she returned to being a prostitute.

And God tells Hosea that when she returns, to take her back.

In this love story, God promised that if His people would return to Him, He would be faithful to always forgive them and welcome them back into His loving arms.

So even though Jesus Christ, the Messiah, had not yet come to redeem the earth, God was already using the symbolism of a broken marriage and relationship to communicate with His people, who He loved.

Then we get to the NT

Turn with me to Ephesians 5

[Eph 5:22-25 NKJV] 22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23

For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. 24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so

[let] the wives [be] to their own husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

Believers in Jesus Christ are the bride of Christ -

And just like in ancient times when there was a separation between the bride and the bridegroom until the wedding, the church is currently going through that period and we wait with great anticipation for the day when we will be united with our Bridegroom. Until then, we remain faithful to Him.

So who is this great harlot?

The religious system / the counterfeit church.

People think that during the tribulation Period – there will be no more religion.

There will be religion –

Church, please remember that being religious doesn't equal being saved.

Because as we will see here - there will be lots of religious people going to hell.

Always remember - Jesus saves, not religion.

You don't go to heaven because you come to Calvary Santa Cruz – no one will be able to stand before God and say, "Well I went to so and so church"

Where we spend eternity will be based upon whether or not we place our trust in Jesus Christ for our salvation.

The many waters that are described at the end of verse one – speak of the influence that this false church is going to have over the entire world..

And I also had you make a note of the wine of her fornication – that is the deception / the lies that are going to entice the people to it and lead them to destruction as they rebel against God.

A harlot lets others use her – but in reality she's the one using them.

And that is what is going to happen here with this false religion.

3 So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast [which was] full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. 4 The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. 5 And on her forehead a name [was] written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

So John is given this vision of this harlot sitting on top of the beast.

Now, we have seen this beast before.

Back in Revelation 13

The one that was coming out from the sea –

She is riding the antichrist

This means that this false church is going to be in cahoots with the one world political system that will be established by the antichrist.

And by the way she is described by John here – we can see that she is definitely going to have power and wealth.

Purple and scarlet were colors of splendor and magnificence – these were colors reserved for rulers.

During ancient days, harlots would wear headbands with their name on it. That way they would be recognized by their customers.

Here, the great harlot wears hers with a description of what she has done.

She is the Mother of Harlots as her influence has caused man to rebel from God for thousands of years.

We also see the name Babylon here – Babylon is synonymous with rebellion against God.

It was at the Tower of Babel where people began to come up with a way to get to God on their own terms.

It was the birthplace of manmade religion.

Babel – is Babylon.

And while Nimrod, who scriptures tell us founded Babel, his wife became the head of the Babylonian religion that was established there.

And according to Babylonian mythology – 40 years after the death of Nimrod, his wife conceived a child – who she said was miraculously conceived through her dead husband

The child later dies and his life restored.

Both of them are elevated into major deities among the Babylonian gods.

And then they morphed into other deities in the area – always depicted as the Queen of Heaven and her son.

So we see the influence that began in Babylon – and then spread to the world.

In Assyria, you find Ishtar and her son, Tammuz.

In Phoenicia, you find Astarte and her son, Baal.

In Egypt, Isis and her son, Osiris.

In Greece, Aphrodite and her son, Eros.

In Rome, Venus and her son, Cupid.

6 I saw the woman, **drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus**. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement. 7 But the angel said to me, "Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns.

This false religious system will persecute and try to exterminate any remaining believer here on earth during the Tribulation Period.

The woman not only persecutes, she also revels in her persecution of the godly as a drunk revels in wine.

She is going to enjoy it!!!!

8 "The beast that you saw **was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition**. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. 9 "Here [is] the mind which has wisdom: **The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits**. 10 "There are also seven kings. **Five have fallen, one is, [and] the other has not yet come**. And when he comes, he must continue a short time.

Notice that the angel's explanation here is focused on the beast -

What does the angel mean that the beast was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition mean?

You may remember from previous studies that the antichrist is going to suffer a mortal wound.

He is going to die and then come back to life – he was and is not

His influence is going to come from the abyss – Satan

Go to perdition – speaks of the Lake of Fire where he will be thrown for eternity at the end of the 1000 reign of Jesus Christ here on earth.

So we know that when the antichrist comes back to life – that people will worship him – they will take the mark of the beast and show their loyalty to him.

That choice they make to worship the beast is a conscious, willful rebellion against God, and a rejection of Jesus, from which they will not repent.

And we saw that last week as the bowl judgments were poured on the people.

Now let's talk about the seven mountains –

Because many people have made the claim that this speaks of Rome – as Rome is the city that was founded on seven hills.

So immediately the assumption is that the Catholic Church and the Vatican will play a big part during the Tribulation Period.

It could be – but I believe that the seven heads or the seven mountains here is in reference to what John rights about in the very next verse.

I believe the seven mountains are tied to the seven kings or seven empires that have and will rule the earth.

Five that have fallen

1. Egypt
2. Assyria
3. Babylon
4. Medo-Persian Empire
5. Greece

One is = is in reference to the time that John was writing this – 1st century. Rome was ruling the earth during this time.

And the one that has not come = to the one world government that is going to be set up by the antichrist.

11 "The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.

Huh?

It's really not that confusing!

- Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece are kingdoms one, two, three, four and five.

- Rome, at the time of John, is six.

- The Roman Empire will be revived in the first years of the Tribulation, making it kingdom number seven.

- The Revived Roman Empire ruled by the antichrist during the last half of the Tribulation would be number eight in this list.

The antichrist, then, was "of the seven," but comes to supreme power, and is the eighth kingdom.

12 "The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. 13 "These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast.

Now, we have seen a reference to these 10 horns / kings before

Turn with me to Dan 7

[Dan 7:23-25 NKJV] 23 "Thus he said: 'The fourth beast shall be A fourth kingdom on earth, Which shall be different from all [other] kingdoms, And shall devour the whole earth, Trample it and break it in pieces. 24 The ten horns [are] ten kings [Who] shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them;

He shall be different from the first [ones], And shall subdue three kings. 25 He shall speak [pompous] words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then [the saints] shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time.

So these 10 kings or rulers are going to show their loyalty to the antichrist.

The antichrist is going to give each of the authority for a short period –

Notice that they will only have authority for an hour – compared to the whole Tribulation “week” or seven years.

This coalition of rulers along with the antichrist will make up the 8th empire that we saw in the previous verses.

14 "These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those [who are] with Him [are] called, chosen, and faithful."

The coalition of rulers – like I said last week will combine their resources and troops to fight against Jesus Christ at His second coming at the valley of Megiddo.

[Rev 19:19 NKJV] 19 And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.

His army are the ones who are with Him in verse 14 – these are the believers that are raptured.

They will follow Jesus as He defeats the antichrist and his armies and will serve as witnesses to the victory of the Lamb.

Notice that those who are with Him are called chosen and faithful.

Some people might say, “It’s not fair that God chooses people”.

But we like the idea of getting to choose our spouse, the person we’re going to spend the rest of our lives with.

Aren’t you glad you have a choice like that?

Jesus is going to spend eternity with us, isn’t it fair that He get to choose who He spends it with?

If we want to be one that Jesus has chosen, we simply need to choose Jesus. We’ll find that He has already chosen you.

Jesus said,

(Jn 15:4–5 NKJV) —4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 5 “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

Our victory doesn't come from our own effort or our own works.

Our victory right now simply comes from "abiding", from staying put, from simply trusting in Jesus.

15 Then he said to me, "The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. 16 "And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire.

The harlot, who had so much influence over the whole earth, is going to have a problem mid-Tribulation.

If the antichrist demands to be worshipped as god, how can the false, one-world religion go on? The answer - It can't.

Once his power has been consolidated, the Antichrist no longer needs the help of religious Babylon. He will then work to dismantle and destroy her and her one-world religion.

17 "For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. 18 "And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth."

Notice that God is the One – who directed the judgment against religious Babylon.

He used these evil 10 kings to judge the false church.

God will ordain the political support of these ten kings for the Antichrist. God will give the world just what it wants: godless religion and godless rulers.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 'May the LORD bless you and protect you. 25 May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you. 26 May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

