

The Scarlet Woman Revelation 17:1-18

INTRO: This chapter is one of harsh words and harsh reality. Chapter 17 is a chapter that deals with a one world religion, the final result of the ecumenical movement.

What we have before us here in chapter 17 is the rise and fall of the ecumenical world church. This will come about after the rapture although signs of it are being seen today.

I. VSS 1-2, THE ANGEL'S INVITATION

A. Vs 1, John is invited to see the destruction of the ecumenical world church.

1. The word "whore" does not speak of an actual woman, a prostitute or a loose immoral woman. It speaks of false religion, idolatry, and spiritual adultery.
2. "Sitteth upon many waters" is defined in verse 15.
 - a. The "whores" authority will be universal. Every nation will look to her leader.
 - b. Instead of worshiping God in the tribulation, men will worship Babylonian religion.

B. Vs 2, The "kings of the earth" speaks of the great international influence of this false religion. The people of the world and their leaders are held in the hand of this world-wide church with approval of the anti-Christ. "During the Tribulation hour, a vast international religious system. . . creates impure alignments with kings, rulers, and presidents in an unprecedented way" (Van Impe 198).

1. Spiritual fornication is committed: evil association, idolatry, and works religion. Look back in history; you will see that almost every king has had political, economic, or religious ties with the Vatican.
2. Christians are to be separated from the world system.
 - a. Rom 12:1-2
 - b. I John 2:15-16
 - c. James 4:4
3. "Drunk"—speaks of strong delusions, love of pleasure, etc.

II. VSS 3-4, THE PICTURE OF THE WOMAN ON THE BEAST

A. Vs 3, The angel carried John to a desolate waste land where Iraq

is located today.

1. The woman is the “whore” of verse 1.
2. She is sitting on a scarlet colored beast, meaning the beast, anti-Christ, is her support, at least for a while.
3. Scarlet speaks of luxury, sin, and bloodshed.
4. “Names of blasphemy”
 - a. The beast will take to himself the titles that belong to God.
 - b. “Blasphemy” –anything contradicting Bible doctrine.
5. “Seven heads”– we look to verse nine for the interpretation. Rome is in view. Rome is the city on seven hills. It was the capital of the old Roman empire and is the seat of the Papal state.
6. “Ten horns”– prophetic of the European Common Market, the revived Roman Empire.

B. Vs 4, The woman is decked out in expensive clothing. Remember this woman is a religion. Walvoord says: “The description of the woman as arrayed in purple and scarlet and decked with gold, precious stones, and pearls is all too familiar to one acquainted with the trappings of ecclesiastical pomp today and especially of high officials in the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches” (245). Purple and scarlet are the official colors of the Vatican.

1. Spiritual adultery is described in explicit terms.
2. “Abominations” sensual pleasures that make God sick.

III. VSS 5-7, THE WOMAN AND THE BLOOD OF MARTYRS

A. Vs 5, This woman, the “whore” is like unto what Babylon was religiously.

1. “Mother of harlots” speaks of the pagan practices of Babylon that became a part of Roman Catholicism from which most Protestant religions came. Baptists are not Protestant; Baptists existed before the Catholic church was founded.
2. Mystery Babylon goes back to Nimrod, the founder of Babel, and his wife Semiramis.
 - a. In Assyria and Nineveh, she was called Ishtar.
 - b. In Egypt, she was Isis; in the Phoenician Pantheon, she was Ashtoreth or Astarte.
 - c. Among the Greeks, she was Aphrodite.

- d. To the Latins and Romans, her name was Venus.
- 3. Semiramis became the high priestess of the idolatrous Babylonian system.
 - a. Semiramis gave birth to a son, Tammuz, who she claimed was conceived by a sunbeam and was the promised seed of God.
 - b. When Tammuz was grown, he was killed by a wild boar; but after forty days of his mother's weeping, he arose.
 - c. The Mother and child cult began with this. This is an abomination!
- B. Vs 6, Through the centuries true believers have been persecuted and even martyred for their true faith in opposition to false religion.
 - 1. John Walvoord says: "The history of the church has demonstrated that apostate Christendom is unsparing in its persecution of those who attempt to maintain a true faith in Jesus Christ" (249).
 - 2. John saw with awe the death of millions at the hands of the church of Rome.
- C. Vs 7, The angel will declare the mystery to the wondering and shocked John.

IV. VSS 8-11, THE BEAST AND THE SEVEN HEADS

- A. Vs 8, The beast, anti-Christ, comes out of the home of Satan, the bottomless pit. This indicates Satanic power in his politics.
 - 1. "Perdition" means "utter destruction" or "eternal damnation."
 - 2. "Was and is not" is explained in Rev 13:3. He is assassinated and Satan the great imitator resurrects him and enters his body. This explains "yet is" in this verse.
 - 3. The lost will wonder at all this.
 - 4. The saved have their names written in the book of life. This was done in eternity past.
- B. Vs 9, This is Rome. According to Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable 1894, Rome is the city on seven hills. The hills are Aventine, Caelian, Capitoline, Esquiline, Palatine, Quirinal, and Viminal.
- C. Vs 10, The vision of the seven kings.
 - 1. Five have fallen: Julius Caesar, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero. At the time of the writing of the Revelation,

- Domitian was alive and on the throne.
2. "The other is yet to come." This is the anti-Christ who will rule for a short time; thus "one is." He, Domitian, banished John to Patmos.
- D. Vs 11, King number eight is king number seven resurrected.
1. When the seventh is assassinated, Satan resurrects the body and enters it. This is the eighth.
 2. He will go into perdition, same as said to number seven (vs 8).
- V. VSS 12-15, THE TEN HORNS
- A. Vs 12, The anti-Christ will control the world.
1. There will be an alliance of nations, the ten toes of Daniel.
 2. "One hour" –their power will be strong, but it will be short.
- B. Vs 13, They are under the rule of the world leader, the anti-Christ, and give all to him. They give up their nations sovereignty to be ruled.
- C. Vs 14, This is fulfilled in Revelation 19:11-16.
1. The elect will go with Him, Christ, to defeat the enemy (19:14).
 2. These are the ones who are called by the Gospel (II Thes 2:13-14).
- D. Vs 15, This is explained in verse one. A universal so called church rules with false religion.
- VI. VSS 16-18, THE WOMAN DESTROYED
- A. Vs 16, God in His sovereignty will turn the ten-horns against the ecumenical church.
1. The anti-Christ will be betrayed from within.
 2. All of the possessions of Rome will be stripped away.
- B. Vs 17, God is Almighty! He is in control! (Psa 15:7).
- C. Vs 18, What city this is is uncertain. I believe it is the Papal city, the Vatican. "The fact that the prostitute is seated on the beast and defined as one 'rules over the kings of the earth' indicates the tremendous power she will exercise over the world government during the first half of the tribulation" (LaHaye 265).

CONCLUSION: True churches need to clear of the ecumenical movement.

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Nov 16, 2008