

REVELATION 17 - LESSON 22

REVELATION 17

We're going to look at Chapter 17, but I am going to link it to CH 18.

17:1-6

18:1-3

Chapters 17 & 18 need to be understood together because they both deal with 2 distinct systems that are headquartered in the same location.

There is a lot of discussion as to whether Babylon mentioned in 17 & 18 is a literal city or if it's merely figurative and paints a picture of something.

I believe it's literal and refers to the ancient city that will be revived, rebuilt and ultimately destroyed.

Other than Jerusalem, Babylon is mentioned more times than any other city. It's the 2nd most mentioned city in the entire Bible.

Over 300 references from Genesis to Revelation refer to the ancient city of Babylon.

In Revelation there are 404 verses and 42 verses refer to Babylon.

Ancient Babylon is 55 miles south of Baghdad along the Euphrates River in Iraq.

The city itself was considered impenetrable and was built with walls that Herodotus records were 35 stories high and 87 feet thick.

Babylonians believed it was not able to be penetrated but Bible predicted that it would fall!

In fact, in Jeremiah chapter 51, 60 years before it fell, God prophesied through Jeremiah, it would fall.

In Isaiah, between chapters 45 - 47, 150 years before it fell, prophesied it would and even named Persian King Cyrus by name.

So 150 years before he was even born, Isaiah said Cyrus would be the one to defeat the city.

The Euphrates River was actually diverted around the city to function as a mote for an extra layer of defense.

Cyrus dammed up the Euphrates River a few miles north of the city and when he dried it up, he went under the walls on the dry river bed and took Babylon without having to deal with the walls.

Babylon fell Oct 12, 539 BC

But as the Bible predicted its fall, it also predicts it being rebuilt.

Some of you may remember Sadam Hussein tried to rebuild it.

He spent 500 million (½ billion) in this endeavor but never finished cause he tried to take Kuwait and in 1990 sanctions were imposed, war ensued and he was captured, tried and hung.

Babylon is now just ancient ruins but one day will be a literal city that represents 2 systems.

1) Spiritual Babylon = World Religious System

2) Commercial Babylon = World Economic System

Ch 17 - probably occurs in the first half of the tribulation.

Notice in the verses we read, there is a reference to "A Woman". She's not a literal woman but rather a picture.

Also referred to as a "Harlot" in the NKJV.

Also referred to a "prostitute" in the NIV and ESV.

Vs 5 - "Mystery", "Babylon the Great", "The Mother of Harlots", "And of the Abominations of the Earth".

So what does "SHE" represent? "A false religion that rises on the back of the Antichrist and seduces the nations".

In order to understand how this comes to be then we need to understand the historical context of Babylon.

Gen 10

Gen 10 we are introduced to Noah's great grandson "Nimrod".
He is mentioned here in Gen 10:8-10.

Gen 10:8-10

"Babel" = Ancient word for "Babylon"

"Shina" = Ancient term for Mesopotamia

"Nimrod" = "Rebellious One"

Vs 9 - "Hunter before the Lord"

"Before" = "pane" it's Hebrew for "Face"

It means he was in God's face or he got in God's face. He was in opposition to God.

Gen 11:1-9

Up until this time, there was one language and not diverse or scattered.

They built a "Ziggurat" structure which was a pyramid type building with staircase around it that led to the top.

They wanted to reach to the heavens. . . Why?

To Worship the Starry Hosts.

They wanted to worship the sun, moon, stars and wanted to make a name for themselves.

It was astrology and occultic, Astrological Worship. You can trace all of that to “Babel” or “Babylon”.

The occult started in Babylon..

God therefore scattered and dispersed them and they grouped together based on language they could understand.

Oldest record of Astrology comes from here.

Remember - 2 most referenced cities in the Bible are “Jerusalem” and “Babylon”.

So the Bible is the “Tale of 2 cities”.

JERUSALEM = CITY OF PEACE

BABYLON - = CITY OF CONFUSION

Now in addition to the people of Babel worshipping the sun, moon & stars, there is also an ancient legend that emerged in Babel. Nimrod married a woman named "Semiramis". She is in the Bible in Jeremiah referred to as "Queen of Heaven" 10 times.

They had a son (Ezekiel 8:14) "Tammuz".

The legend part is that Tammuz was conceived in a miraculous way (which isn't true) but also he was gored by a boar and rose from the dead.

Basically that legend takes root in Babylon and they began to worship this mother/son combo, Semiramis and Tammuz.

This legend carried on through other civilizations.

Assyrians = worshipped Ishtar and Tammuz

Canaanites = worshipped Ashtaroah and Baal

Egyptians = worshipped Isis and Horus

Greeks = worshipped Aphrodite and Ares

Romans = worshipped Venus and Cupid.

Interesting "Tammuz" - Iraq named its nuclear reactor after him.

Israel killed "Tammuz" June 7, 1981.

Babylon is the birthplace of false religion. But it's also going to be the deathplace of false religion.

Babylon will rise again and bear in mind when the church is raptured, (I believe before the tribulation), there will be the absence of Christian presence.

There will not be a strong Christian presence and it will create a vacuum. In order to fill that vacuum, these false religions will come under the banner of one.

And when Christians are taken, either there is a coming together of this false ecumenical movement or without Christianity what is the dominant religion right now? ISLAM

17:1 - "Sits on many waters"

17:15

It's figurative language and she sits on sea of humanity.

“Inhabitants made drunk with wine of her fornication”.

False Religion = Spiritual Adultery.

17:3 - “Sitting on Scarlet Beast”

“Rode to prominence with the Antichrist”

“Arrayed in purple and scarlett adorned with gold and precious stones”. Associated with wealth and royalty.

This world religion is going to be associated with WEALTH and ROYALTY.

(Vs 6) - “Drunk with blood of saints”.

Promotes violence against believers.

Could be the advance of Islam through violence.

(Vs 7)

(Vs 8-18)

(Vs 9 & 10) - "Sits on 7 mountains" = "Seven Kings" = "Kingdoms"

Associated with a political system.

(Vs 10) - "Have Fallen" = Past Tense

"One is" = Present Tense

"Not Yet Come" = Future Tense

“5 have fallen”

Who are the 5 dominating Empires that have fallen:

1. Egypt
2. Assyria
3. Babylonia
4. Medo-Persia
5. Greece

“One is” - who is the World Empire when John was writing this?
Rome

“Other has not yet come”

(Vs 11)

“Of the 7”

“5 have come”

“One is” = 6th

There is a world dominating empire that will come as the 7th for a short time.

Also says Antichrist was of the 7th and he becomes the 8th.

It's a confederation of nations that has not come yet but the Antichrist will come out of that to be a World Dictator.

10 Nation Confederation that includes the Antichrist and rules for a little while until they give the Antichrist full control.

Notice vs 12 "10 horns" - Horn = Authority

There will come a day when there will be a 10 Region Globe.

We can see each region could have its own ruler.

Among those 10 Rulers, one of them will be the Antichrist.

(Vs 16 - 17)

Beast with 10 horns will “hate the harlot” and bring her to ruin and “give their kingdom to the beast”.

Overthrown and replaced so that the Antichrist rules and is worshipped.

They will overthrow the world religion and give their power to the Antichrist, to rule and be worshipped.

