

Revelation
Ch 17 PT 2

Get Smart - KAOS

6 And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. When I saw her, I wondered greatly. 7 And the angel said to me, "Why do you wonder? 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.

8 "The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will wonder when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come.

9 Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits, 10 and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while. 11 The beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction. 12 The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour. 13 These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast.

Last week we saw the seductive woman who had led many astray and she drank from the gold cup filled with the blood of the faithful witnesses.
She was a fatal attraction for many in the world.

V. 4 The woman is dressed colors of royalty and adorned with precious jewels as she holds a gold cup.

These are alluring symbols in the world – wealth and power. These are a counterfeit to the true royal power of God and of His Christ. The Dragon, Satan, is a deceiver and knows what temptation is found through the love of the world- the boastful pride of life that comes with wealth and power. Her sexual immorality is a symbol of physical and spiritual immorality where idolatry = adultery.

In the first century Babylon was Rome. NOTE that Rome is here called Babylon – an ancient imperial power that long before had persecuted the people of God. This is an indication that "Babylon" is any world power wherever and whenever it rises to work against the spiritual life of human beings, promotes their spiritual deception, and prompts the persecution of the saints.

Babylon is the expression of self-worship, arrogance, idolatry, extravagance, luxury, and evil desire raised up to political and economic power with the Devil's help. Babylon is Vanity Fair in every age. [Stott, *The Incomparable Christ*, 230]

As one commentator puts it, "Babylon is the prevailing economic-religious system in alliance with the state and its related authorities that has existed throughout the ages." [Beale, 850] There was a Babylon in the 7th and 6th centuries B.C., there was a Babylon in the first century A.D. and there is a Babylon today.

v. 1-7 last week

Babylon the great is the world's systems that seduce us into compliance with the agenda of the Dragon, Satan.

The allure is deceitful, like when fishing.

We are called to be aware and be on the alert.

Now there is a shift from woman to the Beast and how they work together. There are tactics we need to see. We need wisdom and discernment.

While things look bleak, remember that John is writing about the coming hope found in the Victorious Lamb.

v. 7 the angel will explain the mystery.

TWO VIEWS

1- The ANGEL gives the historic view of rulers

2- John speaks of the function of the beast for all ages.

I take the 2nd option.

Problem of #1 – how to attribute the numbers to the rulers of Rome – a lot of disagreement from those who take this view.

#2 fits rulers of Rome, but of all the ages – a system of the beast that is present.

Beast, was, is not, about to rise – ‘anti-Christ’ is a counterfeit of the true Christ. These terms show this again

It all goes back to Satan who is NOT like God. His end is destruction.

Ch 13 tells how Satan receives a mortal wound. The cross was a death blow to Satan, though he still works and will rise up for a final attack.

We see his work today. There is a mounting intensity, and though we don't have details of the final days, we do have a sense of what Satan's work looks like:

1. Father of lies, so deception is increasing

2. Satan hates God and his people, so persecution – Matt 24 “deliver up to tribulation”, v. 9

3. Satan wants worship or allegiance, or at least not to worship the one true God. Matt 24 – false prophets will arise.

Those whose names are NOT written in book of life will marvel (wonder or admire).

v8. Their hope and trust will be in this powerful combination of political, social, culture, and technological power.

Is This a one world government? Possibly, since there is a global influence described here.

Who could have known 50-75 years ago of the sort of global connections that exist today? The Chinese already practice a social credit score by which they can exert more control over the population. This sort of thing was seen in an early episode of The Black Mirror – “Nosedive”

We don't know what Babylon has in store 50-100 years from now. But what really matters is what God has in store.

In any case, Babylon's end is certain.

NOTE the saving power of God's electing love.

It is the writing of their names in the Book of Life that guarantees their resistance to the woman and the beast, not the other way around.

Those whose names WERE written in the book of life before the foundation of the world are kept from falling to the seduction of the woman. They may marvel for a moment, but like John, they cannot be charmed by the beastly woman to give up their place in the Bride of Christ, the church.

NOTE – the Belle of Babylon and the Beast are inseparably connected. The great prostitute is riding the Beast. This beast doesn't turn into a handsome prince.

v. 9 wisdom is needed. We know that, right?

v. 9 This calls for wisdom...i.e. it's not easy to understand, so we need spiritual discernment.

Wisdom is not just knowledge but takes it and applies it to life. **The goal is not information, but PREPARATION for whatever comes.** Wisdom about God's plan gives us hope.

The woman on seven mountains of v. 1 – she sits on many waters.

These two images are symbolic of peoples and nations that are under the sway of her immoralities.

It's not about knowing which king is in power, but to see the overall scope of the woman and the beast.

v. 9-13 we see a beast similar to the ones described in ch 12-13 with some mixture of Dan 7 thrown in. These are historic kingdoms and anti-God governments hostile to the people of God. There are multiple fulfillments as we zoom out for a 2000 year view – the original audience had Rome and history since has seen various such empires.

It is Rome and what it represents throughout the ages. The spirit of Rome is still present.

Attempts have been made to identify the heads and the horns with specific rulers or empires. But there is no biblical foundation for making clear identifications.

The clearest thing about these symbols is the use of the number SEVEN, which symbolically represents a sense of completion or perfection.

The seven kings symbolize the various manifestations of totalitarian god-hating governments that span the entire time of human history. The beast is trans-historical and trans-temporal (Beale). Spanning history. It is not one empire or government but would include all ruthless God-defying dictatorships throughout history. At the head of the list is a Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Tiglath-Pileser of Assyria, Antiochus Epiphanes, who desecrated the temple in Jerusalem in 168 BC, Nero, and Domitian, etc. up to the modern era.

The 7th king, while future from John's time, would represent all the totalitarian terror-states from the time of Rome until the end of the world including the Hitler's Third Reich, Stalin's Soviet Union, Castro's Cuba, Xi's China, etc. Over and over, the beast appears in a new embodiment. Its name changes but its essence remains the same throughout history—an anti-God government that demands of its citizens an allegiance which belongs to God alone.

v.10- 11 the beast is an 8th king to come who comes in the same system as the 7 rulers – the spirit of godless rulers.

The description of v 11 sounds like v 8... "it was and is not". This is a parody or counterfeit of how Christ is described in 1:4,8; 4:8; 11:17. 16:5 . We clearly see that the beast is NOT Christ. The beast has his doom in the abyss while Christ will have glory and dominion forever and ever.

This is a sort of anti-Christ and is “of the seven” being the 8th. That means that he is of the same spirit or character of the seven but would also seem to be the last or the final anti-Christ. He is the one who comes out of the abyss - ch 11, 17 In ch 20 an angel comes with the key to the abyss and shuts in the Dragon for 1000 years.

John describes the nearness of the end. “Nearness” is a relative term when dealing with the time frame of God. 1000 years is as a day and vice versa.

This vision is about expectancy, not a precise timeline. This pattern of persecution, deception, and propaganda will continue through human history until the very end. We don't know when that end will be.

v. 12-13 the 10 horns show increasing intensity. “10” is used to describe the work of Satan, 2:10; 12:3, 13:1-2; 17:10

Who are the 10 horns? We don't know. Some have tried to designate ten emperors of Rome, but that is arbitrary.

Some saw this in the European Union when it had ten members, but it has more now. The EU was always going to be too small since v. 15 speaks of “dominion over the kings of the earth”, not the kings of Europe.

**Fun fact – the WEF, the minds behind the “Great Reset” push for global governance had its beginning as the Club of Rome. That group divided the globe up into ten spheres or regions or kingdoms.

I'm NOT SAYING, “Eureka, I found the 10 horns or kingdoms.” Do they fall into the pattern or template described in Revelation? In some ways, yes. Such global groups may have global utopian ideals, but they also require a totalitarian process.

v. 13 the beast is rulers and powers with a worldwide influence.

These are powers that seek to replace God with a man centered power, agenda, and values. The goal is to replace the values and truth of God's Word with the values of man.

The German philosopher Hegel was an advocate of a strong central state. In his view, – the state is “the march of God on earth.” He was a great admirer of Napoleon as a “world-historical man” because Hegel saw him as a mighty world conqueror and had a vision for detailed regulations of the state and the economy.

<https://mises.org/library/hegel-state-gods-will>

Following in Hegel's path was communist prophet, Karl Marx. He adopted a high view of the state as a replacement of God.

His utopian vision was one in which religion was replaced by a powerful state and then people would be so fulfilled and enlightened that we would not even need a state because we would have a humanistic paradise. How did that work out in former and current communist countries?

If there is no God above the state, then the State becomes the functional God. Some version of theology will become dominant in a culture – it may be an overt religious viewpoint, or it may be a secular theology. It is not a question of “if we will live under a theocracy” but only a matter of which one

WE ARE ALL SELECTIVE THEOCRATS – Every time you say or think, “Should or Must”, you are tapping into your inner theocratic ruler, your inner view of what you think God wants.

The eighth king will employ the 10 kings for the work of the Beast.

v. 13 There is one mind among the 10 kings – war on the Lamb. This is not a new war, but the war described in the 6th Bowl where the nations gathered at Armageddon.

John now brings the HOPE – the Lamb is the Victor. This is THE overall message of Revelation. While it looks like the beast may win, John shows us that the victor is THE LAMB. Satan thought he had the victory at Calvary, but he didn’t know the deep plan of God.

Honestly, I feel like I’ve been saying the same thing for 40 weeks, but that’s because John keeps saying it.

v. 14 – Christ is the victor, and the believers are with the Lamb. He does it and we trust what He has done.

The “called and the chosen” echoes Rom 8:28 ff Eph 1

30 and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

Eph 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love 5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

As secure believers, we are to respond in faithful devotion Phil 1 – prayer of Paul –

9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, 10 so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;

As we COME TO THE TABLE, we see a proclamation and call to remember the power of Jesus over the penalty and power of sin and Satan.

I find it interesting that the aspect of his ministry that Jesus tells us to do “in remembrance of Me” is to remember His death for us.

If that doesn’t mean much to you it may be because you don’t really believe that you NEED Jesus to die for you.

One way to Hold on to Jesus is to hold the elements that represent His death for us.

Hold on and look to Him as you face the trials and doubts of Life. The Lamb gave his life for us.

VoV – The Grace of the Cross

By thy cross crucify my every sin;
Use it to increase my intimacy with thyself;
Make it the ground of all my comfort,
the liveliness of all my duties,
the sum of all thy gospel promises,
the comfort of all my afflictions,
the vigor of my love, thankfulness, and graces,

Make it the very essence of my religion;
And by it give me that rest without rest,
the rest of ceaseless praise.

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