***The Woman Sitting on the Scarlet Beast  
  
RV210-01***

We are studying "Ecclesiastical Babylon in Revelation 17. This is segment number 4.

**Babylon**

In this chapter of the book of the Revelation, John has been transported in his vision back to the first half of the seven-year tribulation period. At the end of chapter 16, the seventh bowl judgment saw the total destruction of Babylon and the final windup of the judgment of God upon mankind. Then the chronological progression stops, and John is transported back to the beginning of the tribulation because God wants to show John why it is that He's going to so utterly destroy that city on the Euphrates River and all that it has stood for. During this period (early in the tribulation) there will exist world religion, the one from ancient Babylon which was begun by Nimrod under the guidance of Satan, as we have been reviewing. This religion will not only be worldwide, but it will actually dominate the political powers on the earth. This will continue for the first three-and-a-half years of the tribulation period. A religious system will dominate the governments of the world.

This is a system (a situation) which will be similar to what existed during the era when the communist government reigned in Poland, a country which is probably 90% Roman Catholic. The official religious position of the Polish communist government was atheism. But the religious beliefs, and the devotion of the overwhelming majority of the Polish population, was Roman Catholicism.

When you add, furthermore, to the fact that the current pope was Polish from Czestochowa, Poland, and that the religious zeal and subjection of the Poles to this pope, you see what an intense level of enthusiasm they had for their religion. Consequently, when the Pope spoke on political matters relative to Poland, the communist government (which hated him) did not dare ignore him, but tried in some way to accommodate him because they feared the people. If the atheistic government of Poland could have done so, they would have thrown off the yoke of the Roman Catholic Pope, and they would have done so eagerly. This is precisely the condition that's going to exist in the tribulation.

The antichrist and other world leaders, for three-and-a-half years, find themselves dominated and burdened by this religious system. They can't throw it off because it is such a system that is so attractive to the population of the world. People have drunk of the wine from the cup that this religious system has given them such that the political rulers are actually in a position where they need this religious system to help establish their power base and control over people.

So, the world religion of the tribulation will exist to midterm. But at that point, the antichrist will become not only a ruler of the Western Confederacy, but of the whole world. He will become a world dictator. At that point, he will throw off, eagerly and happily, the domination of this world religion.

**A Harlot**

John himself, as we have seen, is invited by one of the angels to view this era of political domination by a religious dictatorship. The religious system is described as a harlot because of her spiritual fornication. She is unfaithful to the true God and to the Word of God. She dominates the world's political rulers whom she has made drunk with the wine of her spiritual immorality. The system of religious fornication that the political power have practiced is the religion of ancient Babylon, which was revealed to Nimrod by Satan. We've gone into some detail in the study of that religion. That is important for you to know because it's all around you today. It is what's making the wheels of society spin. Christians who are ignorant of that don't know what's going on.

The citizens of whole nations have followed their leaders, and immersed themselves in the spiritual fornication of Nimrod's religion which we call Babylonianism. Babylon has influenced all nations against God with her religion.

**The Tower of Babel**

The religion of Babylon was actually carried from the Tower of Babel fiasco throughout the world as people were forced to spread. The basic tenets of Nimrod's Babylonian religion are found everywhere to this day. This consisted of pantheism – the idea that all material matter is divine, so that God is in everything as a universal force – not as a personal thing. They reject a personal living God as one who has created all things, and therefore has the right to establish the rules of living. The tenet of polytheism was that Nimrod's religion; that is, that all life forms and animals are divine, and that man therefore is a potential God through evolutionary cycles of reincarnation. Astrology was believed to determine the good and the bad things that would happen to people on this earth. So, heavenly bodies were studied, and their relationship to one another. Occult practices were followed in order to establish contact and to control the demonic spirit world. The worship of the gods was practiced through illicit and perverted sex acts. We refer to those as the phallic cults. At the heart of the whole system was the virgin mother and the small infant son who was a god. They practiced Baal worship through various religious rituals. And the system of Babylon practiced human sacrifices to the gods. This included the burning of infants upon the altars of Baal.

The primary expression of this Babylonian system today is the New Age movement, which is a sophisticated version of Hinduism, and the Roman Catholic Church, which is an amalgamation of biblical Christianity and Babylonianism. Babylonianism is the religious system that the Jews found prevalent everywhere and in full force when they moved into the Promised Land of Canaan. For this reason, God commanded them that they should destroy this religion; everything that pertained to it; and, all of its adherents, including the children. This was so that the children would not grow up and remember what their parents once believed, and would reenter that system. The Jews did not do this. They disobeyed God, and in time, actually began practicing these vile religious rites themselves, including the burning of their infants.

God's wrath against Babylon on the Euphrates (the one which has spawned the satanic religion) is going to be expressed with the utter destruction of that city. The Bible tells us that when that happens, it will be sudden. It will be totally obliterated. There will be no debris left. It will never again be inhabited. Of course, this has not happened to the city of Babylon, which in fact is being rebuilt on the Euphrates River to this very day. So, we have an interesting observation here. This is a city from which has come a religious and political system that God hates with a vengeance, and for which He is going to destroy this city in such a way that it is total.

However, Babylon has never been destroyed. Nowhere in history has Babylon been obliterated in the comparison that the Bible makes of the obliteration of Sodom and Gomorrah. The Medes and the Persians indeed conquered Babylon suddenly, but they didn't destroy it. Actually, they made Babylon their capital. Alexander the Great conquered Babylon. He wanted to make it his capital, but he suddenly got sick and died there. The apostle Peter wrote his first epistle from Babylon, 1 Peter 5:13 indicates this. Hundreds of years after Christ, there was a thriving Jewish community in the city of Babylon which existed. It produced the Babylonian Talmud. By the 12th century A.D., Babylon had enlarged, and it contained several Muslim mosques. The city of Hillah was built on the site of Babylon, and in the year 1900, it had grown to a population of 10,000. Today, the government of Iraq is restoring the whole city of Babylon.

So, it is evident that the biblical prophecies about the destruction of Babylon have not been fulfilled. We take the Bible to be literal. Therefore, we do not say, "Well, this word 'Babylon' is a symbol. It's a codeword for Rome or some other city." But we take the word "Babylon" to mean Babylon on the Euphrates. The city has not been obliterated, and it is still inhabited.

In Jeremiah 51:43 the prophet makes a prediction that the cities around Babylon will be destroyed when Babylon is destroyed. But that's not yet true. The area around Babylon today is fertile and it's prosperous. Jeremiah 51:43: "And cities have become an object of horror, a parched land in a desert – a land in which no man lives, and through which no man passes." This is a description of the condition that will exist after God destroys Babylon.

Please notice Jeremiah 51:24-26. Here he has a prediction that after the destruction of Babylon, like Sodom and Gomorrah, there'll be nothing left to use as building materials. Jeremiah 51:24: "'But I really repay Babylon and all the inhabitants of Chaldea for all their evil that they have done in Zion before your eyes,' declares the Lord. 'Behold, I am against you, O destroying mountain (referring to Babylon as an empire), who destroyed the whole earth,' declares the Lord. 'And I will stretch out My hand against you, and roll you down from the crags. I'll make you a burnt out mountain. And they will not take from you even a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations. But you will be desolate forever,' declares the Lord."

This has not been the case to date. Since Babylon has deteriorated, many cities have been built from its ruins. The present day city of Hillah was built entirely from the ruins of ancient Babylon. The bricks with the word "Babylon" stamped on them have been found as far away as Baghdad today. So there has been no destruction of Babylon to date. Debris from Babylon has been carried elsewhere to use as building material. There has been no total destruction. What the Bible is telling us is that it would be as if the earth were to open in an earthquake; Babylon falls in; the earth closes; and, not a trace is left on the surface.

However, we do know when it's all going to happen. The Bible is quite explicit as to when Babylon on the Euphrates is going to be destroyed for the religious and political systems that it has created. In Isaiah 13:6, we read, "Wail (speaking to Babylon), for the day of the Lord is near. It will come as a destruction from the Almighty. Babylon is going to be destroyed."

Go down to verse 9: "Behold, the day of the Lord is coming." If you can trace back from instruction in the past, first of all, when you read "the day of the Lord," you should immediately become aware that that's a technical phrase. That's a specific period of time. Do you know what it is? The day the Lord begins with the tribulation, and it ends with the millennium. It is two segments. It's the seven-year tribulation period and the 1,000-year millennial period. That's what in the Bible is constantly referred to as the day of the Lord. It's a day of judgment, and a day of blessing: judgment in the tribulation; and, blessing in the millennium.

So, verse 9 said, "Behold, the day of the Lord is coming, cruel with fury and burning anger (the tribulation part of it), to make the land a desolation, and He will exterminated its sinners from it. For the stars of heaven and their consolations will not flash forth their lights. The sun will be dark when it rises, and the moon will not shed its light." Obviously, this is referring to something that has not happened, which is yet in the future, dealing with Babylon. ...

The point is that when this happens, there are going to be terrible events taking place (destruction) out in space with the luminaries. But this gives us the specific time because the Bible tells us that these luminary destructive effects will be done in the tribulation. So, the prophecies of Babylon's destruction are related to this time of the tribulation era.

Isaiah 13:1 says, "The oracle concerning Babylon, which Isaiah, the son of Amos saw." This is what we're talking about. We're revealing this oracle. And the time of Babylon's destruction is the day of the Lord in the tribulation part.

So, on the basis of the details of Old Testament prophecies about Babylon's destruction, and the details of Revelation 17 and 18, it is evident that what we read there is that Babylon, the city on the Euphrates, has to be restored. It has to become a place that comes to world prominence. That is happening today. It will become a religious center, and it will become a commercial center. At the end of the tribulation, during the day of the Lord, Babylon will then suddenly be obliterated and destroyed forever.

**A Desert Place**

At this point in Revelation 17:3-4, we are introduced to a domination that religious Babylon will be exercising during the first half of the tribulation era. In Revelation 17:3, we read, "And he (John is speaking of the angel) carried me away in the spirit;" that is, John in his vision was carried away. This is probably a reference to God the Holy Spirit who was giving John these visions. The Holy Spirit carries John away into a place that the New Testament calls an "eremos." The word "eremos" means "a desert place." Of course, immediately you can see that this would be fitting for Babylon on the Euphrates, which in its extended environs is in a desert place.

The reason John is taken here is so that he can be positioned to view this harlot woman more clearly. Remember who the harlot is. The harlot is the false religion of Nimrod that exists from that time to ours. But before God destroys Babylon, He wants to show John the reason that he is so angry against this system. So, John is carried away into this desert area, and he is given a position where he saw the woman: "I saw a woman." This word for "saw" is the word for an overall panoramic view. John gets the whole picture. He doesn't just see her in some detail. He sees her in totality in a different context than he has seen her before.

**Sitting on a Scarlet Beast**

He says that this woman is sitting on something. She is astride something. This is her constant position. It is for her personal benefit. What she is sitting upon is described as "a scarlet beast." The word "beast" is the same word ("therion") which has been used for the antichrist all along. So, the woman, the harlot religion of Babylon, is riding on the back of this beast. That means that she controls it. She is in charge.

The scarlet color is somewhat of a question. It may refer to the blood that this religious system has said of true believers, but probably (more likely) it's related to the Revelation 12:3 passage which describes the devil as the red dragon. So, the scarlet color probably is a signal to us that this woman is the product of Satan's mind. And, of course, it is. The whole religion of Babylon was invented by Satan. However, this is the same beast (the same political system) that was introduced to us in Revelation 13:1, where we read, "And I saw a beast coming out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names. This is the same beast now that we have here in Revelation 17:3. And here the woman (the religious system) is riding this beast. This is the same political power which is referred to in Daniel 7:7 under this same symbol.

Now, as John looks more closely at this woman, he notices that she is covered all over with blasphemous names. This beast is covered with the names of blasphemy. Blasphemy is basically the claim to be deity. Blasphemy is claiming to be God – to take God's place. This may mean that this beast is covered with the names of pagan gods and goddesses which are worshiped in Babylon's religion. It may be that here are all the names of Diana, and Apollo, and Zeus, and all of the names of the Greek and Roman mythological gods which were the expression of worship of the Babylonian system. But these names all reflect the spiritual fornication of this religious system. The world is going after false gods.

**Seven Heads**

She is also described as having seven heads, just as we have seen before. The beast had seven heads. These seven heads, as we have pointed out in the past, actually represent the world empires which have been the transmitting agents of Babylon's religion. These world empires are the transmitters of the witchcraft, the sorcery, the astrology, the magic, the sacrifices, and all of the things that constituted Babylon's religion. They were transferred by empire to empire. We have, for example, the first one which is Assyria. In Nahum 3:4, we read about Assyria all because of: "The many harlotries of the harlot, the charming one, the mistress of sorcery, who sells nations by her harlotries, and families by her sorceries." Here you have a clear declaration that Assyria was the transmitter of sorcery which was the basic feature of that of the religion of Babylon. So, Assyria transmitted the doctrines that constituted Babylonianism. The second head was actually Egypt, and in Exodus 7:11 and Exodus 7:22, you have the description of how the magicians and the wise men of Egypt were able to create sorceries and magical events that seemed to imitate the powers of Moses. The third head was Babylon; the fourth was Medo-Persia; the fifth was Greece; the sixth was Rome; and, the seventh is going to be (and is in the process of being) the revived Roman Empire. So, these seven empires are what are represented by these seven heads.

One of these heads, we read, has on it ten horns. Horns in the Bible refer to nations – to political authority and power. And the ten horns obviously refer to the ten nations which make up the western confederacy, over which the antichrist rules during the first half of the tribulation period.

So, the picture here is that we have a religious system which is a great harlot, because spiritual fornication is at the heart of her system. She has caused the political leaders of the world to become drunk on her spiritual fornication. They have readily drunk of her wine (of her immoralities), and now she dominates these political powers. She drew them to her; she enticed them; and, now she rides them like a cowboy riding on the back of a bucking bronco. The political leaders hate it. They wish they could shake her off, but they cannot. The religion of Babylon controls the political powers of the world during the first half of the tribulation.

The true church at this time, you understand, of course, is in heaven. And the harlot church of Babylon therefore reigns supreme and unchallenged with its falsehoods. There aren't going to be any biblical Christians around to be writing articles; to be preaching sermons; to be writing books; to send out tapes; or, to be sounding off about what is taking place. The only source of truth that is left is what tapes and books are left which have not been destroyed which carried the truth while the church was still here.

**Female Leadership**

You have the picture here then of a woman who is leading a religious system of the world. The fact that you have a woman leading tells you one thing right off the bat. It's false. Revelation 2:20: "But I have this against you (speaking to the church of Thyatira): that you tolerate the woman, Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads my bond services astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols."

Now listen carefully. Any system of religion that is founded by women is false. God does not use women to guide in spiritual matters. So, whatever niceties and whatever dignities the Seventh Day Adventist put on, they were still founded by Ellen White. David Koresh was a great devotee of Ellen White. Whatever the Bible said was to be interpreted in the light of the teachings of Ellen White because she was the prophetess. This is exactly the thing you have in Revelation 2 where God says, "This is wrong. This woman does not speak for me. How dare you, here in the church at Thyatira to sit in this congregation and listen to a woman giving you instruction in the church as men and women meet together? How dare you sit there and permit a woman to stand in the pulpit and proclaim herself a preacher?" This is the same thing that all these female charismatics do on TV and in churches everywhere. Sometimes they are pastors or co-pastors with their husbands. And Christians who are not alerted to the Word of God, instead of vomiting, eat it up. So, get it straight. If you think it's all right for a woman to be a spiritual leader, you're eating vomit, and God says, "I'm disgusted with you." In fact, to the Laodicean church, where this becomes so extreme, God says, "I vomit you out."

It's important that you understand that the Babylon system of religion is in subtle forms. Most of the subtle forms are called Christian denominations. And one of the subtlest forms of Babylon's religion is in female leadership in spiritual things – churches where a woman can stand up and teach the congregation of men and women. There are churches which have a woman as a pastor or a priest. The whole system of Babylon is built upon the mother and child cult, and the leadership of the female.

The religion here in the final days is the woman riding the political powers. And it is false because of that. This comes down to Babylonianism in the homes of Christian families: when a woman becomes the instrument of determination of what a family does; when a woman becomes the focus of the family's leadership and the family's actions in spiritual matters; and, when determinations are based upon her leadings. At that point in time, that woman strips her husband of all of his manliness if he does not rise up and say, "No, I am in charge, and I will make the decision, and we will decide according to the Word of God and to truth what we will do and what we will not do.

This is why I stress to you that the administration in Washington is so far out of the will of God, and so far in sync with Satan, that it's mind boggling. They cannot wait to follow the spiritual leadership of women. The president's wife has a new guru who is one of the chief proponents of New Age religion in all of Babylon's finest expressions. She finds herself completely in sync and in sympathy with him. She reverberates as she has long discussions with him. Do you think this is not permeating and affecting this nation? God is so enraged in heaven now. Would you dare make Him enraged against you and your family by taking in Babylonianism on this feature? This is a sad thing when a man will not take his role of spiritual leadership. The family pays for it now, and it pays for it in eternity.

The kings of the earth have been so attracted to this harlot that they will happily, for a while, accept for domination because it helps them to control their citizens. All the religions of the world are going to be part of this harlot system in the tribulation. This harlot is going to be so attractive that the antichrist and the world rulers don't dare oppose her. The world religion will first be supported by the nations financially. She will be given military protection. She will use the state to persecute her enemies, namely biblical believers.

The Roman Emperor Constantine, in the fourth century A.D., set in motion this whole domination of political power by the church over civil powers. The Holy Roman Emperor Charlemagne received his crown from the Roman Catholic Church. I believe that it was on New Year's Day, 800 A.D. when he received his crown from the Roman Catholic Pope. Do you understand what that means? The Holy Roman Empire had replaced the defunct Roman Empire of old, and the ruler Charlemagne bowed before the Pope, and the Pope put the crown on his head. This meant that the Pope decided, "You can have this crown." The Pope was the dominant figure. Here was the church riding the civil power.

When the Pope was called to Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris to crown Napoleon (who had decided to be an emperor), the ceremony came to that high point where the Pope now took the crown, and lifted it, and started forward to place it upon Napoleon's head, and Napoleon reached up and took the crown out of the Pope's hands, and put it upon his own head. Wouldn't you like to been there in Notre Dame that day? I've been in Notre Dame Cathedral to view some real Nimrod religion in action in some terrific high points in awesome times. But this must have been great. Napoleon was telling the pope, "You're not going to ride my back. I am the emperor, and I am going to be in charge, and the religious world will be under my authority. It was a clear statement.

However, the religion of Babylon from Babel has always sought to dominate the political powers. When a church organization, such as the Roman Catholic Church during the Middle Ages, and in Latin American countries today, dominates the political powers, it has forsaken its calling as the bride of Christ. The Bible never authorizes the church of Jesus Christ to usurp political authorities. And Protestants have, in times past, been guilty of this very thing. During the Middle Ages, no emperor could take his office unless he was approved by the Roman Catholic Pope. And the Roman Catholic Pope had complete domination over the life of the nation.

**Henry IV**

One all time classic example was Henry IV, another Holy Roman Emperor of Germany. In 1077, Henry defied the papal authority Pope Gregory VII. So, Henry IV squared off with Gregory VII. The Pope excommunicated King Henry. Do you know what that means? When you're excommunicated in the Roman Catholic Church, that means that if you die in that condition, you will go to hell: no "ands;" "ifs;" or, "buts." Furthermore, he put Henry's realm under interdict. That meant that anybody who was under the authority of the government of Henry IV, if *he* were to die, he would go immediately to hell. The realm was in terror, and the people in an uproar. And finally, Henry knuckled under and yielded to the Pope, and he went to the Pope to seek forgiveness. He walked to the Pope's palace in Canossa, Italy, and in January, he stood outside the palace waiting for audience to receive absolution. The Pope made King Henry stand for three days in the snow, wearing the flimsy garments of a penitent, before finally permitting Henry to enter the palace and to stand before the Pope, and to make his confession, and to seek his forgiveness and absolution, which the Pope then granted him. This was a clear example of the harlot church riding the political beast.

**The Woman**

Now notice Revelation 17:4. This harlot woman, who is in this horrendous position of authority over political powers, is now described. She is described as a woman. The Holy Spirit doesn't want to have you make any mistakes about this. This is a signal that this is a false religion. You have female leadership.

**Clothed in Purple and Scarlet**

This woman is clothed (she's wrapped around, literally) with a garment that is purple and scarlet. The word "clothed" in the Greek language is in the perfect sense which means that this is something that has happened in the past, and that she has continued to John's day in this garment. It happened in Nimrod's Day, when Satan clothed her with the garments of purple and scarlet. This woman represents the false religion of Babel, and the colors of purple and scarlet represents that which is gorgeous and luxurious in garments. The colors purple and scarlet were the colors of those who were wealthy. They were luxurious colors to be able to wear in the ancient world.

**Purple and Scarlet**

The reason for this was that the dyes to make the color purple and scarlet were extremely expensive to manufacture. This is why Lydia, whom Paul found financially able to support him, was the wealthy woman, because she dealt in purple. She dealt in the business of purple dye. People is associated with royalty in Judges 8:26. Scarlet connotes a magnificent status in Nahum 2:3.

**Wealth**

So, here you have this woman (this false religion) – gorgeous and luxuriously arrayed in garments of purple and scarlet. Furthermore, she is adorned; and, here again, this is something that was done to her in the past and continues. The word "adorned" here means a "veneer." She appears as if she were dipped into something, and has a veneer over her. She is adorned with gold. She is covered with great wealth. This is the basis of wealth. Gold is always the basis of wealth. In addition to this, we read that she has on her precious stones and pearls. The woman wears expensive gemstones as jewelry.

So, this harlot is externally very attractive looking. She has, in fact, the appearance of royalty. She appears to be a queen, and she conveys therefore, to those who see her, an irresistibly attractive appearance. She appears to be a person of great significance and substance. You've seen people like this – unbelievers who are shallow clods. These sometimes include the great people of the entertainment world who are insignificant, trivial people. They outwardly adorn themselves in great magnificence, while on the inside, they are vile and filthy and nothing. However, the ungodly are seduced by this appearance of the harlot, so they deserve the true God, and they follow Satan in exchange for the harlot's favor.

The harlot's religion is externally very attractive and beautiful, but inwardly, it's vile and it's revolting. The height of external adornment here in this woman covers the depth of internal moral corruption. This is always true that the farther a person drifts from the inward possession of true spiritual realities, and the farther a religious system drifts from the Word of God and true inward spiritual realities, the more they begin adding external adornments of pomp, ceremony, and garments. That's why you have the externalities of that which is gorgeous and impressive, because there is nothing on the inside. False religion always covers its poverty in truth and spiritual realities with outward ostentation and sensual satisfaction to the followers.

So, they seek to impress their devotees with magnificent places of worship. You cannot deny, when you walk into St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, that it is an object of great beauty. It is an object of great external, impressiveness. There are visual images provided to cover internal lack. Wealth and precious metals and jewels are to be seen everywhere. Gorgeous garments; hypnotic music; the burning of incense and candles; the use of drugs; and, mysterious ceremonies – all of these things are to cover up externally what is lacking internally in real spiritual contact with God.

Well, the religion of Babylon made itself supremely attractive externally, so that it led its followers to worship false gods. And they topped it off by making religious prostitution and perverted sex the avenue of worship. This external cover-up of false religion, with its sensual appeals, is eventually going to be exposed by God for what it is. They're not going to get away with it. Isaiah, in trying to warn the Jews that that's what God is going to do to them, tried to alert them that the false religion of Canaan that they were absorbing, God was going to strip off, and show them half naked and poverty struck spiritually they were.

Isaiah 3:16-26 is a very impressive passage of Scripture: "'Moreover,' the Lord said, 'because the daughters of Zion are proud and walk with heads held high and seductive eyes, and go along with mincing steps." And notice this. This is the woman who propositions you. This is exactly the way she does. She walks in this way. She acts in this way: "And tinkle the bangles on their feet. Therefore, the Lord will afflict the scalp of the daughters of Zion with scabs. The Lord will make her forehead bare. In that day, the Lord will take away the beauty of their anklets, headbands, crescent ornaments, dangling earrings, bracelets, veils, headdresses, ankle chains, sashes, perfume boxes, amulets, finger rings, nose rings, festive robes, outer tunics, cloaks, money purses, hand mirrors, undergarments, turbans, and veils." That's pretty complete. And you notice that they're all externals. These are all the things that this woman put on (the Babylon system) to make herself attractive.

God says, "Like a woman who is vile on the inside, and is propositioning you to evil by making herself attractive on the outside, I am going to strip all of these externals. Now what are we going to see?"

"It will come about that instead of sweet perfume, there will be putrefaction; instead of a belt, a rope; instead of well-set hair, a plucked-out scalp; instead of fine clothes, the dawning of sackcloth; and, branding instead of beauty. Your men will fall by the sword, and your mighty ones in battle. And her gates will lament and mourn, and deserted she will sit on the ground." God said, "I'm even going to take away your protectors – the men who should be leading and, of course, providing and protecting you. I'm going to take that away, and you're going to sit there naked, as a pile of putrefaction." That's a pretty strong image.

Contrast this with the appearance of the real spiritual woman that the world should be pursuing – the bride of Christ. Revelation 19:8 describes the church, and how she is adorned: "It is given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean, for fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints." She's adorned in her righteous acts, not in her personal righteousness, but in her in her experiential of sanctification – a woman steeped in doctrine, being led by God the Holy Spirit in acts of righteousness. That is the true woman.

**A Golden Cup**

So, John sees this woman dressed in this external magnificence, and then he sees one thing more. He sees in her hand a golden cup. An attractive queen-like harlot stands there with a golden cup which is extended to her devotees. That's the picture. Here is this beautiful, queen-like, seeming royal person, and in her hand is this golden cup, and with her smiling face, and in all of her attractiveness, she's inviting you to sip from her cult. Occult ceremonies are filled with this particular ritual – receiving from the leader a brew of some kind to drink from a cup, often containing a drug. This is the devotees' fix. This is the harlot woman's fix which will seal mankind to her.

**The Contents of the Cup**

What's in the cup? The cup, we're told, "Is full of abominations." This is a great word in the Old and New Testaments. I want to show you again what it looks like. It's a word of extreme revulsion: "bdelugma." I show you this word because it's a very specific word in the Greed language. You couldn't have a word that turns your stomach more – that was detestable and disgusting more than this. This is a word that connotes something that is foul, disgusting, and detestable in the extreme. It contrasts with the esteem in which something is held by people, but detested by God. You have the strange thing such that people esteem something that God says, "That's rotten. That's disgusting. It's filthy. It's revolting." But people eat it up.

This is what Luke 16:15 is saying: "He said to them, 'You are those who justify yourselves (Jesus said) in the sight of men.'" You look very attractive, and people are impressed with you when you have your Academy Awards program: "But God knows your hearts. For that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable." This is the word for "abomination" in the sight of God. The contrast is very great. In the Old Testament, this word "abomination" is associated with God's attitude toward idolatry. You'll find that in 2 Kings 23:13; Isaiah 44:19; and, Daniel 2:11. All those passages tell us that abomination is a disgusting thing to God.

So, the harlot's cup, we're told, is filled with a return to idolatry with all of its defiling rituals. The antichrist, because he claims to be God, is the ultimate abomination. And that's why Matthew 24:15, quoting Daniel 9:27, refers to him as the abomination of desolation – "the abomination which makes desolate." He's called an abomination because he claims to be God.

**Immorality**

Furthermore, this cup is filled with not only this idolatry worship, but it's filled with unclean things of immorality. The word "unclean" connotes filth and old sin nature sewage. "Immorality" refers to sexual immorality. Here, it refers to spiritual fornication – the worship of Satan as God. This cup is filled with the central evil designed to satiate the old sin nature lust, and those of the woman who dominates. The cup is filled with moral abominations and filthy sensualities which the tribulation unbelievers drink eagerly, but which cause true believers to vomit.

For centuries, since Nimrod's day, this wine of the harlot has been drunk by nation after nation, as she has smilingly extended to them this cup of abominations and spiritual immoralities.

In Proverbs 5:3-5, we read, "For the lips of an adulterous drip honey, and smoother than oil is her speech. But in the end, she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death. Her steps lay hold of Sheol." That's exactly this woman. She is so attractive that for centuries people have been drawn to her. Rulers have been drawn to her. Nations have been drawn to her. And this woman through the centuries has been foremost represented by the Roman Catholic Church, which has attracted millions – the harlot church. The contents of the harlot's cup causes a spiritually stupefying effect, as if one were intoxicated, so that the way to the true God cannot be discerned. The gross practice of the harlot church in the name of God, offering a cup full of fornication; moral filthiness; abominable idolatry; and, sensual wickedness. The promise of sweet wine, that the harlot extends to those who listen to her, leads them away from the honey of doctrine to the bitter dregs and the wrath and vengeance of God.

The cup externally was very beautiful, I'm sure, in itself. But internally, it was deadly. The harlot woman, as the state religion in the tribulation, dominates the world's political powers for the first three-and-a-half years. This woman wins the hearts of mankind with her spiritual seductions. So, rulers don't dare throw her off, and the Pope cannot oppose her. This woman is dressed in the imperial robes of a queen, and she is dominating the governments of the world.

This is the picture that John sees, but John hasn't quite been hit with what he is seeing here. In the next two verses, the connection is going to be made. And it's going to be like a trap slamming on the foot of an animal, as John realizes that Jesus is talking about the church of the Lord Jesus Christ of New Testament times of which John was a part. He is giving John the picture of where this church is going to end up, and the apostasy to which it will sink.

So, at the end of verse 6, we read that John looks at her, and he wondered greatly. Finally, it hits him. He cannot believe what he sees. As we get into the full impact here of the mother of harlots, you'll see why John is so taken aback that such a terrible thing could happen to true believers. All a true believer has to do is be negative to truth. God help you if you sit in a place where you hear truth spoken, and you go negative to it. Just remember that that's going to eat away and eat away and eat away. And you're out of the fellowship of God all the time until you backtrack to where you stepped off the line, and you get back on track. Are you ready to pay that price for time and eternity?

Dr. John E. Danish, 1993

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