



# The Bowls & Babylon: Part 2

*Revelation 17*

## ANNOUNCE

Movers and Shakers - 50 and over - 6:00 - Bill Owens will be speaking.

Baptism today after 2nd service

Tomorrow 11 am last opportunity for boxes

## BIBLE PASSAGE

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

## INTRODUCTION

We finished looking at the final seven judgments of the bowls of God's wrath that the earth and those who dwell in it will experience. They are rapid in succession, and we get a foreboding sense that things are winding toward the end without reprieve.

- Now, it might read easier if chapter 16 ended and chapter 19:11 began because, chronologically, that's the timeline.
- After the seventh bowl is poured out, the voice in heaven declares, "It is done." Judgment is complete on the earth, and now it's time for Jesus to establish His rule and reign on the earth. Chapter 19 picks up with Christ returning with His saints to engage in dismantling the final human attempt to overthrow Him.
- But Jesus found it crucial to notify us of another important judgment that is occurring during this timeline. It's as if we see a magnifying glass close into a certain city, a certain power of the earth to let us know what happens with this powerful expression of human authority, wealth, and culture that is called Mystery Babylon; the harlot whom the beast carries on his back.

We might want to note immediately that verse five does use the word MYSTERY, and for a good reason. I don't know that it is for us to definitively know what this Babylon is. We can assess, compare scripture, and come to some strong conclusions about the form of Babylon, but there is also a level of speculation because it's a mystery until the appointed time. Those who witness these things take place will understand the mystery at that time.

***"The antidote for mystery is not investigation or discovery, but revelation."***

But I think you'll find that there is no lack of important application for us today.

## THOUGHTS

Regarding this harlot on the beast referred to as "Mystery Babylon," most pre-millennial scholars agree that Mystery Babylon represents a twofold system of world dominance during the final seven-year tribulation period:

- First, there is a spiritual or religious system that is intrinsically tied to a commercial economic system that dominates the globe. These systems ride on the power and political system of the beast (antichrist) until the antichrist and his coalition of 10 nations force the system of Babylon to bow to its authority. The antichrist makes himself the center of all humanity's worship and the center of the world's economic system of buying and selling with His mark.

# 1 Babylon Historically

## HISTORY

Babylon is no stranger to the halls of history or scripture (which records historical accounts). Babylon is mentioned 287 times in the Bible, namely because it was the seat of power and

capital of the Babylonian empire at the time the nation of Israel was exiled as a disciplinary judgment by God for their consistent idolatry and disobedience.

- The history of Babylon as a city moves all the way back to 4 generations after the flood that destroyed the earth. Even after the great judgment of God, when mankind began to repopulate the earth, it became quickly apparent that the intent of their hearts remained unchanged. They sought to band together and "outdo" God, demonstrating their independence and self-sufficiency without God.

We will talk about the conclusion of that story later, but moving forward, that region between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers ultimately became the center of power for the vastest and wealthiest empires the world has ever known.

### **The construction of Babylon:**

- At its height, it was known as "The city of Gold."
- It was the largest city in the world at the time, covering 4 square miles. Its outer defensive walls covered 11 miles, while its inner walls were up to 40 feet thick. It was considered impenetrable. The natural defenses of the Euphrates River made it impossible to reach by advancing armies. In fact, the only way the Persians eventually seized it was due to a diversion of the Euphrates River.

The city of Babylon passed between multiple hands of power. Alexander the Great had ambitions to make Babylon the capital of His empire before he died. As regional power shifted, Babylon was ultimately abandoned. Despite Saddam Hussein's attempt to rebuild Babylon, today, it mainly sits as a wasteland full of ruins.

## **2 Babylon Symbolically**

### **APPLICATION**

- As I mentioned earlier, it was only four generations after the flood that a mighty leader named Nimrod (**Genesis 10**) established a kingdom in the region of Babylon (Modern day Iraq) with one language amongst a united human race. They determined to build a

tower that would reach into the heavens to demonstrate the power of united mankind **[image]** and defiance toward the God of Heaven and His authority.

**[Gen 11:4 NKJV] 4 And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."**

- Many of you know the story: God saw their work and how quickly they would willingly expel God from their thinking, so He confused their language and consequently scattered the people throughout the world. The region of this split became known as the region of Babel, which later became the empire of Babylon.
- Babel and Babylon come from the same Hebrew root word that means "confusion by mixing." God confused humanity by mixing languages, but as we will see, Babylon became a symbol of human spiritual confusion by the mixing of truth and error, leading to spiritual adultery.
  - Nimrod is called a great hunter before the Lord who became mighty in the earth. "Hunter" probably doesn't refer to his rifle skills during deer season. It probably refers to him being a conqueror and hunter of nations. We are told that He built the great city of Nineveh and that his empire was among the first great human empires that were formed after the flood.
  - **His name actually means – We shall rebel.**
  - Nimrod's message to humanity was that mankind doesn't need God; man can be his own God. Mankind can overcome God through their knowledge, strength, and ingenuity.
  - It's interesting because the Bible tells us that the tower they created was insulated with pitch. Noah put the same material over the ark to make it waterproof. They also built the tower high into the heavens, perhaps as a statement that no matter how high God made the waters next time, they could ascend even higher. Nimrod was confident that no flood from God would be able to destroy His work.
- Look at the words used to describe the nature of Mystery Babylon:

## APPLICATION

Ultimately, what we begin to recognize by studying Babylon's history, is that Babylon is the symbol of human pride.

The Bible goes to great lengths to display an ongoing narrative from the fall of man to the restoration of all things: There are two competing kingdoms: The kingdom of God and the Kingdom of man, Jerusalem and Babylon, the true Christ and the antichrist. **I believe the reason we get a glimpse into the judgment of Babylon is to remind us that, ultimately, it's Christ's kingdom that prevails!**

- The King of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, arguably the most powerful man to have ever ruled in the history of the earth, once stood looking at His kingdom and declared, "*[Dan 4:30 NKJV] 30 "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?"*
- Well, God put him quickly in his place. In a moment, a flash, the mightiest man on earth was reduced to a lunatic who resembled a beast, ate grass, and lived in the wild.
- Once His senses were restored to Him, His final assessment is one that would be incredibly relevant for all forms of Babylon to heed.

**[Dan 4:37 NKJV] 37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down.**

In like manner, future Babylon will discover that no amount of wealth, luxury, pleasure, security, influence, creativity, or culture will be able to protect it from the mighty hand of God's judgment. Next week, we will see that, like the people building the tower of Babel and King Nebuchadnezzar, within one day, the glory of the world will be decimated and brought to nothing.

#### QUOTE

**“Pride always leads to arrogance and ignorance of the coming judgment of God, the reality of His authority, and the accountability that He will one day demand.**

Pastor Josh

#### APPLICATION

**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.**

Babylon's pleasures came by way of vile and abominable practices that sickened the heart of God.

- Externally, her appearance is one of majesty, wealth, and pleasure. Purple and scarlet are colors of royalty. Gold, precious stones, and pearls are signs of opulence and material wealth. Her golden cup indicates that she drinks to her heart's content and offers her drink to the world.
- But notice what's in the cup. Notice what you can't see from the surface: ***abominations and filthiness and fornications.***
  - **She has built her wealth, power, security, and pleasure on wickedness, rebellion against God, sexual perversions, injustices, and demented, twisted spiritual practices.**
  - **As the "MOTHER OF HARLOTS," the earth's abominations are somehow rooted in her authority.**

## WARNING TO AMERICA

Some really believe that Mystery Babylon is a reference to America in prophecy. When you read Chapter 18, you can see that there might be some things that fit, such as America's economic strength, commercial strength, wealth, security, and power.

- I don't hold to that view personally, but I don't think it's outside the realm of possibility. One key piece that doesn't fit for me is that Mystery Babylon is drunk on the blood of the saints. In other words, they are either directly responsible for martyring Christians or capitalizing on the death of Christians. America has a history of favoring religious tolerance and Christianity, but who knows what future America will look like after the rapture occurs.

But one thing I am confident of: ***The spirit of Babylon is alive and well in this nation, and the warnings to Babylon, past and future, should be heeded today!***

- America has long rested in and boasted of its superiority in the world.

## ILLUSTRATION

**EXAMPLE:** Images in mirrors: Objects may be closer than they appear.

***"Wealth, comfort, and security can be the blinders that shroud people's spiritual awareness and the earplugs that muffle the Spirit's warnings."***

## 3 Babylon Spiritually

### APPLICATION

In the Bible, harlotry is not only physical. God presents adultery in spiritual form as well. As Babylon mixes and confuses ideas, it also does so with God. Many believe that Babylon also represents a system of religion widely accepted in the last days.

- There will be a time when the Antichrist demands that all worship goes to him and him alone, but prior to that moment, the world will have embraced a system of spirituality that allows people to keep some form of their religious beliefs but also mixes them with the culture of humanism.
- ***Ancient Babylon conquered their enemies, not through annihilation, but assimilation.***
- They would mix the other cultures and religions into the Babylonian culture until all sense of unique identity was erased and replaced with a Babylonian identity.
- This is what they attempted to do with Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and all the Jews. This happened to the degree that only a small portion of the Jews who were exiled ended up returning to Jerusalem. They opted instead for their new lives in Babylon.

***In the Religious Babylon of the future, there will be no room for faithful Christians who embrace the idea that there are objective truth claims about God. Most people in future Babylon will accept the idea of tolerance over truth and create a God that bows down to humanity rather than the other way around... and it's already beginning.***



## APPLICATION

Unfortunately, we've seen the Babylonian system enter into the so-called "Christian Church" of today. Open-mindedness had replaced biblical truth. Relativism has replaced absolutes. The pursuit of wealth, knowledge, comfort, and power has replaced the pursuit of godliness, holiness, and eternal focus.

- It wasn't long ago that the National Council of Churches released a gender-neutral Bible translation. The Lord's Prayer begins, "Our Father and Mother who art in Heaven..." As if God wasn't sure how He wanted to present Himself to humanity.

*People are rejecting the restraints of orthodox Christianity to concoct their own "designer religion." In a 2007 Pew Research poll, 57% of people who call themselves "evangelical Christians" agreed that there are many ways to heaven, not just Christianity. This means that six in ten professing Christians now deny the exclusivity of Christ... Like a harlot, Christians have sold out their Savior for the favors of this world. Realize when the true Church gets raptured, there will be churches that will continue normal operations. It'll be Sunday as usual in a lot of churches. Not everyone who professes Christ is a genuine Christian. In Matthew 7 Jesus warns, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven..." Profession doesn't guarantee possession*

**1 Timothy 4:1-2 – Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron...**

I believe that in chapter 17, we can safely say that Babylon represents the apostate, humanized religious and political system of the future. Yes, they will use religious phrases, promote spiritual activities, and even come under the banner of God, but they will reject truth and have a form of godliness but deny His power.

It is this apostate church, along with the other religious leaders of the world, that will combine under one name to bring forth the one world religious system that we find in Revelation 17.

***In 2 Corinthians 6, Paul quotes Isaiah 52. Isaiah speaks to the people of Israel that will come out of Babylon just as they came out of Egypt.***

**BIBLE PASSAGE**

**[2Co 6:16-17 NKJV] 16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people." 17 Therefore "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you."**

**[Isa 52:11 NKJV] 11 Depart! Depart! Go out from there, touch no unclean thing; Go out from the midst of her, be clean, you who bear the vessels of the LORD.**

## **4 Babylon Prophetically**

**BIBLE PASSAGE**

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

## APPLICATION

Does everyone understand?! Good!

Let's look at what we have:

- **Seven Mountains**
- **Seven Kings**
- **One Beast**
- **Ten horns**

## APPLICATION

Several commentators point out that the Greek language is most appropriately translated as "the seven mountains, which are the seven kings."

- Mountains are a biblical symbol of world powers.
- It's true that Rome had the title "the city on seven hills," which leads some to believe that the world power of the future will once again be centered in Rome and that the Catholic church may have something to do with the future one world religion. I don't think this is without merit, especially with the current direction of the Roman Catholic Church.
- But more than likely, the seven mountains refer to the seven kingdoms that are referred to. In a sense, the spirit of the harlot Babylon has resided within these seven kingdoms throughout history and into the future.

NOTE: The antichrist is given this interesting description three times in this chapter: The one who was, is not, and yet is. There are two ways to look at this title:

- Back in chapter 13:3 the antichrist receives a mortal wound to the head. This title could be referring to the fact that he was alive (he was), he died (is not), and is apparently resurrected when Satan fills him (and yet is).
- Another possibility is that the antichrist comes in the same spirit as a former dictator who lived and reigned once before on the earth (Maybe Nero, Titus, or Domitian). Whether God allows him to be resurrected or this guy comes with the same satanic influence, I'm just not sure.

Here's where we will examine the seven heads. The Seven Kings:

- We know that these are seven kings because verse ten tells us. At the time of John, five had fallen, one was, and one was yet to come.
- The time of John, in that region, the five previous empires that had specific dealings with God's people were: **The Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Medo-Persians, and Greece. The sixth that was is Rome during the time of John.**
- In this case, there will still be one more revived Roman empire still to come, the seventh. That empire will only last a short time before it becomes the kingdom of the antichrist (the eighth).

## THE TEN HORNS

When this final beast reigns as an extension of the six previous empires that came before, he will reign with ten other kings/kingdoms willingly subjected to him. These are the ten horns. In fact, Daniel tells us that the ten horns exist, and the antichrist comes up like an 11th horn to subdue them and bring the empire under his control.

- I believe that the ten main world powers will be clearly established prior to the coming and rise of the antichrist.
- Could this be in the form of the European Union? What would they have to do with China, Russia, and the Middle Eastern nations?
  - It's interesting that the **EU coins bear the emblem of a woman riding a beast.** To them, it is the ancient Greek goddess Europa Riding Zeus, but, interestingly, it is the same imagery John described 2000 years ago.
  - Also, I'm not sure if you've seen the EU Parliament building, **but it's a replica of the tower of Babel.**
  - **The EU and the World Economic Forum might not be the 7th empire, but it indeed operates in the spirit of Babylon!**
- Honestly, I don't know, and I don't think anyone outside of God does.

## APPLICATION

While looking at potential connections is worthwhile, it's not wise to speculate mysteries too much, especially when it sacrifices the obvious applications of what we need to take home today. When the time is right, things will be clear.

- If anything, for all the stuff we can't figure out, what should be obvious to all, even the skeptic or unbeliever, that the empires of the world have shared this Spirit of rebellion against the true God.
- We've gone through the Classical Age, the Middle Ages, the Early Modern Age, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, the Modern Age, the Industrial Revolutions, the Great World Wars, and now we have moved into post-modernism.
- Hey, label them however you want. But with all our changes and advancements, the spirit of humanity has remained the same: The spirit of Babylon has maintained a thread through every culture and every society. Humanity is God, and if God is real, he's nothing more than a tool for humanity to use. Well, one day, it's going to be a deafening wake-up call for the final Babylon when they are utterly brought to nothing by the judgment of the true King of Kings and the everlasting Kingdom of heaven.

## QUOTE

“*The world isn't falling apart; it's falling into place.*”

**[Rev 17:17 NKJV] 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.**