

You're of no earthly value unless you're...

Heavenly Minded

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“Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.”

In this issue ...

‘Pious’ Prostitution Forever Lost A Wedding and a War

Dear Friends,

When the serpent introduced us to the world of deception way back in the Garden of Eden, he started by seeding doubt in our heart concerning what God had said. He followed quickly with the big lie and mixed it with a twisted version of the truth.

Even the sinless mind of Eve was susceptible to deception. In like manner, even sincere Christians, born again, saved by faith in the finished work of the Lord on Calvary, can be very susceptible to the deception of the serpent today.

The hallmark of this final era, according to scripture, is indeed, deception. “Deceiving and being deceived” is the prime characteristic of our day. Like the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, the temptations of this world, wrapped in the twisted version of truth served up from podiums and pulpits, aired by the prince of the power of the air, look pretty good.

That’s why we must be anchored in faith by the truth of what God has said.

The church today is being deceived on a grand scale – popular preachers are addicted to fame and too many others lust for the same. Desire destroyed Eve and will also corrupt the contemporary church if we don’t wake up. We don’t need ‘revival’ supposedly birthed in some gathering but rather the individual fire of repentance birthed in the depths of our soul.

May we each be open-eyed to the spiritual debauchery around us and be clothed in the sackcloth of humility, broken-heartedness and devotion to the truth. Thus robed, we will be ready for our Bridegroom! May God bless you all!

In Christ’s Love,

John and Darlene Dickey

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‘Pious’

Prostitution

Revelation 17

After the six trumpets, the Lord provided us with some background information that covered the history of important elements of mankind's situation spanning time from various points 'way back' up unto their culmination "in the days of the seventh trumpet". In like manner, having shown us the wrath of God mixed with the seven last bowl judgments, He again provides us the important background that is about to conclude coincident with the last bowl. Likewise this imagery requires understanding a story that covers a great deal of time.

Because it begins so far back, we will look to archeological evidence as supplementary to the scripture. Of course, our standard and last word is always the Bible.

It would seem that the beginning of this story is shortly after Noah and his family began repopulating the earth after the great flood. It was in Mesopotamia that the first cities were built, and the first of these was quite naturally named after the very first city built by man before the flood--Enoch. Due to linguistic permutations, this

name has come down to us as Erech or Uruk in Sumeria.

Cush was the grandson of Noah, being the son of Ham. The Bible tells us:

Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD." And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. From that land he went to Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah (that is the principal city). (Gen 10:8-12)

That word "mighty" is an intensive form of the word which means to prevail or conquer. Some authorities assert that Nimrod came to Sumeria from Ethiopia, but whatever the case, he became the first major conqueror. Also, that word for "before" as in "before the Lord" means facing but comes from the word meaning to turn away or turn against and thus would be better understood to mean "against the Lord".

According to Jewish legend, the great success that attended all of Nimrod's undertakings produced a sinister effect. Men no longer trusted in God, but rather in their own prowess and ability, an attitude to which Nimrod tried to convert the whole world.

In the midst of the tumult of war Nimrod met Semiramis -- tradition states that she was an inn/brothel keeper and a prostitute in the city of Erech. The name Semiramis is a later, Hellenized form of the Sumerian name "Sammur-amat", or "gift of the sea" (which may indicate how Nimrod arrived in Sumeria.) The first part, "sammur", when translated into Hebrew becomes "Shinar" (the Bible's name for lower Mesopotamia), and is the word from which we derive "Sumeria". This one woman had such a lasting impression upon world history that not only do we call by her name the land from which civilization flowed, but the Bible itself says that it was "the Land of Shinar," or Semiramis.

Nimrod took her as his wife. However, not content with that role, she endeavored to expand her power by inventing a false religion with herself not simply Nimrod's queen but the "Queen of Heaven". Some scholars believe the religion she 'created' was based primarily upon a corruption of the primeval astronomy formulated by Noah's righteous ancestors before the flood. In the original, this system was the story of Satan's rebellion and the war in the heavens, his subversion of mankind, the fall of Adam and Eve, the promise of One to come who would suffer and die to relieve man from the curse of sin then be

installed as Lord of Creation, and the final re-subjugation of the cosmos to God through Him.

In her corrupted version, the great dragon is depicted as the rightful lord of the universe whose throne has been temporarily usurped by One whom we can recognize as the God of the Bible. The serpent creates man in his present miserable state, but promises that a child would one day be born of a divine mother-- which child would supplant God, become a god himself, and return rulership of the Earth to the serpent. (You can easily see the source of her inspiration!)

Now, Semiramus became pregnant out of wedlock (big surprise) and of course, Nimrod was none too pleased. Though he was part of her phony religion, to preserve her position, his wife co-opted her priesthood into killing Nimrod. This left her as the ruling queen. She named her illegitimate son Damu (from the Sumerian "dam," or blood), which in the later Babylonian language became Dammuzi, in Hebrew Tammuz, and in Greek Adonis. She later had him killed as well to preserve her power, but in order to 'spin' the situation she 'enhanced' her already polluted version of the truth.

She claimed that she had actually conceived miraculously. Consequently, the son, named Tammuz, was considered a

divine savior. Many ancient artifacts remain with the familiar motif of the mother Semiramis holding the savior-infant Tammuz, which predate Christianity. It was also said that Tammuz was killed by a wild beast and then miraculously brought back to life. Baal was the Canaanite name for the Babylonian Tammuz.

One well known scholar documented how Semiramis developed in her system a celibate Priesthood which was answerable to her and the High Priest, Nimrod, who was known by the title of 'Pontiff' or Pontifex Maximus meaning 'bridge-maker'. This High Priest was supposedly the 'BRIDGE' between this life and the life to come (which of course was before she had him brutally murdered). He was also known as the 'fish god' Dagon and this is why a fish-mitre hat was worn by the High Priest. It was in the shape of a fish's open mouth. He also tells us the regular priests wore black robes, which was the color of Satanism and the occult (Fausset's Bible Ency.p291). In addition, he documents that Nimrod had a council of 12 priests to assist him in the temporal and political affairs of running the empire.

They were called "Cardinals" and they were dressed in scarlet

& red robes. (see The Two Babylons by A. Hislop)

This version of 'the truth' permeated virtually every culture throughout history. The holy scriptures condemn it in Eze 8:14, Jer 7:18 and 44:17-19. From Babylon it spread to Phoenicia under the name of Ashteroth and Tammuz. From Phoenicia, it traveled to Pergamos in Asia Minor. It may very well be the reason for John's admonition to the church at Pergamos in chapter two of Revelation: "*I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is . . .*" (Rev. 2:13). In Egypt the mother-child cult was known as Isis and Horus. In Greece it became Aphrodite and Eros. In Rome this pair was worshiped as Venus and Cupid.

When Attalus, the Pontiff and King of Pergamos, died in B.C. 133, he bequeathed the Headship of the "Babylonian Priesthood" to Rome. When the Etruscans came to Italy from Lydia (the region of Pergamos), they brought with them the Babylonian religion and rites. They set up a Pontiff who was head of the Priesthood. Later the Romans accepted this Pontiff as their civil ruler. Julius Caesar was made Pontiff of the Etruscan Order in B.C. 74. In B.C. 63, he was made "Supreme Pontiff" of the "Babylonian Order," thus becoming heir to the rights and titles of Attalus, Pontiff of Pergamos, who had made Rome his heir by will.

Thus, Julius Caesar, the first Roman Emperor became the Head of the "Babylonian Priesthood," and Rome became the successor to the long line of this perverted priesthood. The Emperors of Rome continued to exercise the office of "Supreme Pontiff" until A. D. 376, when the Emperor Gratian, for Christian reasons, refused it. (see Clarence Larkin's Dispensational Truth) However, even today, some supposed Christian practices and festivals are highly influenced by this twisted religion. With this bit of background, let's begin our study of the Revelation.

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, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication." The spiritual personification of the false religious system initiated by the prostitute Semiramis is seen here at the end of the ages sitting upon the people of the nations. She has enticed the kings of the earth to idolatry (spiritual fornication) and has deluded the people with her lies (wine of her fornication).

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. By now, we should recognize this creature. Because it is scarlet, the beast clearly shares the bloody nature of the dragon. Because she is riding the beast, it is apparent that he will, as "the kings of earth" before him, support her, for a time.

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. The rewards of her prostitution are handsome materially. Material prosperity obtained through religion is a key indicator of its falsehood. This flies in the face of contemporary Christianity, but it is the very intoxication that the beast will use. The prophet Daniel wrote of him:

And through his policy (shrewdness or cunning) also he shall cause craft (deceit) to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify [himself] in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many; he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand. (Dan 8:25) That word for peace is better translated prosperity.

(BTW, the NKJV is off on this verse.)

The golden cup in her hand is the unholy grail of her demonic communion. An abomination is literally a foul, detestable thing whereas the “filthiness of her fornication” may refer to the excrement of her prostitution. What a detestable quaff!

And on her forehead a name was written:

MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

Her title identifies her as the source of all idolatry and all foul, detestable things (in Israel and the world). Thus, in the end of her reign, the very planet is known by her name.

“Mystery” most often means something hidden and thus secret. Until recently, that’s exactly what this whore has been.

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. This false religious spiritual force has taken special pleasure in killing both Hebrew and gentile believers.

This vision is too much for John. He has seen the dragon, the beast, the judgments and wrath of God but here he marvels. Why? Possibly it’s because although he expected and could handle the imagery of the previous things, he never imagined the true nature of false religion.

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. 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. We can surmise that the antichrist will be possessed of Satan and thus his imagery as the beast bears a near perfect resemblance to the dragon. As we look ahead in the Revelation, it is the dragon who, after the 1000 year reign of Christ, will ascend out of the bottomless pit and later be cast into the lake of fire (or perdition).

Indeed, the spirit of this beast is Satan who **was** in heaven but **is no longer** (for he was cast to the earth). Upon Christ’s triumphant

return, he will be cast into the bottomless pit. He will **ascend** out of it after the millennium and then, after a final conflict with Christ, will be cast into the lake of fire and thus spend eternity in **perdition**.

The marveling of those who are deluded by the beast “that was, and is not, and yet is” probably points back to the supposed resurrection of the antichrist or his government which we examined in chapter thirteen.

Because this passage refers to both entities as seemingly one, we can foresee that indeed the beast will be spiritually possessed by the dragon. It is once again, Satan’s vain attempt to imitate God the Father’s relationship with God the Son. Recall, Jesus said to his disciples, “I and my Father are One.” (John 10:30)

“Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. Some have said that the Greek word for mountain here only refers to a large mountain, but in fact, the Bible uses this word repeatedly to refer to the Mount of Olives which is really a hill. (And it uses it to refer to other hills as well.) Thus, this passage could justifiably be translated seven hills and in fact should have been. In light of

what we learned above about the transfer of headship of the Babylonian religion to Rome, I think these seven hills refer to it. It is commonly known as the city built on seven hills. But there’s more...

There are also seven kings. This should read “[and they] are also seven kings.” The verb form used here is the third person plural present indicative. In other words, these heads have two meanings. First, they refer to the city of Rome and second, they refer to the seven kingdoms that have ruled over the Hebrews as we’ve mentioned before. With that second meaning in mind, we continue...

Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time. At the time of this prophecy, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece had come and gone as rulers over the children of Israel. Rome was the present power and the revived Roman empire will be the seventh and technically is already in place in the form of the Mediterranean Union. Therein, the “clay” (the Jewish people) of Daniel’s chapter two image has officially mingled with the “iron” (Rome).

When the AC takes over this union, he will make it the seventh kingdom to rule over the Hebrews. This arrangement will continue for only a short time – perhaps only a few years. That’s because...

The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition. In the midst of the tribulation, the AC will set up his throne in Jerusalem and while in the temple declare himself to be god – the ‘unquestionable’ ruler of Israel. As such, he himself will be the eighth kingdom, and he will use his position to both corrupt the carnally minded of Israel and attempt to annihilate God’s faithful remnant. “He is of the seven” clearly shows that the spirit that drives him makes him a ‘member of their club’ – ‘antichrists R us’. However, along with the dragon, he will ultimately be cast into the lake of fire as well.

“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. These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast.

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.” We discussed these ten horns in detail in “Little Horn and the Ten”. In brief, these ten horns or ten kings are clearly shown as representing the final hour of the revived Roman Empire both in the ten toes of Daniel chapter two and on the fourth beast of Daniel chapter seven.

What is foretold therein and this Revelation passage is that there will exist at the end of the age a group of ten kings that will cooperate together but remain dormant until another king arises from outside their sphere. Since it says that they are kings, it would seem that they each have a kingdom of their own. As a group, however, they have no kingdom or literally no authority to rule over their united kingdom until the little horn appears and takes over. He is “diverse” or different from the first ten. “Little” in those passages, probably does not mean lesser in authority or power but rather newer or little in time. It can also mean a power that is diminishing or withering. This little horn will subdue or literally humble three of the ten kings and apparently change the leadership of the group. Unlike

the ten horns, this little horn will not simply be a horn, that is, a kingdom power, but a personality, it’s like this little horn will eventually be his own kingdom so to speak – i.e. he probably will rise to power from ‘out of nowhere,’ presumably over another kingdom not included in the ten; but fundamentally his ascendance will really be about himself and his own authority.

Then he said to me, “The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. 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. 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. The final tribulation whore will be useful to the beast for a season but then, since he wants to be god, she will be in the way. At that point the yoke of ‘the religion of the past’ will be pillaged,

burned and discarded by the antichrist’s subordinate kings.

But a one world false religion is coming and is already in the works. In fact, the *Catholic*

Review commented on this when it recently said, “The unity of religion promoted by the Holy Father Pope John Paul II and approved by His Holiness the Dalai Lama is not a goal to be achieved immediately, but a day may come when the love and compassion which both Buddha and Christ preached so eloquently will unite the world in a common effort to save humanity from senseless destruction, and leading us toward the light in which we all believe.” This is only a very small sample of what is going on behind closed doors to unite the religions of the world.

And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.” As we’ve already covered, “great city” is literally “great throng” or multitude. It is the whorish satanic spiritual force and deception of Babylon that has, since its inception, dominated the kingdoms of this world. This chapter marks its end. Praise God!

Forever Lost

Revelation 18

The seventh bowl of wrath has been poured out and the voice from the temple declared, "It is done!" As with chapter 17, God is herein continuing with the background information that runs in parallel with previous chapters but concludes with the seventh bowl judgment. Chapter 17 basically exposed the whore, Babylon the Great, which Satan used to bring together all the rebellious against God into one vile congregation. At this point, it is the entire planet. This chapter will show the consequences of both her seduction and her destruction under God's wrath.

After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! Because this messenger has great power and glory, some may think it is Jesus, but the words "another angel" make it clear that it is indeed an angelic messenger for there is no "other" Christ. He is probably

one of the seven angels that stand before God like Gabriel. His power and glory are indicators that he has been close to God just as Moses on the mount spending time in the presence of the Lord was radiant with glory when he descended.

His message is twofold. First, he declares emphatically that whorish Babylon is fallen or as the lexicon amplifies, cast down from a state of prosperity. Whenever an attribute is repeated in scripture, it is for emphasis. There'll be no rising up from this fall. Second, he declares what she has become – the habitation of demons, the prison of every filthy spirit and the cage for every filthy, hateful bird. These are likely three echelons of evil entities; the point being that planet Babylon is a spiritual toxic dump.

But it is this 'becoming' that is significant. Of course, it implies a transformation. What this tells us is that Satan has made planet Babylon the gathering place for all evil in existence. This world is NOT a playground but a battleground. As he corrupted angels, he will have corrupted men and indeed the whole of creation on this planet.

For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the

abundance of her luxury." To say that there are two Babylons, religious and commercial, is like saying there must be two heavens – a religious heaven and a commercial heaven. That's nonsense. Planet Babylon is Satan's answer to God's kingdom. As we said before, it is the result of a whorish spiritual force that gathers and indwells the throng of those rebellious against God. Satan sees himself as the counterpoint to God, the antichrist as his counterpoint to Christ and the false prophet as the counterpoint to the Holy Spirit. Babylon is the counterpoint, in his fiendish mind, to the New Jerusalem. All the devil can do is imitate God by providing 180 degree opposites. This, of course, in no way makes him God's peer. Satan is only an angel and a diminished, fallen one at that. Even Michael the archangel is able to cast him out of heaven.

"Her fornication" is quite simply idolatry, the worship of anything except the truth in Christ. And it is an angry idolatry. This wrath is the unholy counterpoint to God's. God's wrath is pure and it cleanses, whereas the "wrath of her fornication" is filthy and it corrupts. All nations have imbibed this foul brew. The leaders of men have been intimately entangled with her lies, and the leaders of business have been enriched by the power of her luxury. They

have bought in to Satan's 'anti-gospel' which says, "You can have it all – just take it. Love yourself and crave things. Lust is good. Self sacrifice is bad. Seek riches. Seek power. Live for now." On and on it goes, counterpoint by counterpoint, and everyone in Babylon agrees.

And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. Consistently, God speaks to His people as two groups – the Hebrew remnant and the mostly gentile church. Both are His people. First, God showed us the horrible condition of the planet. And now, He reminds us what His command has always been to His people – to "Come out." As we know from chapters four and five, He gave that command to the church at the rapture. He also executed that command in taking the final harvest of believers in chapter fourteen just before the bowls of the seven last plagues were poured out. Finally, there remains the remnant of Israel.

As you consider the phrase "lest you share in her sins" you sense He's speaking of the remnant since they remain on earth during the tribulation wherein their faith is tested. The

phrase “lest you receive of her plagues” is surely a reference to the other groups of believers who have already been taken to heaven either by rapture or by death so they would not see the plagues of God’s wrath.

They say that you must bury a corpse at least six feet deep in order to keep animals from smelling it and digging it up. The rottenness of death is a stench like no other. When it says “her sins have reached to heaven” it is not so much that they are piling up, though in a sense they are; rather, the stench of their decay is a kind of cosmic pollution. This also reminds us of man’s vain attempt at Babel to build a tower to the heavens.

Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her. In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, ‘I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.’ Who is God speaking to? His people. But all His people save the remnant are in heaven at this point. How can they render anything back to the whore? When they return with Jesus to the planet to take it by force. That’s coming up.

This, then, is a pep talk of sorts. It’s taking place in the locker room of heaven if you would and the ‘Coach’ is telling His team how to play the second half. When we return with Jesus, we will render to her and repay her just as God has commanded.

Her thought, ‘I sit as queen, and am no widow...’ takes us back to the original perverted mind of Semiramis. It seems that she induced her drug intoxicated priests to kill her husband, King Nimrod, by tearing his body apart while was still alive. Then she took over the rulership of his kingdom as the “queen of heaven”. And this mindset has been the attitude of the whore, Babylon, ever since.

Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her. Day here means the ‘last day’ of this present age, the day in which Christ will return from heaven, raise the dead, hold the final judgment, and perfect his kingdom. The lexicon amplifies by saying, “Eastern usage of this term differs from our western usage. Any part of a day is counted as a whole day.” What’s being said is that her destruction will be in a relatively short span of time compared to the millennia she has built up her domain. Her plagues are the seven bowls of God’s wrath that

have been poured out culminating in the return of Jesus Christ with his army -- the saints of heaven. Recall, also, as we learned earlier, that the ten kings who have given their power over to the antichrist will, at the convenient time, burn the whore with fire. However, this “utterly burned with fire” may also pertain to the time at the end of the millennium when, after a last rebellious uprising inspired by Satan, God destroys the entire planet with fire. See chapter twenty and 2 Pet 3:7,12.

“The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, ‘Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.’ Now how, you might ask, can anyone stand at a distance from the whole planet? Trust me, you’ll see in a minute. What is a bit more important is that we recognize that it is the ultra rich who are weeping for indeed, Babylon the mother of whores, has made all who worship her materially wealthy. Once again, it is the counterpoint to the true eternal riches the Lord has promised to those who are faithful in Christ.

The contemporary church especially in western society has

been completely caught up in material concerns. This is most obvious with the televangelists, but is not limited to them. Pastors increasingly look to the church rather than the Lord for their welfare. Some have even developed ‘social marketing’ schemes to, in essence, fleece the flock under their care. The church budget, though ‘sanctified’ by prayer is more and more often the ‘prudent’ guideline of church activities rather than the Lord’s Spirit. Trusting obedience, even unto poverty, is unheard of today. Sadly, the modern church is significantly influenced by the ‘propaganda’ of the whore. Remember from chapter three that the Laodicean church says, “I am rich and increased in goods and in need of nothing.”

“And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore: merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet, every kind of citron wood, every kind of object of ivory, every kind of object of most precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble; and cinnamon and incense, fragrant oil and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and bodies and souls of men. You may wonder why the Spirit cares to

give us this cargo manifest, so to speak. That is, until you see that it is ordered in degree of value to the 'owner'. Do you see gold and silver at the beginning? As you run down the list, the relative values decrease; and what's at the bottom? The bodies and souls of men. In Satan's whorish kingdom of Babylon, regardless of what the media says, the least valuable items of trade are people. That's because we are made in the image of God. To the devil and his followers, we are worth less than all the rest. Abortion has made that completely obvious, hasn't it.

The fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you, and all the things which are rich and splendid have gone from you, and you shall find them no more at all. We have GOT to get it into our understanding that material prosperity has always been the snare of the devil. By default, we assume it to be the blessing of God and that just ain't necessarily so! Prosperity will be the primary device by which the beast will seduce and destroy both the Hebrews and the nations of the world.

The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine

*linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! For in **one hour such great riches came to nothing.**' Every shipmaster, **all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What is like this great city?'***

"They threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and wailing, and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth! For in one hour she is made desolate.' In a previous study we noted that from the perspective of prophetic imagery, one hour probably refers to the seven year period of the tribulation. Recall, the ten kings which support the beast during this time are said to reign with him for one hour. What we're seeing is that although the beast will likely bring a supernatural economic revival to the world, it will crumble under the wrath of God.

Returning to our question above about standing at a distance, notice that it is those who are at sea who witness this mess from afar. It is they who bemoan Babylon's devastation from afar.

"Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!" There are three groups that God

has avenged – those in heaven, the apostles and the prophets. Of course, we expect that the latter two are in heaven but the term heaven probably refers to all who have suffered the affliction of the whore and been faithful to the Lord. Both the New Testament apostles and the Old Testament prophets died as martyrs, at least a large portion of them did.

Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore. The sound of harpists, musicians, flutists, and trumpeters shall not be heard in you anymore. No craftsman of any craft shall be found in you anymore, and the sound of a millstone shall not be heard in you anymore. The light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore, and the voice of bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore. You know what a millstone is used for – it grinds. Babylon has been a grinding force in the life of sincere believers – you can sense it grinding on your soul each and every day. But the most important part of the first sentence is "shall not be found anymore". What wonderful news for the redeemed. Recall that the angel declared that Babylon had become the abode, the prison and the cage for all

things evil. I'm inclined to think that it may indeed be the repository of all sin, even yours and mine. Thus, seeing God cast it into the sea, forever to be lost, is a great comfort.

For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth." Notice who the "great men of the earth" have been – her merchants. Do you still want to be listed in Fortune magazine's Top 100 richest? Of course, since Babylon is the congregation of the rebellious against God, the whore would have the blood of everyone who was ever killed on earth, from Abel on including Jesus. No wonder she was described as being drunk with their blood. How glorious, how wonderful, that she is cast so far away from all the created cosmos, both seen and unseen, as to never be found again. I've been inclined to picture her and all the demonic horde within her as diminishing in size forever and ever into infinite smallness and complete darkness.

Babylon will be no more.

A Wedding and a War

Revelation 19

In pouring out His wrath contained in the seven bowls mixed with the seven last plagues, God was unapproachable. No one could enter the holy place of the temple in heaven. In this chapter, there are two amazing and long awaited events that take place. It is a time of celebration and then conflagration. Planet Babylon has been ravaged by the wages of sin unleashed in the seven seals, the warnings of seven trumpet judgments and then by the holy wrath of God.

All of these things took place with the vast majority of heaven looking on, but now the time has come for them to begin participating. What is their reaction?

After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God! For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the

great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her." Again they said, "Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!" The wretched planet yet remains and the devil with his unholy counterpoint trinity are still defiant. But here is the Lord's wedding gift to His spouse. It is spoken of in the past tense for most of it is done. There remains one final battle before the millennial reign of Jesus – we'll get to that momentarily.

First, make sure you've got your robe -- we've got a wedding to get to!

And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, "Amen! Alleluia!" Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!" Worship of God is spontaneous for the twenty-four and four. It is followed by an invitation to all God's servants and a command to all who fear Him. Where are those who fear Him? I suggest that they are on earth. They are the Hebrew remnant in hiding. Who are they in heaven who do not serve our Lord? No one, of course. Do you suppose that they serve out

of fear? Certainly, they have an ever enlightening awe of Him, but fear only entered into the relationship of God and His creation by way of sin. We saw that demonstrated in the garden of Eden when Adam and Eve first sinned. There is no sin in heaven; it has been confined to Babylon. The remnant of Israel, who are still in the flesh must yet deal with the sin nature of man and thus fearing God is right and good. However, I submit the heavenly hosts serve God in ever growing love and admiration.

And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." The halls of heaven are thundering with praises at the invitation to do so. Our Lord God is Omnipotent – all powerful. We sometimes wonder about this here on Babylon when the trials and personal tribulations seem to overwhelm us. But God has always been and is and always will be omnipotent. He is also all knowing and all present. Only in heaven will this begin to sink in for us.

That's probably part of what we'll be doing in heaven during the time of the tribulation. Our questions getting answered, our anticipations realized, our fears dispelled, our minds filled with awe – I suspect that this will be part of our preparation as the Bride of Christ.

And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Note that her garments are "granted" – they weren't earned nor are they any kind of entitlement. They are a gift. And still they are her righteous acts. This is the epitome of grace, isn't it? You can see that her wedding gown is clean and bright.

Yet you know you've blown it down below; you've been so dirty down in Babylon. You've truly given your heart to Christ and believed unto salvation. You've washed and washed and washed in the Word of God as you should have. But here, and only here in heaven, you discover and truly realize that every righteous thing you ever did was a gift from God.

And notice that her garment is the righteous acts of the saints. It's not just you, it's the righteous deeds of everyone saved by grace. Here, you

thought your garment was all up to you. Though we know the rewards in heaven are individualized, in a wonderful somewhat mysterious way, the covering of the bride is the result of God's graciousness to all His saints. It's by the blood of Christ shed for all.

Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" Who are called? Jesus spoke of this in one of His parables. He spoke of a wedding a king had prepared for his son. He invited many but the ones he invited were not willing to come. In fact, some ignored the invitation and others "seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them". The king was furious and destroyed the murderers. He said, "Those who were invited were not worthy." So he then sent his servants out to invite as many as they could find and the wedding hall was filled with guests.

But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him, "Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?" And he was speechless. Then the king said

to the servants, "Bind him hand and foot, take him away and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." For many are called but few are chosen. (Mat 22)

Those who were invited were the Jews of old. The 144,000 anointed Hebrews of chapter seven are probably the group of servants God sent out afterward to invite as many as they could find. You might think of them as the church but the church is the Bride and then the Wife of Christ. And though the wedding hall was filled, it was absolutely necessary for everyone to have the proper garment – a robe of Christ's righteousness. Now the wedding was first, then came the wedding feast. Notice that we never see a wedding ceremony. Why is that? I'll suggest that at this point it has already happened – you see, Jesus pronounced, "I do" to His Bride before His Father on the cross of Calvary. What greater eternal commitment could He make? And in response, each time a new believer says, "I do" by accepting Jesus Christ into his/her heart as Savior and Lord, the wedding ceremony is more complete. At this point, the church is complete, thus the weddings are finished. Our text says that the "marriage has come" and the verb tense indicates it's complete. Notice

also that the Bride is now referred to as the Wife.

In church gatherings throughout the world and throughout the age, many people are present and often times witness to the ceremony in which new members of the Bride say, "I do" and yet they themselves never make that commitment. They think that by just attending the ceremony so to speak that they are "in". God has allowed everyone to attend the wedding ceremonies including the fakers, but they will be culled out and only the righteous will be called to the marriage supper that follows.

And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God." John the apostle is aghast and the angel who has shown him all these things knows it. We should note that he did not have to assure John of the verity of what he'd shown him until this point. Why?

It was much easier for John to accept the majesty of Christ, the judgment on a sin filled world and all myriad aspects of the heavenly revelation up till this point. But this – the Bride of Christ, the wedding feast – that's just too good, too fantastic, too joyful, too, too, too much for him. He needs reassurance. Having gotten that...

And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Two things are important for us here – first, is John's mistake. He's worshipping his guide, and he's corrected for it. Now, John was a good Jewish boy so to speak and an aged apostle. There's no way he's going to knowingly make a mistake like that, but down he goes. Why? I'm convinced that this guide who identifies himself as one of John's brethren – that is, a believer who went to heaven before John – looks so much like Jesus that John is honestly confused. He thinks this is Jesus.

And that's consistent with scripture for the Bible tells us of a wonderful transformation that will take place. Paul wrote:

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. (Rom 8:28,29)

We're all going to look a lot like Jesus. Hallelujah!

Next, this Christ-like brother tells John that he must worship God because the "testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy". A testimony is what someone says and how they live. And remember, this book is the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Fundamentally, it is all Jesus speaking.

"Spirit" is equally "breath" and "prophecy" is basically "the speaking forth of truth". So in this, John is being doubly assured that what he has just witnessed is indeed absolutely true for every word and act of Jesus is the breath of truth. And that's why God deserves his worship. Recall, Jesus said, "I am the way, the **truth** and the life." And just in case there's any question remaining in John's mind about it, Jesus will next present Himself with a name that confirms it...

*Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called **Faithful and True**, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.* Unlike the rider on a white horse who was sent out when the first seal was opened in chapter six, this Rider is

Faithful and True. This is obviously Jesus.

The antichrist went forth on a white horse to deceive and conquer in wicked rebellion to God and to establish worldwide Babylon. As such, he is the counterpoint and 180 degrees opposite in motive and results to Christ.

His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. How many times had John looked into those eyes and seen pure love and gentle kindness. But this is Christ going to war. And on His head are diadems, crowns of royalty, not the crown of achievement. There are many of them because He is King of kings. We don't know where His name is written and we don't know what it is. The reason that's significant is that knowing a person's name gives you a type of power over that person. Call out to your friend, "Hey, Joe! Or, "Hey, Sam!" and watch his head turn (providing his name is Joe or Sam.) This understanding was more pronounced in the Middle East. What this is saying is that no one has any authority over Jesus in this matter – He is absolutely in charge. No one can turn His attention from this invasion.

He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. Keep in mind that this scene is still in heaven. He's about to go out. For that reason, I'm confident that this blood is His own. He Himself is among those whose blood the whore had shed. His blood is what made the garment of His Bride pure and bright. His blood is what has filled heaven with undeserving saints, saved by grace. His blood is why there are armies in heaven ready to follow Him. He is the Word of God.

And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Here is the fulfillment of Enoch's prophecy which Jude recorded:

Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him. (Jude 14,15)

Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the

winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. Here is the Messiah that the Hebrews had always looked for. They should have recognized Jesus when He came as a Lamb – their law and sacrifices had portrayed the Savior as such for many hundreds of years – but they did not. They wanted a Lion and here He is on His way to Armageddon. This is the conquering Son of God and His name is clearly written right where everyone He smites can see it -- KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great."

Centered in the area of Megiddo, the war will cover the entire land of Israel, north to south with blood. Guess whose? Birds of carrion have always haunted battlefields and

here they will gather en mass by special invitation. I have seen dozens of vultures circle a dying animal and they have a huge appetite.

And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. You have to wonder who in their right mind would try to fight God in war. But these people are not sane. They are all either demon possessed or so deluded by the beast and false prophet that they are no longer even rational. The AC may have even convinced them that Christ and His army are alien invaders.

Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh. Death is too good for the two who are captured. They are cast alive into the lake

of fire. This is perdition, a place of eternal torment. Jesus spoke of this when He told His disciples to fear God Who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Forever, the antichrist and the false prophet will be in torment, both body and soul. The rest are mercifully killed and will be judged later at the Great White Throne.

There's one more person of the evil anti-trinity to deal with and that's coming.



Not By Bread Alone by Michael Dudash