
REVELATION DAY 4 NOVEMBER 2008

In the middle of the 19th century, a noted French scientist Pierre Berchelt, stated his belief that within 100 years scientists would have discovered the secret of the atom. He went on to suggest that such a breakthrough would herald the age in which God would say to the world, "Gentlemen, it is closing time".

Having negotiated ourselves thus far, we now come to look at some more infill detail in Revelation 14. We are still in the parenthesis between the 7th trumpet and pouring of the bowl or vial judgements – or between Revelation 11:16 and Revelation 15:4 when we pick up on the golden bowls, and we are still looking at the ***mid-Tribulation period***.

Chapters 12 and 13 have described the events that culminate with the middle of the Tribulation and now before we begin the bowl judgements that come out of the seventh trumpet and cover the ***last half*** of the Tribulation, we are about to look on the disruption and confusion that will be happening at the end of this three-and-a-half year period, and ushers in the last half of the Tribulation. We will also see why these bowl judgements are so necessary.

The marriage between politics and the state which took place between the Antichrist and the apostate church in the early days of his rise to power was an uneasy relationship from the start; and now it ends in divorce. During the first half of the Tribulation the Antichrist and his ten nation confederacy, throw off the restraint of this religious prostitute which sought to control them.

You will be aware that the book of Revelation speaks of two 'Babylons', both termed '*Babylon the Great*' – destruction is predicted for both. These two Babylons were both begun by Nimrod at the Tower of Babel and minister to man's desire both for religion and to possess and control the economic climate around him - in other words, to be totally independent of God, whilst nursing idolatry in his heart -

Genesis 11: 1 - 4

The Tower of Babel

¹ Now the whole earth had one language and one speech. ² And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. ³ Then they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. 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."

The two Babylons which began here are -

- religion which emphasises idolatry and
- governmental and commercial control

You will remember that the event which started the 7 year Tribulation period was the signing of a covenant between the Jews and the Antichrist, which enabled them to worship and sacrifice in the newly built temple. At this mid-point in the Tribulation, the Antichrist reneges on this covenant and sets up an effigy of himself in the Temple, in order that **he** might receive the worship.

This effigy is referred to in Matthew 24 as **'the abomination that causes desolation'**.

Matthew 24:15,16

¹⁵"Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand) ¹⁶"then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.'

We have already seen that a *'place was prepared for the woman'* where she could be safe, and here in Matthew, we see that the safe place will be in the caves in the mountains surrounding Jerusalem, where she will be kept by God's power.

As the Antichrist goes into megalomania the **second** religious system will be set up, that is worship of him, as he sets himself up in the Temple in Jerusalem to be worshipped as god, bringing to finale the False Prophet's purpose – promotion of the Antichrist until he is worshipped as God. As we know, just like Nebuchadnezzar, anyone who would not bow down and acknowledge him as supreme, will be put to death. The Antichrist's post-resurrection rise to power will be energised by Satan himself.

2 Thessalonians 2:8-12

⁸And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. ⁹ The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, ¹⁰ and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. ¹¹ And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, ¹² that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.'

We can see that the aim of the counterfeit miracles and signs will be in order to deceive men so they will worship the Antichrist and not God, by doing this; they have passed the point of no return and sealed their fate for eternity. They are deceived because they want to be deceived because they didn't love the truth, but believed the lie. This great deception climaxes when the effigy which has been erected on the wing or flying buttress of the Temple, suddenly comes alive.

The breaking of the seven year treaty will also trigger worldwide persecution of the Jews of an unprecedented scale.

Matthew 24:17 – 28 –

¹⁷ Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. ¹⁸ And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. ¹⁹ But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! ²⁰ And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. ²¹ For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until

this time, no, nor ever shall be. ²² *And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.* ²³ *"Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it.* ²⁴ *For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.* ²⁵ *See, I have told you beforehand.* ²⁶ *"Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it.* ²⁷ *For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.* ²⁸ *For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.'*

Satan himself is now cast down to the earth and he will launch an all out attempt to destroy the Jews.

So there's a whole lot going on right now, and in Revelation 14 we come to midtribulation announcements made by 6 angels who have specific tasks, making proclamations one after the other.

But first we need to look at the Lamb and another 144,000 – are these the same as the 144,000 we have already met?

We must follow our own law of interpretation and establish where the action is taking place – is it in heaven or on earth? Remember the first 144,000 we met in Revelation 7: 1 – 9; we established clearly that this was taking place **on earth**, so where is this scenario being worked out?

Revelation 14: 1 - 5

The Lamb and the 144,000

¹ Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Name and His Father's name written on their foreheads. ² And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. ³ They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. ⁴ These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. ⁵ And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.'

Clearly we are looking at a **heavenly** scenario because we can identify harps, and a throne, the four living creatures, and the elders which establish this for us.

From the debacle taking place on earth, we are again transported into the heavenly realms where all is focussed on the Lamb and His adoration by those who *'follow Him wherever He goes'*. Here we see Mount Zion which clearly locates the heavenly scene to Jerusalem, and 144,000 believers, who are sealed with the Lamb's seal and the seal of His Father - this group have both. This is in direct contrast to the seal of the Antichrist which is the counterfeit. This 144,000 are the undefiled, they are 'virgins' and they sing a new song to the Lamb. These have a very special description – they are the **'firstfruits'** both to God and the Lamb and they are redeemed **'from among men'**, not just from Israel. The term 'firstfruits' is a promise of a harvest yet to come.

We then move into the proclamations of the angels, the first of whom conveys a special message concerning **the middle of the Tribulation** –

Revelation 14: 6 – 7 -

⁶Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people— ⁷saying with a loud voice, “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.’

Whilst there has been a huge harvest already from the preaching of the 144,000 Jewish witnesses, there has also been great persecution by the apostate church, and many have already been martyred for their faith. It therefore appears necessary for angelic intervention to ensure that the everlasting gospel is proclaimed to those who will yet hear.

Revelation 14:8 -13

⁸And another angel followed, saying, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” ⁹Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.” ¹² Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. ¹³ Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labours, and their works follow them.”

In quick succession there is another angel proclaiming the fall of Babylon. This system is called **‘Mystery Babylon’** and the **‘mother of harlots’**, and its fullness will be uncovered in Revelation chapter 17. However, this Babylonian system is very powerful during the first three-and one-half years of the Tribulation and it actually exercises a *restraining* power over the Antichrist.

A third angel follows declaring what will happen to those who worship the beast and receive his mark. With the announcement of a final call to heed the gospel comes an announcement of the coming, and final, series of judgements. They also sound a clarion call that the political system, called Babylon is going to fall and great will be the fall of it. The warning here is so clear it cannot be misunderstood.

Revelation 14:14 -16

Reaping the Earth’s Harvest

¹⁴ Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. ¹⁵ And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, “Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has

come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.”¹⁶ So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.’

Here we see the promised harvest of souls, foretold by the first fruits.

Revelation 14:17-20

Reaping the Grapes of Wrath

**¹⁷Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.
¹⁸And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, “Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.”¹⁹ So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.²⁰ And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses’ bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.’**

This angel has a different message, for a different group of people. He also has a sickle, but his is for the purpose of harvesting the grapes for treading. As *‘reaping’* is commonly used to describe salvation, *‘treading’* is commonly used to describe **judgement**. The fifth and sixth angels introduce us to the events following Jesus’ return when He destroys, the False Prophet, Antichrist and all his followers – it is a prophetic glimpse into what is yet to come in Revelation 16: 12 – 16 and Revelation 19:11 – 20.

The things set in motion during the first half of the Tribulation will rumble on because it will take some time to accomplish it all. The latter part of the second half of the Tribulation period will contain these horrific bowl judgements but before we go into those – the prelude to the bowl judgements -

Revelation 15:1

Prelude to the Bowl Judgments

‘¹Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete.’

John sees *‘another’* great and marvellous sign – the use of the word *‘another’* harks back to the two previous signs revealed to John in chapter 12, the woman who represented Israel, and the great dragon who sought to consume her child – Satan himself. This third sign is described by John as *‘great and marvellous’*.

We have seen that the *‘imagination of man is evil continually’* as it says in

Genesis 6:5 -

‘⁵And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.’ KJV

We can clearly see why God has to bring these final judgements on the earth to make an end to this wickedness. Since the tower of Babel man has sought to be free of the restraints of a Holy God and to make for himself a god – the god of self-will and self-determination. He will not have God to rule over him. Finally that cup of iniquity which we first saw in Genesis 15 is full, and God has to judge the earth again.

Revelation 15 is the shortest chapter in the book of Revelation. But this is not an indication of it being less important in any way. This chapter reveals three things:

1. it concludes the events shown in chapters 10 – 15 concerning visions in heaven and conditions on earth to the mid- tribulation time
2. it serves to introduce what is known as the **Great Tribulation**, which is the last half of the Tribulation when the seven angels pour out their bowls
3. it reveals to us important truths concerning the wrath of God

Revelation 15:2 – 4

² And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. ³ They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: "Great and marvellous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints! ⁴Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, for Your judgments have been manifested."

Again we are translated to heaven and see this majestic sight and the overcomers singing the song of Moses...this doesn't mean that they are all Israelites, it signifies that they are singing a song of victory and triumph over their enemy, which is the song of Moses in Exodus 15:1 – 21. These Tribulation saints standing before the Throne are lifting their hearts in gratitude towards God.

Revelation 15: 5 - 8

⁵ After these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. ⁶ And out of the temple came the seven angels having the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands. ⁷ Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever. ⁸ The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.'

This is the third time we have encountered a group of seven angels at once, there were seven angels assigned to the seven churches, one to each. Then each of the seven angels was given a trumpet to blow in revealing the second quarter of the Tribulation judgements, now we see seven more to whom the final judgements of the last period of the Tribulation are given.

This brief section of eight verses in the middle of the book of Revelation opens and closes with the wrath of God. It depicts the scene in heaven of God's sending out His angels of judgement to perform His last act of bringing people to Himself. The last verse tells us that with these 7 plagues, the judgements of God are completed upon the earth. There remains now only the Great White Throne judgement – there is no going back from this point. The end has come. With the outpouring of these seven last vials or bowls, God's wrath will be complete – let's just refresh ourselves with the passage in Daniel and see now where it fits in –

Daniel 9:24-27

²⁴“Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. ²⁵ “ Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times. ²⁶“And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined. ²⁷ Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.””

We see now that we are in the final stages of

Daniel 9:24

²⁴“Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.’

Revelation 16:1 -

¹Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, “Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth.””

And the 7 bowl judgements – no introduction is needed now for this chapter. The judgements speak for themselves –

Revelation 16: 2

First Bowl: Loathsome Sores

²So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.’

It appears that only those who bear the mark of the beast and those who worship him are afflicted thus – as with the plagues in Exodus, God’s people are spared this horrific experience.

Revelation 16:3

Second Bowl: The Sea Turns to Blood

³Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died.’

The sea acts right now as a giant bowl of Dettol, purifying putrefying matter, now not only is it turned to blood, but everything in it dies too – can you imagine the stench?

Revelation 16:4 - 7

Third Bowl: The Waters Turn to Blood

“Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. ⁵ And I heard the angel of the waters saying: “You are righteous, O Lord, the One who is and who was and who is to be, because You have judged these things. ⁶ For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due.” ⁷ And I heard another from the altar saying, “Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments.”

An interesting point here is that there is obviously an angel assigned to the water supply on the earth and now he is permitted to turn these waters to blood, because man has shed the blood of man. This is God’s vindication of the suffering of the martyrs from the earliest times to the present, answering the prayers of the souls under the altar in Revelation 6.

Revelation 16:8,9

Fourth Bowl: Men Are Scorched

“⁸Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire. ⁹ And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory’.

Now, with the outpouring of the fourth bowl, the sun is given power to scorch mankind – add this to the lack of water and the stench arising from rotting flesh and vegetation everywhere...

Revelation 16:10, 11

Fifth Bowl: Darkness and Pain

“¹⁰ Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. ¹¹ They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.’

Now the throne of the beast is targeted by the angel and his kingdom becomes full of darkness. The effect on the people is that men gnaw their tongues because of the pain. It seems that they are now unable to repent because their hearts are hardened for they curse God because of their suffering, but there is yet more to come -

Revelation 16:12-16

Sixth Bowl: Euphrates Dried Up

“¹² Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. ¹³ And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. ¹⁴ For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. ¹⁵ “Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk

naked and they see his shame.”¹⁶ And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.’

The Euphrates is 1,800 miles long and is the eastern border of the land God gave to Abraham, it formed a natural barrier to invasion, until at the Lord’s command, it dries up. Here we see the gathering of the nations, led by the Antichrist, as deceiving spirits lure them into the Valley of Meggido for what we know as the battle of Armageddon.

‘Who will go and be a deceiving spirit in the mouth of the prophet?’

2 Chronicles 18:21 (King James Version)

²¹And he said, I will go out, and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And the Lord said, Thou shalt entice him, and thou shalt also prevail: go out, and do even so.’

The Euphrates has to dry up to enable access to the hordes coming from the east. This is where the nations and the demonic make a futile attempt to line up against the Coming King, as we will see in Revelation 19. Satan is determined to take as many as he can with him into eternal punishment in the lake of fire, but this is orchestrated by God, to bring about their destruction and total ruin.

Joel 3: 13 -14

¹³ Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; for the winepress is full, the vats overflow — for their wickedness is great.”¹⁴ Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.

The Valley of Decision here spoken of is more properly translated, the valley of judgement for it is here that the Lord will separate out the sheep from the goats and will defeat the armies of the Antichrist.

The Meggido Valley has already served as a battleground for many major wars. There Barak defeated the Canaanites, Judges 4:15, Gideon defeated the Midianites, Judges 7, and Saul and Josiah both met their deaths. It was of this valley that Napoleon Bonaparte said *‘This is the ideal battleground for all the armies of the world’*. He was either being prophetic, or he knew his Bible.

Revelation 16:17 - 21

Seventh Bowl: The Earth Utterly Shaken

¹⁷ Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, “It is done!”¹⁸ And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth.¹⁹ Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.²⁰ Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.²¹ And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.’

When the seventh and last angel pours out his bowl into the air, a voice will be heard from the Temple before the throne of God conveying the message '***It is done!***' The day of Jacob's Trouble and the wrath of God upon the ungodly, is spent.

This final judgement of God will appear in the form of the world's greatest earthquake. It will destroy Satan's citadel in Babylon and the cities of the nations will collapse, as if this were not enough, great hailstones, stored in the heavens for this purpose, will be unleashed.

Job 38:22 - 23

'²²"Have you entered the treasury of snow, or have you seen the treasury of hail,²³ which I have reserved for the time of trouble, for the day of battle and war?"

We will see more of the destruction of Babylon the great in chapter 18.

Revelation 17:

Here we come to some *really* interesting stuff which gives us insight into the systems under which the world lives. There are two, religious and economic; both are entitled 'Babylon'.

John sees this vision of the religious system of the first half of the tribulation and we are told it in **Revelation 17**.

In **chapter 16** he received a revelation which took him right through to the end of the Great Tribulation, all the way, in fact, to the battle of Armageddon at the Second Advent.

Here we are taken back again into the *first half* of the Tribulation and the religious system which will be in place – we will pick up in chapters 19 -22 more about the Second Coming, the Kingdom and the Eternal Order.

Revelation 17: 1 – 6 –

The Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast

'¹Then 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 (or destruction) 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."³So 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.⁴The 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.⁵And on her forehead a name was written:

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

‘ 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 marvelled with great amazement.’

John is shown a picture of a woman who was so despicable, that in his prophetic vision he was ‘greatly astonished.’

The great whore or harlot:

No respectable woman wants to be called a prostitute, but this woman in Revelation 17 is no lady! The Greek word for ‘whore’ is the word **porne**, which is usually translated in the New Testament by the word ‘harlot’ or ‘prostitute’.

Dr John Walvoord says in ‘The Road to Armageddon:

“The picture of the woman as utterly evil signifies spiritual adultery, portraying those who outwardly and religiously seem to be joined to the true God, but who are untrue to this relationship. The symbolism of spiritual adultery is not ordinarily used of heathen nations who know not God, but always of people who outwardly carry the name of God, while actually worshipping and serving other gods....In the New Testament the church is viewed as a virgin destined to be joined to her husband in the near future (2 Corinthians 11:2) but she is warned against spiritual adultery (James 4:4).”

The prostitute of the end times has two faces: apostasy and religion.

We have been looking at the world which is heading for the Tribulation and the stream which will become a river at the culmination of history. The rebellion, which began at the tower of Babel, is fast coming to its fullness.

This is a tale of two Babylons, one mystical and one material. Babylon – idolatrous, wealthy, intriguing and immoral – is mentioned more times in the Bible than any other city, with the exception of Jerusalem.

When John was given a vision of the end times, he saw that the Antichrist would be supported by two powerful global allies, one religious and one economic. So ‘**Mystery Babylon**’ actually covers both the religious and the economic and social system. It is called a ‘mystery’, because up until this moment it has not been revealed in all its corrupting fullness. John is shown a picture of a woman who was so corrupt, so appalling that in his prophetic vision, he was ‘*greatly astonished*’.

John’s reaction to this revelation is one of amazement. He marvels. The angel says ‘*I will show you the judgement or destruction of the great harlot*’. A modern term for ‘harlot’ is prostitute – which is to take something that has a *proper* use and use it *improperly*. A prostitute does this with the sexual act. Sex has a legitimate purpose within marriage, but the prostitute takes that which has a legitimate purpose, and uses it in an illegitimate way. In this passage, the harlot does the same with religion.

James says that true religion is to visit the fatherless and take care of the widows; true religion is taking on the role of a servant, true religion is servant-hood and service, but when religion is ‘*prostituted*’ it moves from servant-hood to **lordship** where it begins to rule.

This is what happens in Revelation 17: the harlot prostitutes religion and moves it from its legitimate use, which is serving, to an illegitimate use, which is ruling.

The fact that she *'sits on many waters'* is an indication that this religion is worldwide. She sits, then, upon the population of the earth, which means she rules over the religious affairs of the world. That is how she has prostituted herself – this is a description of the union of religion and state that results in mutual corruption. Remember I mentioned that the union was uneasy from the start, and very soon the Antichrist throws off her oppressive control.

So verses 3 – 6 are saying in essence that this religion, or woman, rules with the support of civil government – the beast upon which she rides. She is the counterfeit of the Bride of Christ – she is named of Babylon because Babylon was the originator of idolatry, this is where idolatry and spiritual fornication began - with Nimrod.

This counterfeit religious system was born on the plains of Shinar where the first world dictator, Nimrod, defying God, built a tower that would reach to heaven. Out of Babylon came another movement, promoted by Nimrod's wife Semiramis, who claimed she had a son, miraculously conceived, whose name was Tammuz – this is the root of mother/son worship *'The Two Babylons'* by Alexander Hislop uncovers it nicely, bit antiquated in its language, but worth a potter through.

When we talk about something being a 'mystery' in Biblical terms, we are not implying that it cannot be understood. The term means something which has been hidden in God's agenda and is now revealed like the 'mystery' of the church. So as we look at 'Mystery Babylon', keep the definition of the word in mind.

The fact that the beast upon which this woman rides is scarlet signifies that it is the **fourth** gentile empire and is the same as the fourth beast in the book of Daniel. She is the counterfeit bride of Christ. The fact that she is called 'mystery' is not because of Babylon itself, or because Babylon was the seed bed and originator of idolatry, the 'mystery' – the hidden thing - which is uncovered here is this, that this Babylonian religious system will develop into a **one-world unified religion** and will rule the world in the first half of the Tribulation. It is most likely that it will have its headquarters in literal Babylon – which is modern day Iraq.

The scripture we can use to substantiate the theory that Babylon will indeed become the religious, political and economic centre of the world is found in -

Zechariah 5:5 – 11 KJV

Vision of the Woman in a Basket

⁵ Then the angel who talked with me came out and said to me, "Lift your eyes now, and see what this is that goes forth." ⁶ So I asked, "What is it?" And he said, "It is a basket that is going forth." He also said, "This is their resemblance throughout the earth: ⁷ Here is a lead disc (or ephah) lifted up, and this is a woman sitting inside the basket"; ⁸ then he said, "This is Wickedness!" And he thrust her down into the basket, and threw the lead cover over its mouth. ⁹ Then I raised my eyes and looked, and there were two women, coming with the wind in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork, and they lifted up the basket between earth and heaven. ¹⁰ So I said to the angel who talked with

me, "Where are they carrying the basket?"¹¹ And he said to me, "To build a house for it in the land of Shinar; when it is ready, the basket will be set there on its base."

The name of the woman is 'Wickedness' and she is being transported to the land of Shinar, or Babylon where 'she' will become both the centre of the world's economy and the world political centre. Mystery Babylon, mother of harlots, by name.

Revelation 17:7 – 18

The Meaning of the Woman and the Beast

" 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 fulfil 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."

The angel now explains to John the vision he has seen. And tells him the mystery of the woman – the one world religious system which will come into operation in the first half of the tribulation and in verses 7 through 14, he describes the government of the time, which he says is that of ten kings ruling co-equally over ten kingdoms. In the middle of the Tribulation all the other kings will turn their authority over to the Antichrist (verse 13) who will then rule the world for the second half of the Tribulation, and as we saw in Chapter 16, his rule will end abruptly with the Second Coming.

But the religious system she represents dominates the Antichrist for the first half of the tribulation.

Power politics and power religion commit themselves to each other, but only for a time. This is a case of female domination! The harlot system which dominates the Beast and controls with tight reins for the first half of the Tribulation is truly a marriage of church and State.

This powerful prostitute influences 'peoples, multitudes, nations and languages' verse 15. But like many partnerships, when one member of the team wants to buy out, or push out, the other, it doesn't last long.

We see from verses 16 and 17, the alliance between the Antichrist and his confederation of nations and the religious system is relatively short lived as they *'hate the harlot'* and according to God's predetermined plan, they destroy her. So this *'woman'* is initially in partnership with the political system of the Beast.

Ms *'Mystery Babylon'* will not be a soft-hearted madam with a heart of gold; this woman is drunk with the blood of the saints.

It is not the first time that Roman Imperialism has been drunk with the blood of the saints, and during the Tribulation, those who have become believers will suffer intensely under the rule of the one-world religious system - Mystery Babylon. Whenever Rome has been in control of a country, it has not hesitated to put to death all who opposed it. Rome's frantic opposition to Reformation is a good example. Rome has never been noted for her toleration, when she is established in power you can expect outbreaks such as that which happened during the Inquisition.

It is interesting that the harlot is also described as *'a city'* just as the wife of Jehovah is described at the end of the book of Revelation, when she is described as *'coming down out of heaven as a bride adorned for her husband.'*

Revelation 18

Here we come to the fall of Babylon the Great. Ever since the fall of Adam the angelic creatures around the throne of God have anticipated that ultimate day when the cup of human iniquity would be filled and God would finally judge the human race.

The rejoicing which will take place in heaven contrasts with the attitude of people on the earth who will be weeping for the doom of the prostitute, Babylon.

The human race has made a religion of commercialism and government, whose destruction is described in this chapter, this in this sense, Babylon probably refers to all three forces that distort a person's basic quest for God into false religions, a lust for money and material possessions or a lust for power through government.

These three evils have characterized mankind since before the flood. The destruction here referred to is significant because it involves more than just the physical city of Babylon and the commercial government and religious headquarters: it includes all that Babylon has typified since the days of Nimrod, who succeeded in carrying on the nefarious work of Cain and Lamech in the pre-flood days when they initiated systems that led people away from God.

Revelation 18:1-2

The Fall of Babylon the Great

'After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. ² 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!'

In **Revelation 18:2** we see the cry *"Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!"* An angel who had great authority prophesies about the destruction of another Babylon. This shout is a sign of cataclysmic

destruction. The repetition of the word is intended to describe two separate stages of the fall. The first refers to **Babylon as a system of false worship**, and the second, to **Babylon the social and economic system**.

Her destruction by the hand of God will be done explosively – sixty minutes to ashes!

The destruction of Babylon described here and in chapter 17 will rid the world of the two major evils that have plagued the human race for about 5,000 years. Literal Babylon is destroyed; the governmental, religious and commercial headquarters of the world during the Tribulation, the place where Satan had his throne are no more.

Revelation 18:3-8

'³For 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."⁴ 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. ⁵ For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. ⁶ 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. ⁷ 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.'⁸ 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.'

The sins of Babylon have piled one on another like bricks in the tower of Babel, each stone is an indictment about its condition – as we have already seen, God waits until the cup of iniquity is full before He judges (Genesis 15:16). Babylon is judged because of her sin and her influence, she is the centre of social, political, cultural and commercial life on this globe and they are told to come out of her.

Revelation 18:9 -20

The World Mourns Babylon's Fall:

⁹ “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, ¹⁰ 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.’ ¹¹ “And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore: ¹² 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; ¹³ 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. ¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, ¹⁶ 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! ¹⁷ 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 ¹⁸ and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, ‘What is like this great city?’ ¹⁹ “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.’ ²⁰ “Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!”

She is also judged because of her infidelity and her inhumanity – living in gross sin and boasting about it, she trades ‘the bodies and souls of men’ (Rev.18:13). This is wickedness indeed. This predicted judgement should certainly caution all who put their trust in stocks and shares, houses and lands, or the making of money, that they are trusting in the wrong things!

Revelation 18: 21 - 24

Finality of Babylon's fall:

²¹Then 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. ²² 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. ²³ 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. For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived. ²⁴ And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth.”

The passage ends with a picture of the totality of Babylon's destruction as the angel heaves the millstone into the sea. There are many, many, prophecies in the Old Testament regarding the fall of Babylon, Isaiah 13: 19 - 22 is a case in point –

Isaiah 13:19 - 22

¹⁹ And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans' pride, will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.²⁰ It will never be inhabited, nor will it be settled from generation to generation; nor will the Arabian pitch tents there, nor will the shepherds make their sheepfolds there.²¹ But wild beasts of the desert will lie there, and their houses will be full of owls; ostriches will dwell there, and wild goats will caper there.²² The hyenas will howl in their citadels, and jackals in their pleasant palaces. Her time is near to come, and her days will not be prolonged."

As is Isaiah 47 -

Isaiah 47:1 –15

The Humiliation of Babylon

¹ "Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon; sit on the ground without a throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans! For you shall no more be called tender and delicate.² Take the millstones and grind meal. Remove your veil, take off the skirt, uncover the thigh, pass through the rivers.³ Your nakedness shall be uncovered, yes, your shame will be seen; I will take vengeance, and I will not arbitrate with a man."⁴ As for our Redeemer, the LORD of hosts is His name, The Holy One of Israel.⁵ "Sit in silence, and go into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans; for you shall no longer be called the Lady of Kingdoms.⁶ I was angry with My people; I have profaned My inheritance, and given them into your hand. You showed them no mercy; on the elderly you laid your yoke very heavily.⁷ And you said, 'I shall be a lady forever,' so that you did not take these things to heart, nor remember the latter end of them.⁸ "Therefore hear this now, you who are given to pleasures, who dwell securely, who say in your heart, 'I am, and there is no one else besides me; I shall not sit as a widow, nor shall I know the loss of children';⁹ but these two things shall come to you in a moment, in one day: the loss of children, and widowhood. They shall come upon you in their fullness because of the multitude of your sorceries, for the great abundance of your enchantments.¹⁰ "For you have trusted in your wickedness; you have said, 'No one sees me'; your wisdom and your knowledge have warped you; and you have said in your heart, 'I am, and there is no one else besides me.'¹¹ Therefore evil shall come upon you; you shall not know from where it arises. And trouble shall fall upon you; you will not be able to put it off. And desolation shall come upon you suddenly, which you shall not know.¹² "Stand now with your enchantments and the multitude of your sorceries, in which you have laboured from your youth—perhaps you will be able to profit, perhaps you will prevail.¹³ You are wearied in the multitude of your counsels; let now the astrologers, the stargazers, and the monthly prognosticators stand up and save you from what shall come upon you.¹⁴ Behold, they shall be as stubble, the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame; it shall not be a coal to be warmed by, nor a fire to sit before!¹⁵ Thus shall they be to you with whom you have laboured, your merchants from your youth; they shall wander each one to his quarter. No one shall save you."

In this passage too we see that sudden desolation is predicted upon Babylon because she has trusted in her wickedness. The Lord tells her that none of her idols will help her now, she is doomed to destruction and that – complete. This destruction is to be so total and so final that Babylon will never be inhabited by man again. It will be as total as Sodom and Gomorrah according to -

Jeremiah 50:39-40

³⁹“Therefore the wild desert beasts shall dwell there with the jackals, and the ostriches shall dwell in it. It shall be inhabited no more forever, nor shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation.
⁴⁰ As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighbours,” says the LORD, “so no one shall reside there, nor son of man dwell in it.’

Jeremiah also commanded a scroll wrapped stone to be thrown into the Euphrates to symbolize the sinking of the city of Babylon.

Jeremiah 51:63

⁶³Now it shall be, when you have finished reading this book, that you shall tie a stone to it and throw it out into the Euphrates.’

Now the angel casts a stone, this one the size of a millstone, in order to show how Babylon will sink without trace. This event will likely cause great consternation on the earth, but not in heaven, for when Babylon’s destruction takes place, it will signal that the **Second Coming** is near and with it, the restoration and regeneration of Israel.

All the iniquities of past ages will be judged in this destruction when God, in righteous anger and judgement **“has avenged on her the blood of His servants” Revelation 19:1**. Which brings us to -

Revelation 19

We have seen that in order to understand this book we must see where the action is taking place. In contrast to the destruction which has been taking place on the earth in chapters 17 and 18, the heavenly ‘*Hallelujah Chorus*’ breaks forth in heaven and chapter 19 of the book gives us a view of the rejoicing that takes place there, at the end of the Great Tribulation.