

The Book of Revelation

By

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FIFTH EDITION

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CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT

"And there came one of the seven angels, which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters" (vs. 1).

The angels are vitally interested in the earth. Here one of the angels that had poured out his vial, offered to show John the end of the great whore.

The Virgin and the Whore

The church is the virgin bride of CHRIST. A bride who is unfaithful to her husband is an adulterous woman, and a church member who courts the friendship of the world commits spiritual adultery (James 4:4); The whore is apostate Christendom, or may even include all false religions. It is apostate Protestantism and Catholicism and all in one great union for the end time.

The Protestant church is divided into countless denominations and sects. No doubt most, if not all, began with a sincere group of like-minded believers who banded themselves together to worship GOD in their own way.

But time soon changes things. Bethel may be the "house of God" for Jacob, but it was in that spot that the calf of Jeroboam's idolatry must raise its head. And so with denominations. Their church systems, building, colleges, schools and missions may be started and maintained by the Godly people, but not long is it until the tares of the enemy appear and usually choke out much of the wheat.

A Call to Union

There is a call to union in our day. The Interchurch World movement may fail, but others will arise and take its place, until the true church is taken out and then iniquity, having no restraint, will head up into one mighty union; the Great Whore of Revelation seventeen.

It is not uncommon to have on the same platform a Roman Catholic priest; a Protestant minister and a Jewish rabbi. Not many moons have passed since such a group prayed over the radio for peace, and the Protestant minister claims to represent the fundamental group. Such an alliance is

hailed as a great step forward.

Almost any doctrine may be sacrificed in the interest of peace. Even the inspiration of the Scriptures, the deity of CHRIST, the blood atonement or the second coming of CHRIST must be ruled out if they stand in the way of such a group.

GOD's command is absolutely separation. Our Lord is with the "**two or three**" that have gathered in His name. The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable (James 3:17). That is, GOD is not interested in peace at any price. His first requirement is purity and not peace, for there can be no peace between those who differ in doctrine.

The Two Brides

John is told to "**Come hither**" and see the end of apostate Christendom. Similar language is used in a later chapter where John is told to "**Come hither**" and see the "**bride, the Lamb's wife**" (ch 21:9). One is the pure virgin bride of CHRIST, the other is the abominable adulterous bride of the beast.

An Editorial

Recently the ministers of our town held a series of Lenten services and used a booklet put out by that apostate organization, The Federal Council of the Churches of CHRIST in America.

In a recent editorial in a Protestant paper there appeared an article entitled "*A Mighty Union.*" "At the present writing the entire Protestant world is feeling the pulse of the Methodist union which has created a denomination of eight million souls - that is perhaps the most significant union in Protestantism - The effect of this union will be felt throughout the entire Protestant world - why should not others unite? - In every case the fellowship of kindred spirits would be strengthened; organization would be simplified; duplication of efforts and cost of operation reduced and the effectiveness of the church enormously enhanced."

The book of Revelation is written in sign or picture language.

"The waters, which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" (vs. 15).

Long years ago a woman took leaven and hid it in "**three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened**" (Matthew 13:33). After the true church is removed, all apostate religions will unite with not one single vital doctrine of truth. Leaven is a type of evil and the whore sits upon all nations of the world, for by that time the whole of Christian doctrine will be corrupted and apostate.

"With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication" (vs. 2).

The kings of the earth seek her favor and flock about her, committing fornication with her. Kings have always needed a spiritual adviser. Pharaoh kept a group of magicians; with

Nebuchadnezzar there were the astrologers; Balak called upon Balaam, while in our own day we are told that many of the rulers of the world have mediums as their spiritual advisers.

The Woman on the Beast

"So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns" (vs. 3).

"The woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth" (vs. 18).

This points to Rome. No doubt the Roman Catholic church will play a very important part in end time events. John was carried in spirit to the wilderness to see an adulterous woman, the bride of the antichrist. Later John was carried away in the spirit to a great and high mountain to see the **"bride, the Lamb's wife."**

The bride of the antichrist is a city and the bride of the Lamb is the holy Jerusalem which will descend **"out of Heaven from God"** (ch. 21:10). When we speak of a city we sometimes mean its inhabitants and sometimes we mean its buildings.

This **"beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition"** (vs. 8).

The seven heads **"are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth"** (vs. 9). A mountain is a prominent place and in Scriptural symbolism it stands for a government.

"The ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet, but receive power as kings one hour with the beast" (vs. 12).

The final form of the Roman empire will be in ten kingdoms. This arrangement will last but for a short time because it is in the **"days of these kings"** that the GOD of Heaven shall set up His Kingdom (Daniel 2:44).

Gaudy Apparel

"And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication" (vs. 4).

This woman is clothed in a gaudy layout of clothing.

It is a fitting picture of our day when the church is saying, **"I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked"** (Revelation 3:17).

Her golden cup is bright and attractive to the world but it is full of things that are abominable to GOD.

GOD is interested in just one thing, namely the salvation of mankind. Modernism would turn its attention to education, reforms and social betterment. They would rather get the prodigal a job and leave him in the far country, than get him home to the Father's house; they would rather paint the pump than to clean up the source of the water supply.

The world is doomed. GOD has sent out a lifeboat in the Gospel of His Son. Soon this old world like a ship, will take its final plunge. How foolish to be occupied in painting its dark hull when there is yet but little time to spring into the lifeboat and be saved.

Religious Babylon

"And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth" (vs. 5).

In Chapter eighteen we have commercial Babylon, here we have ecclesiastical Babylon. Although the great characteristic is Babel, yet they have but one cup. At least one thing they make all nations drink of, is denying the deity of CHRIST. Here is the mother of **"harlots and abominations."**

Nothing is more disgusting and abominable than an unfaithful woman. In chapter twelve we saw another woman. That was Israel of whom came CHRIST; this is the mother of abominations of whom came the spirit of antichrist.

"And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints... and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration" (vs. 6).

This woman is apostate Christendom and it is there that we find the source of all persecution.

Persecution usually comes from within, not from without, the organized religion. The world hated our Lord but it was not the social nor the political world, it was the religious world of scribes and Pharisees. And so the woman is drunken with the blood of saints. All the blood of the martyrs is charged up against false religions.

"And the angel said unto me, wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her" (vs. 7).

The beast is the political power; the woman is the religious power. The woman rides the beast; that is, the kings of the earth support and carry her around as long as she can be made to assist them and serve their purposes. If the pope will bless the army; if Protestant ministers will pray for the success of the army; if they will but use their influence for the success of their program, they are willing to carry them about and pay them well for the privilege.

Religious Babylon Destroyed

However much the kings of the earth may pamper and carry the woman about, she yet rides in the saddle.

She holds the reins and helps direct its movements. This is sure to bring a clash, for there cannot be two heads. Even now do we hear rumblings of anger from the lawmakers of our land; even now do they advise churchmen to keep out of politics. **"The ten horns... shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire"** (vs. 16).

After his resurrection, the beast seems to change his tactics. He must be the lone object of worship and he hates all opposition. He will destroy the organizations; take her money and burn her cathedrals, temples and places of assembly.

One of the most powerful and mysterious forces in all the world is that of the pope. He has a strange hold on countless thousands and they move at his command. He has no navy and no standing army and yet millions will follow him even unto death. But this power must cease, for a time will come when the beast is the sole object of worship. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled, but let them turn their backs and refuse to hearken and GOD will let them reap the fruit of their evil way, even to worshipping Satan's superman, the antichrist.

GOD will permit men to follow their evil way and then put it into the heart of wicked men to work vengeance and destroy them. The ten kings will **"have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast"** (vs. 13).

Men will desire and work and scheme and plot to get a high position in the world. They will trample under foot their neighbors and even their friends to win a political position. But here we have ten men who have already won the place of king and yet they willingly give it up to their leader, the beast.

In baseball, a sacrifice hit is applauded, and here as ten men hand over the reins of government in the name of better times, they win the plaudits of millions. It is not, however in their own heart that this move is born for **"God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled"** (vs. 17).

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