

Today is the second part, of a 2-part message on Revelation 17. In Revelation 17, there are 2 key characters, and **both** of them are evil. In our first part (a few weeks ago), we encountered the first character (the great prostitute), and to confuse things a bit, this woman, is a symbol of a symbol:

This alluring woman in her expensive designer clothes and blinged out with all sorts of gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her sexual immorality.... – this woman, actually represents a city – the great city “Babylon”, but then we discover that “Babylon” is itself, a symbol ...

Babylon is a symbol, of the arrogance and extravagance and the indulgence, of man in godless, arrogant civilisation.

Babylon represents:

1. a society that rejects God;
2. It's a place where its people elevate **themselves** to the place of God
3. It's a society that rejects the **Law** of God, and because it has no basis for its morality, it descends into **immorality**
4. It's a place where the arrogance of Godless civilisation, tramples the world's poor, and takes advantage of the world's weak
5. And fifthly, it's the arrogance of Godless civilisation that persecutes the disciples of Jesus. Why? Because disciples of Jesus Christ live **counter** to the culture of Babylon, **and** Disciples of Jesus call Babylon to repent, and to turn to the Lord Jesus Christ..

And so the task of us Christians, is, even though we live **in** Babylon, **not** to live as Babylonians – we are to live **counter** to the culture in which we live.

If you haven't noticed this yet – that as a Christian, you are called by our Saviour, to live very differently to how most people in our culture live – if you haven't noticed this yet, well it's probably time to start learning: just what it does mean, to be a disciple of Jesus.

So, Babylon is the first key character, and Babylon is evil – the arrogance of Godless civilisation – Against God, and against Christians.... And in Chapter 17, Babylon is judged and destroyed. Woo Hoo!!!!!!

But don't cheer too loudly, because to understand chapter 17, we have to understand that the enemy who does away with Babylon, is **not** our friend.

So, let's read Chapter 17 again:

17 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters, ² with whom the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality, and with the wine of whose sexual immorality the dwellers on earth have become drunk." ³ And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names,

and it had seven heads and ten horns. ⁴ The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her sexual immorality. ⁵ And on her forehead was written a name of mystery: "Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations." ⁶ And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.

When I saw her, I marvelled greatly. ⁷ But the angel said to me, "Why do you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman, and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns that carries her. ⁸ The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction. And the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will marvel to see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come. ⁹ This calls for a mind with wisdom: the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated; ¹⁰ they are also seven kings, five of whom have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he does come he must remain only a little while. ¹¹ As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to destruction. ¹² And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received royal

power, but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast. ¹³ These are of one mind, and they hand over their power and authority to the beast. ¹⁴ They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful."

¹⁵ And the angel said to me, "The waters that you saw, where the prostitute is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages. ¹⁶ And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will hate the prostitute. They will make her desolate and naked, and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire, ¹⁷ for God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by being of one mind and handing over their royal power to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. ¹⁸ And the woman that you saw is the great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth."

"The enemy of my enemy, is **not** my friend."

2 key characters, in opposition to each other, but they're **both** evil:

The **first** character: the great Prostitute, is a symbol for Babylon, which itself is a symbol of the arrogance of Godless civilisation, and everything it represents.

And whilst Christians will rejoice at the downfall of Babylon, Babylon is the least important of the 2 evil figures. While Babylon (for a time), rides on the back of the second character (the Beast), the Beast hates Babylon, and the Beast destroys Babylon.

And so, I'll say it again, "The enemy of my enemy, is **not** my friend."

Back in chapters 12 & 13, we already learned, that as the world's history nears its end, an **unholy** trinity, will rise to power:

- Satan (represented as a dragon)
- Antichrist (represented as a 7-headed, 10-horned beast), who attempts to mimic Christ in an unholy way
- And his minister of religion (the false prophet)...

Antichrist and the false prophet, make war on God's people. They do it by compelling false religion and idolatry, and they do it by shutting Christians out of the market place. Anyone who refuses to worship the antichrist (or his image) won't be allowed to trade. And Jesus' faithful disciples will be persecuted: They'll be starved; imprisoned; and executed.... (We learned all this in chapters 12 & 13).

The **Holy** Trinity (Father; Son; Holy Spirit) – well, they have a wonderful **unity** of communion together... But this (of course), is where Satan's **unholy** trinity fails completely... The **holy** trinity have a perfect bond of love, that binds the Godhead together. **And** it's a bond of love that binds **us**

together with the Father; Son; Holy Spirit. We're not only saved by God, but we fellowship **with** God – we are **united** with God. We are sealed by His Holy Spirit – He lives inside of us.

But the **unholy** trinity, of: Satan; Antichrist; and the False prophet, well they don't **have** that bond of love... The only thing that binds **them** together, is their shared hatred of God and their shared hatred of God's children. And here in chapter 17, we begin to see the collapse where Satan begins to tear himself apart. Jesus told us that a kingdom divided against itself will fall, and that's exactly what Satan does in chapter 17.

I love the way chapter 17's written – it's actually mocking Satan. In Revelation 4, God is worshipped as : **the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!**"

But when it comes to the antichrist, who sets himself up in **opposition** to God, well he's described as that which was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction.

Alright, the beast (Antichrist) is **not** eternal like God is eternal... **God was**; God **is**; God **is to come**, But Antichrist **was**, Antichrist **is not**, and Antichrist will be again, but only so he can go to his eternal destruction. You see, Antichrist sets himself up as this Christ-like figure, but he can never, ever even come **close** to comparing with the true Christ. In chapter 17, Antichrist even tries to mimic the real Christ, by doing battle with evil, and by defeating evil, but (of course) for Antichrist to defeat evil, who's he defeating? He's

defeating **himself**, and it's the beginning of his **own** destruction...

“The enemy of my enemy, is **not** my friend.”

And so, the 2nd key character, is the beast (antichrist), and we've talked about him before: A world ruler will rise to power, and the nations of the world, will hand their power over **to** Antichrist. People will begin to worship him, because he is fatally wounded, and yet he lives. And anyone who doesn't worship Antichrist, will be ostracised (they won't be allowed to buy or sell), and they'll be killed. And so there's going to be a very strong temptation to compromise.
(battle for Mosul example)

And for those who are not discerning, when they see Antichrist take down Babylon – when they see Antichrist destroying that which is opposed to God, they might begin to feel that Antichrist is “the good guy” – he becomes their hero – their saviour... But he's nothing of the sort. He's worse!!
....

So, how does it all unfold?

Well, there's lots of symbolism here, and we could do a lot of guessing, but I think all we can be sure of, is if we concentrate on the **big** picture. If we know the **big** picture (and if we can be **sure** of the big picture), well when the time comes, the finer details might be bit clearer for us.

But before we look at the big picture, we **do** have to address some of these symbols:

- We've already talked about the prostitute, representing Babylon, representing arrogant, Godless civilisation, opposing God, and opposing God's children
- We've also talked about the beast – representing antichrist.
- But the Beast had 7 heads, representing 7 mountains, but they also represent 7 kings. What does that mean?

Well, many people have tried to line up , and try and work out exactly who these 7 kings are. 7 mountains seems to be an allusion to Rome, but who are these 7 kings? And from where do we begin the countdown? If John is seeing things that will happen in the future, has the countdown already begun for John? Or is the countdown from a future perspective? At the time John wrote this, had 5 of them had already been, 1 of them was currently ruling, and the 7th one was yet to come? Or is it from the perspective from the reader in the future? ...

And so we could try and name these kings, and some of the commentaries I read gave varying possibilities, but it depends on who you begin with, and who you count as a king... And are they kings? Or are they nations? Or are they superpowers?

And so, we have to remember, that what we're dealing with here, are symbols.

Yes, 7 mountains do represent Rome, but what does Rome represent? The 7 heads also represent 7 rulers, or 7 nations, or 7 superpowers (as they do in Daniel)...

I think what's important for us to 'get' from this, is the beast (antichrist) gets his power, through the **rulers**; he gets his power, through the **nations**; he gets his power, through the **superpowers** of the world, that rise and fall through the world's history. And the 8th head, which will be the arrival of Antichrist himself, will be like, but worse than any of the nations, or any of the rulers, or any of the superpowers that have ever existed before.

Where does he get his power from?

Well, this is where the 10 horns come in to play: The 10 horns represent 10 kings, and the fact that they are horns, refers to their power,,,,, The number 10 may refer to their completeness (or a significant number of them.),,,,, And these kings / or kingdoms / or nations, will hand over their power and authority to Antichrist.

- Could it be like the United Nations?
- Could it be like the G20?
- Could it be like the EU?
- Could it be like the union of the Soviet states?
- Could it be like NATO?

Are you getting the picture? A bunch of strong and powerful nations, will come together with a like mind, and unite their military strength under one leader

And firstly they'll destroy Babylon, and then they'll go to war against Jesus Christ Himself. (That of course is who the Lamb is).

So, that's a few of the symbols – What's the big picture.

1.

Firstly, Babylon is judged, and Babylon is destroyed. (and this is a good thing) Godless, arrogant civilisation – that has all of its confidence in itself, and sets itself against God, and against God's children, is destroyed. It's gutted.

And though it's Antichrist and his minions who do it, it's actually the work of God. V17 tells us how the powerful kings (or the powerful nations of the world) (That's what the 10 horns represent), do it because **“God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose”**

God is in control (you see). And so when you see Antichrist – when we see the forces of evil, destroying Godless civilisation, rejoice, because God has put it into their hearts to do this – it's the judgment of God, against arrogant, Godless civilisation.

Next week, we're going to read the lament of those whose hearts are set on Babylon, and how they are so sad, because all of its wealth and trappings, are no more... And I reckon it's going to be quite a challenge for us as Christians, as we consider, “Is my heart set on Jesus Christ and His eternity? Or does my heart really belong to the wealth and prosperity of this world?” But that's for next week.

So Babylon is judged and destroyed by Antichrist and his minions, but it's **God's** plan, and it's **God's** work.

2.

Secondly, Antichrist may rise power, and he may seem to be unstoppable, but he's no more significant than a bug that will be splattered on the windscreen of God's purpose in history.

As we read through ch17, we keep getting reminded that Antichrist, and his minions are bound for destruction (and it's not far away):

- V8 tells us that the beast was, is not, and is about to go to destruction.
- The 7th King, will remain only a little while.
- The 8th king, goes to destruction.
- The 10 horns (and what they represent - the kings or nations that give their power to Antichrist), receive their authority for just 1 hour – alright, just for a little while.
- They're not going to last very long, because they're going to make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them.

Antichrist is but a bug, that will be splattered on the windscreen of God's purpose in history.

3.

Thirdly, The Lamb (Jesus Christ), is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. **He** is the one who is Victorious – not Antichrist.

4.

And fourthly, those who are with Jesus, are called, and chosen and faithful.

Jesus Christ calls us, God has chosen us, and the faithful part is up to us. By His Holy Spirit, God **helps** us to be faithful, and with His help, we **can** remain faithful, through all of the temptations, and through all of the troubles, and through all of the persecutions. And those who are with Jesus Christ victorious, are called, chosen, and faithful.

That's the **big** picture. There **will** be worldwide, international intrigue and upset. The whole world financial system, and everything tied to it **will** collapse – the functioning of godless civilisation, **is** going to crumble. Antichrist **will** rise to power...

Does this mean God has lost control? Not in the least – In fact, it's exactly the opposite. This is all part of God's plan. But Antichrist isn't going to be around for long – He's doomed for destruction, **Jesus Christ** is the one who will be victorious, and those who are with Him (Christians) are called, and chosen, and faithful.

That's the **big** picture. And once we've got the big picture, it's not so scary is it?

So, what else is important for us to know? Well, I want to share this with you – it's what jumped out at me:

Babylon rides on the back of the beast. It's **connected** to the beast. It's **powered** by the beast. The Beast is **against** Babylon, but the Beast and Babylon are both Satanic. So why would the Beast hate Babylon and want to destroy it?

Well, that's all God's doing. God frustrates his enemies so that they turn on one another. And that's why Satan turns on himself.

And we can see this principal unfolding in the world even today. Here's a couple of examples:

I think you'd have to agree with me, that our society, is growing more and more Godless. The laws of God are not just being disregarded – they're being labelled as "unjust". Our society has thrown out morality, and is embracing an "almost anything goes" kind of an ethic.

And we shouldn't be surprised by this, because we live in Babylon – this is what Babylon represents – the arrogance of Godless civilisation – against God, and against God's children.

And yet, as a **reaction** to this Godlessness, we have **the rise of Islam**. It rose before, (mainly through military conquest), as Muhammad and then various Caliphates, and the Ottoman Empire went out in conquest... Here's a map, showing some of the territories that at one time was held by Islam. Its tentacles reached out from Persia, the Middle East, the Balkan states, Spain, and even getting into France.

But by the end of the two World Wars, Islam had been beaten into submission.... And so in one respect, Islam is like Antichrist. It rose to being a world power, but then by the end of the World Wars, it seemed like it was a spent force (it **seemed** like it was dead – it was a ‘has-been’), but now Islam is rising again.

Islam is currently the world’s fastest growing religionⁱ. And most of its growth is once again, due to military conquest, but also, it comes from immigration, and a higher birth-rate than other religions, but there are also conversions.

Western journalists are beginning to ask the question, “Why are so many westerners converting to Islam?” Actually, usually their **biggest** question is “Why would **any** western **women**, **ever** convert to Islam?” To the liberal western media, this just makes no sense to them at all...

But my understanding is this: An increasing number of westerners are converting to Islam, as a reaction against the hopelessness of the Godless civilisation they live in. They’re looking for something bigger. They’re looking for a moral structure to live by. In a society where immorality and lawlessness seems to reign, they embrace the strict morals, and the order and structure, and the discipline, that Islam has to offer... ⁱⁱ

Babylon and Islam, are both Satanic, but Islam hates everything about Babylon. The immorality; the corruption; the Godlessness... And so Islam and Christianity, have a common enemy – Godless civilisation, but under Islamic rule, Christians fare even worse.

It's interesting though, that the spread of Islam, is only made possible because of the materialism and the Godlessness of Babylon. For many years, they've been bedfellows. The oil of the Islamic world, has made the success of Babylon possible, and at the same time, the wealth of Babylon is being transferred to Islamic nations, making rise of Islam possible...

That's one example. Here's another one:

The green movement.

On the surface, the image the green movement like to project of themselves, is "a getting back to basics" – in essence, it's a rejection of what Babylon has to offer: It's a rejection of the greed and the opulence, and the subsequent overuse of resources and whatnot.... And yet at their heart, when the greens come to power, what are they most against? They are most against God, God's laws, and God's children.

Likewise, the green movement can only ever get a go-on, **because** we're living in Babylon – the green movement is a luxury that can only be afforded by those who live in the wealth and prosperity of Babylon. And yet the green movement hates, the very thing, that has allowed it to exist...

Here's another example:

The rise of communism

During the communist revolutions of the early to mid 1900's, millions of people were killed.

- The Russian Revolution had somewhere around 9Millionⁱⁱⁱ deaths
- During the rule of Stalin, **another** 6-9Million soviet citizens were killed in the Gulag and deaths during interrogations and deportations^{iv} ...
- Under Mao (in People's Republic of China), around about 40 Million were killed
- In Cambodia, (under the Khmer Rouge) around 20% of the population were murdered...

In just about every communist revolution, the death tolls have been horrific... And Communism (at one stage) grew very strong. In the Soviet union, they went from wooden ploughs, to becoming a nuclear superpower.

And yet, when the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, it seemed like it was all over for Communism – it seemed like it was a failed experiment – it was an ideal won with blood, and yet one that has always failed to live up to any of its promises...

But today, have you noticed that Communism seems to have a new lease on life again, and it seems that Communism is (once again) growing strong. The transformation of China has been amazing. Its trade with the capitalist nations of the world, has allowed it to grow its industries. And now, China is beginning to flex its muscles. It builds islands, where there were none... It's investing in land and resources, all over the world...

It has grown strong **off** of capitalism – the wealth of Babylon has helped it to grow and prosper, but now, China; Russia;

North Korea; are becoming more and more war-like, as they turn against Babylon...

And of course we know the hatred that Communism has towards God and God's children.

So, that's just a few examples of how we can see (even today), how Satan turns on Himself, where a Satanic ideal, sets itself against Godless society. And so it shouldn't be a surprise to us, when Antichrist rises, that he will turn himself against Babylon, in a very similar mechanism to what we see today.

But when this happens, are we going to be afraid? I hope not. We have every reason, NOT to be afraid, because we have the big picture:

- It is God's plan for Godless civilisation to be judged and destroyed
- Antichrist may seem unstoppable, but he's but a bug to be splattered on the windscreen of God's History.
- Jesus Christ is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and **He** is victorious.
- And those who will stand with Jesus Christ in victory, are called, chosen and faithful.

That's the big picture. And it's comforting for me, to know that no matter what international upset and turmoil should arise, we are called and chosen, to remain faithful to Jesus Christ, and that's it.

We are not to belong to Babylon – we are not to be at all comfortable with fitting in to arrogant, Godless civilisation,,,, Nor are we to give our allegiance to the powers that rise to overthrow Godless civilisation,,,,,

The enemy of my enemy is not my friend. There is only one to whom we remain faithful – the Lord Jesus Christ... That's all we need to learn, from ch17.

Questions?

ⁱ <http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2017/03/17/islam-worlds-fastest-growing-religion-except-australia>

ⁱⁱ <http://www1.cbn.com/spirituallife/why-are-so-many-westerners-converting-to-islam>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://necrometrics.com/20c5m.htm#RCW>

^{iv} https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Stalin#Calculating_the_number_of_victims