

21b REV

Let's continue our study now in Revelation chapter 17. We're looking at the Scarlet Woman on top of the Scarlet Beast. One of the things I wondered if anyone would catch or ask me about, but obviously it's Friday night, we're all a little fatigued.

But see if you notice this at all. What does it say in verse one? Come, I will show you the judgment of who? The great harlot who sits on many waters. Then we go to the Eremos, which is the desert.

Does anybody see any sort of tension between a woman sitting on many waters and then going to the desert to see her sitting on the beast? Well, of course, the desert and the water are not the same thing. The woman doesn't say she's sitting on the Eremos, she's sitting on the beast. But verse one gives us a great clue because she sits on many waters.

What do the waters, many waters, turmoil, always represent in Scripture? It's the chaotic forces of darkness. The chaotic forces of darkness have been given shape and given form and have been brought into submission in the form of this beast. This is the kingdom of the Antichrist.

It's the seven-headed, ten-horned thing. Starts out, you have these ten kings, the ten horns, and that's how the thing begins. In fact, we're going to be told a little bit further down that these ten horns, you get down to verse 12, it's going to tell us that these are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom.

They're a committee that represent the power of the beast, but they don't have their own kingdom. They're all kings and they're kind of, you know, it's rulership by committee. And of course, the little horn is going to come up between them.

That's going to be the Antichrist proper. So, this harlot sits on many waters. She controls these multitudinous, multifarious, water-symbolized group of otherwise chaotic people.

She is adorned, as we've already seen, in the purple and scarlet, the gold and the precious stones and the pearls. If you've ever walked into a great cathedral, if you've ever looked at the officiating nabobs in the front with their pointy hats and their robes and their trappings and their over-gilded, overstuffed, over-embroidered stuff. And you know what really is painful is when you see a Protestant evangelistic Christian get on TV and begin to reproduce the same sort of decor.

You know, you have to watch TBN to appreciate that comment. But when you start seeing everything over-gilded and over-decorated and overstuffed and over-fine and, you know, gold-plated napkin rings and so on all over the place. I mean, it's just too much.

It has nothing to do with Jesus who foxes have dens and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man is not a place to lay his head. He was meek. He was without ostentation.

His treasure was the truth. And we are encouraged to lay a treasure for ourselves in heaven and not here on earth. And when you see somebody going in the exact opposite direction, you know that there's something deeply amiss.

So, pearls, gold, precious stones, the trappings of ritual that you find in a lot of religions. It's not just the Roman Catholic Church. You can look at the Eastern Orthodox and the Episcopalians, a lot of others.

The more ritual, you tend to find all of these trappings and finery. You even see today, by the way, this is not just the Byzantine sort of, you know, gilding of the golden coin and the painting of the lily and all of that, which is, by the way, the original quote, just to straighten everybody out. It's not the gilding of the lily.

If you go back and read Shakespeare, it's like, I forget what the name of the coin is, but it's the gilding of gold and the painting of the lily that has been squashed into gilding the lily, just so you know. Anyway, what are the trappings today that are the equivalent of the gold and the purple and the pearls and all the rest of it? Look at your megachurches with their multi-million dollar entertainment systems, lighting, sound, state-of-the-art sonic equipment. Not sonic equipment, but you know what I mean.

It's overdone. It's computerized. They've got millions of dollars worth of stuff just so you can come sit and be wowed.

Well, that's no different than a pope walking in with a big gold chain and a thing full of smoke. It's just the modern equivalent. And that is just as rife in the ritualistic and traditionalized versions of Protestant Christianity as it is in the Catholic version.

So notice in verse four, I mean, there's so much here. I'm in danger of not being able to finish the chapter tonight. What does she have in her hand? She could have a sword.

She could have a tennis racket. She could have a bag of shekels. I mean, there's all kinds of things she could have.

What does she have in her hand? A golden cup. Now, as soon as you think about a golden cup, what do you think of? Indiana Jones, what's he looking for? What are Monty Python's horseless knights looking for? No, not a shrubbery. The grail, the cup.

What is the best thing the church can focus on? This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Instead, you have this woman with a cup full of abominations covered in blood, sitting on a beast that is soaked in blood. It's just the... If you want to talk about anti-Christos, I mean, you can't get any more anti than this.

It's just the reverse of what it's supposed to be. Think Belshazzar. Think handwriting on the wall.

Mene, mene, teko, ufarsin. You know, dala, dala, 50 cent nickel. I mean, it's just going down, down, down.

So, she has in her hand a golden cup not holding forth to the world the New Testament in the blood of Christ. Instead, abominations and the filthiness of fornication. It isn't enter into a relationship with Christ.

It's enter into a relationship with me. Illicit relationship, evil relationship, abominable relationship. Drink this cup and go to hell.

This is the bottom line. On her forehead is this name written. There's an interesting textual decision to be made here on the word mystery.

If you look at a New American Standard or an NIV, you will find that this has been separated from the title, that this is a mystery title. In other words, that mystery is a description of the title and the title actually begins with the word Babylon. And I think this is probably pretty close.

That this is probably the way it should be taken. I'm not sure mystery is actually written on the forehead. A mystery name is written on her forehead.

And this says the Babylon here is not to be taken literally. This is metaphorical. This is symbolic.

This requires thought. Babylon. What do we know about Babylon? What's the first mention of Babylon in the Bible? We're in the last book of the Bible.

You've got to go all the way back to the first book of the Bible, don't you? To the big tower called Babel. Babylon and Babel, they are derived from the very same word. They speak of the same location.

And of course, Babel, even in modern English, if somebody is babbling incoherently, it is confusion. And our word Babel comes from Babel. And that's what it means.

Thousands of years before Christ, you have one of the most famous rulers of this region besides Nebuchadnezzar. Long time before Nebuchadnezzar. Thousands of years before Nebuchadnezzar.

Hammurabi. Where did Hammurabi sit and come up with his code? Babylon. Babel.

Nebuchadnezzar was the first ruler of Babylon. Nimrod, way back in Genesis chapter 10, founded the place. He had a wife who, interestingly, is actually mentioned in Scripture.

It's kind of unusual for the begats and these are the generations of. But Nimrod's wife is mentioned. Her name is Semiramis.

Genesis 10, 8-12. Semiramis is the mother of the mystery cult that originated in Babylon. She's the mother of what later came to be known as Zoroastrianism.

Gnosticism. The mother-son perverse cults that go back and people say, oh look, Christianity borrowed all of this from... No, they didn't. Semiramis initiated this stuff way back in the earliest generations of history.

Wife of Nimrod. She founded these secret religious rites. According to ancient legend, Semiramis had a son who was miraculously conceived.

Tammuz, someone we have seen recently in our Ezekiel study. Tammuz, miraculously born to Semiramis, etc. False corruption and perversion of the seed of the woman prophecy given all the way back in Genesis chapter 3. This Babylonian religion is the archetype and the breeding ground for all sorts of perversities and false religious traditions such as being the mother of God, orders of virgins, resurrection myths.

Satan knew the plan way back and said the best way to obscure and thwart the plan of God is to put a bunch of similar looking but false trash out there ahead of time and make it look derivative, make it look late, make it look like just another in a long line. And so Satan, he knew what the seed of the woman meant. He knew that Jesus would have to be divine.

I mean, he's no dummy. He's a heck of a lot smarter than any human. And so what does he do? Well, what do you do when somebody fires a surface-to-air missile at you? What do you do if you've got an air-to-air missile coming at you? You dump the countermeasures.

You put something out there that looks like an airplane but is not an airplane. You put something out there that looks like an exhaust but is not an exhaust. Put something out there that will confuse and obfuscate the whole issue.

And that's exactly what Satan has done. All the way back in the earliest generations. You can't get ten chapters into Genesis without this stuff taking place.

So, the mother of God, child of God, virginal births, orders of virgins who become religious prostitutes. You remember when we talked about Tammuz and Ezekiel, that there was a tradition that he was killed by a wild animal and then restored to life, resurrected. This is condemned throughout the Scriptures.

Jeremiah talked about it. Ezekiel talks about it. Baal worship springs out of this whole Tammuz deal.

And of course, it was counterfeited right on the holy precincts of the temple in Jerusalem itself. It wasn't until the Persians came in and kicked the Babylonians out. You remember, you know, hoist a cold one with Belshazzar and lose your life.

And then here are the Medes and the Persians. They pretty well poured a lot of cold water on the religions, the mystery religions of the Babylonians. And so, these things, like trying to get rid of mold or fungus or something, you squash it here and it just spreads outward.

And a lot of this stuff removed to places like, one of the hotbeds when it was removed from Babylon was Pergamos or Pergamum. Remember one of the letters to the seven churches is written to the church of Pergamos? Well, this was a seat of this whole weeping for Tammuz and Babylonian mystery, virgin prostitute cult, mother of God stuff. The chief priests of this cult wore hats.

And you know what the hats looked like? Tall, pointy things. Looked like the heads of fishes. Or like a miter.

Like Dagon priests. Fish head, fish god. They wore these hats that looked like the head of a fish stuck on.

And you know, you get your miters from essentially the same shape. Just a little shark head up there. A little piranha head.

The crowns had the words, keeper of the bridge. I'm the keeper of the bridge. I am the intermediary.

I am the one that crosses the gulf between you and Satan in reality. But I am the guy that spans the gulf. I'm the keeper of the bridge.

What does the Pope claim to be? He's the vicar of Christ. He's the substitute Christ. You know that's what they call him.

They call him vicar. You know vicar comes from vicarious. Vicarious means instead of.

I get vicarious pleasure. You smoke and I watch you and I second hand smoke. I enjoy vicariously.

Or I can't play tennis but my child does. And so I sit in the stands and get vicarious pleasure watching them do what I can't do. It's substitute.

Vicar means substitute. The Pope calls himself the vicar of Christ. He's the substitute Christ.

In Greek you would say Antichristos. The Roman emperors grabbed this title for themselves. Keeper of the bridge.

And if you want to up the ante a little bit and say you're the major keeper of the bridge. You know what you call yourself? Pontifex Maximus. Pontifex Maximus means I'm the big time keeper of the bridge.

Which of course comes down. What's the other word for Pope? The pontiff is visiting. The pontifex.

I mean you know. How many hammers have to hit us in the head for this? Later of course in Pergamum. The mystery religions started losing their credibility and their traction.

Their hold on the people. They moved to another great capital of the time. Rome.

And in Rome they insinuated themselves into the church. And their rituals and their hats and their titles soaked right in. And were transmogrified into what we now know as the Roman Catholic Church.

Babylon is the symbol of apostasy in the true sense of the word. Of blasphemy and so forth. Well, I saw the one drunk with the blood of the saints.

There won't be any Christians in the peaceful kingdom of the beast. We're all gone. There's anybody who pops up and starts saying, Hey, I think I believe Jesus is the Messiah.

I'm not going to take the mark of the beast. Bloodshed. Destruction.

Oppression. These are the souls under the altar that say, How long O Lord, that we saw earlier. They are not church.

They are saints. They are martyrs. They are servants of God.

They are those who weep and cry over the sad state of affairs. And God says, wait a little while, you will be avenged. Well, what is the meaning of all this? We pick up in verse 7, The angel said to me, Why do you marvel, John? I know you gave it the old college try.

You wrote your gospel. You wrote your epistles. You tried to snuff out Gnosticism.

You tried to hold the light of truth out for people. Just like John the Baptist. Remember the whole discussion of light in the gospel of John chapter 1. John the Baptist was not that light.

He bore witness to that light. That light was the light of men. That light is life.

There's a great discussion in John chapter 1. John tried to make this clear. But he looks down the corridors of time and he says, Essentially, my God. Look at how this has turned out.

He's amazed. The angel says, look, why do you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman. And this is what, again, makes us think that the word mystery is not a part of the title.

It's a description of the title. I'll tell you the mystery of the woman and the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. The beast that you saw was, is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition.

Now, we just got through saying, which beast is this? And we said this is the Antichrist who comes as the beast out of the sea. Because he's got the seven heads and the ten horns and so on. But, what is the motivating force and life of that beast? What gives it its power? What gives it its ability to dominate? It's the other beast.

It's the beast that comes out of the bottom. Remember, this is a trinity. And it's like saying, well, who did the miracles that Jesus performed? Well, Jesus performs them, but it's in the power of the Spirit.

That's why Jesus says, blaspheming the Spirit. If you claim I do these miracles by Beelzebub, you're blaspheming the Spirit. Because it is the power of the Spirit by which Jesus did His miracles.

It's the power of the Spirit by which we do our miracles in daily life. We operate in faith and we trust God and we persevere under great stress and trial. So, he says, the beast that you saw was, is not, will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition.

What is this was, is not, and will ascend? Well, we've already seen some of this, haven't we? We know the fact that Satan's sway has operated in the past. He's been out and about. He was.

It says he is not. He is the Prince of the Power of the Air. He is the God of this world.

But, there is a chaining, there is a removal that takes place. Where are we in the chronology as the bowl angel is speaking to John? The angel's bowl is empty. He's saying, look, I'm showing you this thing in the past.

That beast that we're looking at that was back in the past before I dumped out my bowl or as I dumped out my bowl. That beast was when we were doing the bowl thing. He is not because he's in the bottomless pit, but he is going to ascend at the end of the thousand years.

And he will go into perdition. What is perdition? This is in the middle of verse 8. It is the word Apollia. Apollia.

Remember the name of the angel Apollyon? And Jesus calls Judas the son of perdition. The son of Apollia. Apollia and its derivatives and cognates, its word group, means total

and complete loss.

It is loss. Paul says, I would suffer the Apollia of all things that I might gain Christ. Loss.

Obliteration of things. You can be a believer and be a son of loss. Because the loss in that context is your inheritance, your treasure in heaven, your reward, your opportunities, your portion and your lot.

Here, the fate of the beast out of the bottomless pit, i.e. Satan, is total and complete loss. Obliteration. That's his fate.

That's where he's going. Comes up out of the pit and he's going to go into oblivion. 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.

Now, he was operating specifically in the tribulation. He is not in the millennium. And then he is again.

He comes up out of the bottomless pit. This is post ascension from the pit and pre-Apollia, pre-oblivion. He's got this short space of time where he's like Jack Nicholson.

I'm back. Right? And there he is. Who is going to marvel? Who is going to be impressed when he comes up out of the bottomless pit? Those whose names are not written in the book.

The book that is from the foundation of the world. The book is from the foundation of the world. That's how long the book has been in existence.

When God set up the world, he set up the book. There are going to be two kinds of people in the world I'm creating here. You've got the seekers and the non-seekers.

You've got the believers and the unbelievers. You've got the faithful and the faithless. Two kinds of people in this book.

This is the book of life. Jesus said, the one who believes in me shall live and not die. Never die.

And of course that makes great sense when you view life in terms of falling asleep. You close your eyes. You open your eyes.

There is no real experience of death. You just transition from earthly life to resurrection life as a church age believer. So, those who dwell on the earth are going to be impressed.

John marvels when he sees the woman riding the scarlet beast. The angel says, what are you marveling for? I'll tell you who's going to marvel. These non-believers, the tares

amongst the wheat, are going to marvel when they see this guy come back again.

There's going to be some marveling. They're going to be impressed. They're going to gather.

They're going to surround the camp of the saints. We'll see this later on. So now, he says in verse 9, here is the mind which has wisdom.

This is great in Greek. It says, here is the noose that has Sophia. Here is the mind that has not gnosis or epinosis knowledge, but Sophia.

This is the ability to take knowledge and apply it to a situation. We talked about this last time in terms of chaos management. What do you do when all hell is breaking loose on earth or in your life? You have to think.

You have to put two and two together. Take your knowledge. Put it together.

Draw conclusions. Make applications. You can't vapor lock.

You can't choke. You can't seize up. You can't just freeze.

You have to think, think, think. Here is the mind that can think. Here is the mind that can put together not just gnosis, knowledge, but Sophia, wisdom.

The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. What is the most famous place in the world that is built on seven mountains? Rome. Built on seven hills.

The city of seven hills. Romulus and Remus. Read the legend.

Rome is the city of seven hills. There are also seven kings. Five have fallen.

One is and the other has not yet come. This goes back to the seven-fold manifestation of human government. Going back to Egypt and Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome and revived Rome.

Seven empires. Five have fallen. Egypt is gone.

Assyria is gone. Babylon is gone. Medo-Persians are gone.

Greece is gone. Old Roman Empire is gone. Actually, he says one now is and the other has not yet come.

One is the Roman Empire in which John currently dwells. The other has not yet come. When he comes, he must continue a short time.

Seven years to be exact. The beast that was and is not is himself also the eighth. What is the eighth? End of the millennial kingdom.

The rebellion against the rule and reign of Christ and his regent King David on earth. He is the eighth. He comes up.

He is of the seven. He has been infiltrating and trying to manipulate human government from the beginning. He got into the Egyptians.

He got into the Assyrians. He got into Babylon. He got into Greece.

He got into the Medo-Persians. A little out of order there. He got into Rome.

And he is getting into the revived Roman Empire of the Antichrist. And he is going to have his eighth wonder of the world at the end of the millennial kingdom. But he is going to oblivion.

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. If current history is any guide, you look at the EU.

Nobody has ever really taken over Europe or Eurasia. Nobody has ever been able to really become the king of the whole thing. They have all kind of jockeyed around.

But they are going to get this authority for an hour in the incarnation of government represented by the beast. These are of one mind. Where in history have you seen Europe be of one mind until our lifetime? I mean this is unique.

The first world war and the second world war started because these people couldn't get on the same page. And now they are. And they are largely of one mind in hating us.

And downgrading us. You have one little tiny island off the coast of Europe and everybody else hates our guts. And you can see the incipient hatred for Christianity, for the Bible, for the Jews, for anything.

I mean Europe is being taken over by Islam. Europe is being taken over by the crassest forms of materialism. And this is what is uniting them.

Anyway. Ten kings who have received no kingdom. They are of one mind.

They will give their power and authority to the beast. Okay buddy, take it over. These will make war with the Lamb.

And the Lamb will overcome them. For He is Lord of Lords and King of Kings. The Lamb of course is Jesus in His aspect toward Israel.

He is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. That's how He was introduced by John the Baptist. That's how He was pictured in the Levitical offerings.

Those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful. We could spend a lot of time

illuminating Romans 8.28 and 29 from this passage. Called, chosen, and faithful.

Those who do not take the mark. Those who are martyred for their faith. They are the virgins.

They do not defile themselves with women. They represent the overcomers of that 70th week. Just as we see the overcomers that John talked about in Revelation 2 and 3. He said to me, the waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, here we have the vindication of our understanding, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.

The Gentile swarms of the earth. The ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate, naked, eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. They're going to say, you know what? You remind me of the Christians.

So, they rip her off their back. They strip her naked. Eat her and burn her with fire.

So, down goes St. Peter's Cathedral. Down go all of the monasteries, all of the other cathedrals. Everybody's going to burn them with fire, literally.

All these unbelieving popes and everything are going to get their comeuppance. And people are going to say, boo on religion. Boo on you Catholics.

Boo on all you pearl-adorned fornicators. So, 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 woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.

The woman who is ripped and destroyed, this is false religion. This is that which blasphemes God by setting itself up instead of God. And to our untrained eye, this is, of course, Catholic Church.

Well, very troublesome times. But once again, notice, this is the bull angel. The bulls give us God's perspective.

When God looks down on the earth, what does He see? What does He show to John through the revelation of this angel? What is John seeing in the Spirit? There is that which purports to be of God, that purports to represent God, and is not God. And you can see God's attitude toward it. He puts it in the heart of these people to rip it up, shred it, and destroy it.

And, of course, that thing itself is going to be ripped up and destroyed. But here's the point of application for us. We are supposed to be representing God.

We are supposed to be the temple of God, the temple of the Holy Spirit. And woe unto us if we end up holding forth a golden cup that is anything but the New Covenant, the New Testament, in the blood of Christ. We are the body and bride of Christ.

We are supposed to be, as it says, Jesus came and did His work that He might present to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. That's what we are supposed to be. Christ is the head of all things to the church.

We are to be wearing those white robes, not scarlet. We are to be emulating Christ in eschewing the riches and the trappings and the enticements of this world and laying up for ourselves treasure in heaven. And to the extent that we go down this very dramatically presented path and evidence this very dramatically judged attitude, we will share this kind of devastating judgment.

It is critical that we remember who we are and why we're here, what we are supposed to be and what we're not supposed to be. Because a lot of well-meaning people don't think they're wrong. Everybody wants to believe that they're right.

The only way we can have light shined on us to know whether or not we're in the faith, whether or not we're pleasing God, is to let the Word of God pierce to the dividing center of the soul and the spirit and the joints and the marrow and to judge the thoughts and intents of our heart. We have to be teachable. We don't ride anything.

We don't steer anything. We don't dictate anything. We are those who overcome by faith.

Those overcomers who persevere, who remain faithful. We go back and read those letters to the seven churches. Well, we're at a good stopping place here at the end of chapter 17.

Give you back a few of the minutes I've taken on other occasions. And we'll pick up in chapter 18 of the book of Revelation next time. Father, thank you for the privilege of studying your Word.

Thank you for these very dramatic and memorable pictures that are painted in the account of future happenings that remind us the importance of being faithful, of being diligent in understanding and applying your Word. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will minister these things to our hearts. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen.