**April 1, 2020 | A Study on Chapter 17 of the Book of Revelation**

## The Woman on the Beast

John is shown the punishment of the woman who is called the great prostitute who sits on many waters.  She is identified in verse 5 as Babylon.  In order to gain an understanding of who this is, a brief review of chapter 12 is helpful.  The heading of that chapter in my Bible is The Woman and the Dragon.  A woman gives birth to a child similar to Mary giving birth to Jesus, but it is most likely that the woman in John’s vision is symbolic of the church.  The dragon (Satan) attempts to kill the child which is Jesus but he ascends to Heaven.  After that the dragon pursues the woman and makes war against her offspring which are those who do not submit to worshiping the beast.  As we have discussed, Satan imitates God with his version of the Trinity and here he has his version of the church.  It would seem to be a world wide religion that has its center in a future Babylon.  During the Tribulation, God’s 144,000 servants have God’s name on their foreheads.  The woman on the beast has the name mystery on her forehead as well as the name Babylon, the mother of prostitutes.  Babylon itself was an early center of false religion.  According to David Guzik, the Babylonian religion was founded by the wife of Nimrod (a great-grandson of Noah), named Semiramis. She was a high priestess of idol worship, and she gave birth to a son who she claimed was conceived miraculously. The son, named Tammuz, was considered a savior. It was also said that Tammuz was killed by a wild beast and then miraculously brought back to life. Baal was the local, Canaanite name for the Babylonian.  Another example of Satan imitating God.   Numerous cities in the Old Testament are referred to as prostitutes.  Those who think these are historical events believe Babylon to be Rome.  In his first letter, Peter refers to the church in Babylon which probably a code name for Rome indicating the prevailing opinion of the wickedness of Rome.

The woman is seated on a scarlet beast with 7 heads and 10 horns, identical to the beast of the sea in chapter 13 which is the Antichrist.  She is clothed in purple and scarlet which are the colors of rulers in John’s time indicating that the woman represents a church that also is a one world government.  In verse 6 we read that she is drunk with the blood of the those who bore testimony to Jesus.  This is reminiscent of chapter 16 where the enemies of the church had only the blood of the saints to drink since the rivers and streams were dry.   In verse 8 the angel tells John a riddle; the beast once was, now is not and will come up out of the abyss and go to his destruction.   In verses 9-11 he adds to the riddle, the beast is an 8th king, belonging to the 7 kings which are also hills.  Notice also that of the 7 kings, 5 have fallen, 1 is and 1 has yet to come.  The best explanation I can give you for this is that this represent 5 kingdoms that had passed: Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Medo-Persia and Greece.  The kingdom that is (6th) would be the kingdom in existence during John’s time which was Rome.  The kingdom that has yet to come (7th) is a kingdom to arise in the future, perhaps during the tribulation.  This kingdom will be short lived to be followed by the 8th king (the Antichrist).

Next the angel explains that the 10 horns represent future kings that will join forces with the Antichrist to make war with Jesus.  These are the kings in chapter 16, verse 14 who are summoned by the spirits of demons.  In verse 15 the many waters are described as the people of different nations, again demonstrating that the prostitute represents this one world religion.  Unlike God who loves his children, Satan hates his (v. 16).  The kings give the power to the Antichrist to rule over their subjects.  When he no longer has a need for them, he destroys them (v16).  It is clear that these events occur during the 7 year tribulation period although it is hard to pinpoint exactly the timing.  One possible explanation is that the one world religion rises during the first 42 months followed by the beast demanding all people worship him during the last 42 months.