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Louis T. Talbot

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THE SCARLET WOMAN

Her Final Apostasy, Fall, and Desolation

By LOUIS T. TALBOT
Pastor, Church of the Open Door, Los Angeles

The Scarlet Woman
Rev. 17:1-6

Printed in the United States of America
The Scarlet Woman
HER FINAL APOSTASY, FALL AND DESOLATION

A Radio Message Given Over
Station KMPC
Beverly Hills, Calif.

By
LOUIS T. TALBOT
Pastor, Church of the Open Door
Los Angeles, California
FOREWORD

In response to requests for copies of the message on "Babylon—The Great Mystery—Her Final Apostasy, Fall, and Desolation," this booklet is published separately—a chapter from the series of radio Bible studies on "The Revelation."


That the Spirit of God may use this message to open blinded eyes to the grace of God in this age of ever-increasing apostasy, is the prayer of the author.

THE SCARLET WOMAN

HER FINAL APOSTASY, FALL, AND DESOLATION

Rev. 17:1—19:4

IN THE last, tragic world-drama of "the things which shall be hereafter" (Rev. 1:19); that is, after the translation of the church, forever to be with the Lord—in this approaching, terrific drama of sin and blood and tears, one of the chief "personages" will be "the great whore... MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." As we shall see from this study of Rev. 17:1-19:4, the "great whore" which John saw, "a woman... upon a scarlet coloured beast," is a symbol of none other than apostate Christendom in its final form. This spectacular organization will include those, both Catholic and Protestant, who profess the name of Christ, yet deny "the faith once for all delivered unto the saints."

The true church is called by the Spirit of God the Bride of Christ; and Satan, ever offering a counterfeit religion in imitation of the true, will present to the world a false system, called by the Holy Spirit "the great whore." What a contrast in these two scriptural terms! The Bride of Christ, cleansed from every stain, from all defilement, by the shed blood of her Bridegroom and Lord, will be "to the praise of his glory" throughout the endless ages. But "the great whore," "full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication," will meet her just and fearful and eternal doom before Christ returns to earth with His Bride to set up His millennial kingdom. It is the God-given picture of the final apostasy and Satan-inspired power of "the great whore," followed speedily by her fall and desolation, that we are to study today. May the Spirit of God open our eyes to see these "things which shall be hereafter," these
things which are even now casting their shadows before them. Then may He send us out, as flaming evangelists, to warn men to flee from the wrath to come.

In Rev. 14:8 and 16:19 we have found two brief references to this false system and her coming doom:

"And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

"And great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath."

These two references state in summary what the Holy Spirit enlarges upon in chapters seventeen and eighteen and in the first four verses of chapter nineteen. In these chapters it would seem that the Spirit of God draws aside the veil and shows us the doom toward which all the godless systems that have come in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ are rushing headlong, what their end is going to be, and how God is finally going to judge them just prior to the personal, visible, bodily return of our Lord to the earth.

Now let us read 17:1-19:4 carefully, prayerfully, more than once. The repeated reading of this portion of the book, as a unit, will show us that chapter seventeen describes the corruption and the fall of Babylon; chapter eighteen enlarges upon the same theme, revealing further the lamentation of "the kings" and "the merchants of the earth" for the loss of their gains in the fall of "the great whore;" while 18:20 and 19:1-4 add the truth that when God sends desolation upon Babylon, this false religious system, He will not only be dealing with her in righteous judgment, but He will also be avenging "the blood of his servants at her hand."

"A WOMAN . . . UPON A SCARLET COLOURED BEAST"

CHAPTER seventeen describes her as "a woman . . . upon a scarlet coloured beast." First we see her riding the beast in all her ungodly pride and vainglory.

Then we see the beast turning upon her with hatred (verses 16, 17). We see that "the ten horns . . . upon the beast . . . shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire."

And what does the beast represent, with the seven heads and the ten horns? Without a question, it is the same beast that we have seen in the thirteenth chapter of this book. We have already found that it represents the Roman Empire in her last glory, as she is to be revived by the "man of sin" who will appear in Europe after the true church has been translated. (See II Thess. 2:1-10.) When he appears, he will consolidate those nations that now occupy the territory once belonging to the old Roman Empire. The seven heads represent seven forms of government. John tells us that five were, one was, and one is yet to be. History tells us that up to the time when John was living, five forms of government had passed away, and the imperial form was then in existence. The form that is yet to come will be the revival of the empire under the "man of sin," the Antichrist. The ten horns represent those ten confederated kingdoms that will be under his jurisdiction.

Careful students of prophecy can not fail to realize that today we are seeing the old Roman Empire come once again into being. It was only a few months ago that Mussolini conquered Ethiopia, announcing to the world the statement quoted in the headlines of "The Los Angeles Times" and in every leading newspaper of many countries, in words somewhat like this: "Mussolini Declares Roman Empire Revived." And yet more recently he visited Libya, an Italian colony in northern Africa, seeking the goodwill of the people there, many of whom are Mohammedans. He promised them every consideration in their worship of "Allah," their name for God. When we remember that all of northern Africa, as well as the other countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea, belonged to the Roman Em-
pere of the Caesars, we realize something of the significance of these things that are even now coming to pass. And when we remember also that "the man of sin" can not be revealed until the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit dwelling in the true church is taken away at the rapture, then we take courage in the "blessed hope" of our Lord's soon return for His own. "Then" only "shall that Wicked One be revealed" and the old Roman Empire come once more upon the stage of world history for a brief period, yet with satanic power.

But let us look again at the picture described in the seventeenth chapter of Revelation. There we see "the great whore," riding "a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns."

"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: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus": (verses 4-6).

We are not surprised that John "wondered with great wonder" (verse 6, R.V. !) The woman represents a religious system—that system which prevails officially in those nations that now occupy the Roman Empire, a system that is even now grasping for the reins of government in Europe. The head of it has been made temporal sovereign, numbered among the sovereigns of the earth; he has his principality; he has his own coinage, his own mint. This speaks of the time when that system, at least temporarily, will dominate.

We shall consider the significance of the name that without doubt makes known to us the identity of this woman. But if the name were not known, the very description of her would make clear just what is in the mind of the Spirit of God regarding her. She is bedecked with silver and gold; she has in her hand a cup which is full of abominations; she is called "a whore," which means, in the spiritual sense, one who gives herself to idols. This woman is drunken with the blood of the saints, the martyrs of Jesus. She not only represents the Roman papacy as it is yet to be, but she also represents all the systems of Protestantism that are going to be "spewed out" of the mouth of the Lord when the true church is taken away. (See Rev. 3:16.) At that time, just as there will be a great union of nations under the coming "man of sin," so there will be a union of all the religious movements that are godless, Christless, bloodless. They are going to be "spewed out" of the mouth of the Lord when He takes away His true Bride. In that day when the Antichrist reigns, there will be a union of church and state.

NIMROD—THE FOUNDER OF ANCIENT BABYLON

THE name, "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT," takes one back in thought to the apostasy of the human race at Babel, as recorded in the tenth chapter of Genesis. There you have a picture of the man who was an apostate in the eyes of God, who was the founder of the city that is called Babylon—a man named Nimrod. The Word of God tells us some definite facts about this man. Genesis 10:9, the Authorized Version, reads: "He was a mighty hunter before the Lord." We do not get the true meaning from this translation. The ancient rabbis tell us that this statement means that Nimrod went out from the presence of the Lord, in the sense that he turned his back upon God and His truth, and became "a hunter of souls," seeking to turn multitudes of men away from God and unto himself. The Lord declared to the people of the earth that they were to scatter abroad, but Nimrod went out to defy God and call the multitude that he had gathered unto himself to consolidate. Thus he was the first to conceive the principle abroad in the world today—that in unity there is strength. So he banded the men...
together, that they might build a city and a tower which was to reach unto heaven.

As we read the account in Gen. 11:1-9, we note that the words “may reach” in verse 4 are in italics, meaning that they were not in the Hebrew manuscripts. They were put in by the translators. It is likely, therefore, that the “top” of the tower was a design of the heavens, a spherical dome marked with the signs of the zodiac, setting forth the position of the heavenly bodies. The zodiac has been used by the mystery religions through the ages past. Such a stone has been found in Mexico recently among the Aztec Indians. The probable thought is that the zodiac was used in connection with the tower of Babel, and that this tower, with the mysteries that began there, they dared to call “Babel.”

According to this interpretation, the audacity of Nimrod and his followers is seen in the fact that the word “Babel” means the “Gate of God.” The syllable “el” is one of the names of Jehovah; that is the reason why there are so many names in the Word of God that end with “el.” “Immanuel” means “God with us”; “Israel,” “a prince with God.” “El Shaddai” is one of the names of God. When Nimrod’s followers had the temerity to name their city the “Gate of God,” they implied that in this way man could approach Jehovah and be brought into a right relationship with Him, on other grounds than the altar and the sacrifice which pointed on to Calvary.

MYSTERY BABYLON

IT WAS in the city of Babel, later called Babylon, that all the mystery religions began—those religions that were destined to cover the earth one thousand years later. Let me give you an outline of what the mystery religions were. This is necessary if one is to understand how it came to pass that certain forms and ceremonies have been preserved in the Roman Catholic Church, as well as in some Protestant churches.

The sacred symbols Semiramis and the mystery child Tammuz. Archaeologists have unearthed similar images which reveal the fact that 1000 years after Babel, Babylonism had become the religion of that part of the world which had rejected God’s truth. Semiramis and Tammuz became Isis and Horus in Egypt, Aphrodite and Eros in Greece, Venus and Cupid in Italy, and bore many other names in more distant lands.
The founder of Babel was Nimrod, but the foundress of the mystery religion connected with Babylon was Semiramis, the wife of Nimrod. The central mystery was this: The wife of Nimrod claimed that she gave birth to a child whom she called Tammuz, declaring that her son had no father—that he was conceived by the great spirit above. As we study further, we shall see in this central mystery how the devil has sought to bring to naught all the purposes of God that were going to come to pass through the "seed of the woman" (not the seed of the man) by presenting a counterfeit.

Thus the wife of Nimrod presented Tammuz to the people, claiming that he had a mother, but that he did not have a human father. The figure that was used in connection with the mystery of Babylon was that of the wife of Nimrod with a crown on her head, with a little baby in her arms—Tammuz. Archeologists who have gone to India, to Egypt, to Greece, and to ancient Phoenicia, have found that a thousand years after Babel was erected this mystery religion had spread all over that part of the world. Isis and Horus in Egypt, Aphrodite and Eros in Greece, Venus and Cupid in Italy, are some of the designations of this religion adopted by different nations and systems. If you go to any museum, you will find statues that have been dug out of the earth from all of these countries, images of a woman with a crown on her head, having a baby in her arms. Connected with this central mystery, there are hundreds of lesser mysteries; for instance, sanctification through purgatory, the use of holy water, the eating of the wafer that was presented to the Queen of the Heavens. If you turn to Jer. 44:16-22, you will find that this particular mystery, the presentation of the wafer to the Queen of Heaven, had gotten into the nation of Israel in the time of Jeremiah. You will find, moreover, that Jeremiah pronounced the curse of God upon those who took part in this rite.

A remarkable story about Tammuz was this: His
mother declared that he had been slain by a boar, and that he arose from the dead on a certain day which was always thereafter celebrated as the feast of Istar. This feast celebrating the resurrection of Tammuz from the dead was preceded by forty days of weeping and sorrowing. This mystery also had corrupted Israel. (See Ezek. 8:14.) But the feast day itself was one of great rejoicing.

When Nebuchadnezzar became the king of Babylon and built that great city, there was a temple unit dedicated to these mystery religions called the Temple of Bel. It was a mile and a half in circumference. There were the priests that gave themselves to services; there were the virgins that were dedicated to Tammuz; and there was the symbol above it, the sign of the cross. The cross was used as symbolizing the life-giving principle and as the first letter in the name of Tammuz. The sign of the cross, therefore, did not originate with Christianity. It originated with the ancient mystery religion at Babel. The sacred symbol of the egg that we use at Easter time was also prominent.

When the Medo-Persian empire overthrew Babylon, the city was destroyed, but the mystery religion did not die. When Alexander the Great overthrew the Medo-Persian empire, that empire came to a close, but the mystery religion did not; only its center was changed. Fifty years before the birth of Christ, Rome became the mistress of the world, and the city of Rome became the center of all the ancient mysteries. All the Roman emperors were initiated into this mystery religion. When Julius Caesar was initiated, he took unto himself a title, Pontifex Maximus, which means "the greatest high priest," and was a declaration that Caesar became the leader, the high priest, of those Babylonian mysticisms which began back there in the twilight of history. When Christ was born in Bethlehem, Augustus Caesar ruled over the Roman Empire. (See Luke 2:1.) Like Caesars before him, he bore the title, "Pontifex Maximus." And the pagan religions of
Greece and Rome covered the vast domain of his possessions—all permeated with the mystery religion that came from ancient Babylon.

**The Union of the Mystery Religion and Christianity**

Early in the Christian era Nero and others of the Caesars cruelly persecuted the Christians. Many were martyrs, including Paul, the apostle. Then in the fourth century, Constantine came to the throne. He professed conversion. With the eye of a politician, he saw that those first Christians had made wonderful strides; and instead of persecuting them—they now numbered about four million—he thought it would be to his advantage to favor them. But he was never saved, was never a real Christian.

If you should go to the British Museum, you would be shown coins that were put into circulation at the time of Constantine. On one side there is a cross; on the other side, a picture of the Temple of Bel and one of the sacred symbols of Tammuz.

This is what Constantine did when he came to the throne, thus bringing about a union of the mystery religion and the professing church of Jesus Christ. The Pope of Rome, the first bishop of Rome, was given the title "Pontifex Maximus," and every pope from that day to this bears that name upon his mitre. To quote Dr. H. A. Ironside: "The very fact that he bears that title is a declaration that he is not a successor to Simon Peter, but is rather the successor to the high priest of the heathen mysteries that began away back there in Babel. When Constantine came to the throne and the first pope assumed the title, Pontifex Maximus, all those heathen associations and ceremonies that had their beginning with Nimrod—the worship of the Queen of the Heavens, the eating of the wafer, the doctrine of purgatory, the wearing of vestments, and the observance of a thousand and one lesser mysteries—all these were brought into the church,
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