

REVELATION – SERMON 65

THE ECUMENICAL WHORE

Revelation 17:3-5

INTRODUCTION

- The origins of today's many Protestant denominations can be traced to the great whore of Roman Catholicism
- It should be remembered, however, that *“Baptists are the original Christians. We did not commence our existence at the reformation, we were reformers before Luther or Calvin were born; we never came from the Church of Rome, for we were never in it, but we have an unbroken line up to the apostles themselves.”*
(Charles Spurgeon)
- Now many of these “Protestants” are returning back to their harlot mother in the name of *ecumenism*
- This is the spirit of Babel/Babylon which seeks to unite humanity under one idolatrous religion and government
- Ecumenism is the religious counterpart of globalist politics
- The *globalist* seeks to unite all the different nations into one

- The *ecumenist* seeks to unite all the different religions into one
- The Scripture never teaches a unity at the expense of truth
- True Christian unity is based upon fellowship in the truth
- Any union of truth with error is not of God
- “Fellowship with known and vital error is participation in sin.” (Charles Spurgeon)
- In our previous study we considered the origin and identity of the “great whore” of Babylon
- She is both a *city* and a *system* of great antiquity and global influence
- Her characteristics most closely resemble pagan and papal Rome
- In these verses we learn more of the great whore, and her objective to unite all of humanity in rebellion against Jesus Christ

I. HER ALLIANCE WITH THE ANTICHRIST (3)

A. The scene of the vision – the wilderness

1. John was carried “in the spirit” (cf. 1:10; 4:1; 21:10)
2. The wilderness is a traditional scene of visions (Exodus 3:1; 1 Kings 19:4; Luke 1:80)

B. The woman sits upon a beast

1. This beast is the same as that of 13:1 – the antichrist
2. The scarlet resembles the red of the dragon (12:3)
3. The seven heads represent seven kings/kingdoms (17:9-10) and the ten horns are ten kings (17:12)
4. “Her position, that of riding the beast, indicates on the one hand that she is supported by the political power of the beast, and on the other that she is in a dominant role and at least outwardly controls and directs the beast.” (Walvoord)
5. A woman riding a beast (Europa and Zeus) is a widely used symbol of Europe today
6. This is an unholy alliance of political and ecclesiastical power
7. The union of church and state has been used by Romanism and Protestantism to oppress and persecute Baptists

8. Christ's kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36)

II. THE OPULENCE OF HER ADORNMENTS (4)

A. Her clothing indicates wealth and power

1. Purple was the colour of royalty, scarlet of luxury
2. Contrast this with the clothing granted to the Lamb's wife – fine linen, clean and white (19:8)

B. Her ornaments indicate extravagant wealth

1. This system is concerned only with the temporal riches of this world
2. Chapter 18 details her merchandising by which she heaped up riches (18:12-13)
3. The Babylonian influence can be seen in modern-day "prosperity gospel" institutions whose focus is upon the material profits of this world rather than the spiritual riches of heaven
4. There is much dazzling beauty in the whore, which attracts multitudes to her bosom

C. Her golden cup (cf. Jeremiah 51:7-8)

1. Intoxicating beverages have long been an integral part of the ancient mystery religions

2. Full of abominations

- a. An abomination is something detestable, and especially is used of idolatry
- b. Some abominations to God are homosexuality (Leviticus 18:22; 20:13); occultic practices (Deuteronomy 18:9-12); wearing apparel which pertains to the opposite sex (22:5); prostitution (23:17-18); a divorcee returning to her first husband after remarrying (24:4); unjust business practices (24:13-16); pride, lying, shedding innocent blood, wicked imaginations, false witness, sowing discord (Proverbs 6:16-19); the wicked (15:8); the way of the wicked (15:9); the thoughts of the wicked (15:26); the sacrifice of the wicked (21:27); the prayer of the wicked (28:9)

3. Full of the filthiness of her fornication

4. The Lord gave his church a cup which is one of remembrance of his atonement, of communion, and of blessing (Luke 22:20)
5. The counterfeit “church” of the last days has a cup filled with things that are hateful to God
6. God will finally fill her cup with a double portion of his wrath (18:6; cf. 16:19)

III. THE IMPUDENCE OF HER ABOMINATIONS (5)

A. A name on her forehead

1. Roman prostitutes would wear a band on their head with their name on it
2. The high priest of the tabernacle wore a mitre which bore the words across his forehead:
HOLINESS TO THE LORD (Exodus 28:36-38)
3. Revelation contains varied markings on foreheads
 - a. The 144,000 sealed with the Father's name written in their foreheads (7:3; 14:1)
 - b. The beast worshippers who receive the mark of the beast in their foreheads (13:16; 14:9)
 - c. The servants of God who will have God's name in their foreheads (22:4)
4. This woman bears a "whore's forehead" indicating impudence and lack of shame (Jeremiah 3:3; Isaiah 3:9; Philippians 3:19)

B. It is a mysterious name

1. A mystery is something unknowable by man unless and until revealed by God

2. Just as Jerusalem is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt in 11:8, so there is a spiritual, or mystical significance to the name Babylon here
3. Her pagan religious system has historically been in the form of *mystery*
 - a. Its doctrines and rites are known only to select people known as initiates
 - b. It has a priestly caste who claim exclusive contact with the deities and wield power over the laity

C. Her name describes her character

1. Babel under Nimrod originally meant “the gate of God” in Akkadian, but in Hebrew the name signifies “confusion”
2. She is “great” in her antiquity and in her global influence which has spread idolatry to every part of the earth
3. She is the mother of harlots and abominations
 - a. Idolatry is often described in scripture in terms of adultery, fornication and whoredom
 - b. Union with the godless Babylonian system is like union with a prostitute (see Proverbs 7)
 - i. There is a cost to be united with her

- ii. There is a promise of momentary pleasure and gratification
 - iii. There are fatal consequences for those who unite with her
- c. As the “mother”, all forms of idolatry today can be traced back to her

CONCLUSION

1. The ecumenical movement of these last days is the precursor to Satan’s one-world religion of the tribulation
2. Many are being seduced by the harlot, accepting her lie that what you believe is not important; that we should not separate over doctrine
3. There is a growing disregard for the truth among churches and professing believers
4. While the world and apostate Christendom call for unity, God calls it fornication and commands separation (2 Corinthians 6:17-18)
5. Will you renounce this world, ungodly companions, false doctrine and those who follow it, regardless of the cost?
6. “Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.” (Hebrews 13:13)