The Wine of Modern Babylon, that Great City  
(Revelation Chapter 17)

We're going to look at Revelation Ch. 17, which gives us a prophetic road map of events that God says will take place in the near future, extraordinary events that we will most likely witness with our own eyes. To understand these events we will first need to lay some groundwork by exploring the meaning of the phrase Babylon that great city (see Rev. 14:8, 17:8, 18:10, 18:16, 18:19, 18:21, 21:10).

I'm sure that, by now, you know that there are three church systems that God has warned his worshipers not to get involved with; the Bible names these three as the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. The problem is, the majority of the world's worshipers are already involved in one of these three systems; Adventist theology more specifically identifies these three systems as SPIRITUALISM (the dragon), CATHOLICISM (the first beast), and APOSTATE PROTESTANTISM (the false prophet).

As a group, these three systems of worship are clearly shown in the Bible to have fallen under the control of Satan's demonic forces. Revelation 16:13 and 14 says,

"13. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." So, all three of these church systems, the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, have fallen under the domination and influence of unclean spirits. If you are looking to one of these three church systems to be saved, then you are in for a rude awakening. 2 Thess. 2:11,12 says that..."...for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

As we go on we will discover why the dragon, the beast and the false prophet are called Babylon the great.

The doctrines and miracles of Spiritualism (the dragon's religion) have produced great harm by misleading God's worshipers away from TRUTH. Through Spiritualism, Satan is promoting his old lie again...His lie says we do not die (Genesis 3:4), because the soul is immortal; there is no judgment or condemnation, and we will meet our relatives on the other side. We can even speak to them now, through spirit guides, and ask them questions about the after-life. We can even receive important information from spirits who are in contact with those who have already passed over to the other side. (Lie upon
As the children of Israel moved into the promised land, God foresaw the danger of their exposure to such occult practices...in other words, their exposure to spiritualism, which involved contact with the fallen angels. We'll read in Deuteronomy 18, verses 9 thru 15...you'll probably want to write this reference down in your Bible, because it's a fairly complete list of the occult practices that the Lord calls an abomination...

"9. When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations.  
10. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch,  
11. Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.  
12. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee.  
13. Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God.  
14. For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the LORD thy God hath not suffered thee so to do.  
15. The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;"

So, in this last verse, the Lord tells the children of Israel, your only source for divine information, must come only from your own prophets. You may not use observers of times, diviners, enchanters, witches, charmers, or those who consult with familiar spirits...instead you are only to consult with my prophets taken from among your own people.

Further along in the Bible, we run into King Saul, who completely ignored the Lord's instructions against consulting with familiar spirits. Why did Saul risk going to the witch at Endor...because God wasn't answering him through the normal channel, the prophet. The Urim and the Thumin on the Ephod, the breastplate of the prophet, had remained silent...you see, God wouldn't answer Saul because the Lord had told Saul to root out the Amalekites, but he didn't do it; so, as judgment, the Lord brought the army of the Philistines up against Saul, and Saul was so afraid, that he rushed out in the night to see if the familiar spirit of this witch could give him some advise.

1 Samuel 28:7 says, "Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor."
So, Saul disguised himself and went to this witch; and he asked her to bring Samuel the prophet up out of his grave. Now, of course, we know that it wasn't Samuel the prophet...but it was one of Satan's fallen angels disguised as Samuel. The message that Saul was given by way of this familiar spirit, was that the Philistines would defeat him and kill his sons the next day...and that's exactly what happened. In 1 Samuel 31:6, we read that the Philistines defeated Saul's army, killed Saul's three sons, and, in disgrace, both King Saul and his armour bearer fell upon their own swords.

So Satan, the ruler of all darkness, uses Spiritualism to both make prophecies and fulfill them, to prove his credibility...and, as is the case with King Saul, the prophecy came true.

King Saul had forgotten God's instructions...that the occult powers of Satan and the abominations, such as necromancy (or consulting the dead), were never to be used.

In Acts 13:9-11, we find an interesting confrontation between Paul and a sorcerer named Barjesus...and this account illustrates very clearly the battle between good and evil...

Paul and Barnabas had been called to the house of a man named Sergius Paulus, a deputy who wanted to hear the word of God...but, there was a sorcerer there, a false prophet by the name of Barjesus, and this Barjesus argued against Paul and Barnabas, and tried to turn Sergius Paulus away from the faith.

In Acts 13:10,11 we read that Paul looked this sorcerer directly in the eyes,

"10 And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?
11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand."

So, by the power of the Holy Ghost, Paul made this sorcerer blind, and when Sergius Paulus saw God's power in operation, and heard the testimony of Paul and Barnabas, he believed in the power of God, and his faith was strengthened.

This sorcerer, named Barjesus, also named Elymas was, in fact, working for the devil. He was trying to prevent Sergius Paulus from believing in the faith. And this puts me in mind of the prophecy that Timothy made, in 1 Timothy 4:1...He said, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;"

Timothy makes it plain: The purpose of these seducing spirits, and these
doctrines of devils is to cause Christians to depart from the faith. . . just as the sorcerer Barjesus had tried to turn Sergius Paulus away from his new-found faith. In fact, Satan's entire apparatus of sin, called the dragon, the beast and the false prophet, has been designed to make the world depart from faith in Jesus. The world is drunk on the wine of Babylon, drunk on the false teachings and doctrines of Babylon, drunk on the misrepresentations that have been introduced into religion by the unclean spirits sent from the dragon, the beast and the false prophet. Shortly we're going to meet the whore who sits on the scarlet beast in Rev. 17:4. She is Babylon the Great, holding a golden cup that is overflowing with the impure wine of Babylon...the false teachings of Babylon the Great.

In the second angel's message, found in Revelation 14:8, we hear God trying to warn the world...He says, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

So, why has God used ancient Babylon to symbolize the work of modern Babylon the Great (the dragon, the beast and the false prophet)? Because modern Babylon is repeating the sins of ancient Babylon.

The symbol of ancient Babylon tells us why modern Babylon is fallen. Let's go way back to the time of Nimrod. The tower of Babel was built, because men were afraid that God would bring a second flood. They no longer trusted God, so they set out to construct a salvation of their own making, a great tower that would reach into the clouds and save them from a second flood. When God saw their arrogance, he confused the languages...and, so today, the tower of Babel has become a well known SYMBOL OF CONFUSION and SALVATION BY WORKS.

The city of Babylon was constructed on the same site where the ancient tower of Babel had been built. Babylonians worshiped the sun and were heavily involved with the occult. King Nebuchadnezzar had a full staff of wizards, astrologers, and soothsayers to advise him...so, now ancient Babylon adds two more disturbing meanings to its modern symbol...that it was INVOLVED WITH THE OCCULT (wizards, astrologers and soothsayers), and even worse, Babylonians WORSHIPPED THE PAGAN SUN GOD.

Later, during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon became a symbol of idolatry and false worship. You are probably very familiar with the facts: Nebuchadnezzar constructed a statue of himself and ordered that everyone in the kingdom had to bow down to it. Nebuchadnezzar was wallowing in the sin of self glorification, because this statue was fashioned after himself. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to worship the idol and were thrown into the furnace, where a fourth person, one like the Son of Man, appeared with them in the flames...and protected them because of their faith. The issues here were false worship, self glorification, and idolatry. These
three faithful servants chose to die in the furnace, rather than breaking God's commandment against idol worship. What God is telling us is that modern Babylon the Great will repeat the same sins of ancient Babylon; those sins of FALSE WORSHIP, SELF-GLORIFICATION and IDOLATRY.

Babylon's greatness ended during the reign of Belshazzar, when he profaned God by using the sacred vessels captured from the temple in Jerusalem as drinking mugs for himself and his guests. Belshazzar drank from these sacred vessels, making no distinction between the common and the holy. And, so now, we must add one more description to the symbol of Babylon...that MODERN BABYLON WOULD FAIL TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE COMMON and THE HOLY THINGS OF GOD. The Medo-Persian army killed Belshazzar that night, and took his kingdom. Shortly thereafter the Jews who had been taken captive from Jerusalem were freed and allowed to go home.

So the history of ancient Babylon unlocks the symbol of modern Babylon the Great and its system of fallen churches and false worship: The symbol reveals that the mistakes of ancient Babylon are being repeated by modern Babylon the Great, which is the dragon, the beast and the false prophet.

Just as the ancient tower of Babel was used as a means for men to save themselves, so, too, THE FLAWED DOCTRINES OF BABYLON WOULD REQUIRE SALVATION BY WORKS.

Just as King Belshazzar failed to treat the sacred things of God with respect, MODERN BABYLON WOULD ALSO FAIL TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE COMMON AND THE HOLY THINGS OF GOD.

Just as Ancient Babylon had strong ties to the occult, MODERN BABYLON WOULD BE HEAVILY INFLUENCED BY NON-CHRISTIAN EASTERN RELIGIONS AND THE OCCULT ARTS.

Just as ancient Babylon had done, MODERN BABYLON WOULD FALL TO THE SINS OF FALSE WORSHIP, SELF-GLORIFICATION and IDOLATRY.

Finally, just as ancient Babylon had done, MODERN BABYLON WOULD TRY TO FORCE MEN TO BREAK GOD'S COMMANDMENTS UNDER PENALTY OF DEATH.

We've been talking about modern Babylon the Great...but, we really don't have a very good picture in our minds of what it looks like...so, Please turn to Revelation 17:3-6. Here, John was shown a vision of our nemesis, our
spiritual enemy, Babylon the Great, beginning in verse 3... "3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. 4. 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: 5. And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. 6. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration."

Rev. ch. 17 is literally bursting with clues that the woman sitting on this beast is the Roman church..... <> Both Rev 13:6 and Rev. 17:3 identify this woman as blasphemous. <> Verse 4 attests to both her opulence, her jewels and the royal colors of purple and scarlet used by her priesthood. <> Verse 6 identifies this woman as drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus...and this reveals her historical purging of heretics, counted in the tens of millions.

Rev. 17:3, tells us that the beast the woman is sitting on has a scarlet colored body, with seven heads and ten horns. But the apostle John was just as confused as you and I; when he saw this woman and beast in his vision, he didn't know what to make of it. But, just as he had done for Daniel, the Lord sent an angel to John to explain the vision.

THE RIDDLE of the 7 HEADS and 10 HORNS

Rev 17 verse 7: "And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns."

In verse 8, the angel begins to explain the vision:

"The beast that thou sawest was," [this is referring to the era of papal supremacy, from 538 to 1798]

"...and is not;" [this is referring to the deadly wound that was dealt to the Papacy in 1798 and the 131 years that followed when the church had virtually no power or authority]
"...and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition:" [This last phrase is the Papacy's rebirth, when its deadly wound was healed in 1929 by Mussolini's Lateran Treaty; this treaty made a settlement with the church in the millions for the land which had been taken from it. And, the treaty restored the Papacy's autonomy, granting the Vatican statehood and the ability to send and receive diplomats. Now with its full power returned to it, the papacy begins to make a final bid for control of all religions, during which she goes into perdition, meaning she sins both against men and God. Verse 8 finishes by saying] "...and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is."

In Rev.17: 9 we read, "And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth." Here in verse 9 God gives us the mailing address where the woman lives. Rome was built on seven hills, and the Vatican property is within those seven hills.

As God does from time to time, He will give some prophecies a dual meaning...as He has done with verse 9. The seven heads of the beast symbolize both the address of the Vatican and a succession of seven kings; let's read this riddle in Rev. 17, verses 10 and 11, and you will begin to see what I mean....

In Verse 10 and 11 God gives us the second meaning of the seven heads in the form of a riddle:
"10. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.
11. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition."
[The five kings that are fallen are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Pagan Rome, and Papal Rome]

"and one is,..."
This 6th King is likable America, which I have nicknamed Dr.Jekyll. In its early stage, the Dr. Jekyll phase, America has two horns "like a lamb" (Rev.13:11), and it still values the civil and religious liberty of its constitution.

However, there in verse 10, we read,"and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space."
This "other" 7th king is unknown. But, it seems likely this 7th king may be America, transformed into Mr. Hyde. The Spirit of Prophecy has warned us that America is destined to become a radically different country.

This Mr. Hyde America is going to change its constitution,
<> it relinquishes religious freedom, and
<> it speaks "as a dragon" (Rev 13:11)
So, for now, this king remains a mystery to us, because "he is not yet come."

We'll just have to wait and see what this "other" king turns out to be. Some writers have suggested that it may be an external governing body, like the United Nations...but, frankly, we just don't know yet. My personal belief is that the 7th King will be America transformed into a malicious persecutor of Christians, because of the will of a 10 horn confederacy, which America is destined to endorse. And, we'll look at that confederacy of the 10 horns in a moment.

For now, let's go on to the eighth king in our riddle...in verse 11...
"11. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition."
[This last king is the Papacy, restored to full power.]

Let's see if we can give you a little clearer meaning of the riddle:
Seven heads are seven mountains=the seven hills upon which Rome is built
Seven heads are seven kings.................................
1) Babylon,
2) Medo-Persia,
3) Greece,
4) Pagan Rome,
5) Papal Rome wounded to death,
6) Protestant America, having religious liberty,
7) Apostate Protestant America, no religious liberty,
8) Papal Rome restored, but going into perdition, supported by the two-horned beast (America).

But, now we get into the really interesting part of the prophecy, which is the ten horns that were on the scarlet beast. Look at the next verse, verse 12..............
"12. And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.
13. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.
14. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them:"

So, what we are seeing here is taking place in the near future...it is a confederacy of 10 kings that unite with the papacy to make war with the Lamb...to make war against those who keep the commandments and have faith in Jesus. Notice in verse 12 that it is the beast who actually gives the ten horns their power as kings. Unfortunately, God does not reveal the identity of the 10 kings in this confederacy.

Now, let's go back to Rev.17:5, and look at that long name that is written on the forehead of the whore who is riding the scarlet beast. Turn to Rev. 17:5... "And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." This name actually identifies the three parts of Babylon the Great.

MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT: This is the name for all three parts of modern Babylon.

Next in the name, we see 1) THE MOTHER: She is the first part of Babylon the Great...this blasphemous woman, the Roman Church, who is identified in the very next verse, verse 6, as drunk with the blood of the saints and martyrs.

Next in the name, we read 2) HARLOTS: They are the second part of Babylon... the daughter churches, which are the protestant churches that are unfaithful to the Lord and his teachings.

And the third part of Babylon the Great are the churches named as 3) ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH...churches which practice spiritualism; these churches have accepted the doctrine of immortality of the soul, or have included occult practices designated as an abomination by God Himself. So, this long name on the woman's forehead virtually identifies all three parts of Babylon the Great.

1) The Mother is the Beast (Roman Catholicism);
2) The Harlots are the False Prophet (Apostate Protestantism);
3) The Abominations of the Earth are the Dragon (Spiritualism).

While modern Babylon the Great will flourish for a time, and will even persecute the saints again through her confederacy with 10 kings, there are several prophecies that show her confederacy will break apart and meet a violent end: Here is a list of the verses that reveal the fate of Babylon the Great, and all those who have become drunk on her doctrinal wine...

Rev.14:8, Rev.16:10,11, Rev.16:19, Rev.17:16-18, Rev.18:8, Rev.18:21, Rev.19:20, & Rev. 20:10-15.

When all the above verses are taken together, God leaves no doubt as to the identity of modern Babylon the Great: It is the dragon, the beast, and the
false prophet...because, we find their names written on the forehead of the woman riding the SCARLET beast: These three, the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, will send unclean spirits to the Kings of the earth, who will form a confederacy of ten supporters, aimed at destroying God's faithful worshipers. And, now, you understand the full prophecy.

The first hint that modern Babylon would fall is found in the second angel's message in Revelation 14:8...it says...
"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."

Rev. 16:10,11 says, "And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds."

Now, go to Rev. 16:19..."And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath."

Rev. 17:16-18..."16. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire." [Verse 16 indicates that the confederacy of ten supporters eventually turns against the woman on the beast, and destroys her.] "17. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. 18. And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth."

Then in Revelation 18:8, we learn of God's wrath against the Woman..."Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her."

Revelation 18:21..."And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all."

Revelation 19:20: "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that
had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."

And our last verse is Revelation 20:10 "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

There you have the tragic portrait of the Church of Rome, depicted as a woman, sitting on a scarlet colored beast with seven heads and ten horns; the woman has "...a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornications:" (Rev. 17:4) You now know the meaning of the names written on her forehead, how these names identify the dragon (Spiritualism), the beast (Roman Catholicism), and the false prophet (apostate Protestantism).

And we showed you the riddle of the seven heads, and what each head represents.

Then we cleared up the meaning of the ten horns which are "ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast." (Revelation 17:12) This is a prophecy of the future, and has not unfolded yet...so, the identity of these "kings" are, as yet, unknown.

You will have to review all of this information a few times before you can get your mind fully wrapped around it.

God undoubtedly has already calculated that this information will disturb many people in many different church denominations...which is why he has prepared yet another modern-day church in the wilderness where true believers can flee to safety. As God has counseled His believers we are to be "in" the world, but not "of" the world...therefore, we are not be members of any church that has been infiltrated by "unclean spirits."

Before this entire presentation ends, you will know the identity of this modern-day wilderness church, which keeps God's commandments, has faith in Jesus, and has been given unique understanding of prophetic events through the Spirit of Prophecy. May God richly bless you for giving these studies your attention. AMEN

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