

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

Revelation chapter 17 describes The Harlot and The Beast in the last days. The Harlot, who rules over The Beast for a time, is that “great city” called Babylon (v. 18) and her name is “**Mystery [Secret] Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth.**” (Rev. 17:5). I assume that most accept that Babylon is a symbol for any belief system that is against God and, specifically, an icon of the Roman Catholic Church. Her name is interesting because she is not only the mother, or progenitor, of “harlots,” which are religious offshoots, but she is the “mother” or source of all ABOMINATIONS of the earth. Because of this, there will be a worldwide warning against Babylon in the last days:

REVELATION 18:1-3 After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. 2 And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! 3 “For **all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication**, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance [*miraculous power*] of her luxury.”

The angel who proclaims the warning is one who has GREAT authority and whose glory is so brilliant that he lights up the entire earth. This being of the heavenly host is obviously very powerful. His message begins by describing the fall of Babylon and, not just some, but ALL nations who engage in her evil ways. The Greek does not exclude ANY nation. Every nation upon this earth—both gentile and Israelite—will commit fornication with The Harlot and become rich by drinking the “wine of the wrath of her fornication.” Now that is a rather puzzling phrase. It is repeated in Revelation 14:8 and again with very similar wording in 17:2. What does it mean exactly? Perhaps Jeremiah provides the answer:

JEREMIAH 51:7 **Babylon was a golden cup** in the LORD’s hand, That made **all the earth drunk**. The nations drank her wine; therefore **the nations are mad [deranged]**.

Babylon is a likened to a cup of wine, which causes all the earth to be drunk; that is, *mad* or *deranged*. So, the phrase “wine of the wrath [*madness, derangement*] of her fornication” describes a world that will be enticed by the wealth and luxury of Babylon so much so that it is a madness or derangement that is like an addiction. I think Paul also prophesied of this state of the world:

2 TIMOTHY 3:1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:

*Perilous* in the Greek means *dangerous* but also implies *furios*. The root means ‘reducing the strength’. Paul is referring to times when people will be addicted by—not have the strength to resist—the evil of the world and they will pursue wealth and luxury with a lustful fury. He describes these people as:

2 TIMOTHY 3:2-7 For men will be **lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal [savage], despisers of good, 4 traitors [betrayers], headstrong, haughty [conceited], lovers of pleasure** rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! 6 For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, 7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

People will LOVE themselves and money. They will be BOASTFUL, PROUD, and BLASPHEMERS (abusive, defamatory, irreverent). They will have NO LOVE, be UNFORGIVING, and lack SELF-CONTROL. They will be SAVAGE, BETRAY one another, and be CONCEITED. I think Paul is describing a world that follows after the abominations of The Harlot and becomes addicted to pleasures, wealth, and self-gratification. Simply put, they are drunk on the "wine of the [madness, derangement] of [The Harlot's] fornication [*abominations*]."

These few verses portray a world that is hard to imagine but impossible to deny since there is a madness that has already come upon many and every aspect of life is promoted as and motivated by pleasure and wealth. But are these unconverted people? Read the next verse:

2 TIMOTHY 3:8 Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do **these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved [rejected] concerning the faith;**

Believe it or not, Paul is talking about those who KNOW the Truth but RESIST it! They UNDERSTAND the Faith but REJECT it! Paul, in fact, told Timothy to rebuke those who are supposed to be *teachers* in the previous chapter. He told Timothy to remind them not to "subvert" the *ekklesia* (v14), not to "increase to more ungodliness" (v16), and not to "overthrow the faith of some" (v18). Really? Will ministers be so corrupt and ungodly? Here is another of his rebukes:

1 TIMOTHY 6:3-5 If **anyone teaches otherwise** and does not consent to wholesome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to **the doctrine which accords with godliness**, 4 he is **proud**, knowing nothing, but is **obsessed** with disputes and arguments over words, from which come **envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions**, 5 useless wranglings of **men of corrupt minds** and destitute of the truth, **who suppose that godliness is a means of gain**. From such withdraw yourself.

Notice that there will be teachers/ministers who use GODLINESS as a means for PERSONAL GAIN. They are PROUD and OBSESSED! Outwardly they appear as servants of God but they only do it to satisfy their personal lusts. It is bad enough that the nations of the earth will be that corrupted but is it possible that this applies to some ministers? Sadly, there is more. After the angel ended his warning to Babylon, John heard another voice from heaven, which said:

REVELATION 18:4-5 And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her [*Babylon*], **My [God's] people**, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. 5 "For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.

While the mighty angel's message will be to the entire world, the voice from heaven will be a warning for God's people to come out of Babylon. Who are God's people? Does it refer to physical Israel and Judah, to the *ekklesia*, or both? Take note that Revelation 18:4 repeats some OT scriptures:

ISAIAH 52:11 Depart! Depart! Go out from there, Touch no unclean *thing*; Go out from the midst of her, Be clean, **You who bear the vessels** of the LORD.

JEREMIAH 51:6, 45 Flee from the midst of Babylon, And every one save his life! Do not be cut off in her iniquity, For this *is* the time of the LORD's vengeance; He shall recompense her. ... 45 "**My people**, go out of the midst of her! And let everyone deliver himself from the fierce anger of the LORD.

Reading these verses in context, they certainly refer to physical Israel and Judah in the last days; however, Paul used them when speaking to converted Corinthians:

2 CORINTHIANS 6:14-18 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? 15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? 16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For **you are the temple of the living God**. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be **My people**." 17 Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." 18 "**I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters**, Says the LORD Almighty."

Clearly, "My people" also refers to those of the *ekklesia*. This is a warning for God's people to come out of Babylon in the last days to both physical Israel and Judah as well as the true *ekklesia*!

Putting it all together, there will be those of the *ekklesia*, including teachers and ministers, that become drunk on the "wine of the wrath [*madness, derangement*] of [The Harlot's] fornication." Here is more proof:

EZEKIEL 34:2, 4, 7-8, 10 "Son of man, **prophecy against the shepherds of Israel**, prophecy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD to the shepherds: "Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! **Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?**" ... 4 "The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back **what was driven away**, nor sought what was lost; but **with force and cruelty you have ruled them**. ... 7 "Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: 8 "As I live," says the Lord GOD, "surely because My flock became a prey, and My flock became food for every beast of the field, because *there was* no shepherd, nor did My shepherds search for My flock, but **the shepherds fed themselves and did not feed My flock**"— ... 10 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, **I am against the shepherds**, ...

None of the leaders or kings of Israel were ever given the title or had the role of shepherd (David was a shepherd but his title was king). Moreover, Ezekiel lived during the time when Judah was exiled to Babylon and they never had another king from that point onward. So, who are the shepherds Ezekiel prophesied against?

Elders and ministers in the Body of Christ! In the last days, they will rule over God's children "**with force and cruelty.**" And it is apparent even now. How many brethren have been "driven away" because they fellowship with brethren of a different church organization, disagreed on a point of prophecy, or did not get 'approval' for marriage or other personal matters? How many have felt "forced" to pay tithes to church organizations at the expense of their family? Is it not "cruel" when church organizations spend millions of dollars in donations on buildings, cars, salaries, and pensions while brethren live in poverty? I could go on and on, but Ezekiel 34: 1-10 (and Jeremiah 23) is a condemnation of shepherds who "feed" themselves instead of the flock. Now notice his warning to the sheep:

EZEKIEL 34:17-21 'And *as for* you, O **My flock**, thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, **I shall judge between sheep and sheep**, between rams and goats. 18 "*Is it* too little for you to have eaten up the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the residue of your pasture—and to have drunk of the clear waters, that you must foul the residue with your feet? 19 "And *as for* **My flock, they eat what you have trampled** with your feet, and **they drink what you have fouled** with your feet." 20 'Therefore thus says the Lord GOD to them: "Behold, **I Myself will judge between the fat and the lean sheep.** 21 "Because you have pushed with side and shoulder, butted all the weak ones with your horns, and scattered them abroad,

Judging between "sheep and sheep" is referring to judgment of fat sheep who live luxuriously but do not help the lean sheep. How many brethren have the finest houses, cars, clothes, etc. and withhold from helping brethren in serious need? Doing nothing proves their faith (and prayers) are DEAD (Jas. 2: 16-17). How many wealthy go to exotic foreign festival sites but ignore the indigenous brethren or later brag about all the fun they had and things they bought to those who could not afford to even attend locally? Like with the shepherds who only feed themselves, I could list many more examples of fat sheep.

The point of all this is that there is a serious judgment of God coming against shepherds who do not feed God's flock and against the fat sheep who have abundance but leave the poor sheep in leanness. Babylon is "*the Mother of [both] Harlots and Abominations.*" The cry of the voice from heaven to "Come out of her, My people" is to physical Israel AND those of the *ekklesia* who will become drunk on the "wine of the [madness] of [Babylon's] fornication". It is a warning and plea from God to return to the way of agape love and serve the brethren:

ROMANS 12:9-13 **Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil.** Cling to what is good. 10 **Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;** 11 not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; 12 rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; 13 **distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.**

May God's grace and peace be upon you!

Steven Greene

<https://sabbathreflections.org>

[sabbathreflections@gmail.com](mailto:sabbathreflections@gmail.com)