

What's So Bad About Babylon? (2013) (Part One)

It Is Upon Us

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You are going to hear a sermon that I have given before, yet I have never given it before. That sounds like a contradiction but it is not. The reason is because it is both. The title and the subject I have given before, in fact ten times before. However each time I give it, it is not the same sermon because of all the alterations that I make as I go along.

This is because of the updates by rearranging how it is organized, the scriptures are changed somewhat and I used different illustrations each and every time as well. I keep giving it because it contains a theme that is ever-present in our lives and constantly must be dealt with us as part of Christian living.

I got the original sermon from Art Mocarow, who many of you may remember, and that was probably somewhere around 1970. However, it is most definitely not his sermon. I have made significant changes, and about the only thing that I really have retained is the title, which was the title that he gave that sermon in 1970 on.

This is the second time that I have used it during the Days of Unleavened Bread. The previous time was ten years ago during the Days of Unleavened Bread, and I gave it here (in Fort Mill). As I was thinking about what I should speak on during these days, I came to realize how well the theme applies to these days, so I began on and off to rearranging it once again.

If things go well as I plan, it will be two sermons long. The first part covers why we at this time need to be concerned about how bad Babylon is. We will begin in the book of Revelation.

Revelation 18:1-8 After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a habitation of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird.” 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 of her luxury. And I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works. In the cup which she has mixed, mix for her double. In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow, for she says in her heart, ‘I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.’ Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her.

It is not difficult to discern that the punishment prophesied to fall on Babylon is horrific, to say the least total destruction is in its future. By way of comparison, regardless of what has happened in other parts of the world during our life times, life for those of us here in the United States of America, has been relatively good compared to that experienced in other nations.

Overall, our economy is certainly going south, even though we are undergoing a brief respite at the moment. Overall, morality is low. There are occasional weather disasters which hit parts of the country, and political feuding is almost constantly in the news. At least there have been no major wars, and yet God urgently commands us to “come out of her My people lest you receive of her sins.” Impending doom on Babylon is the word.

I think you can see that the subject at least has a sense of the Days of Unleavened Bread. We are commanded to come out of her. Israel came out of Egypt on what became the first Day of Unleavened Bread. Egypt is a type of this sinful world, and the church’s focus is on coming out of sin during these days.

What is God indicating here? First is, come out lest you become collateral damage, or come out because you are directly targeted. Here, to me, is an interesting question: Come out of where? The church is a spiritual body, scattered worldwide, wherever God has called its members.

He has called members all over the world. We get literature requests or questions from people virtually everywhere in the world, because the Internet goes everywhere in the world. People write in questioning, or they write in wanting to be baptized, or wondering where they can go to church.

There are people out there listening and they are responding and besides that there are already members, maybe from Worldwide days, or United, Philadelphia, COGWA, or whatever. There are people out there who have the Spirit of God. We even have a small group in China! They are not members, but they are college students and they are interested.

If they read Revelation 18, are they supposed to come out of China? If somebody in Brazil reads it, are they supposed to come out of Brazil? If somebody in Mexico reads it and they are a member, are they supposed to come out of Mexico? What if we all run in different directions? Are we going to crash at some central location?

Where do we come out of? This word is going all over the world, even as the message to “come out” goes all over the world. You can see there is the potential here, unless we get this straight, for confusion Should the Chinese run to the United States? Should Americans go to England? Should the French go to Germany? Where, is the question, because we have no idea where to go, if it means a literal movement away from where we presently are.

It is clear to us then that the church is not located in one nation. According to a multitude of verses in this chapter, the “her” is named Babylon; in verse 2 and in verse 10, it is called a great city. Does that tell us anything? In what nation is that city located? Here is a question: Is it possible that God is using the ancient city of Babylon merely as a point of reference? I think that is probably correct. Babylon is pretty bad. Is it possible that God has applied that name to things other than the original Babylon?

I did not mean to minimize what is already happening but I take the fairly urgent warning that is given there to “come out of her” at least as a heads up from God to get out while the getting is good,

because living conditions are going to get much worse—very much worse, according to Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21. We do not want to be targeted whenever that occurs.

Not only do we not know precisely where modern Babylon is located, we also do not know where to relocate to. If we leave where we are, where do we go? The reality is that we do not have any assigned place by God where we can go and that we all know with certainty that where we are headed is the God-approved location. There is no unanimity of agreement on that either.

To flee to another area might at this time actually leave us worse off than what is coming upon Babylon, or wherever we happen to be. History shows that there have been times in the past when the body of the church did have to move to a different location in order to preserve lives.

The first century church had to flee from Jerusalem to a city named Pella, which really was not that far away. During the Middle Ages, remnants of the true church had to flee to places of safety, usually in mountainous areas where they would be safer, until persecutions or persecutors lost patience and gave up hunting for them.

Because of this unanswerable reality, I take the present meaning of “Come out her My people” to be spiritual. That is for us to turn from practicing Babylon's prideful, self-centered way of life, and leave off practicing any of the idolatrous spiritual and immoral beliefs of the culture that we find ourselves in regardless of where that location is on earth.

Revelation 12:1-2 Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.

Revelation 12:14 But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time [three and half years; 1,260 days], from the presence of the serpent.

For quite a long time, I believed that because of the phrase in verse 5 (which we did not read), that the woman who gave birth to the man child—*this is my former belief*—must have represented the nation of Israel, because the church did not exist when Christ was born. If the church did not exist until Jesus Christ founded it, and He was birthed by Mary roughly 33 years before that, and *then* the church was founded, how could the woman give birth to the man child?

Well, with the help of my wife, I now understand that if one interprets the woman in verse 1 as being spiritual, and added to that understands that the church—this is really the key—is of heavenly origin and that is where our citizenship is, then the church, being a spiritual organization in the mind of God, where He is located in heaven, and He has been there and the church has existed in His mind from creation, way before this time—then the spiritual organization that is from heaven did give birth of the man child of verse 5.

Thus, verse 14, “the woman was given to wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place where she is nourished for a time and a times and half time from the presence of the serpent”, with that interpretation, the flying woman in verse 14, is the church.

John must have seen this in a vision as a single female, not single in terms of not being married, but one lone female flying to a specific location. In the vision she was given wings like an eagle, and

went to a specific location called “her place.” I do not know how much we can make from the flying aspect, but she clearly was not running. And people do not fly. Therefore, within the context of the vision, in symbol, she, the church, appears to be miraculously cared for but at the same time she has had to supply something on her own as well, by flying.

It takes effort to fly! Therefore she spent much effort preparing to be ready to be taken. She prepared herself spiritually to be taken, and when that time came she was ready. Therefore when you put both of these things together, she was both taken *and* she flees. Thus the practical reality is that we stay put until God speaks from on high telling us to physically go. We should not be idle! We are to get ready to flee, and if it is God's will, He will make sure we get to that place of safety.

That is what He is showing us. As I have taught you in the past, that is going to be God's decision. Who goes and who does not. That is very clear. Even though a person may be very righteous, like the apostles, they were all martyred! What if God wants us to be martyred? That is why I say it is God's decision, and whether we are chosen to stay or whether we are chosen to flee, we have to be ready for either one, and God will judge. Either way He will supply our needs for whatever we have to go through.

There is yet another reason, an important one, to stay put physically until God clearly signals that “come out” means physically come out. This reason involves timing. Time wise we already understand that the events of Revelation 17 and 18 take place immediately before Christ returns to earth.

We are going to establish a timeline by means of a couple of specific prophecies that were made long before Christ's first coming, and continue on unfulfilled to this very day. They are still hanging out there, we might say, waiting for God to complete them. We will first establish God's personal, direct involvement regarding both location to flee to and the timing of the events.

Isaiah 46:8-10 [Very meaningful words. God is speaking] Remember this and show yourselves men; recall to mind, O you transgressors. Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done.

Who is going to stop God from doing what He has willed to do? Obviously nobody. Bible prophecies are histories written in advance. They reveal what God has willed to do, and God's declaration says here in Isaiah 46 that He knows the end from the beginning because He established the end, and He is working toward that end.

Therefore please understand that He has planned specific events to occur in a specific place and time. Events such as we are looking into regarding Revelation 17 and 18. So events as we are looking into are timed, directly and personally by God Himself. They do not happen randomly. Recall what Jesus said during all that prophesy, that He did not know the day nor the hour of His return. It is in the mind of the Father only. Some things were kept even from His Son!

God is not treating us any differently than He does His Son. We are sons of God and there are things that He has not revealed completely to us and this thing that we are going through right now, the prophecies of Revelation 17 and 18, are in His mind and therefore they are in good hands.

Revelation 17 and 18 fit into the same time element as the return of Jesus Christ, in fact immediately preceding His return. We will go back to the book of Revelation where we will see that He is not returning until after the marriage to the bride, as shown in Revelation 19.

Revelation 19:10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “See that you do not do that, I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

Revelation 19:7-9 Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, “Write: Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God. “

Revelation 19:11-15 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called the Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

That still lies ahead of us, and you can see as we continue through this the return of Jesus Christ does not take place until the events of Revelation 17, 18, and 19 as well, take place. In the meanwhile, where are we? We do not know yet, but we are to be preparing for going to wherever that is.

We are working on a timeline here. In order to establish a timeline, we are going to have to go back into the Old Testament and we are going to begin that timeline in II Kings 17. This will help us to establish something that is fairly clear if one wants to look into every aspect.

II Kings 17:1 In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah, Hoshea the son of Elah became king of Israel in Samaria, and he reigned nine years.

II Kings 17:3-6 Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against him and Hoshea became his vassal, and paid him tribute money. And the king of Assyria uncovered a conspiracy by Hoshea, for he had sent messengers to So, king of Egypt, and brought no tribute to the king of Assyria as he had done year by year. Therefore the king of Assyria shut him up and bound him in prison. Now the king of Assyria went throughout all the land and went up to Samaria and besieged it for three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away to Assyria, and placed them in Halah and by the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

What we read there, very briefly, was the conquering of Israel, the ten northern tribes by the nation of Assyria. We will turn to II Kings 18.

II Kings 18:9-13 Now it came to pass in the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea the son of Elah, king of Israel, that Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria and besieged it. And at the end of three years they took it. In the sixth year of Hezekiah, that is, the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken. Then the king of Assyria carried Israel away captive to Assyria and put them in Halah and by the Habor the River of Gozan and in the cities of the Medes, because they did not obey the voice of the Lord their God, but transgressed His covenant and all that Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded; and they would neither hear nor do them. And in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them.

We have both Israel and Judah attacked by the Assyrians. Israel, the ten northern tribes, was defeated and they were deported from their native land. So what we can see here is that Israel and Judah are two separate nations at this time in their history. In this context we enter Judah's existence—remember Hezekiah was mentioned—about two hundred and fifty years after the reign of David and Solomon (which would establish a timeline). At that time Israel was solidly united as one nation rather than twelve or thirteen separate states. There was no federal government ruling Israel until David established one just prior to 1000 BC.

As we pick up the history here in II Kings, Israel and Judah are related by blood to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but again separated by internal politics and economic disagreements. Israel occupied the northern parts of Palestine, Judah the south. It was the Assyrians (who then occupied that area of the Middle East that is today occupied by Iraq), who first defeated Israel. Then they moved their armies further south to continue their conquest by invading Judah (the mention of Hezekiah comes to play here).

II Kings 18:13 begins the story that the Assyrians attempted to conquer Judah, and if we were to read further we would find that at first the Assyrians had some success, but ultimately they failed because of God's intervention. God had other plans for Judah.

Assyria then passed from the scene of history, as far as any relationship with either Israel or Judah was concerned. All of this that we just read took place around 720 BC. David and Solomon were around 1000 BC. Then the conquering of Israel right around 720 BC, and then a small number of years later we come upon the relationship of Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon, and Judah. We are establishing a timeline here, so we will turn to Daniel 2.

Daniel 2:1 Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him.

The time element involving Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar is again about, roughly, 100 years (actually a little more than that), after what we just read in II Kings 17 and 18. The Gentile nation being dealt with by the Judeans is no longer Assyria, but Babylon, and the focus here is on King Nebuchadnezzar dream, and God's interpretation of it through Daniel.

Nebuchadnezzar had a disturbing dream but he did not understand it. In order to test the honesty of his advisers, he demanded that they tell him what the dream was too. They could not, but they did do something wise. They recommended that he try Daniel.

Daniel 2:31-35 [the telling of the dream] You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome. This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

Nebuchadnezzar was impressed, but the best was not yet to come until a little bit later. In verse 36, Daniel then interprets the dream for Nebuchadnezzar. Actually Daniel does not do it. God revealed it to Daniel.

Daniel 2:36-45 This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king. You O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all. You are this head of gold. [Nebuchadnezzar is the head of gold.] But after you shall rise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others. Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men, but they will not adhere to one another just as iron does not mix with clay. And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; [Verse 44 time wise brings us to the same general period of time as Revelation 13, 17, and 18.] and the kingdom shall not be left to other people. It shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain and its interpretation is sure.

Now one of the significant things that we will see as we continue on here is that the dream's interpretation reveals the passage of a considerable amount of time as one kingdom after another rises to power and then recedes only to be replaced by another. The passage of time begins with the head and proceeds closer to our day, as the description of each part of the body is given. We are in that period of time just prior to Christ's second coming and the final stage of the complete fulfillment by the feet and the toes of iron and clay are about to occur.

The complete fulfillment of what is prophesied regarding the image will not occur until at least 2600 years after Nebuchadnezzar dreamed. Big leap of time! Those 2600 years brings the timeline to very close to our day right now. The prophecy contained in the dream still has not been completely fulfilled as shown in Revelation 17 and 18. We are still looking forward to that.

The feet and the toes of the image has not yet clearly risen, but we are seeing indications that it may be forming, we know enough to understand that time wise we still have a ways to go yet. I do not like to tell you that. It is a little disappointing but we have a ways to go yet. Maybe that is good; we need more time to get ready so that we can fly away like the woman did in Revelation 14. It could come together fairly quickly. I do not know how many times Mr. Armstrong said, when you see these things begin to happen, hold on! It can happen mighty fast.

We will summarize to this point. We not only do not know where to flee, we also do not know when to flee, because all the facts are not in yet. This has important ramifications for us right now, even as Israel could not leave Egypt until everything was in place, neither can we leave where we are, even though things are fairly bad and growing worse.

We will consider Nebuchadnezzar dream again. It was an image of a man, that is where we start. We know that the physical head of every human is that part of the body containing the brain; the brain is the nerve center of the body and the seat of our intellect and of our thinking processes. The brain also holds the memories of our experiences of life and it is the seat of our character and personality. All these things are important to this prophecy.

It is from the head that each part of the body, your body and my body, is given direction as to what to do, and unless the body breaks down in some way, every part of the body responds to the brain. All that stuff is stored in the brain. Not only that, every part of the body responds at the time that the brain tells it to respond.

Unless the brain tells my feet and legs to run, they do not run, and they do not run until everything else in the body is put in the order so that the feet can run. All this is done without ever having to think of it and that part is important too, to this prophecy. It is from the head down that each part of the body is given direction as to what to do.

Now regarding the image, each of the metals as they are described as one moves down the body from the head, reveals this deterioration relative to value, the kind of value men put on things. In other words, silver is not as valuable as gold, and bronze is not as valuable as either, and iron is not as valuable as all three of them.

Nebuchadnezzar, representing the Babylonian Empire, is declared as being the head of gold. Silver represents the Medo Persian Empire; bronze represents the Greco Macedonian Empire, and the iron represents the Roman Empire. Now Rome was without doubt the most powerful, and historically, easily endured the longest. That is the way iron is.

I believe that we are to understand that since the Babylonian Empire is the head of the entire image, each of the other empires following, carries with them characteristic of the first empire, Babylon.

All the way through time until God destroys it through Jesus Christ, the characteristics of Babylon are present right now. This is important to understand, because this prophecy has not been completed yet; it is unfulfilled. It is still going on and the characteristics of Babylon are in many ways just as strong, just as real now as they were when Nebuchadnezzar had his dream, because that was the source, at least as a nation.

Thus Babylon, the head of gold, is perceived as the initiator of many of the other nation's characteristics. By the time we arrive at this day and age, represented by the feet, Babylon no longer

exists as an independent nation but many of its cultural characteristics are carried by the others that followed. And yet it is spoken of here in Revelation 12 and 13 as if it still exists as a powerful nation. That is how lasting those powerful characteristics are. Babylon as a nation is gone but the characteristics that were in that mind are still alive.

By the time that we arrive at this day and age, represented by the feet, those characteristics are still here. How is this possible since Babylon has not been a powerful nation since the Medo Persian Empire defeated them in the period of time around 539-38 BC? There is a simple spiritual answer: because Satan is alive and well, and it is he who has deceptively impressed his anti-God system on all of these other nations beginning with Babylon. They never died out because a living being was passing them on from nation to nation.

We will not put all the blame on the Babylonian people. They were no better or worse than anybody else. They were deceived by that spirit being that was ruling over them, they were no better no worse than any other people. They became what they became because God directed them according to His purpose by freeing Satan to do what he did in much the same manner as He oversaw Satan's interaction with Job.

God told Satan with Job: this far and no further. He did the same thing with each nation as it carried the torch down the time channels right to us today. Thus, before Christ returns, though Babylon no longer exists as a nation, God uses Babylon as the symbolic name for the cultural system of religion, business, education, government, and the basic way of life of those nations directly under Satan's sway at this time.

God also uses the symbolism of a whorish woman to represent the manipulative and seductive power of Satan's way of life. God is warning us, especially those of us in this western world, of the evil influence. It is all around us, and we live within the pervasive influence. Perhaps we might even say, at the very heart.

Calling a place by an ancient name is not all that unusual for God. Please turn to Revelation 11 where we will learn something here.

Revelation 11:8 And their [refers to the Two Witnesses] dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

What city did he mention there? Jerusalem, what did he call it? Sodom and Egypt. Why did he call it Sodom and Egypt? Because the characteristics of Jerusalem were virtually the same as ancient Sodom and Egypt.

Now we know what Jerusalem was like, by knowing what Sodom and Egypt were like. We understand what life was like in Jerusalem and will be like because that is where the Two Witnesses are going to do the majority of their prophesying. It is also the place where they are going to be killed.

When you apply the same principle you can begin to understand very clearly why even though Babylon no longer exists as a nation, its characteristics still exist and they are alive and well on this earth, and brethren *they are impacting on you and me*. We need to focus in a little bit more on who is Babylon. It would be better to say, *what* is Babylon? Here in Revelation 17:5, speaking of the great prostitute.

Revelation 17:5 On her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

What we see building is to become the epitome of God-defying power, as the persecuting enemy of everything godly, regardless of which nations Christians live in. I know that this is true because this is what Jesus had basically said in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21. The Olivet prophecies are there, and those prophecies were directed at the church because some of the church, at the time of the end, is going to have to endure, at least part of them, and some, a very small number, are going to have to endure all to the end or they are going to be killed, by the time the end actually comes.

Notice, it is a mystery. The great prostitute is a mystery. So what is this in practical application? And what does it mean to us personally? When are these prophecies going to be fulfilled? The time is just ahead of us and they are going to be experienced, from everything that we are able to see, while all of us who are in this room are still alive.

Let us say it takes place over the next five or ten years. What does that mean to you and me personally? First we will recall Isaiah 46:8-10. God knows the end from the beginning. He knows the end, because He planned it and He is the one that is maneuvering events to end up at the place that He has planned that they will end us.

The reason God has given us these prophecies is so that we can understand, so we can know, what is going on. When we begin to coordinate this with what Jesus said in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21, given to the church, the church is going to go through a great deal of what Jesus described.

Therefore this means, the church that is alive now, that by God's design—remember He knows the end from the beginning—by His will, He has determined that the wilderness pilgrimage of His end-time church in preparation for the Kingdom of God, is not in a physical wilderness as the Israelites before us trod to the Promised Land. Ours is in the midst of Babylon the Great's anti-God spiritual wilderness, at the very peak of its anti-God spiritual power. That, brethren, on the one hand is a very scary thought.

On the other hand it is an awesome honor to be assigned by Him, to bring Him glory in the midst of this seriously great trial that Jesus said must be endured to the end or until God removes us from it. I am certain that we will not have to endure the worst of it but it will be enough to complete our perfection.

Revelation 17:6 I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.

God calls this place—person—Babylon. Babylon no longer exists as a nation and has not, as far as I know, since 539 BC. Here it is 2600 years later, and God speaks of her as being present at this very time just before Christ's return. The woman is a symbolic name or picture of a system, not a nation. The nation ceased to exist, it is a system.

Everything is in the brain and the brain is passing everything through the ages until everyone of these great nations, all the way down to our time, is carrying the mind of the Babylonian head of gold. What has survived is not the nation but the way of life of that nation, the way that they thought, the way that they carried on their business, the way that they worshipped, and on and on it goes. Babylon

the Great, this woman, this great prostitute is a picture of a system, a way of life. It is not a thing in the ordinary sense of the word, like a nation.

So she is pictured, the system, as a woman and she is riding on a beast. Now what about those beasts? What are they?

Revelation 17:7 But the angel said to me, "Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns."

Heads and horns pictures nations with rulers, kings. The woman is directing, or that is, the system, the way of life that the kings are using within their nations to do their governing and the conduct of business.

Revelation 17:9-10 Here is the mind which has wisdom [he is revealing the mystery bit by bit]: the seven heads are seven mountains [nations] on which the woman sits. There are also seven kings. . . .

There are nations and kings involved in this. The Bible mentions other nations but only as they impact on Israel and Judah. Here we are at the time of the end. God does not break that pattern that He has established; it is alive to this day. Also remember that the feet and toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image at the time of the end are iron and miry clay, and clay is used a number of times in reference to Israel and thus the last part of those reigning powers of Nebuchadnezzar's image.

Remember the stone that was cut out without hands, it struck the image on the feet, so at the end we have a union of nations that includes both Gentiles and Israelitish nations within it, combined together, unified in some kind of an association or organization. We can establish that at the time of the end when that part of the beast is brought to life, it is going to be a union of both Israelites and Gentile peoples.

So the great prostitute of Revelation 17 and 18 is referring to the Babylonian cultural system that both Israelitish and Gentile people unknowingly practice within the Western world, and it dominates our life. Now the Western world, as it is called today, is, ethnically, largely Israelitish.

Revelation 18:3 [It is talking about Babylon falling] For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication . . .

"All" does not mean everybody in the world. It only means all within the focus of the prophecy, and this prophecy here involves Israel and nations that are normally having business with and are related in some way or another to the Israelitish people.

Revelation 18:3 . . . the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury.

I want you to pay attention to two things in that verse that it concentrates on. First, the kings of the earth. Second, the merchants of the earth. What you are looking at, using a very low measure of technology, he is describing the capitalistic system of the Western world. The capitalistic system dominates Europe and the United States. It dominates the Israelitish countries whereas other nations have almost all socialistic systems, and dictatorships.

Those nations in the European Union, and those who are aligned with the United States and Great Britain primarily, are the nations that use a capitalistic system, and a capitalistic system is dominated by the political leadership of that nation, tied together, unified together, corrupting together, the merchants of the earth—the corporate interest.

Between the two of them, they scratch one another's backs in order to make the corporations rich and in order to get the same people elected over and over again—the money of which is supplied by the corporate interest. That is how low the system has become and that is why nothing ever changes for the good. The same people, in the sense of what they think, and how they think (they all think alike), are ruling on the basis of self-interest.

What we are beginning to see emerge from this is that the system has captured the minds of those people within the nations: seven heads and ten horns. While all this is working out, where are we going to flee? Where is this taking place? It is what we call today, the Western world. That is where the Israelitish people are. They are in France, England, Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Canada, and on and on.

I want to make sure that you do not confuse what we see here in Revelation 17 and 18 with the description of the rise of that weird animal in Revelation 13. Eventually that is going to come and I will tell you what will occur when that beast begins to rise up. Before it rises up, something else has to occur.

It has been my procedure in the past to try to assign a nation to the woman who is riding the beast. For a good period of time I studied this thing and came to the conclusion that it was Israel. I think I was reasonably close, but I no longer believe that is true. The woman is not Israel. The woman is the system by which Israel functions. Israel got the system by contact with Babylon, and Israel has helped that system to be kept alive, and we are using it to this very day.

If I had to say that it represented anything, if there is a nation involved, it would be Israel, but I do not really believe that. The woman is a *cultural* system.

As we proceed through time, something very interesting is going to happen. Turn to Revelation 17:7. Remember the woman is sitting on the back of a beast.

Revelation 17:7-9 But the angel said to me, “Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and ten horns. The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel [this thing is going to be revealed], whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains [nations] on which the woman sits. [The directing comes from the system.]

Revelation 17:12-15 The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast. These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King

of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful. And he said to me, "The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. . . .

Revelation 17:17-18 For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth."

I think just about everybody agrees that the great city now is New York City. It is the great commercial center of the world.

The woman is going to be betrayed. When it is betrayed, a new system is going to have to be found to replace it. Who does the killing, if I can put it that way, and what is going to replace it? The killing is going to be done by that entity in Revelation 13. It is going to destroy the Babylonian system. What are they going to replace it with? Their own system, the one that is building now, and the one that even now we are seeing advertised as the New World Order.

These people are going to rearrange things. They are going to come up with their own system that is different from the Babylonian system. It is one that they will design, and they will put it together, and they will be the ones who benefit from it. The poor people of the earth will become slaves of that system. This is why when Christ returns He is going to fight against that system as well.

I mentioned a couple of times something that I think is worth noting. I want to give you some names of some nations and organizations, all of which are part of the Western world, all of which are being ridden by the great prostitute, in Revelation 12 and 13. Every one of these organizations or nations that I am going to give you, you will recognize immediately. Most of Europe, United States of America, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Republic of South Africa, Israel, United Nations headquarters is in New York City. The Bildebergers, Club of Rome, Trilateral Commission, Council on Foreign Relations, the Order of the Garter, the Committee of Three Hundred, the Council of Rome, the Federal Reserve Bank, the Central Bank of Europe, the European Union, England, France, Switzerland, Germany, the Catholic Church. Virtually every Protestant denomination has a headquarters in the Western world, virtually every major corporation in the world has a headquarters in the Western world, virtually everything that means anything to physical life to those of us here and our brethren in these nations, is in the Western world. It is dominated by "the woman."

I told that I believe in conspiracy theories. I believe in them because there is a Satan, because there is a God in heaven, and because I see evidence in what is going on in the news, where people say that a New World Order is coming.

The woman is going to be slain. Right now that system has domination over our lives, to the extent that we will allow it. Spiritually, we do not want to be part of it in any way! The preparations that we are to make now are those preparations to be able, by God's judgment, to flee from that system when the time comes for Him to unleash the forces that are going to bring that system down, and replace it with the one that the beast is going to bring in and put in its place.

We can see the things that are happening, and you can read of the things that are going to happen. Incidentally, the beast will not come in as a warrior. The Bible shows the beast is going to come in as

a peacemaker with a new and better idea that he is going to try to sell the people on. It will not be until after he gets in place, where these other kings give their support to him in whatever he wants them to do, that the real pain is going to come, because he will show his true colors, and what he has in mind as he changes everything.

He will bring upon those things that we see there in Revelation 14 and 15 about the mark of the beast. Now we have time that the Western world under the woman is passing by, so we hang on tight, we work to overcome; we dedicate ourselves to getting ready to move, to flee, whatever, as God gives us order.