

**Scriptures and Doctrine :: Babylon the Great Harlot by Zac Poonen****Babylon the Great Harlot by Zac Poonen - posted by tedlock (), on: 2004/9/17 16:32**

Taken from Zac Poonen's book The Final Triumph
CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

V.1: And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, 'Come here, I shall show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters.'

If a betrothed bride goes around with another man she could be called a harlot. The Bible says that if anyone loves the world, the love of the Father cannot be in him. Jesus said, "You cannot serve two masters". You cannot have two husbands - and Jesus said that the two possible husbands were God and Mammon (material things) (Lk.16:13)!

And these two cannot mix, like oil and water. You have to keep them totally separate. Oil is necessary for running your vehicle. Water is good for drinking. But when you mix the two, you cannot drink it, and you cannot put it in your vehicle either. It becomes useless.

That is what happens when people try to mix God and Mammon. They end up in Babylon. We have to choose - either to serve God or to live for money. But when people use the Christian religion to make profit for themselves, they build Babylon. And Babylon today is a massive structure! When money given for Christian work is used unrighteously for oneself or wasted carelessly, when reports of Christian work are sent out in order to get money in the name of Christ, there we have the essence of Babylon.

Babylon is called a harlot because she claims to be engaged to Christ, but is actually married to money and the world. She wants greatness in the world as well as in heaven. Heathen people cannot belong to Babylon and become harlots, because they do not even claim to be engaged to Christ. They are married to Mammon and they are loyal to their husband! Only those who claim to be Christians can make up Babylon.

V.2: (Babylon) with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality.

This is the marriage of religion and politics. Political rulers and religious rulers work together, because both can benefit thereby. Both seek to rule over people - and working together achieves this end much better. Christian history reveals how much of this there has been in these 2000 years. When the Roman emperor Constantine, became a "Christian" around 300 A.D. he joined hands with "Christian" bishops and became the head of the church. That was the beginning of Babylonian Christianity. And it started in Rome!

Remember that John wrote Revelation at least 200 years before Constantine's time. And he says in v. 9, "Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits."

The harlot was going to have her headquarters in Rome - the city built on seven hills. Verse 18, "The woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth" confirms that this is referring to Rome.

Through the centuries, Christian leaders have worked hand-in-glove with political leaders - mostly from Rome and the result has been spiritual harlotry and the corruption of Christianity. That is Babylon.

The influence of this corrupt Christianity has now spread all over the earth. Therefore the verse says "those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality."

V.3,4: And he carried me away in the spirit into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality.

Babylon is the bride of the Antichrist. We shall see the bride of Christ later in Chap. 19. There is a striking contrast between the way the two are dressed. The bride of Christ is clothed in fine linen, bright and clean (19:8) - simple, clean and pure. But Babylon is clothed in gaudy, purple and scarlet colours, with gold, precious stones and pearls. We may say that since God looks at the heart and man looks at the outward appearance, God cannot be interested in what we wear. But our clothes are very often a revelation of the desire of our hearts - and that is what God sees. Babylon desires to deck herself with the glory of this world. The bride of Christ however clothes herself with "a gentle and quiet spirit which is precious in the sight of God" (1 Pet.3:4).

The golden cup full of abominations that Babylon holds reminds us of Jesus words in Lk. 16:15, "That which men esteem

man highly is an abomination in the sight of God". Everything that man values highly is detestable and an abomination in God's eyes. Whatever we have that brings us the esteem of ungodly people in the world has no value before God. Our cleverness, educational qualifications, wealth, musical abilities, cultured ways, refinement, family-connections, worldly honour and position - all of these have no value at all in God's eyes. The fact that people in the world speak highly of us also has no value in the eyes of God. Even the Nobel prize has no value in the eyes of God, for it is a worldly honour. Would you be thrilled if you got some worldly awards or honours like that? A church that places value on any of these things will certainly become Babylonian.

Babylon's immorality is seen in the fact that she claims to be an ambassador of Christ and yet lives by the principles of the world and seeks to be great in the world. That is how her cup becomes full of abominations.

Here is a test. Ask yourself just one question: Can you honestly say that you do not care one bit for the approval and esteem of any human being - either of worldly people or of the leaders of your church?

V.5: and upon her forehead a name was written, a mystery, 'BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH'.

Babylon is a mystery to many people, because she claims to follow Jesus. Thus she fools millions of her devotees across the world.

Babylon is called GREAT eleven times in Revelation. Notice the contrast with Jerusalem, the bride of Christ which is called 'the HOLY city' (Rev.21:10). There we see the distinction between the harlot and the bride. The harlot is great whereas the bride is holy. Those who desire to be great in the world (even in the Christian world) will certainly become a part of Babylon. But if our pursuit is after holiness (Heb.12:14), then we shall be a part of Jerusalem. Babylon may be interested in evangelism and social work. But she has no interest in holiness. Her works are done to impress people in the world. There is a lot of Christian work like that. Statistics are deceptive. The fire on the final day will not test size and greatness but quality (1 Cor.3:13). Anyone who covets a position of leadership in any Christian organization or church, instead of wanting to be a servant like Jesus was, is heading towards Babylon, if he hasn't already become a part of it!

Babylon is called the mother of harlots, because there are many harlots, not just one. This religious Babylon began on a large scale when Christianity joined hands with the Roman empire in the early fourth century. But from that mother has come forth many denominational and independent churches through the centuries that have also ended up as harlots, and become just like the mother. So Babylon is called the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth. Is it only in the larger mainline denominations of Christianity that the leaders seek greatness and worldly honour? No. There are just as many leaders in smaller independent churches who seek for it too! Religious harlotry is widespread in Christendom.

But our Lord is not like any of them. He came riding on a donkey. He did not come with gold and silver decorations on His body. How can this Lord be united to a bride that is decked in purple and scarlet with gold and silver and precious stones. The very concept is ridiculous!

V.6: And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. And when I saw her, I wondered greatly.

Through the centuries, many so-called "Christians" of all groups have persecuted the true saints of God. Millions of true saints of God have been persecuted and killed by religious "Christians" of all denominations. Even today, many saints are being slain by their "fellow-Christians" - by their tongues and their writings - for preaching the whole counsel of God. Babylon and her daughters are indeed drunk with the blood of the true witnesses of Jesus.

But God has kept a record of everything and will repay everyone appropriately on the final day. No-one will escape, for God has promised to take vengeance and He always keeps His Word (Rom.12:19)

V.7,8: And the angel said to me, 'Why do you wonder? I shall tell you the mystery of the woman and the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. The beast which you saw was and is not, and is about to come out of the abyss and to go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth will wonder, whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast, that has been, and is not, and will come.'

The beast came from the abyss. Human beings are not sent to the bottomless pit (abyss), when they die. If they are converted, they go to hell, as Jesus said in Lk. 16:23. The bottomless pit is where imprisoned demons dwell. So if someone comes out of the bottomless pit, it must be a demon. This will be an evil spirit who will control the Antichrist, just like there are evil spirits controlling world-rulers today. The phrase "He was and is not" could mean that the same demon was in the past in charge of one of the world's great empires. That demon was in the bottomless pit in John's time, but would be permitted by God to come out in the last days to control the Antichrist.

V.9-11: Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while. And the beast which was, and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction.

In 96 AD, when Revelation was written, five world-kingdoms had fallen - Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece. Rome still ruled. One was yet to come. We don't know which the other one is. But it must be referring to some world superpower that existed during the past 1900 years. That empire would remain for a little while. In the last days, the Antichrist will arise. Finally he too will be destroyed.

V.12-14: And the horns which you saw are ten kings, who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour. They have one purpose and they give their power and authority to the beast. These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful.

Ten horns are ten nations. The "one hour" mentioned here is the hour of judgment when God is going to judge the world. The ten nations will give all their power and authority to the Antichrist.

We read in Dan. 7:24,25, "As for the ten horns...ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings". The Antichrist will subdue three of the ten nations totally and rule the other seven.

The Antichrist will then wage war against the Lamb. It won't be a long war. In just a few moments, the Lord will destroy the armies with the word of His mouth. His bride, the 144,000 - the called, chosen and faithful - will be with Him in this battle. Many are called, but few are chosen, and fewer still are faithful. Are we faithful? Our faithfulness is tested not in big things as much as in little things. Blessed are those who seek to be faithful to the smallest commandments of Jesus.

V.15-18: And he said to me, "The waters which you saw where the harlot sits are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues. And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire. For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God should be fulfilled. And the woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth."

The harlot has spread her influence around the whole world. But finally the ten-nation kingdom will hate the harlot. The political powers will use the "Christian" religious system for its own ends. Once the rulers have accomplished their ends, they will have nothing more to do with Babylon.

During the elections for the U.S. President, some years ago, both candidates realised that there was a large chunk of the American population that claimed to be born again. So both candidates claimed to be born again Christians - because they could thus get the votes of the born-again people!!

In India, it has become a common practice now for "Christian" preachers to have non-Christian political leaders sitting with them on the platform and addressing the crowd. Thus the message of the gospel is totally compromised. One cannot imagine Jesus inviting Herod or Pilate to sit with him on a platform when He spoke to the multitudes. But today's "Christian" preachers follow another Jesus. Yet multitudes of Christians are unable to see through this deception!

When the political powers have made use of Babylonian Christianity for their own ends, they will hate her and burn her up with fire. God will thus allow judgment to come upon false, apostate Christianity by the very same political powers they once held hands with.

In this chapter, we have seen the essence of false Christianity - it is religion, money-making and political power all mixed together.

From the beginning of the human race, we find two types of religions - one in Cain and the other in Abel. Cain was not an atheist, but a deeply religious man. He was no idolater. He believed in bringing offerings to the true God. He had a form of godliness. Abel also brought offerings to the same God. Whereas Abel came with the blood of a lamb, Cain brought vegetables from the ground. The Lord accepted Abel's offering - perhaps by supernatural fire coming down from heaven and consuming it. When Cain saw that, he was jealous, for no such fire came down on his offering. And so he killed Abel. The first murder in the world was a religious murder - committed in jealousy. This was the beginning of what we read in Rev. 17:6, "The woman was drunk with the blood of the saints". Cain was the first person to shed the blood of a saint. In Cain, we see the beginning of the Babylonian religion, just as in Abel we see the beginning of the true faith.

Then God wiped out all the descendants of Cain through a flood in Noah's time, and started all over again. Noah was a descendant of Seth, not of Cain. There is no descendant of Cain in the world today. But a division soon came among the sons of Noah. He had a godly son called Shem, and an ungodly one called Ham. Ham was cursed, and Shem was blessed. Through Shem came Abraham, and the Jewish race and Christ.

Ham was cursed because he did not respect his father (Gen.9:22-27). It is interesting to see that the curse on Ham's descendants came because he did not respect authority. Disrespect for Divinely-appointed authority is an essential part of Babylon. If children are not taught to respect their parents, they are being bred for Babylon. Ham had a son named Cush, who had a son named Nimrod who established the first kingdom of Babylon (Babel). (Gen.10:6-10). Then we read how they built the tower of Babel as an act of rebellion against God (Gen.11).

Secular history tells us that Nimrod was a great hunter who killed many wild beasts and thus became famous and a world-leader - a type of the Antichrist. Shem, the son of Noah, was prophesying in those days, as a servant of God. He is a type of the true church standing against the abominations of the Antichrist. Finally Nimrod was slain - possibly supernaturally by Shem. But by that time, Nimrod was almost worshipped by people. History tells us that Nimrod's wife, Semiramis, sensing that she was now in danger of losing her power over the people, did something very clever. Being an immoral woman, she had a child through someone. When the child was born, she told people that it was Nimrod re-incarnated (come back to life again). Thus began the worship of the "mother and son", which in later centuries, became the worship of "Mary and the infant Jesus". There were images of "the mother and son", around the world, hundreds of years before Christ was born. These were the images of Semiramis and her son.

The Israelites also were corrupted by this Babylonian religion. In Jeremiah's time, we read that they used to burn sacrifices to "the queen of heaven" (Jer. 14:15-18). They were worshipping the queen of heaven 600 years before Mary was even born. In Ezekiel 8:14, we read of the Israelites weeping for the son, Tammuz - which was another name for Nimrod who was supposed to have been reincarnated as Semiramis's son. (That was Satan's counterfeit of the resurrection of Christ.) The "mother and child" were "Semiramis and Tammuz" in those days.

Secular history also tells us that the Babylonian religion included the worship of the sun. And so the idolaters used to eat a round wafer symbolising the sun. Around the heads of their Babylonian deities they would paint a picture of the sun - which we today call "a halo". There would be halos behind Semiramis's head and Tammuz's head. It was this Babylonian idea that finally influenced the pictures drawn of Jesus and Mary with halos.

Idolatry leads to immorality too. History books record the immoral lives led by the heads of "Christian" denominations in the Middle Ages. But immorality is not restricted to the middle ages alone. Many "Christian" preachers and pastors in the recent past have also been found to be living immoral lives. The daughters also have the harlotry of the mother. For a detailed, fully-documented study of this subject, you could read the book "THE TWO BABYLONS" by Alexander Hislop. There you will see how many rituals and customs that are practiced by many churches today actually began in the ancient Babylonian religion.

You can read the whole book and others by Brother Zac Poonen for free at: www.poonen.org/zac

Watch the video Mystery of Babylon here: <http://www.sermonindex.net/modules/mydownloads/visit.php?lid=4347>

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Re: Babylon the Great Harlot by Zac Poonen - posted by tedlock (), on: 2004/9/20 8:34

If you liked this you may want to read "The Kingdom that Turned the World Upside Down" by David Bercot

If someone were to ask you what was the theme of Jesus' preaching, what would be your answer? Man's need for salvation? God's love for mankind? The new birth?

To be sure, Jesus spoke about all of those things. And they're all essential truths. But none of them were the theme of His teaching. The theme of Jesus' message was the kingdom of God.

In *The Kingdom that Turned the World Upside Down*, David Bercot takes the reader back to Jesus' teachings of the kingdom—teachings that have too often been forgotten. Bercot describes the radically new laws of the kingdom and its upside-down values. There's no room in Christ's kingdom for superficial Christianity, for this is a kingdom that has historically turned the world upside down.

The Kingdom that Turned the World Upside Down will challenge you to the core in your Christian walk.

I'm not trying to sell this...I've given out many copies of this book as a Gospel Tract for Christians...it has been a blessing

His website is www.scrollpublishing.com this is also available at evangelism rate of \$3.00 per copy.