

**The Destruction of the Nations, Part 3**

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: 1332

We come tonight to the study of the destruction of the nations, part 3, in our study of prophecy for this particular theme. And the particular subject in the destruction of the nations that we want to zero in on is the subject, the final forms of false religion.

We are discussing a period of time known as the Tribulation. The Bible tells us that the church is going to be taken out of the world at the end of the age and we believe that to be very soon. And then once the church is taken out of the world, there's going to begin a terrible, fearful time known as the Tribulation. We have discussed, concerning the Tribulation, some of the things that are going to be happening. We have discussed, particularly, Israel's place during that Tribulation time. And we are now discussing the place of the nations during that same seven-year period known as the Tribulation.

Now, there are many aspects of the nations in that particular Tribulation period. One of them is the religion of the Tribulation. What kind of religion will exist among the nations in the Tribulation? That is what we want to talk about tonight, the final forms of false religion that are going to exist in the Tribulation. Now, obviously, the church, having gone out, all true religion has left. God, then, will begin to redeem some from Israel and the great multitude from the Gentiles, but aside from that true work that is going on, there will rise a great worldwide false religious system, Satan's final great phase of false religion. And we want to see what that is, what's going to happen to it and if there are any signs right now that we can look at that indicate that this is fast coming.

By way of introduction, let me just begin at the beginning. When God (laughter)...when God created men at the very start, He created them with an anticipation and an anxiety toward deity. Men were created for fellowship with God. And so there is innate in every man from the very start, a desire to know and be known by the supernatural. Along came the fall of man as recorded in the book of Genesis. And since the fall, man's nature has been dominated by sin and perverted. But even in the perversion of man's nature, there is still a religious bent. There is still a desire to know the supernatural. There is still the haunting thought that there must be somewhere a God. Witness, for example, the myriad of religions around the world. You say, well, I don't know about that because I know a man who's not religious, who's atheistic. Well, that doesn't disprove the law any more than a blind man disproves the general statement that men see. There may be an exception to that. There may be someone who has reasoned himself logically out of the possibility of God. But perhaps he's not really honest, like the atheist who got himself in a terrible situation and said, if there isn't a God,

there ought to be one for times like this and began to pray (laughter). But legitimately, men have a religious bent. They create religions to accommodate this bent. And since the beginning, since God made man, He made him with a religious nature, a capacity to step outside of himself and find spiritual fulfillment within the framework of the supernatural world. Men, then, continue to be religious. And Romans, chapter 1 says that even though they reject the truth, they then manufacture their own religions. And, really, they all boil down to the worship of Satan, demons and self. They worship the creature more than the Creator. When they rejected the true God, they began to worship four-footed things and birds and snakes and everything else, Romans 1 says. Man will always turn to religion because he has a drive built in him from the creation to know the supernatural. Now, friends, Satan knows this. And Satan knows that this supernatural bent is so powerful that it can actually dominate the patterns of a man's life. And so Satan is very busy all the time creating false systems of religion. Man is already bent that way; Satan simply accommodates the bent. And Satan comes along as an angel of light, manufactures all the false systems and men dive right in. When the fall occurred, immediately after the fall, God set about to redeem man, didn't He. He said in Genesis 3:15 that there's coming the seed of a woman who will bruise the serpent's head. And He went right into a redemptive process immediately even to the point of sacrifice. And immediately, Satan began a counter campaign. God began a move to propagate the world with His truth, and Satan began a move to propagate the world with error. In fact, in II Corinthians 4:4 [this is 4:3,4] it says that "if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost in whom the god of this world has"...what?..."blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel...should shine unto them." Satan, then, has moved in to blind man to truth and has filled him up with error. Now, the reason there are religions around the world is because of man's bent toward religion and Satan's desire to capture him in false systems. And it's very, very successful.

Now, all of this began, if you take your Bibles, back in Genesis, chapter 11. All of this organized, systematic kind of religion began back here in Genesis 11. And it's a very interesting passage to consider because it has ramifications that go on clear till the end of man's day. Religion has become the enslaver of men. People get locked into religious systems, Satan does enough miracles to hold them captive, and, really, the whole, kind of, systematic, false religion thing began here on the plain of Shinar in Genesis 11. Verse 1: "The whole earth was of one language and one speech. It came to pass as they journeyed from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and they dwelt there. They said one to another, 'Come, let us make brick and burn them thoroughly.' They had brick for stone and slime had they for mortar. And they said, 'Come, let us build us a city and a tower whose top may reach unto Heaven, and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.'" Now, you notice something very interesting here. They said in verse 3, "let us," in verse 4, "let us," in verse 4, again, "let us." Now, this was the desire of self-will to frame religion. And they were gonna build a tower. Now, it's very simplistic to say they were gonna try to build a tower to reach Heaven. If they were gonna do that, they never would have built it in the plain of Shinar; they would have built on top of a mountain and short-cutted it. They were not trying to build a tower that they could climb into Heaven on. They were building what is commonly known as a

ziggurat. They were building a tower or a monument to their own religion. A ziggurat had on the top of it a zodiac. And the priests of this particular system hoped to gain the information they needed from the stars. This was the beginning of the zodiac. In fact, this right here was the beginning of all systematized false religion. They began actual devil worship. They began actual demon worship. Now, the man behind this whole mess was named Nimrod and he's mentioned in Genesis 10:9. And verse 8 says "Cush begat Nimrod. He began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord. Wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel..." Now, Nimrod was the brains and the motivation behind the whole formation of Babel. It was open defiant turning toward Satan and false religion and from the true religion and the true God. In fact, Nimrod's name means "rebel." He was well named. And, incidentally, he is really a very vivid foreshadowing of the Antichrist. His name means "rebel." Antichrist's name, according to Paul, is "the lawless one." And his particular approach, it says in verse 9, "he was a mighty hunter before the Lord." And that's a little bit misleading. What it literally means is "presumptuous in the presence of God." He set himself against God...again, a picture of Antichrist who does the same thing according to Daniel 11:36,37. And like Antichrist, Nimrod was mighty. You read II Thessalonians, you'll find so was Antichrist, who was able to do signs and wonders. Nimrod, as the Antichrist will be, was also a king. And notice this; Nimrod began his headquarters in Babel. The Antichrist will manufacture a system that the New Testament calls "Babylon." And so you have a full cycle in the history of man. False religion will begin at Babel. It will wrap up in a concept the New Testament calls Babylon.

Now, Nimrod was Satan's man to set up the first system of idolatrous religion. They built their own tower. They invented their own system. God didn't allow it to last. Indicated in verse 5, "the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men builded. The Lord said, 'Behold, the people are one, they have all one language and this they begin to do, and now nothing will be withheld from them which they have imagined to do.'" They're in unison. "'Come, let us go down,'"...interesting, there's communication within the Trinity..."Come, let us go down and there confound their language that they may not understand one another's speech.' So, the Lord scattered them abroad from there upon the face of all the earth and they ceased building the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel..." which originally meant "Gate of God," and then became synonymous with "confusion." When we think of Babel, we think of confusion. "Now, there the Lord confounded the language of all the earth and there did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of the earth." Now, watch. Here was the real beginning of false systems of religion and everybody was one. The whole world, in a sense, was gathered there. When God scattered them all over the place, they took what was left in their minds of this religion and they formulated it culturally wherever they happened to go and in whatever language they happened to speak. This is fantastically important because all the major religions that you find throughout the world have basically the very same ingredients. Why?...because they all came originally from Babel to begin with. And when God scattered them, they all took on cultural aspects according to the language of the people and the place in which they lived and, of course, that was changed through a period of years. The scattering, then, gave rise to

world religions, but all of them go back to Babel. They all will again be reunited in the Babylon of the Tribulation, which is the name of the false religious system. And notice something very interesting. Here at Babel they all spoke the same language. And you know what I think is an interesting thing is that the whole big ecumenical church movement that's coming together to become the Babylon of the Tribulation seems to be finding the greatest catalyst for their unity to be the gift of tongues, which is almost as if we were reversing the disorder of languages and amalgamating people on the basis of that particular kind of ecstatic language. Interesting. There may be an effort on Satan to form another Babel, as it were, bring the thing full cycle. I think we'll get into that in just a minute and make it more clear to you. All false religions, then, stem from Babel, and really, they were all worship of demons. In Deuteronomy there are several passages of note, but one that I would read to you is Deuteronomy 32:17. Speaking here of typical false religion, the Word says: "They sacrificed unto demons, not to God; to gods whom they knew not; to new gods who came up newly, whom your fathers feared not." False religion is a sacrifice to demons...sacrifice to gods that rise out of Hell as it were. In Psalms 106, again another indication of a similar nature...106, verse 37, I think it is...yes. In describing here, false worship, he says "they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto demons." Now, Satan inspired Babel, and the residue of Babel became the core of all the false religions when Babel was scattered. So, whether you're talking about the Babylonian god Marduk or the Assyrian god Ashur or the Greek god Zeus or the Roman god Jupiter or Apollo or whether you're talking about a nature god like Ra, the Egyptian sun god, it was all the same format and it all stemmed from the same satanic source at Babel. And, really, it's all satanic today, whether you talk about paganism or something as sophisticated as Hinduism or something as American as cults; it's all satanic.

Now, satanic religion, then, has been around a long time, but it's getting worse. And that's Biblical, that is Biblical. Paul said to the Thessalonians, "the mystery of iniquity is already at work." There is going to be an unfolding of worse and worse things. Paul said to Timothy, evil men shall grow worse and worse. False religion is moving toward an apex. And Paul says in I Timothy, for example, 4:1, that there's going to be a particular emphasis at the latter times. "Some shall depart from the faith in the latter times, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils." And he goes on to describe something of it. In II Timothy, chapter 2, verse 16, "But shun profane and vain babblings, for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as a gangrene." And you can look in II Peter, chapter 2 and find the same thing. "As there were false prophets, so shall there be, bringing in destructive heresies, denying the Lord," etc., etc. Then in chapter 3, he says essentially the same thing, "in the last days, scoffers, walking after their own lusts..." and teaching error. Now, the Bible then says, now, mark this in your mind, that there's gonna be a worsening of religion...that it is going to grow and grow and grow into a kind of system that is totally satanic. We wonder whether some things could ever get worse, whether satanic worship at this point now isn't as bad as it could be.

Now, as we look at this particular subject in reference to the Tribulation, I want to just pinpoint one subject, one topic tonight and that is the religion of the nations in the Tribulation. What is this system gonna be like? We've talked about the times of the nations. We've talked about the rulers of the

nations or the ruler of the nations - Antichrist. Now, I want to talk for a moment about the religion of the nations. Turn in your Bible to Revelation 17. And we're gonna be there awhile, so you can relax (laughter). Incidentally, we're gonna consider some more things about the nations in the Tribulation in weeks to come: the alignment of the nations, the kings of the east, the north, the south and all that and that's fascinating. Have you been reading the paper today about Egyptians and Arabs allying against Israel and then the news came on today that Russia has sided with Egypt. What did we expect? Daniel 11 predicted it. So we'll be talking about the alignment of the nations, the collapse of the nations, the war of the nations, the judgment of the nations.

Now, Revelation 17 is a fascinating chapter. It predicts the doom of this worldwide system of religion. This is a preview, if you will, of the religion of the Tribulation. Now, let me begin by saying something that I think I need to say as a kind of a check-off point. What I'm going to say tonight is in no way meant to be unkind to any individual. I think you know me better than that. I don't make issues over individuals. But I do believe Satan operates in systems and I may make comments about certain systems and that does not mean that I don't believe that there are wonderful people in those systems, some of them trapped and caught in ignorance. And it does not mean that I don't believe that God is, perhaps, working in the lives of many of those people. But nevertheless, the system itself needs to be brought to the test of the light of Scripture.

To begin with, then, we come to chapter 17 and we're introduced to a system of religion. It comes under an interesting title. Verse 5: It is called "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth." Now whatever this system is in Revelation 17, it has an interesting name. It's called Mystery, Babylon, the Mother of Harlots, or the Mother of whores or prostitutes, and Abominations of the Earth. That's a pretty strong name. You say, well, what is this? What is the true church called? What is the true church called?... the Bride. What would the false church then be?...the prostitute. Why is it called Babylon? Where did all false religion begin?...Babel. And when all false religion then comes together and accumulates into one final system, it is gonna draw, then, the very same name that it had at its very beginning because that's what it is. You see, at Babel, it was scattered. In the Tribulation it all comes back together again in a final system. It's called, then, Mystery, Babylon because it's Babel gone full cycle. And it's called the Mother of Harlots, or the Harlot or the Prostitute because it is the false church. The true church, the Bride, is already with Christ. Now, I believe that what we're seeing today needs to be taken into account. There is the building of the false church going on all over the world. All kinds of churches are getting together on everything but the truth of the Bible, right. All kinds of overtures from one religion to another religion and all kinds of activity together trying to accomplish some kind of a worldwide united church, a great, huge ecumenical church. This is really a part of what we see as the Babylon of the book of Revelation. You say, well, what are they uniting under? Well, it's interesting. They're not uniting under the Bible and Biblical doctrine are they? One thing that all these people are uniting under is social action, community involvement, civil rights, you know, education, welfare, housing, psychological services, women's lib, all those things. And some of those things are good things. But

when the church has lost its identity and gotten lost in social action...you see, doctrine has long ago faded away and so there's an ease about getting together, and that's what's happening.

The second thing that churches are getting together on...and denominations and religions...is experience. And we're living in the existential day when it's almost shameful to be one who talks about a spiritual experience with definition. You would ask the average liberal theologian who doesn't really believe God wrote the Bible and doesn't really believe Jesus was God or virgin born or resurrected...he's a little shaky on it. You ask him, have you ever had a religious experience and he would say, oh, yes, I've had the leap of faith, or I've had my particular otherworldly experience. And you say to him, well, could you define that and he'll say, wait a minute; that's not fair. It's my experience. See. It's indefinable. And he doesn't even want to define it. It's his thing. That's existentialism. Now, you can have a whole lot of people having content-less experiences getting together, because they don't ever have to define their experience.

The third thing that I think is significant about what people are getting together on is emotion. And this is another dimension of experience. I keep reading, with very much interest, about the movement that we call today, the charismatic movement. And I believe that there are some wonderful people in that. There are some people that love the Lord Jesus Christ and we're gonna spend eternity with, and some people that I love dearly, personally. But I see within that movement, a getting together that crosses all the lines without any thought for doctrine or truth... bypassing those things. For example, new bridges are being built from the historic church to the Mormons because they also speak in tongues. New bridges are being built to the Roman Catholic Church and these are most interesting, most interesting. You say, well, are you against the Catholics? No, I'm not at all. I'm against the system because I think it's satanic. You say, what do you mean by that? Let me read you an interesting article. If you think the theology has changed in all these overtures...say, oh, isn't it great that more of the Catholic Church is getting involved in all of this. Let me just read you, basically, a doctrinal statement by a priest in June of 1973 setting down where the Catholic Church stands today. And this he wrote to an evangelical Christian. Quote, "It might interest you to know that I was brought up as a Baptist. I rejected that teaching as heretical, erroneous and hazardous to my mental, spiritual and emotional health. My prayer for all is that they might come at last through Christ's mercy into the ark of salvation, the holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, of which I have the honor to be a priest through the orthodox and apostolic laying on of hands, by the Bishop in the historic Catholic succession. As a result, I have the power to absolve sins, to consecrate bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ and to pronounce God's blessing upon man." Then he closes by saying, "May the blessed Mother bring you to the truth." Now, the interesting thing about that is this, that that doctrine is erroneous. It is not Biblical. But we make all of these overtures to this. We say, oh, but they've had the experience. Don't you see how subtle that is? An unqualified experience doesn't mean anything. At Notre Dame there were some 11,000 Catholics recently at a charismatic clinic there...11,000! And a Benedictine monk from Notre Dame by the name of Father Edward O'Conner, reflecting on what's happening in the Catholic Church in regard to this Pentecostal

movement said this...listen...quote "Catholics who have accepted Pentecostal spirituality have found it to be fully in harmony with their traditional faith and life." Listen. "Similarly, the traditions of the church have been taking on more meaning. Some people have been brought back to a frequent use of the sacrament of penance..." That's buying forgiveness..."through the baptism of the Spirit. Others have discovered a place for devotion to Mary in their lives. One of the most striking effects of the Holy Spirit's action has been to stir up devotion to the real presence in the Eucharist"...that is that Christ is actually in that piece of bread. Beloved, we know these to be false doctrines. How can we say that's the work of the Spirit? It cannot be the work of the Spirit; can it? No. Does the Spirit ever contradict the Word of God? No. Do we really believe that's the Spirit's work? What we're seeing today is the building of a great massive coalition of all of these systems, and on the basis of social action, undefined religious experience and an ecstatic emotional experience, they're crossing all the lines. It's amazing to me that the false church has so much...in just the last 50 years, it has so much more possibility of existing. Let me give you an interesting statistic. Glock and Stark ran a survey in 1970 and the question they asked of all the major denominations in America was this: Are the Scriptures, the Bible, the inspired and inerrant Word of God? That's an important question. Are the Scriptures the inspired and inerrant Word of God? Here's the answer. Seventy-seven percent of the American Lutherans said no. Sixty-seven percent of the American Baptists said no. Eighty-seven percent of the Methodists said no. Eighty-eight percent of the Presbyterians said no. And ninety-five percent of the Episcopalians said no. Now, if all of those people have agreed that this is not the Word of God, then what is? And if this isn't the Word of God, then there are no rules to the game of religion; you might as well get together on social action; right? And you might as well have an experience and get together on that basis. It's a fearful thing.

You say, well, how far does all this go, John? Well, it's building toward this church that is called Mystery, Babylon, the false church. Look at verse 5 again. "Upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." This is the final form of false religion. It's interesting that in the time that John lived when he penned this and had this vision, prostitutes were branded on their heads with certain figures in order that everyone might know that they were prostitutes. And you'll notice on the forehead is the name. You say, well, John, do you think this is the Catholic Church? Do you think the Catholic Church is going...there are some who think that is going to be the great apostate church. There are some reasons that people think that. Verse 4, for example. The woman is...and the woman here is a figure of this system...the woman is arrayed in purple, scarlet, with gold, precious stones and pearls, has a golden cup and some say that's all the display of the Roman Catholic Church. Verse 6: "I saw a woman drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs..." Some say that's The Inquisition, the persecution, how the Catholic Church is persecuted and so forth. Sir Robert Anderson of Scotland Yard once assumed that there must have been 50 million people die at the hands of persecution under the Roman system. Verse 9: "And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits." And everybody knows that Rome is the city with seven hills. And so some of them say this has to be Rome. It even says in verse 18

that it's a "great city that reigns over the kings of the earth." And this could indicate the power of Rome.

Well, let me say that I don't think this is just the Roman Catholic Church. If this is truly Babylon, then what must it include?...everything. I think it's a coming together of the whole world system of religion...all that's false. I think it's too narrow just to be the Roman Catholic Church. I think the term "Babylon" is too broad a term to refer just to Catholicism. And not only that, but in the book of Revelation, I don't expect just to focus on one religion, but to see the culmination of all; right? So, I think this. I think it is talking about a worldwide religious system, but I believe it'll be centered in Rome. I believe it'll be centered in Rome.

Now, I want to show you three things in this chapter. That's the introduction. I'll show you three things: a final union with Satan, a final deception of the world, and a final victory for the Lamb. A final union with Satan, a final deception of the world and a final victory for the Lamb. First of all, a final union with Satan. Look at verse 1 and let's go.

"There came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls..." I always hate to jump in in the middle in the book of Revelation because everybody's out in left field somewhere (laughter). You say, what angels with what bowls? (Laughter) Yeah, right. (Laughter) In chapter 16, and we won't go back any further...promise. In chapter 16, you have the pouring out of bowls as if wrath was being poured out. And during the Tribulation there's gonna be great judgment. And it's as if angels poured out bowls of judgment, dumping out vials on the earth or bowls. Well, one of these angels, who was one of the ones who was used to pour the bowls out in the Tribulation appears. And he talks with John..."talked with me, saying..." come here. Come over here, John, I want to show you something. I want to "show you the judgment of the great harlot that sits on many waters." Now, remember that in Revelation you have figurative language. Now, the great harlot is the false religious system. We have that; right? John says, I'm gonna show you the system and it sits on many waters. You say, well, what are the many waters? Well, verse 15 tells you this. It explains what they are. Verse 15 says, "The waters which you saw where the harlot sits are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues." Now, notice, whatever this system is, it is a worldwide system; right? It sits on the whole system of tongues and peoples and nations and everything. It encompasses the world. So it is the false church that encompasses the world. It's a massive system that Satan has brought together in one big ecumenical hash. Verse 2: "With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication..." Now, remember the symbolism is, the system is like a woman and the kings of the earth have been involved with this woman. "...and the inhabitants of the earth have been drunk with the wine of her fornication." What is that saying? It's saying, whatever this religious system is, it's in connection with the world political system. It's the church and state together. It's interesting that if you study the history of the Roman Catholic Church, you find that continually was a mingling...that the Roman Catholic Church, the papacy itself even was a political football for centuries and centuries and centuries. The church and state were very often wed. And the guy who first started it all was

Constantine. But nevertheless, this particular system is going to be a worldwide system of religion, but all the kings of the earth are gonna get involved in it. And the whole world is gonna get drunk on the wine of its fornication. In other words, the whole world is gonna be seduced by the system. This religious system is gonna dominate the world. The political rulers of the world are gonna be sucked in on the system as well. And everybody else is gonna be sucked in also.

Now, here you have this false system. It is the whore of the political economic system in the end times. Boy, you know that any...and mark this...anybody who ever conquered the world politically had wed to that political system a religious system; right? Religion is definitely the opiate of the people; believe me. Even if it's a Communist system, it's a religion of atheism and, boy, you better buy that atheism...right? Because any political machine knows that men are controlled by their attitudes that are spiritual. And so every dominant power seeks to capture men's minds with a religious system that goes along with its political aspects. And so, Satan isn't stupid. Chapter 18 describes the political system, 17, the religious system that's wed to it. Well, John sees this woman that is the system sitting on these waters and the Spirit says, I'll tell you about it. Verse 3: "So he carried me away in the spirit of the wilderness and I saw a woman..." and notice this...a woman was sitting upon a scarlet colored beast! Um, that's interesting. "...full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns." Now, here's this woman sitting on a scarlet colored beast. Do we know anything about the beast? Who's the beast?...Antichrist. We've already met the beast in our last study. Now, watch. The false church sits on the beast. Guess who supports the false religion?...Antichrist. Why? He knows that if he's ever gonna conquer the world politically, he's gonna do it through a system of religion because that is the opiate of the people. That's what conquers them. Now, this particular beast is scarlet colored. Scarlet is a royal color. Scarlet was the color of imperial Rome and the beast sits there in royalty as the leader of this revived Roman Empire. But you know what's interesting? Almost all of those nations are Catholic in religion. The cohesion for all these years in the absence of imperial Romanism has been religious Romanism. It's kept the thing together. And now it's all getting back together in this 10-nation confederacy. The beast is gonna support the religious system. Notice something about him. It says he was "full of names of blasphemy." He blasphemes God, sets himself up as God. He has seven heads and ten horns. Here you see that the beast's empire is gonna be a ten-king confederacy...ten-king confederacy. And we know that to be the revived Roman Empire. Verse 4: "And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color and bedecked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication." Now, here's a description of the woman that is most interesting and it's one of the reasons we kind of feel this whole system will be centered in Rome. It says that the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color. Scarlet is reserved for Popes and Cardinals. Paul II made it illegal for anyone but Cardinals to wear scarlet hats. A Roman Church ceremony book compiled over 300 years ago by Marcellus, a Roman Archbishop, enumerated five articles of dress for the Cardinal and the Pope. All of them were scarlet. The book also cited a vest that was to be worn studded with pearls and a miter of gold and precious stones. Notice that is all included in verse 4. You can find it all 300 years ago in the church ceremony book written by

Marcellus, a Roman Archbishop, exactly paralleling verse 4.

Now, the false church will also be very wealthy. A gold cup in her hand and all these other things indicate something of the wealth. Notice one interesting thing. It's a gold cup. It's a single cup, only one cup. All the varied systems are gonna come together and drink out of the same old cup. What old cup is it? It's just Babel all over again...false religion unified. Verse 5: "Upon her forehead was the name..." and then we saw the name and we indicated that on the forehead was the way prostitutes were branded and the system is branded clearly right there.

Let me just digress. This is interesting. In Babel...it's called MYSTERY, BABYLON and mystery means something that was hidden, right. This form was hidden. The Old Testament never saw this form of this world religion. It's now revealed. But Babylon...you go back to Babylon...remember I mentioned Nimrod. Nimrod was the brains behind the first system of false religion. But Nimrod had a wife and his wife was a real winner. Her name was Semiramis...Semiramis. She was the Queen of Babel. Now, watch this. When Babel got scattered by God, the whole system revolving around Semiramis went with it. And here's an interesting thing. When Babylon, later on was destroyed by the Medes and the Persians...the system had become very, very, oh, what should I say, very highly detailed...but when the Medes and the Persians came and destroyed Babylon, all the high priests and priestesses left there, who were still hanging on to the old Semiramis bit, fled and they went to Pergamos and they stayed in Pergamos for a little while. But later on, when Rome moved into power, Julius Caesar had all the priestesses and priests of Semiramis move from Pergamos to Rome. That's history. You can read that yourself. Julius Caesar had a great idea about having more power if he could combine a false religion with his system. You see, he knew what every good conqueror knows; you've got to get the people religiously. Now, watch. When the worship of Semiramis arrived in Rome, the chief priest in Rome took the title Pontifex Maximum and it was imprinted on his miter. The title had to do with the worship of a god called Dagon the Fish-god. From then on, every emperor in Rome wore the title Pontifex Maximum. It had nothing to do with Christianity; it meant you were the chief priest of the worship of Semiramis. Do you know who wears that title today?...the Pope. The Pope is not the direct successor of Peter; he is the direct successor of the Babylonian mystery religions and the servant of Dagon the Fish-god. Now, another interesting note is the fact that Semiramis became so well known around the world that every system of religion goes back to her. For example, in Assyria and Nineveh, they worship a woman called Ishtar. That's just Semiramis in their language. In Phoenicia, it was Ashteroth. In Egypt, it was Isis. In Greece it was Aphrodite and in Rome it was Venus. But it's all Semiramis. It's the same basic thing that got scattered and culturized a little bit.

Now, the story of Semiramis went like this. Semiramis gave birth to a son. Now, watch. She said her son was conceived, not by a man, no; she had a wild one. It was conceived by a sunbeam (laughter). That's what she said (laughter). And she offered this son as a promised deliverer. You know what was the...the son's name was Tammuz. Semiramis and the son, Tammuz. He was born

not of \_\_\_\_\_ father, but by a sunbeam. What do you think Satan was counterfeiting there?...the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, wasn't he. He's subtle. When Tammuz grew up, a wild boar killed him. But do you know what happened? After 40 days of his mother's crying, he arose. Do you know, for a long time, the Roman church has celebrated a period of time known as "lent." How long is it?...forty days. Do you find anywhere in the Bible a 40-day period between the death and resurrection of Christ?...absolutely not. You know where that comes from? It comes from the worship of Semiramis and Tammuz. It has nothing to do with Christianity at all.

Now, in the story of Semiramis and Tammuz was born the mother-child cult. For example, if you were to go to Phoenicia, you would find that the child in Phoenicia is called Baal. In Greece, the child is Eros. In Rome the child is that little cutie with the diapers and the bow...Cupid (laughter). But it is all the same thing. It is all the mother-child cult that Satan began. Now, why do you think he began that?...to provide in the midst of the world a counterfeit to Christianity to confuse the issue. And not only that, but when we talk about Christianity and we talk about Christ and virgin birth, then the critics say, oh, yeah, you just picked that up; that's what every religion says. You see the subtlety of it? You know how they used to worship Semiramis? They worshiped her by offering a wafer to her and her name was Semiramis, Queen of Heaven. And there were always 40 days of lent, weeping for Tammuz before the feast, which celebrated his resurrection. The worship of Semiramis also involved priests, sacramental rites, dedication of virgins and purgatory. You say, where did Catholicism come from? Pretty clear, isn't it.

Now, lest you think I'm pulling that out of the air, I want to show you something of very good interest in Jeremiah 44, verse 15. Now, here, Jeremiah is describing the worship of Semiramis. It's interesting. Watch. "Then all the men who knew that their wives had burned incense unto other gods, and all the women who stood by, a great multitude, even all the people who dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying, 'As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee.'" Now, they weren't gonna buy...they weren't gonna worship the true God. "But we will certainly do whatever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven and to pour out drink offerings unto her as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, our princes in the cities of Judah..." etc., etc., etc. Verse 18: "Since we ceased to burn incense to the queen of heaven and pour out drink offerings unto her, we have lacked all things and been consumed by the sword and famine. And when we burned incense to the queen of heaven..." etc., etc., etc. Now, it's obvious that clear back there in the Old Testament they were worshipping the queen of heaven. Now, when you hear that Mary is the queen of heaven, where does that come from?... certainly not the New Testament. You see, what happened was, in the process of Babylonian religion migrating to Rome, Catholicism became amalgamation of Christianity and paganism. And really, it's fitting that the whole false system in the end center in that place. Incidentally, in Ezekiel, chapter 8, you'll find women weeping for Tammuz in that 40-day period. It's defined right there, Ezekiel 8:13, 14. You can look it up for yourself.

All right, verse 6, Revelation 17. Now, going on to describe this union with Satan, the final union with Satan, "I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I wondered with great wonder." You know, pagan religions all through the ages have been responsible for the slaughter of true believers haven't they? Sure, they have. And he says, this woman, this false system of religion is drunk with the blood of the saints. In the Tribulation you know what happens to people who truly are saved? There's gonna be salvation in the Tribulation, isn't there? God's gonna do a wonderful work in Israel and a wonderful work among the nations and the people are gonna get saved, but what's gonna happen to them? They're gonna...most of them are gonna die, aren't they. And this system is gonna be drunk with the blood of the saints. And not only in the past, but I believe in that time...and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And John says, "when I saw her, I wondered with great wonder." It was a lot to handle...a lot to handle. Now, there is a picture of a final union with Satan in this false system.

Now, the second thing I want you to notice is the final deception of the world...the final deception of the world. And I mean, Satan is gonna deceive. Verse 8: "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit"...this is a description of the Antichrist...he's gonna come out of the pit...he's gonna be Satan's man..."and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder..." This one is gonna deceive the world. The world is gonna be amazed and astounded at him except for those whose names are written in the Book of Life...except for the believers. This is the terrible deception. The world is gonna be sucked into this false system. Now, notice verse 9. He says, "The seven heads"...and you remember, there were seven heads on this beast in verse 3..."the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits." Now, notice, friends. The beast is gonna rule a revived Roman Empire. We saw that very clearly, didn't we, last week and the week before. The beast is gonna rule a revived Roman Empire. Where would be the likely place for him to rule then?...Rome. And if the system sits on the beast, where is it gonna be centered?...in Rome. You say, well, wait a minute. How do you know the seven mountains mean Rome? Well, what else could they mean? We know that's the place of seven hills. Interestingly enough, 1963 edition of Confraternity Bible, page 337, footnotes this verse by saying Rome is the city in view here. And that's the Catholic Bible. It's inescapable that it's talking about Rome.

Well, this ten-nation confederacy sitting on the false system, deceiving the whole world, isn't gonna last long. Immediately following the final deception of the world comes the final victory for the Lamb. Look at verse 14. "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them for He is Lord of lords and King of kings and they that are with Him are called and chosen and faithful." This whole false system is going to endeavor to fight against Christ. You notice something exciting there? He's not only going to overcome them...but I like this..."and they that are"...what?... "with Him..." Do you know that the whole world system is going to try to fight Christ? But He's going to overcome them and we're going to be eyewitnesses. We're going to with Him. In Revelation 19 it tells us that. Verse 11: "I saw Heaven opened"...Christ is gonna come back now and wipe out this world system.

He says, and here came the one who is called Faithful and True...verse 11...and it goes on to describe Him. And then you go down to verse 14. "And the armies that were in Heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean." Who do you think are the armies that have been in Heaven?...the church! People say, oh, will I get to be there? You'll be there (laughter); believe me...front row seat.

But before that final victory unfolds...that verse 14...John's always throwing in those sneak previews in his revelation here. That's a sneak preview strictly because there's more yet to come concerning the beast before the final victory of the Lamb. Look at verse 15. Here he says, "The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are the peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues." And watch! "And the ten horns which you saw upon the beast..." Now, watch. You got the beast there and the ten horns represent the ten different kings of the revived Roman Empire. And the woman's on top. The whole system's there. But watch what happens. "The ten horns which you saw upon the beast shall hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked and eat her flesh and burn her with fire." You know what's gonna happen? The political system lets the religious system exist for awhile and then it consumes it. The beast knows, the Antichrist knows that he's got to use religion, but once religion has served its purpose, he gobbles up the false church. And what does he replace it with?...the worship of himself. He puts up a statue that is himself and makes the whole world worship him. The political system then devours the religious system and the beast sets up the worship of himself. Chapter 13, verse 8: "And all \_\_\_\_\_" ...this is the beast described here, the Antichrist..."all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him"..."shall worship him." Now, stay there in 13 for a minute. So what happens? We had one phase of Gentile world religion in the Tribulation...the false church. It gets gobbled up and it gets replaced with phase 2. Phase 2 is the worship of this man himself. Well, you know, every guy that really wants to be worshipped has to have a good P.R. man. I mean, if the whole world's gonna worship you, you gotta get the word out. So he's got a super agent. Verse 11...he's a second beast...comes up out of the earth, he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. Those are the sneaky ones. You know, looks good but speaks like Satan. Nice gentle fellow...two horns like a lamb...two little soft looking things and opens his mouth...aarrcchhh, you know (laughter)...Satan's subtlety. He has all the power of the first beast, that is he can do wonders and signs. He causes everybody on the earth to worship whom?...the first beast. He's the P.R. man for the Antichrist. He "does great wonders," 13 says, "so that he makes fire come down from Heaven on the earth in the sight of men." That's a good trick; believe me. "And he deceives them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast, saying to them that dwell on the earth that they should make an image to the beast that had the wound by a sword and did live." So he sets up a big statue, a big image. And he even goes further than this. He has power to give life to the image of the beast. He's got some kind of device to make that big statue actually talk. "And cause that as many as don't worship the beast should be killed."

Now, beloved, there you have the picture of false religion when it reaches its absolute apex. Do you think there are some signs of that happening right now? You better believe it. Signs of the world

coming together in one great religion as we see theology going down the drain and we can count on two hands the seminaries in America that really teach the Bible and we're producing all kinds of men in ministries and all kinds of churches where God is not honored and the truth is not preached. And people in the world who struggle to know the truth and wander, maybe, from place to place seeking reality, stumble into churches where they're propagating error and are confirmed in their lostness and the tragic things that are going on. Then all this getting together that's going on on false bases. This system will come together in the Tribulation. It will be destroyed itself by the political system. The worship of Antichrist will be set up. And that doesn't last long. Revelation 19 says God takes care of that. He takes care of the Antichrist and his P.R. man in one shot. Revelation 19:20...Christ comes back...verse 19...here comes Christ out of Heaven and the Antichrist and all of them try to fight Him. "...gathered to make war against Him that sat on the horse and against His army"...verse 19. They're gonna try to fight us when we come back in that great day. "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet..." That's the guy who was his P.R. man. "...that wrought miracles before them, with which he deceived them that received the mark of the beast and them that worshipped his image. And these both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." Now, here you see the beast and the false prophet cast into Hell. That's how God destroys the false system.

So, we see a picture of religion in the end time. A final union with Satan of all world religions, a final deception of the whole world as they're sucked into the worship of this beast, and a final victory of the Lamb as He comes and conquers. And then, glorious thought, when Christ comes and conquers this system, He sets Himself up on His throne to be worshipped by all the world forever and ever and ever. And that means that false religion has run its cycle from Babel to Babylon and Christ conquers it all.

There's coming a world like the world has never seen...a world of terrible, terrible tragedy. And we have reason to believe, I think, as we look at the horizon, that it may be very soon. But you need not be a part of that world for Jesus Christ promises to give you life and He promises that if you belong to Him, He'll come and take you out of this world before that ever happens and take you to be with Him forever. That's not just all Christianity is. It's not just all pie in the sky. That's part of it...that's part of it. Let's pray.

Father, thank you for our time tonight. We just really rejoice in it. Bless us even as we close. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Available online at: <http://www.gty.org>

COPYRIGHT (C) 2014 Grace to You

You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (<http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright>).