

NOON BIBLE STUDY: REVELATION 17 (PART 2)

WHO IS THE LAMB (REVELATION 5)?

WHO IS THE DRAGON? (REVELATION 12:9)

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF "BEASTS" IN REVELATION. WHAT ARE THEY MOST OFTEN REPRESENTATIVE OF?

WHAT DO YOU KNOW/REMEMBER ABOUT HAR-MAGEDON? (REVELATION 16:16)

WHAT DOES "BABYLON" SYMBOLICALLY REPRESENT IN REVELATION?

WHEN WE LAST LOOKED AT REVELATION 17, OUR OBJECTIVE WAS TO READ THE CHAPTER TO GET A SENSE OF WHAT WAS BEING SHOWN TO JOHN. WE READ IMAGES OF A "GREAT HARLOT" (17:1) WHO WAS CLOTHED IN BEAUTIFUL ADORNMENTS AND HAS BEEN VERY EFFECTIVE IN HER TRADE. SHE IS DRUNK AND GETS OTHERS DRUNK WITH HER IMMORAL BEHAVIOR (17: 2). THIS WOMAN IS CALLED "BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (17:5). AND SHE'S RIDING ON A BEAST. TODAY WE WILL LOOK A LITTLE DEEPER AT THIS IMAGE.

REVELATION 17:1-7 - THE GREAT HARLOT

REVELATION 17:15-18 - A BRIEF INTERPRETATION

WHAT IS A HARLOT?

MERRIAM WEBSTER DEFINES "HARLOT" AS "A PERSON WHO HAS SEX WITH SOMEONE IN EXCHANGE FOR MONEY. PROSTITUTE." THE VERB "PROSTITUTE" MEANS "TO OFFER FOR SEXUAL INTERCOURSE IN EXCHANGE FOR PAY."

LET'S CONSIDER WHAT THAT MEANS FOR A MOMENT. A HARLOT/PROSTITUTE IS OFFERING SOMETHING THAT IS SUPPOSED TO BE SACRED AND BEAUTIFUL WITHIN A COVENANT RELATIONSHIP FOR MONEY. SHE IS GIVING PEOPLE WHAT THEY CRAVE AND DESIRE WITHOUT THE COVENANT. INSTEAD, SHE WILL TAKE MONEY AND GIVE HER PATRONS WHAT THEY DESIRE. SHE DOESN'T FEEL SHAME OR REGRET FOR SHE IS GETTING WHAT SHE WANTS - MONEY. AND IN THE CASE OF REVELATION 17'S HARLOT, SHE IS GIVING TO THE NATIONS WHAT THEY CRAVE, WITHOUT THE COVENANT. THE NATIONS ARE LOOKING FOR POWER, INFLUENCE, AND AUTHORITY - TO HAVE POWER AND YET NOT SURRENDER TO GOD. TO DO WHAT THEY WANT, THE WAY THEY WANT. AND THE BABYLON SYSTEM IS COMPLIANT.

BUT THE "PAYMENT" THE NATIONS GIVE TO THE BABYLONIAN HARLOT IS THEIR DEVOTION AND ALLEGIANCE TO HER WAY AND WHAT DEVELOPS IS A FALSE COVENANT WHERE THEY KEEP COMING BACK TO HER TO GET WHAT THEY WANT. IRONICALLY THEY ARE IN A COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH HER. SHE LETS HUMANS RULE AS LONG AS THEY BUY INTO HER WAY OF DOING THINGS.

AND HER WAY OF DOING THINGS IS CENTERED IN IMMORALITY, VIOLENCE, PRIDE, UNCLEAN THINGS, BLASPHEMY, DECEIT. ALL OF THESE THINGS ARE A DIRECT AFFRONT TO GOD - EVERY TIME A NATION RULES WITHOUT HUMILITY OR AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF GOD, THEY ARE DECLARING THEIR LACK OF NEED FOR OR DESIRE FOR GOD.

AND WHO IS ULTIMATELY PROPPING UP BABYLON? WHAT DOES REVELATION 17 SHOW? → THE BEAST. & WHO'S PROPPING UP THE BEAST? → THE DRAGON.

LET ME SAY THIS PLAINLY: THE HUMAN INSTITUTIONS OF THIS WORLD ARE CONSISTENTLY DEMONSTRATING THEY DON'T WANT TO SURRENDER TO GOD. THEY USE VIOLENCE, IMMORALITY, PRIDE AND DECEIT TO GAIN POWER AND STAY IN POWER. EACH TIME THIS HAPPENS, THEY ARE MAKING AN ALLIANCE WITH THE EVIL ONE - THE SERPENT FROM OLD - WHO SAYS AGAIN AND AGAIN " *YOU DON'T NEED GOD. HIS WAY IS TOO RESTRICTIVE AND HE'S HOLDING OUT ON YOU...* IN FACT, IF YOU LISTEN TO ME, YOU CAN BE LIKE GOD!" THROUGH THIS VICIOUS CYCLE, THE DEVIL DISPLAYS HIS DESIRE TO MAKE GOD LOOK FOOLISH AND IMPOTENT. WHO APPEARS TO BE RUNNING THE WORLD? THE DEVIL. WHICH SYSTEM SEEMS TO BE WORKING MOST EFFECTIVELY FOR SINFUL HUMANS TO GET WHAT THEIR EVIL DESIRES CRAVE? THE DEVIL'S. SO THEY BUY IN, GET WHAT THEY WANT AND THE DEVIL GETS WHAT HE WANTS - HUMAN ALLEGIANCE AND LIVES TRAPPED IN HIS SLITHERY CLUTCH.

THE DEVIL IS LIKE A HARLOT. HE GIVES PEOPLE SOMETHING THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE RESERVED FOR A COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD IN EXCHANGE FOR THE PAYMENT OF THEIR DEVOTION AND DEPENDANCE ON HIM.

Q - DO YOU BELIEVE THAT THE DEVIL IS INFLUENCING THINGS IN THIS WORLD? IN WHAT WAYS DO YOU SEE THIS? HOW DO YOU SEE THE DEVIL'S INFLUENCE IN GOVERNMENTAL AND POLITICAL SYSTEMS?

THIS IS NOT THE ONLY PLACE THE BIBLE SPEAKS ABOUT THE DEVIL'S AUTHORITY. LET'S LOOK AT A FEW OF THE WAYS THE BIBLE TEACHES THIS:

THE DEVIL HAS OWNERSHIP OF THE KINGDOMS OF THE WORLD & THEIR GLORY

MATTHEW 4:8-11 - AGAIN, THE DEVIL TOOK HIM TO A VERY HIGH MOUNTAIN AND SHOWED HIM ALL THE KINGDOMS OF THE WORLD AND THEIR GLORY; 9 AND HE SAID TO HIM, "ALL THESE THINGS I WILL GIVE YOU, IF YOU FALL DOWN AND WORSHIP ME." 10 THEN JESUS SAID TO HIM, "GO, SATAN! FOR IT IS WRITTEN, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'" 11 THEN THE DEVIL LEFT HIM; AND BEHOLD, ANGELS CAME AND BEGAN TO MINISTER TO HIM.

THE DEVIL IS THE GOD OF THIS AGE

2 CORINTHIANS 4:3-4 - AND EVEN IF OUR GOSPEL IS VEILED, IT IS VEILED TO THOSE WHO ARE PERISHING, 4 IN WHOSE CASE THE GOD OF THIS WORLD HAS BLINDED THE MINDS OF THE UNBELIEVING SO THAT THEY MIGHT NOT SEE THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL OF THE GLORY OF CHRIST, WHO IS THE IMAGE OF GOD.

THE GREEK WORD USED FOR "WORLD" IS *AION* WHICH MEANS "AGE". THE DEVIL IS THE GOD OF THIS AGE.

Q - WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE THE " *GOD OF THIS AGE*"?

THE DEVIL IS THE THE RULER OF THIS WORLD

JOHN 12:31 - "NOW JUDGMENT IS UPON THIS WORLD; NOW THE **RULER OF THIS WORLD** WILL BE CAST OUT.

JOHN 14:30 - "I WILL NOT SPEAK MUCH MORE WITH YOU, FOR THE **RULER OF THE WORLD** IS COMING, AND HE HAS NOTHING IN ME;

1 JOHN 5:19 - WE KNOW THAT WE ARE OF GOD, AND THAT **THE WHOLE WORLD LIES IN THE POWER OF THE EVIL ONE.**

Q - WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT SATAN IS THE " *RULER OF THIS WORLD*"?

HUMANS ARE RULING, BUT WHO HAS WHAT AUTHORITY?

JOHN 18:33-37 - THEREFORE PILATE ENTERED AGAIN INTO THE PRAETORIUM, AND SUMMONED JESUS AND SAID TO HIM, "ARE YOU THE KING OF THE JEWS?" 34 JESUS ANSWERED, "ARE YOU SAYING THIS ON YOUR OWN INITIATIVE, OR DID OTHERS TELL YOU ABOUT ME?" 35 PILATE ANSWERED, "I AM NOT A JEW, AM I? YOUR OWN NATION AND THE CHIEF PRIESTS DELIVERED YOU TO ME; WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?" 36 JESUS ANSWERED, "MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD. IF MY KINGDOM WERE OF THIS WORLD, THEN MY SERVANTS WOULD BE FIGHTING SO THAT I WOULD NOT BE HANDED OVER TO THE JEWS; BUT AS IT IS, MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS REALM." 37 THEREFORE PILATE SAID TO HIM, "SO YOU ARE A KING?" JESUS ANSWERED, "YOU SAY CORRECTLY THAT I AM A KING. FOR THIS I HAVE BEEN BORN, AND FOR THIS I HAVE COME INTO THE WORLD, TO TESTIFY TO THE TRUTH. EVERYONE WHO IS OF THE TRUTH HEARS MY VOICE."

JOHN 19:9-12 - AND HE (~~PILATE~~) ENTERED INTO THE PRAETORIUM AGAIN AND SAID TO JESUS, "WHERE ARE YOU FROM?" BUT JESUS GAVE HIM NO ANSWER. 10 SO PILATE SAID TO HIM, "YOU DO NOT SPEAK TO ME? DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT I HAVE AUTHORITY TO RELEASE YOU, AND I HAVE AUTHORITY TO CRUCIFY YOU?" 11 JESUS ANSWERED, "YOU WOULD HAVE NO AUTHORITY OVER ME, UNLESS IT HAD BEEN GIVEN YOU FROM ABOVE; FOR THIS REASON HE WHO DELIVERED ME TO YOU HAS THE GREATER SIN."

HOW DID SATAN GET AUTHORITY OVER THE WORLD?

THINGS DID NOT BEGIN THIS WAY. IN THE BEGINNING, GOD GAVE THE AUTHORITY OVER THE EARTH TO HUMANS. THIS WAS HIS ORIGINAL INTENTION AND DESIGN:

GENESIS 1:26-28 - THEN GOD SAID, "LET US MAKE MAN IN OUR IMAGE, ACCORDING TO OUR LIKENESS; AND LET THEM RULE OVER THE FISH OF THE SEA AND OVER THE BIRDS OF THE SKY AND OVER THE CATTLE AND OVER ALL THE EARTH, AND OVER EVERY CREEPING THING THAT CREEPS ON THE EARTH." 27 GOD CREATED MAN IN HIS OWN IMAGE, IN THE IMAGE OF GOD HE CREATED HIM; MALE AND FEMALE HE CREATED THEM. 28 GOD BLESSED THEM; AND GOD SAID TO THEM, "BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY, AND FILL THE EARTH, AND SUBDU IT; AND RULE OVER THE FISH OF THE SEA AND OVER THE BIRDS OF THE SKY AND OVER EVERY LIVING THING THAT MOVES ON THE EARTH."

IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN, THE DEVIL REBELLED AGAINST GOD AND HIS MOST PROVOCATIVE ACT WAS TO TEMPT ADAM AND EVE TO SIN. WHEN ADAM AND EVE SINNED THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD CHANGED AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH SATAN CHANGED. HERE'S A WAY TO LOOK AT WHAT HAPPENED.

GOD GAVE ADAM AND EVE EVERYTHING. HE BLESSED THEM AND GAVE THEM AUTHORITY OVER THE EARTH. THEY HAD LIFE AND GOODNESS AS THEY LIVED IN A COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM. WHEN THEY WERE TEMPTED BY THE SERPENT, HERE IS WHAT THEY WERE OFFERED: " " *YOU DON'T NEED GOD. HIS WAY IS TOO RESTRICTIVE AND HE'S HOLDING OUT ON YOU...IN FACT, IF YOU LISTEN TO ME, YOU CAN BE LIKE GOD!*"

AND ADAM AND EVE LOOKED TO GET WHAT THEY CRAVED FROM THE DEVIL RATHER THAN FROM THE ONE WHO THEY WERE IN A COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH. THE DEVIL IN THE GARDEN WAS LIKE A PROSTITUTE ON THE STREET CALLING OUT TO GIVE YOU SOMETHING YOU CRAVE WITHOUT THE COVENANT RELATIONSHIP. SHE'LL GIVE IT TO YOU IF YOU PAY HER. HE'LL GIVE IT TO YOU IF YOU OBEY HIM. ADAM AND EVE DIDN'T LOSE THEIR VIRGINITY WITH THE SERPENT, THEY LOST THEIR AUTHORITY OVER THE EARTH.

AND FROM THIS POINT, WITH THE CURSE INFECTING HUMANS AND SPREADING THROUGHOUT THE CREATION, HUMANITY WILL CONTINUE TO VISIT SATAN'S BROTHEL, GENERATION AFTER GENERATION. AND THE DEVIL GETS MORE AUTHORITY AND POWER AND WORKS THROUGH THE FALLEN CREATION TO TRY AND BUILD HIS KINGDOM - WHICH IS SYMBOLIZED BY "BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH"

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR US?

HAVING FAITH IN JESUS AND CONFESSING HIM AS OUR LORD SHIFTS OUR ALLEGIANCE AND TRANSFORMS OUR IDENTITY. PAUL WRITES THAT WE

"WERE DEAD IN YOUR TRESPASSES AND SINS, IN WHICH YOU FORMERLY WALKED ACCORDING TO THE COURSE OF THIS WORLD, ACCORDING TO THE PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR, OF THE SPIRIT THAT IS NOW WORKING IN THE SONS OF DISOBEDIENCE (EPHESIANS 2:1-2)."

HE WILL TELL THE COLOSSIANS THAT SALVATION IS NOT JUST A FRESH START OR A NICE FEELING THAT BRINGS A MORE OPTIMISTIC OUTLOOK ON LIFE, BUT IN FACT THE ACT OF GOD

"...RESCUING US FROM THE DOMAIN OF DARKNESS, AND TRANSFER(ING) US TO THE KINGDOM OF HIS BELOVED SON...(COLOSSIANS 1:13)

GOD SENT JESUS INTO THE WORLD, THE LITERAL DOMAIN OF THE EVIL PRINCE HIMSELF TO FREE CAPTIVES, TO RESCUE PRISONERS. TO SAVE PEOPLE. TO DELIVER. TO SAVE. AND TO PAY THE RANSOM FOR THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN KIDNAPPED AND BLINDED BY THE DEVIL. THIS IS A PICTURE OF SALVATION. AND NOW AS CITIZENS OF GOD'S KINGDOM, AS EXILES IN THE STRANGE LAND, WE STAY FAITHFUL TO OUR KING AND RESIST OUR ENEMY.

EPHESIANS 6:12 - FOR OUR STRUGGLE IS NOT AGAINST FLESH AND BLOOD, BUT AGAINST THE RULERS, AGAINST THE POWERS, AGAINST THE WORLD FORCES OF THIS DARKNESS, AGAINST THE SPIRITUAL FORCES OF WICKEDNESS IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES...

FOR SURE IT MEANS THAT IN THIS WORLD, THOSE WHO CONFESS JESUS AS THEIR LORD WILL HAVE TROUBLE. THE REMAINING CHAPTERS OF REVELATION ARE GOING TO CLEARLY DELINEATE THAT EVERY PERSON IS ON ONE OF ONLY TWO SIDES - THE SIDE OF THE DEVIL OR THE SIDE OF CHRIST. THERE IS NO THIRD, NEUTRAL TEAM. YOU'RE EITHER A SPIRITUAL CITIZEN OF BABYLON OR THE NEW JERUSALEM. REVELATION 17-19 IS DESCRIBING THE "JUDGMENT UPON THE GREAT HARLOT (17:1)" AND THE DOWNFALL OF HER KINGDOM. CHAPTER 18 SPEAKS OF A GREAT MOURNING THAT WILL OCCUR BY THOSE WHO HAVE ALIGNED WITH HER. AS SHE IS CRUMBLING, SHE IS GETTING "DRUNK WITH THE BLOOD OF THE SAINTS AND WITH THE BLOOD OF THE WITNESSES OF JESUS (17:6)."

TIME & TIME AGAIN IN REVELATION THE CHURCH HAS BEEN CALLED TO "OVERCOME" (11X). THIS WORLD IS **NOT** OUR HOME. IF WE GET ENTANGLED IN THE THINGS OF THIS WORLD, WE'RE HEADING TOWARDS THE HARLOT'S HOUSE. JESUS WARNS HIS DISCIPLES ABOUT GREED, WORRIES RELATED TO THIS LIFE, PERSECUTION, POSSESSIONS, PLEASURES, PLACES OF POWER - ALL BEING THREATS TO OUR JOURNEY TO HIS FATHER'S KINGDOM. THIS WORLD IS **NOT** OUR HOME.

BUT, THE DEVIL AND HIS SYSTEM, THOUGH IT IS POWERFUL AND PERVASIVE - IS WEAK AND TEMPORAL COMPARED TO THE POWER OF GOD ALMIGHTY. THE HARLOT BABYLON SYSTEM SEEMS TO KEEP ON GOING BUT SHE'S NOT A CAPABLE PERSON. SHE'S A DRUNK WHO CAN BARELY KEEP HERSELF TOGETHER.

WE NEED TO BE AWAKE AND ALERT AND ALSO CONFIDENT THAT THE TIME IS SHORT FOR THE DEVIL AND HIS RULE. JESUS HAS ALREADY OVERCOME AND GIVEN ALL AUTHORITY IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH FROM HIS FATHER. THAT AUTHORITY ISN'T JUST A LIMITED AUTHORITY ON THE EARTH FOR A SHORT TIME - THAT'S UNIVERSAL AND ETERNAL AUTHORITY. AND THAT'S **OUR** KING AND THAT'S **OUR** RULER. SO THE UGLY BEAST CAN SNARL AND THE SLIMY SNAKE CAN SLITHER BUT THE LAMB THAT WAS SLAIN HAS OVERCOME AND THE LION OF JUDAH HAS ROARED.

HEBREWS 10:36-39 (NLT) - PATIENT ENDURANCE IS WHAT YOU NEED NOW, SO THAT YOU WILL CONTINUE TO DO GOD'S WILL. THEN YOU WILL RECEIVE ALL THAT HE HAS PROMISED. 37 "FOR IN JUST A LITTLE WHILE, THE COMING ONE WILL COME AND NOT DELAY. 38 AND MY RIGHTEOUS ONES WILL LIVE BY FAITH. BUT I WILL TAKE NO PLEASURE IN ANYONE WHO TURNS AWAY." 39 BUT WE ARE NOT LIKE THOSE WHO TURN AWAY FROM GOD TO THEIR OWN DESTRUCTION. WE ARE THE FAITHFUL ONES, WHOSE SOULS WILL BE SAVED.

ROMANS 16:20 - THE GOD OF PEACE WILL SOON CRUSH SATAN UNDER YOUR FEET. THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS BE WITH YOU.