

In One Hour (Revelation 18:1–10, 15–17, 20; 19:1–3)

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Introduction

1. The book of Revelation was written as a letter to seven churches in Asia Minor, each of whom are singled out in chapters 2 and 3.
2. What was written to these churches is amplified in the remainder of the book. Today's focus is on the great prostitute seated on many waters (chapters 17, 18) who mirrors the false prophetess called Jezebel in the church at Thyatira (2:20–23).
3. Revelation 17–19 form the heart of the book in which John saw the vision of the prostitute, and when he saw her, he "*marveled greatly*" (*to admire*, 17:6, 7). The angel rebuked John and then proceeded to explain the mystery of the woman. Those who would *marvel* (same word) have names that are not written in book of life (v. 8).
4. How does this relate to us today?
 - a. It involves the bureaucracy of unelected government employees who run the affairs of state—the so-called *deep state*, a mysterious, dark, and often sinister swamp.
 - b. While the deep state is political and secular in nature, it reflects the real but not understood spiritual conflict that exists in the world.

Satan's main effort is aimed at the church of Jesus Christ and involves a two-pronged attack.

 - 1) Satan desires to dull the impact of churches by worldliness, disobedience to the Lord, and compromise through spiritual seduction—the teachings of Balaam (2: 14), the Nicolaitans (2:6, 15), and Jezebel (2:20–23). All three errors involve "*the deep things of Satan*" (v. 24).
 - 2) Second is the vicious and full-on assault on the faithful who serve the Lord to silence or destroy the remnant, the overcomers who conquer the flesh and hold fast His name and keep His Word.

I. Mystery Babylon

1. What is revealed in Revelation 17 and 18 shows the great prostitute to be a political and economic system that rides or dominates the governments of nations (the beast system, Revelation 17:15).
 - a. This system is ancient, existing at the time John wrote the Revelation as seen in the use of the present tense—"*the city is . . .*"
 - b. The system arose out of the Middle East and has been dominating the nations of Europe and the United States of America ever since.
2. The angel informed John that "*this* [the interpretation or understanding the mystery] *calls for a mind with wisdom* [God-enabled understanding and discernment of what is revealed in Scripture]" (v. 9).
3. What is written in the Revelation is a warning to the people of God to prepare for the judgment that God is about to bring on this system. Believers will be adversely affected (Revelation 11:15).
4. There is a connection to what was revealed earlier in Revelation 11.
 - a. John had a vision of the church sealed for bearing an enduring and loyal witness to the gospel, which laid the basis for the final judgment.
 - 1) John was given a measuring rod to measure the temple (the dwelling place of God with His people), but he was told not to measure the outer court because it was given over to the nations to trample for forty-two months (11:2; Isaiah 63:18).

- 2) The two witnesses are identified as the Word of God and the work of the Spirit carried out through the witness of the church but hated by the world. Their witness cannot be stopped until God is finished with gospel expansion.
 - 3) When the witnesses have *“finished their testimony,”* the beast rises out of the abyss and makes war on them to conquer and kill them (11:7). This is repeated in Revelation 11:8, 12–14.
- b. The death of the witnesses is great cause for a short-lived celebration in the city, but after 3 ½ days God breathes life into their bodies that have lain in the streets, causing fear among those who see.

II. The Great City

1. The use of the term *city* is symbolic, being identified variously, correctly or not, with Rome and Jerusalem.
 - a. In Revelation 17:18, we read, *“And the woman that you saw is the great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth.”* That sounds like Rome, but is it?
 - b. In Revelation 11:8 we read, *“Their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that symbolically is called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified.”* Jesus was crucified in Jerusalem.
 - c. The term city should be understood to represent capitals or governmental seats of nations as Rome; Jerusalem; or Washington, District of Columbia.
2. In Revelation 16:19 we read, *“The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and God remembered Babylon the great, to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath.”*
 - a. It is of significance that three cities control the earth in our time; Washington, D. C., the financial district of London, and Vatican City
 - b. Revelation focuses on the judgment of the city (Revelation 11:15, 17, 18).
 - c. This judgment is to come in *one hour*—a brief period (Revelation 18:10, 16, 17).
 - d. While the world laments the fall of Babylon, heaven rejoices (Revelation 19:1).
 - e. It is also at this time that the Bride of Christ is joined to her Savior (Revelation 19:6–8).

III. A Prepared Bride

1. A study of the seven churches of Revelation shows three facts: there are no perfect churches, there are bad churches, and there are struggling churches, and Jesus corrects errors and encourages saints to take heart and be strengthened in their spiritual walk with and service to God.
2. Some errors are so great that Jesus threatens harsh reprisals against such churches.
3. In every church, however bad, there was a remnant of faithful saints and overcomers.
4. The point of the threats and promises is to awaken believers to the fact that they are designed for the new Jerusalem and that, no matter how difficult things are here, the Lord is preparing them for that city. Those who love Babylon are most likely to die with Babylon.

What to Take Away

When the deep state falls, and it will, there is likely to be a financial crash and very difficult times such as were experienced in the great depression of the thirties. A very great promise given to the faithful saints in the church of Philadelphia (Revelation 3:10, 11).