

REVELATION – SERMON 67

THE MYSTERY OF THE BEAST

Revelation 17:7-13

INTRODUCTION

- The leaders of the world are presently in panic over a virus
- They have no solutions to the problems we face because they have no understanding of the spiritual forces at work in the world
- On the one side, God is angry with the wicked (Psalm 7:11) and sends disease and pestilence as judgment (Exodus 5:3; Matthew 24:7)
- Then there is the devil, the prince and god of this world (John 12:31; 2 Corinthians 4:4), whose spiritual forces are at work, deceiving the world and preparing it for the final world kingdom under Antichrist
- The Lord Jesus reproved the Jews for their failure to discern the signs of the times (Matthew 16:3)
- God's people must seek spiritual understanding of the times we live in through the Holy Spirit and the word of God in order to know how we can best serve the present age as the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matthew 5:13-16; Phil 2:15)
- The book of the Revelation unveils the mysteries of the past, present and future, and shows us the spiritual realities behind the events in this world, and those who read, hear and keep the things in this book are blessed with understanding (Revelation 1:3)
- In chapter 17, the apostle is shown a vision of a woman sitting upon a beast, and then shown the mystery of these two characters (v. 7)
- The woman is depicted as a harlot – she is the opposite of everything that God intends a woman to be:

THE GODLY WOMAN	THE GREAT WHORE
Chaste (1 Peter 3:2)	Fornicator (17:2; 18:9)
Modest apparel (1 Timothy 2:9)	The attire of an harlot (17:4)
Simple adornment (1 Tim 2:9; 1 Peter 3:3-5)	Extravagant adornment (17:4; 18:16)
Shamefaced (1 Timothy 2:9)	Shameless (17:5)
Sober (1 Timothy 2:9; Titus 2:3)	Drunk (17:6)
Loves the saints (Romans 16:1-2)	Hates the saints (17:6)
Holy (Titus 2:3)	Full of sins and iniquities (18:5)
Humble, meek and quiet (1 Peter 3:4)	Proud (18:7)
God-glorifying (1 Corinthians 10:31)	Self-glorifying (18:7)

- This Babylon, who is at work today, will have its final manifestation in the ecumenical one-world church
- The devil has created numerous tools to foster his ecumenical one-world church:

- ✓ The Charismatic Movement
 - ✓ Contemporary Christian Music
 - ✓ Ecumenical Bible versions
 - ✓ The “universal church” doctrine
- Now our attention turns to the beast upon which the woman sits
 - The beast is both a *man* and *kingdom*, who will rule the world prior to Christ’s second coming
 - The beast is aligned with the whore, using her false religion to gain power
 - But he hates her and will eventually destroy her, directing all worship to himself alone
 - These verses reveal three characteristics of the beast and his kingdom

I. HIS REMARKABLE CLIMB TO KINGSHIP OF THE WORLD (8)

A. The leader the world is looking for

1. He rides a white horse (6:2)
 - a. He is a false Christ, and many will receive him as the Messiah
 - b. He holds a bow with no arrows, conquering not by war, but peacefully
2. He comes as the “desire of all nations” (Haggai 2:7)
 - a. This is a yearning and longing for something better, something beyond this cursed world, this vale of tears; and some *one* to take us there.
 - b. Christ came as that man, but the world rejected him
 - c. The false religions of the world all have a Messianic figure, whose coming they look for
 - d. All the beast requires is that you take his mark and worship him; you may continue in your idolatry, stealing, murdering, fornication, etc

B. His return from the dead

1. He was, is not, shall ascend out of the pit, shall go into perdition (v.8)
2. He “was”, refers to his revealing after the rapture (2 Thess 2:3; Dan 9:26-27)
3. “Is not” refers to his deadly wound (13:3,12; Zechariah 11:17)
4. “Shall ascend” refers to his apparent resurrection from the dead (13:3,12,14)
5. “Into perdition” refers to his being cast alive into the lake of fire at the return of Christ (Daniel 7:11; 11:45; Revelation 19:20)
 - a. Perdition means “destruction” and “damnation”

b. The beast is called “the son of perdition” (2 Thessalonians 2:3)

C. The marvel of the world

1. At the midpoint of the tribulation, the beast revives from his wound, and sets himself up as God in the temple
2. The world will wonder at him and worship him (13:3-4)
3. The beast worshippers’ names are not written in the book of life (13:8)
 - a. God, in his foreknowledge of his elect (1 Peter 1:2), has written in this book the names of all those who will be justified “from the foundation of the world”
 - b. While God in his foreknowledge records the names of all who will be saved, each person has a responsibility to repent and believe the gospel

II. HIS RULE IS THE CONCLUDING KINGDOM OF THE WORLD (9-11)

A. What follows requires wisdom to understand

1. This wisdom does not come from mere education, but is granted by God (James 1:5; 3:17)

B. Seven heads / seven mountains

1. The dragon (Satan) also has seven heads (12:3)
2. These seven mountains have been interpreted as the seven hills of Rome from the early days of Christianity
3. Mountains in scripture are often used to represent governing power (Isaiah 2:2; Jeremiah 51:25)
4. The seven mountains in v.9 point to the seven kings in v.10, which represent a chronology of godless world empires; each of which have ruled over Israel and demanded that their king must be worshipped as Israel’s God
 - a. Egypt (Amenhotep II)
 - b. Assyria (Sennacherib)
 - c. Babylon (Nebuchadnezzar)
 - d. Persia (Artaxerxes)
 - e. Greece (Alexander)
 - f. Rome – the “one that is” (various Caesars)
 - g. Revived Rome of Antichrist – “yet to come” (Daniel 2:43-45)
5. The eighth is the antichrist after his return to life from his deadly wound at the midpoint of the tribulation
6. His kingdom continues only a “short space”, viz. seven years, which is brief compared to the other world empires (cf. 12:12)

III. HE RECRUITS A CONFEDERATION OF THE KINGS OF THIS WORLD (12-13)

A. Ten kings

1. These ten horns/kings have already been revealed in Revelation 12:3; 13:1
2. The fourth beast of Daniel's vision portraying Rome had ten horns (Dan 7:7)
3. The final world empire as seen in the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream had ten kings, depicted by the ten toes (Daniel 2:41-42)
4. The beast's empire is comprised of a ten king/kingdom confederacy (Daniel 7:8; Revelation 17:12)

B. They *receive* their power

1. God "removeth kings, and setteth up kings" (Daniel 2:21)
2. Jesus said to Pilate, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above" (John 19:11)

C. They give their power and strength to the beast

1. As the elders cast their crowns in submission and worship of the Lamb (4:10), so the kings of the earth will cast their crowns at the feet of the beast in fealty
2. Yet three of the kings will evidently rebel and be crushed by the beast (Daniel 7:8,24)

CONCLUSION

1. Too many professing Christians walk in ignorance of the spiritual warfare that is being engaged all around us
2. Few are like the children of Issachar, who "had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do" (1 Chronicles 12:32)
3. "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." (Ephesians 5:17)
4. Whatever calamity faces the nation or the world, the answer remains the same: "Repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15)
5. The world wonders in awe at the wealthy and powerful, and the glory of this world's kingdoms (cf. Matthew 4:8)
6. While man regards the kingdoms of this world as a beautiful image (see Daniel 2), God views them as hideous, ferocious beasts (see Daniel 7)
7. What causes you to wonder in awe?
8. The children of this world marvel at what they see and hear, but the true child of God places his wonder, amazement and affections on things unseen by the eye of flesh (John 20:29; 2 Corinthians 5:7)