

1st Church of Babylon

I. Slide1a Intro: 1st Church of Babylon

- A. I've rethought my theology studying this chapter this week...I believe The Church will go through the Tribulation...that is *the Apostate Church* :)
- B. **Babylon** - is both a **City & a System** (love not the world).
 [metonym | 'medə,nim | a word, name, or expression used as a substitute for something else with which it is closely associated.
 Eg. *Washington* is a metonym for *the federal government of the US*]
1. The same way we speak of Wall Street & Madison Ave.
 - a) They are **actual streets** in NY, **but** also stand for *the financial* (Wall St) & *advertising enterprises* (Madison Ave).
 2. Slide1b Ecclesiastical Babylon = Which is Apostate Christendom.
 - a) Maybe it's a religion that embraces *all religions* of the world?
 - b) Welcome to *1st Church of Babylon*.
 - c) Ch.17 is *Religious Babylon*. Ch.18 is both *Political & Economic Babylon*.
 3. Slide1c Political Babylon (and economic) = Which is the Antichrists united empire (the last form of the *Gentile World Power*).
 - a) Ecclesiastical Babylon will be destroyed by *Political Babylon*, and...
Political Babylon will be destroyed by **Jesus' return**.
- C. Every age has featured a **Babylon**. A Political & Economic system, that has sought to control people's minds & destinies.
- D. **And now**, leading us on our guided tour of the desert, is 1 of the 7 *bowl angels*.

II. Slide2 **BABYLON DESCRIBED (1-7)** *babylon interpreted. babylon destroyed*

A. Slide3 (1) Babylons Background:

1. It's beginning circa 3000bc under Nimrod. It has a consistently dishonorable history. It was famous for the **Tower of Babel**, which was built to keep the

people from scattering, in direct defiance of God's command to do so.
Hammurabi made Babylon a *Religious Power* about 1600bc.

2. Babylon's **zenith** was during Neb. reign (604-562bc). Babylon's **decline** was in 539 when captured by *Darius the Mede* (see Daniel 7).
 3. From 300bc the city has been in decay. In 1986 Saddam Hussein (*portraying himself as the successor to Neb.*) began to rebuild Babylon, which lies (50m.) south of Baghdad in Iraq.
- B. (2) For a believer, participating in *false religion* is like committing *adultery* because:
You are unfaithful to the one to whom you've pledged your love & fidelity.
1. This was *an Apostate church*. When the church is *raptured*, **religion does not** disappear from the earth. **Indeed it will flourish.**
- C. *Slide4a Apostasy* = a *falling away*. It's the act of *professed Christians* who **deliberately reject revealed truth.**
1. It's different from **an error concerning truth** (which may be the result of ignorance). [eg. the HS understanding in Acts 19:2. *Paul & Eph bel's on HS baptism*]
 2. *Slide4b Apostates depart from the faith*, **but** not from the **outward profession** of Christianity.
 3. *Slide4c Apostates are described in 2 Tim. 4:3,4* ***For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.***
- D. (3) She has Political power (for a time), we see her **sitting** on the beast.
1. **Sitting on** usually indicates **power over**.
 2. This is the same beast as in **13:1** (7 heads, 10 horns), **the antichrist**.
- E. (4) *Here is Worldliness, Worldly Vanity, & Worldly Greed.*
1. This church has **power & wealth** w/which she **entices** her people.
 2. **This is Corrupt Christianity.** This is much of *Current Christianity*.
 3. **Genuine Christianity is essentially Unworldly.**

a) **Its founder** was born in an animal stable. Cradled in a feeding trough. Had no where to lay his head. His followers went out on mission trips w/o money bag or knapsack. None of His apostles preached the gospel as a means of livelihood. Paul said, *I coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.*

b) **Slide5 How do I protect my heart from self-love**(worldly vanity) **& greed? Seek** 1st the Kingdom of God, *plus seek* to be the hardest and most honest worker. **Then trust** God to place you in *the proper tax bracket*. [there's my formula]

F. (5a) **Mystery Babylon.**

1. Of course **the True Church** is called **a mystery** (Eph.5:32 *This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church*)
2. This Apostate church is a **counterfeit**.

G. **Slide6** (5b) The Woman is also the **Mother of Harlots** (she's a madam/she runs a brothel)

1. The image of a prostitute is used to illustrate her **spiritual bankruptcy and moral degradation**.
2. This sounds like *many churches coming together under her oversight*.
3. They **Incorporate**, **but** cannot **amalgamate** (combine/unite).

H. (6) They will successfully persecute believers in Jesus.

I. (7) John says, *I'm so confused?*

1. The angel promises John an explanation. **But know** there is a **big difference between** the **Professing** church **and** the **True** church.

III. **Slide7 BABYLON INTERPRETED (8-15)**

A. (8) **The Beast Described.**

1. **Is about to come up** - Antichrist came up in 11:7, placing the timing of his seizure to power (over ecclesiastical Babylon) in the middle of the tribulation.

B. (9-11) **The 7 Heads Described.**

1. Here we have the Woman **sitting** on a 3rd thing: *many waters* (1). Sitting on *the Beast* (3). **And now** sitting on *7 Hills* here.

C. **Slide8 7 heads = 7 mountains = Rome known as built on 7 hills** (9). [not the RC church, think book of Daniel...*Rome last of the world powers*]

D. 7 kings = Roman Emperors (during John writing 6th emperor Domitian, 7th?) (vs.10).

[We do know the 8th is *the Beast/Antichrist*]

E. (12-14) **The 10 Horns Described.**

1. Dan. 7:24,25 *The ten horns are ten kings Who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the first ones, And shall subdue three kings. He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time.* (3 1/2yrs)
2. **The Beasts army** comes, maybe for the love of their nation? or dedication to their leader? (who is sordid & sinister)
3. **The Lambs army** are *Called, Chosen & Faithful.*
 - a) Love for Him & His grand cause, *fills & fires their souls.*

F. (15) **The Waters Described.** The waters are *the people of the world.*

G. **Slide9 Daniel 7** sees **4 Beasts**, each represent a **kingdom** (see vs. 17, 23)

1. There has only been **4 world empires.**

H.(4) **The Winged Lion**

1. **Babylon Empire** (Gold from ch.2)
2. The **winged lion** was a favorite image in Babylon (check any museum that has a Babylonian display).
3. Oh how this mighty kingdom was soaring, **until** Neb was humbled to almost an animal state, this lion was *made to stand on two feet like a man.*

I. (5) **The Bear w/Ribs**

1. **Medo-persian Empire** (Silver)
2. The Medo-Persians are like the **Bear.**
 - a) *The Bear is not known for his swiftness or skill, but for its brute force.* www
3. **3 ribs** - The 3 empires already defeated...*Egypt, Babylon, Libya.*
4. **Bear raised on one side** – indicates ½ the empire (Persians) was stronger & more honorable *than* the other ½ (Medes).

J. (6) **The Winged 4-headed Leopard**

1. **Greek Empire** (Bronze)
2. Alexander swiftly conquered the world thus the swift cat, the **leopard**.
3. **4-heads** – When Alexander the Great died, how many **generals** did the vast kingdom get divided into? **4**, *thus the 4 heads*.

K. (7,8) **The Terrible Beast**

1. **Roman Empire** (Iron)
2. **10 horns** (like 10 toes) powers that be in the **future** *the revived Roman Empire*
3. There is also a **little horn** that pops up, which defeats 3 of the kingdoms.
He will become *the world Ruler*, **he is Anti-Christ**.
4. This is his 1st appearance in scripture [a **Gentile** coming from Roman empire]
 - a) He will *speak great things* **pompous words** (8,20).
 - b) He will *persecute the saints* (believing Jews & Gentiles during the trib) for 3 ½ years (vs.25 – **a time, times, & a ½ time**...3 ½ years).
 - c) He will bring 3 of the 10 nations under his authority in his initial rise to power.

IV. Slide10 **BABYLON DESTROYED (16-18)**

- A. (16) Religious Babylon, which sought political alliances & power, are in the end destroyed by it. [Her lovers turn on her]
 1. The Antichrist seems to use a world church to get himself into power **& then** establish **his own religion**.
- B. (17) Here we have another example of **concurrency** (w/current, flow) of **the purposes of God & the desires of the people**.
- C. (18) **The Woman Described Further**.
 1. Is also represented as **a city** (not only as **a system**).
 2. **Slide11 Look at the contrasts**: We have here **The Woman & the Beast vs. the Bride & the Lamb**. ch.19,21
 - a) **The Bride** is a Virgin. **The Woman** is a Harlot.
 3. You either identify w/the **Woman** or the **Bride**.

a) **The Woman** represents *the ultimate in godless world religion*.

(1) She is **joined w/government & corrupts** everything she touches.

(2) Here is one problem w/the idea of blending **Church & State**. (yes I know the idea is keeping the state out of the church & not vice-versa) [But I think of **the Vatican example**. I think of only **Jesus** who holds title to both **Priest/King or Religious/Political in the Kingdom age**]

(3) As Christians we must be good citizens & seek to **influence government for righteousness & Justice**. Through voting, through running for office **if that is their expertise**. **But** the church should never **marry** the Political system. [like our founding fathers, we're not looking for **a Christian Government, but a just & fair government**] Ps: Vote!

b) **The Bride** is the true church of JC, *cleansed by His blood & destined for glory*.

D. **End: Christians** should have **confidence** as they look at **history**.

1. While **evil** seems so **powerful**, *appearances are not reality*.

2. **The lamb** is **all-powerful** and **evil** will be *conquered*.

3. **The evil kingdom** is full of *lies, hatred, and dissension*. **It will not stand**.