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BABYLON, THE GREAT, IS FALLEN

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION
NUMBER 28
REVELATION 16:17-17:2

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REVELATION 16:17-17:2 "And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great. And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication."

This scripture brings us to the last angel of judgment, the last of the seven drinking cups filled with the wrath of God. This is not the final judgment, not the great white judgment throne. This is the last of the seven drinking-cup judgments. In other words, this is not the final judgment but judgments centered on religion. When you find the idea of a cup in scripture, it is always referring to divine judgment. Jesus described the cross in terms of drinking from a cup.

MATTHEW 26:39 "And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."

MATTHEW 26:42 "He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done."

Jesus referred to this cup when one day he talked with his disciples.

MATTHEW 20:22 "But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able." The disciples didn't realize the significance of this question of Jesus. That cup to Jesus was a picture of those last three hours on the cross when all the sins of the world were poured out on him. The verb here is in the passive voice and carries the idea that Christ received this judgment of sins from his Father. But once he was judged the passive voice is changed to the active voice and Christ has been made the judge and forever after the cross, he will be the one doing the judging. So here in this scripture Christ is pictured as pouring the judgment out on the earth.

You never read here that the earth drank up the judgment poured out. The object of his judgment was religion. They are not willing to receive these judgments but Christ poured them out anyway. Anyone who rejects Christ is in for some judgment. Here in the Tribulation religion and negative volition reach their peak.

This is the seventh vial. Each one is against religion. The words "It is done" really means that these drinking-cup judgments have been completed. Great pain and suffering is the result of these judgments, but no one is killed by them. They are designed for one purpose, to bring men to accept Christ without putting undue pressure on their volition. God is fair and just and he never has and never will tamper with man's volition.

There are three kinds of volition--

1. God's volition. This is what we call sovereignty. It is as old as eternity. God's sovereignty does not operate outside of his plan.
2. Human volition. It has both a positive and negative pole and man is free to go in either direction.
3. Angelic volition. It too is both positive and negative. The angels were free to move in either direction.

Every third class condition and every subjunctive mood suggests that man's free will exists. This means that in the final analysis every man is free and every man is responsible. Dr. E. Y. Mullins listed as one of his great Axioms Of Christianity this idea--"IN ORDER FOR MAN TO BE RESPONSIBLE, MAN MUST BE FREE".

Never was there as much judgment in any prior period of history as there is here in these seven different drinking-cup judgments. Why aren't all these religious people killed? Because of the fact that God is giving them their last great chance to be saved. They have been preached to by 144,000, by angels, by Moses and Elijah, and now in one final desperate move God is preaching to them with extreme judgments. God literally pulled the rug from beneath their feet trying in one great final attempt to get them to turn and be saved. This drinking-cup judgment is against leadership. The voice is from "Apo" the throne and means from the ultimate source of God. God is doing this.

In these next verses we have the various aspects of the judgments of this drinking cup. It all began with God-consciousness, and every person on the earth who is normal reaches God-consciousness. John speaks of it in terms of "A light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world". In his thought pattern there are five ways a man becomes conscious of God. Through self-consciousness, conscience, mentality, volition, and emotion.

An illustration of this is Patrick in Ireland. Thousands of people went on positive volition and God used this man right at that moment to be on the spot so the gospel could be given to those on positive volition. In other centuries the same thing happened in Africa and China and India. God has never overlooked positive volition, but when one is willing to believe God always sees to it that one has the opportunity to hear the gospel. These seven drinking-cup judgments really reflect the love of God for it is his last desperate attempt to reach these religious legalistic people. "It is done" really means this is God's great effort. When these people went on negative signals into the vacuum was sucked religion. So these are the phony, superficial, difficult people who were the hardest of all to reach. Let us look now at four aspects of this final drinking-cup judgment.

REVELATION 16:18 "And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great." Here we face a natural disturbance.

These are terrible sounds in nature. Thunders and lightnings. Terrifying sounds and sights--greater than anything that has ever happened in history before. It is the final warning before the end.

REVELATION 16:19 "And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath."

Here we have disasters that occur in the cities. Jerusalem will be divided into three parts. The capitols of great nations will fall. Babylon refers to Rome in this verse. In the Book of Isaiah we have the story of the destruction of Babylon. Babylon so mistreated the Jews after they got them in captivity that God would not permit it to continue. The grandson of Nebuchadnezzar led in this terrible treatment of the Jews. Babylon here refers to Rome and "The cup of his fury" means that God has finally judged ecumenical religion and the Dictator of the Revived Roman Empire.

REVELATION 16:20 "And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found." Mountains and islands disappeared. There will be a great change in the topography of the earth in the latter part of the Tribulation.

REVELATION 16:21 "And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great." Here we have great hailstones, each one weighing about 120 pounds. Men responded with blasphemy. Here is very strong rejection. They still have their free will and God, even in the last of the Tribulation, will never tamper with free will. God could turn the key and put them on positive signals, but he refuses to do so. Negative volition continues under maximum pressure.

REVELATION 17:1 "And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters" Internationalism of any kind is Satanic. There is no form of internationalism that is acceptable to God. Nations are God's divine institution. God expects men to be faithful to their nation. Romans 13:1-7 gives this emphasis. Christianity is worldwide but it is not an international movement. Internationalism is an attack on the divine institution no. 4, which is the nation. God has set up the earth on the basis of nations, and keeping the balance of power among the nations is very important. If the church and evangelism is to live and have freedom to operate, then the nations must maintain their identity and freedom. From time to time men have arisen in history who try to crush nations, but God always sees to it that they are put down. The United Nations will never succeed because God has designed the world of nations and he is never going to allow internationalism to usurp his plan. I am almost ready to say that we are in as much danger from the United Nations as we are from Communism. Many have in their minds the idea that the United Nations will take over all the armies of the world. They also see the day where the judiciary will be taken over by the U.N. When these things happen we will be a nation of slaves. They may perform good but it is human good. Internationalism gets a great boost right at the end of time, the church is taken out of the earth to be with the Lord, and religion takes over the whole earth right at the end. But when Christ returns this system has already been judged.

In verses 1-6 of this chapter we have the actual vision and the following verses give us the interpretation of the vision.

REVELATION 17:1 "And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters" This is the result--the end of ecumenical religion. God is pinpointing here his judgment. He calls her "The great whore". The Bible portrays life like it is. This is reality. This is a vile and corrupt system. Money and lust play a great part in the whoredom of religion. This is a perfect analogy. There are two factors involved here. Those who go into this system have a great lust, lust to do human good and lust to get power. This system is very attractive. They enter this system because of lust and this system costs them money. The great prostitute sitting on many waters is a figure of speech, and "many waters" refers to people, nations of people.

REVELATION 17:15 "And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." We drop down to verse 15 to show that verse 15 explains what is meant by many waters. Peoples and multitudes refer to races. Nations refer to geographical areas. Tongues refer to language national units. So this is the great religious ecumenical prostitute who dominates the nations.

REVELATION 17:2 "With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication." The leaders of the earth operate in this system under a strong delusion. The leaders of the nations give lip service to this system. This is the international religion of the Tribulation. When you get a combination of religion and state and when religious leaders try to usurp the power of the state, then you have the worst kind of system known to man. God never meant for a religion to control a state, and he never meant for a state to usurp the place of the church. Both are separate and both are free. They can exist side by side without either losing out in the great struggle for survival.

At first the leaders of the earth went into this international religious system with some reservations, but once they were involved they became intoxicated with power and soon were engulfed by it.

For the mechanics of this system let us turn again to 2 Thessalonians 2.

2 THESSALONIANS 2:7 "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way." We already have these false religious systems in the earth. They are known under many names, such as The World Council of Churches, or Romanism, or Ecumenical Religion. But at the present time the ministry of the Holy Spirit is restraining them and holding them back. This system of international religion has not been able to conquer the world. Mohammedanism or Romanism has not been able to conquer the world thus far. There is an unseen restraining power holding these forces back. Then one day this restraint will be taken off. When the church is taken out of the earth, then this restraining power will be removed.

2 THESSALONIANS 2:8 "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." This is the great dictator of the Revived Roman Empire and we have seen what an important role he will play in the events of the last days.

2 THESSALONIANS 2:9 "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders" Now how does this religious dictator operate? Satan works through him. Many centuries ago Satan offered Christ the kingdoms of the earth if he would bow down and worship him and Christ refused. Here Satan will offer these kingdoms to this dictator and he will accept the offer. He will use his great personality to get ahead in the world. He will employ tongues and all kinds of miracle to impress people. And let us remember that people are so often charmed by things they do not understand. In the Tribulation they will fall for this kind of thing.

2 THESSALONIANS 2:10-11 "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie. Here we have the results. God removes all restraint from negative volition. This is the meaning of "strong delusion". When we read that "God Hardened Pharaoh's heart", it simply means that God removed all restraint and took off the brakes and allowed Pharaoh to go completely over to negative volition.