

The Antichrist Chapter 15 ANTICHRIST AND BABYLON (Rev. 18)

by A.W. Pink

Transcript

The Antichrist

Chapter 15 ANTICHRIST AND BABYLON (Rev. 18).

In our last chapter we sought to show that in Revelation 17 "the great Whore," and "Babylon the great," though intimately connected, are yet distinct; the former being the representative of the latter. While allowing, yea insisting upon it, that many features of the symbolic prophecy contained in Revelation 17 have had a striking fulfillment already, still that in which all its varied terms are to find their complete realization is yet future. We also reminded our readers that Israel supplies the solution to most of the problems of prophecy, and this is becoming more and more evident as the last prophetic book in the Bible is receiving wider and closer study. Fifty years ago the majority of the commentators "spiritualized" first half of Revelation 7 and made the twelve tribes of Israel, there mentioned, to refer to the Church. But this has long since been discredited. So, the popular interpretation of Revelation 12 which had the "woman" there a figure of the Church has also been abandoned by many. An increasing number of Bible students are recognizing the fact that "the Lamb's Wife," "the Bride" of Revelation 19 and 21 also contemplates Israel rather than the Church. That the Church is the Bride (a statement nowhere affirmed in Scripture) has been sedulously proclaimed by the Papacy for over a thousand years, and the tradition has been echoed throughout Protestantism. But, as we have said, there is a steadily increasing number who seriously question this, yea, who are bold to repudiate it, and declare in its stead that the new Israel, saved Israel, will be "the Bride." As this truth becomes more clearly discerned, we believe it will also be apparent that the great Whore is not the apostate church but apostate Israel. The future of Israel is a wide subject, for numerous are the scriptures which treat of it. It is, moreover, a subject of profound interest, the more so because what is now prophetic is so soon to become historic. The Zionist movement of the last twenty-five years is something more than the impracticable ideal of a few visionaries; it is steadily preparing the way for the re-establishment of the Jews in Palestine. It is true that the Zionists have been frowned upon by many in Jewry, and that, for a very good reason. God's time is not yet fully ripe, and He has permitted the mercenary spirit of many of Jacob's descendants to hold it, temporarily, in check. The millions of Jews now comfortably settled and prospering in this land, and in the capitals of the leading European countries, are satisfied with their present lot. The love of money outweighs sentimental considerations. Zionism has made no appeal to their avarice. To leave the markets and marts of New York, London, Paris, and Berlin in order to become farmers in Palestine is not sufficiently alluring.

Mammon is now the god of the vast majority of the descendants of those who, of old, worshipped the golden calf. At present, it is (with few exceptions) only those who are oppressed in greater Russia, Hungary, etc. who are really anxious to be settled in Palestine. But soon there will be a change of attitude. Even now there are faint indications of it. As Palestine becomes more thickly populated, as the prospects of security from Turkish and Arabian depredations grow brighter, as the country is developed and the possibilities of commercial aggrandizement loom on the horizon, the better class of Jews will be quick to see and seize the golden opportunity. Few American Jews are anxious to emigrate to Palestine when there is nothing more than a spade and a hoe at the end of the journey. But as hospitals, colleges, universities, banking houses are opened, and all the commercial adjuncts of civilization find a place in the land of David, then rapidly increasing numbers of David's descendants will turn their faces thitherward. High finance is the magnet which will draw the covetous Hebrews. Once Palestine becomes a thorough Jewish State it is not difficult to forecast the logical corollary. We quote from the excellent exposition on Zechariah by Mr. David Baron—his comments on the fifth chapter. Without any spirit of dogmatism, and without entering at this place into the question of the identity and significance of the Babylon in the Revelation—whether mystical or actual—we would express our conviction that there are scriptures which cannot, according to our judgment, be satisfactorily explained except on the supposition of a revival and yet future judgment of literal Babylon, which for a time will be the center and embodiment of all the elements of our godless civilization, and which especially will become the chief entrepot of commerce in the world. "To this conviction we are led chiefly by the fact that there are prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the literal Babylon which have never in the past been exhaustively fulfilled, and that Scripture usually connects the final overthrow of Babylon with the yet future restoration and blessing of Israel. "And it is very striking to the close observer of the signs of the times how things at the present day are rapidly developing on the very lines which are forecast in the prophetic scriptures. "The fears and hopes of the world—political, commercial, and religious, writes one in a monthly journal which lies before me, are at the present day being increasingly centered upon the home of the human race—Mesopotamia . . . As the country from which the father of the Jewish nation emigrated to the land of promise, it is also occupying the thoughts and aspirations of the Jews." "Whatever may be the outcome of the negotiations which have been carried on recently with the Turkish Government by the Jewish Territorialists for the establishment of a Jewish autonomous State in this very region, in which many Zionists and other Jews were ready to join, there is so much truth in the words of another writer that when once a considerable number of such a commercial people as the Jews are re-established in Palestine, 'the Euphrates would be to them as necessary as the Thames to London or the Rhine to Germany. It would be Israel's great channel of communication with the Indian seas, not to speak of the commerce which would flow towards the Tigris and the Euphrates from the central and northern districts of Asia! It would be strange, therefore, if no city should arise on its banks of which it might be said that her merchants were the great men of the earth'" Zechariah 5 is most intimately connected with Revelation 18, and a grasp of the former is of such importance in studying the latter that we must here give it a brief consideration. But First let us outline in the fewest possible words the contents of the first four chapters of Zechariah. After a brief introduction we learn, first, that God's eye is ever upon Israel (Zech. 1:7-17). Second, that His eye is also upon her enemies and desolators (Zech. 1:18-21). Third, assurance is given of her future blessing (2) and of her cleansing (3). Fourth, we learn of the blessings which shall follow her restoration (4). Fifth, we are taken back to behold the punishment of apostate Israel: the "flying roll" symbolizes the destruction of wicked Jews (Zech. 5:1-4). Then follows the vision of "the Ephah" in Zechariah 5:5-11—let the reader please turn to it. We cannot do more than now call attention to the prominent features in this vision. First, the prophet sees as "ephah" (or bath) which was the largest measure for dry goods among the Jews. It would,

therefore, be the natural symbol for Commerce. Next, we note that twice over it is said that the ephah "goeth forth" (Zech. 5:5,6). As the whole of the preceding visions concern Jerusalem and her people, this can only mean that the center of Jewish commerce is to be transferred from Palestine elsewhere. Next, we are told that there was a "woman" concealed in the midst of the ephah (Zech. 5:7). We say "concealed," for in Zechariah 5:5 and 6 the "woman" is not seen—the leaden cover (cf. Zechariah 5:8) had to be lifted before she could be beholden. The writer is satisfied that this hidden woman in the ephah is "the Woman" which is fully revealed in Revelation 17 and 18. Next, we are told that "wickedness" (lawlessness) was cast into the ephah, before its cover was closed again. Then, in what follows, we are shown this ephah, with the "woman" and "wickedness" shut up therein, being rapidly conveyed from Palestine to "the land of Shinar" (Zech. 5:11). The purpose for this is stated to be, "to build a house," i.e. a settled habitation. Finally, we are assured, "it shall be established, and set there (in the land of Shinar) upon her own base." This vision or prophecy contains the germ which is afterwards expanded and developed in such detail in Revelation 17 and 18, where it is shown that "the house" which is established for this system of commerce is "Babylon the great." Let it be remembered that this vision is found in the midst of a series of prophecies which have to do with, first the faithful, and then the faithless in Israel, and we have another clear and independent proof that the Corrupt Woman of the Apocalypse is none other than apostate Israel! In his helpful and illuminative work on the Babylon of the future, the late Mr. Newton devoted a separate chapter to Zechariah 5. His remarks are so excellent that we cannot forbear from making an extract: "If human energy is to be permitted again to make the Euphratean regions the scene of its operation—if prosperity is to be allowed for a brief moment to re-visit the Land of Babylon, it might be expected that the Scriptures would somewhere allude, and that definitely, to such an event. And we find it to be so. The Scripture does speak of an event yet unaccomplished, of which the scene is to be the Land of Babylon. The passage to which I refer is at the close of the fifth chapter of Zechariah. "That the event predicted in this remarkable passage remains still unaccomplished, is sufficiently evident from the fact of Zechariah's having prophesied after Babylon had received that blow under which it has gradually waned. Zechariah lived after Babylon had passed into the hands of the Persians, and since that time, it is admitted by all, that declination—not establishment—has marked its history. From that hour to the present moment there has been no preparation of an house, no establishment of anything—much less of an Ephah in the Land of Shinar. But an Ephah is to be established there, and a house to be built for it there, and there it is to be set firmly upon its base. "An Ephah is the emblem of commerce. It is the symbol of the merchants. In the passage before us the Ephah is described as "going forth," that is, its sovereign influence is to pervade the nations, and to imprint on them a character derived from itself, as the formative power of their institutions. In other words, commerce is for a season to reign. It will determine the arrangements, and fix the manners of Israel, and of the prophetic earth. The appearance of every nation that falls under its control is to be mercantile. He said, moreover, this is their appearance (or aspect) throughout all the earth." The theme is of deep interest, and we are tempted to enter at length into details. But that is scarcely necessary. Every one who has a general knowledge of the past, and who is at all in touch with political conditions in the world today, knows full well the radical change which the last two or three centuries have witnessed. For a thousand years the Church (the professing church) controlled the governments of Europe. Following the Reformation, the aristocracy (the nobility) held the reins. During the first half of last century democratic principles obtained more widely. But in the last two or three generations the governmental machines of this country and of the leading European lands have been run by the Capitalists. Of late, Labor has sought to check this, but thus far with little success. In the light of Zechariah 5 and Revelation 18 present-day conditions are profoundly significant. It is commerce which is more and more dominating the policies and destinies of what is known as the civilized world. "If we turn our eyes

abroad upon the world, we shall find that the one great object before the nations of the earth today is this image of commerce, drawing them with all the seductive influence a siren woman might exercise upon the heart of men. The one great aim on the part of each is to win the favor of this mighty mistress. The world powers are engaged in a Titanic struggle for commercial supremacy. To this end mills are build, factories founded, forests felled, lands sown, harvests reaped, and ships launched. Because of this struggle for mastery of the world's market the nations reach out and extend their borders" (Dr. Haldeman). The recent war was caused by commercial jealousies. The root trouble behind the "reparation" question, the "Strait's" problem the cancellation or demanding repayment of United States loans to Europe, each go back to commercial considerations. Sixty years ago it was asked, Is not commerce the sovereign influence of the day? If we were asked to inscribe on the banners of the leading nations of the earth, an emblem characteristically expressive of their condition, could we fix on any device more appropriate than an ephah?" With how much greater pertinency may this be said today! And how this is preparing the way for and will shortly head up in what is portrayed in Revelation 18, it is not difficult to see. There we read, "Thy merchants were the great men of the earth" (Rev. 18:23). This was not true four hundred years ago: for then the ecclesiastics were "the great men of the earth." Now was it true one hundred years ago, for then the nobility were "the great men of the earth." But today. Ah! Ask the man on the street to name half a dozen of the great men now alive, and whom would he select? And who are behind and yet one with the "merchants"? Is it not the financiers? And who are the leading ones among them? Who are the ones that are more and more controlling the great banking systems of the world? And, as every well-informed person knows, the answer is, Jews. How profoundly significant, then, that the head on the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream (which symbolized the Babylon Empire) should be of gold, and that the final Babylon should be denominated "the golden city" (Isa. 14:4). And how all of this serves, again, to confirm our interpretation of Revelation 17, namely, that "the great Whore" with "the golden cup in her hand" (Rev. 17:4) is apostate Israel, whose final home shall be that "great city," soon to be built on the banks of the Euphrates. Not yet is it fully evident that the wealth of the world is rapidly filling Hebrew coffers—only a glimpse of the "woman" in "the midst of the Ephah" was obtained before it became established in the Land of Shinar. But it cannot be long before this will become apparent. At the End-time it will fully appear that "the woman...is (represents) that great city" (Rev. 17:18). This explains the words of Revelation 17:5, where we learn that the words "Babylon the great" are written upon "her forehead"—it will be obvious then to all! Apostate Israel, then controlling the wealth of the world, will personify Babylon. And what part will the Antichrist play in connection with this? What will be his relation to Babylon and apostate Israel? The Word of God is not silent on these questions, and to it we now turn for the Divine answer. As to Antichrist's relation to Babylon, Scripture is very explicit. He will be "the King of Babylon" (Isa. 14:4); the "King of Assyria" (Isa. 10:12). As to his relation to apostate Israel, that is a more intricate matter and will require more detailed consideration. We shall therefore devote a separate chapter (the next one) to this interesting branch of our subject. Here we shall deal briefly with what Revelation 17 and 18 say thereon. Revelation 17 presents the relation of apostate Israel to the Antichrist in three aspects. First, she is supported by him. This is brought before us in Revelation 17:3, where we are shown the corrupt Woman seated upon the scarlet-colored Beast. This, we believe, is parallel with Daniel 9:27, which tells us that "the Prince that shall come" will make a Covenant with Israel. This covenant, league, or treaty, will insure her protection. It is significant that Daniel 9:27 tells us the covenant is made by the one who is then at the head of the revived Roman Empire, which corresponds with the fact that Revelation 17:3 depicts him as a "scarlet colored Beast . . . having seven heads and ten horns." It is the Antichrist no longer in his "little horn" character, but as one that has now attained earthly glory and dominion. As such, he will, for a time, uphold the Jews and protect their interests. Second, Revelation 17 depicts apostate Israel as intriguing

with "the kings of the earth." In Revelation 17:2 we read that the kings of the earth shall commit fornication with her. Note how this, as an item of importance, is repeated in Revelation 18:3. This, we believe, is what serves to explain Revelation 17:16 which, in the corrected rendering of the R.V. reads, "And the ten horns which thou sawest and the Beast, these shall hate the Harlot, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and shall burn her utterly with fire." What it is which causes the Beast to turn against the Harlot and hate and destroy her is her unfaithfulness to Him. Not content with enjoying the protection the Beast gives to her, apostate Israel will aspire to a position of rivalry with the one over the ten horns. That she succeeds in this we learn from the last verse of the chapter—"And the woman which thou sawest is (represents) that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth." As to how apostate Israel will yet reign over the kings of the earth we hope to show in the next chapter. Third, Revelation 17 makes it known that apostate Israel will ultimately be hated by the Beast and his ten horns"(Revelation 17:16). The 12th verse tells us that the ten horns are "ten kings." This has presented a real difficulty to many. In Revelation 17:16 it says that the ten horns (kings) and the Beast hate the Whore, and make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh (that is, appropriate to themselves her substance, her riches), and burn her with fire; whereas in Revelation 18:9 we read, "The kings of the earth who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning." Yet the solution of this difficulty is very simple. The difficulty is created by confusing "the kings of the earth" with the "ten horns," whose kingdoms are within the limits of the old Roman Empire (see Daniel 7:7). The "kings of the earth" is a much wider expression, and includes such kingdoms as North and South America, China and Japan, Germany and Russia, etc., all in fact, outside the bounds of the old Roman Empire. It is the intriguing of apostate Israel with "the kings of the earth" which brings down upon her the hatred of the Beast and his "ten kings." In closing this chapter we wish to call attention to some of the many and striking verbal correspondences between Revelation 17 and 18 and the Old Testament Prophets: — 1. In Revelation 17:1 we are told the great Whore "sitteth upon many waters." In Jeremiah 51:13 Babylon (see previous verse) is addressed as follows: "O thou that dwellest upon many waters." 2. In Revelation 17:2 it is said that, "The inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication." In Jeremiah 51:7 we read, "Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine." 3. In Revelation 17:4 the great Whore has "a golden cup in her hand." In Jeremiah 51:7 Babylon is termed "a golden cup in the Lord's hand." 4. In Revelation 17:15 we are told, "The waters which thou sawest, where the Whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." In Jeremiah 51:13 we read, "O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures." 5. Revelation 17:16 tells us that Babylon shall be burned with fire—cf. 18:8. So in Jeremiah 51:58 we read, "The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burned with fire." 6. In Revelation 17:18 we are told that the woman who represents the great city "reigneth over the kings of the earth." In Isaiah 47:5 Babylon is denominated "the lady of kingdoms." 7. Revelation 18:2 tells us that after her fall, Babylon becomes "the habitation of demons, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." Isaiah 13:21 says, "But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there." 8. Revelation 18:4 records God's call to the faithful Jews—"Come out of her My people." In Jeremiah 51:45 God also says, "My people, go ye out of the midst of her." 9. In Revelation 18:5 it is said, "Her sins have reached unto heaven." In Jeremiah 51:9 it reads, "For her judgment reacheth unto heaven." 10. In Revelation 18:6 we read, "Reward her as she rewarded you." In Jeremiah 50:15 it says, "Take vengeance upon her; as she hath done, do unto her." 11. In Revelation 18:7 we find Babylon saying in her heart, "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." In Isaiah 47:8 we also read that Babylon says in her heart, "I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children."

12. In Revelation 18:8 we read, "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day." Isaiah 47:9 declares, "But these two things shall come to thee in a moment, in one day." 13. In Revelation 18:21 we read, "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and be found no more at all." So in Jeremiah 51:63, 64 we are told, "And it shall be, when thou hast made an end of reading this book, that thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of the Euphrates: And thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I bring upon her." 14. In Revelation 18:23 we read, "And the light of the candle shall shine no more at all in thee, and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee." In Isaiah 24:8,10 it is said of Babylon, "The mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the heart ceaseth...the City of Confusion is broken down: every house is shut up, that no man may come in...all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone." 15. In Revelation 18:24 we read, "And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." In Jeremiah 51:49 we read, "As Babylon hath caused the slain of Israel to fall, so Babylon shall fall the slain of all the earth." These parallelisms are so plain they need no comments from us. If the reader still insists that the Babylon of Revelation 17 and 18 is the ultimate development of the Papacy as it envelopes apostate Christendom, it is useless to discuss the subject any farther. But we believe that the great majority of our readers—who have no traditions to uphold—will be satisfied that the Babylon of the Apocalypse is the Babylon of Old Testament prophecy, namely, a literal, re-built city in "the land of Nimrod" (Mic. 5:6), a city which shall be the production of covetousness ("which is idolatry"—Colossians 3:5), and a city which shall yet be the home of apostate Israel.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/aw-pink/the-antichrist-chapter-15-antichrist-and-babylon-rev-18/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net