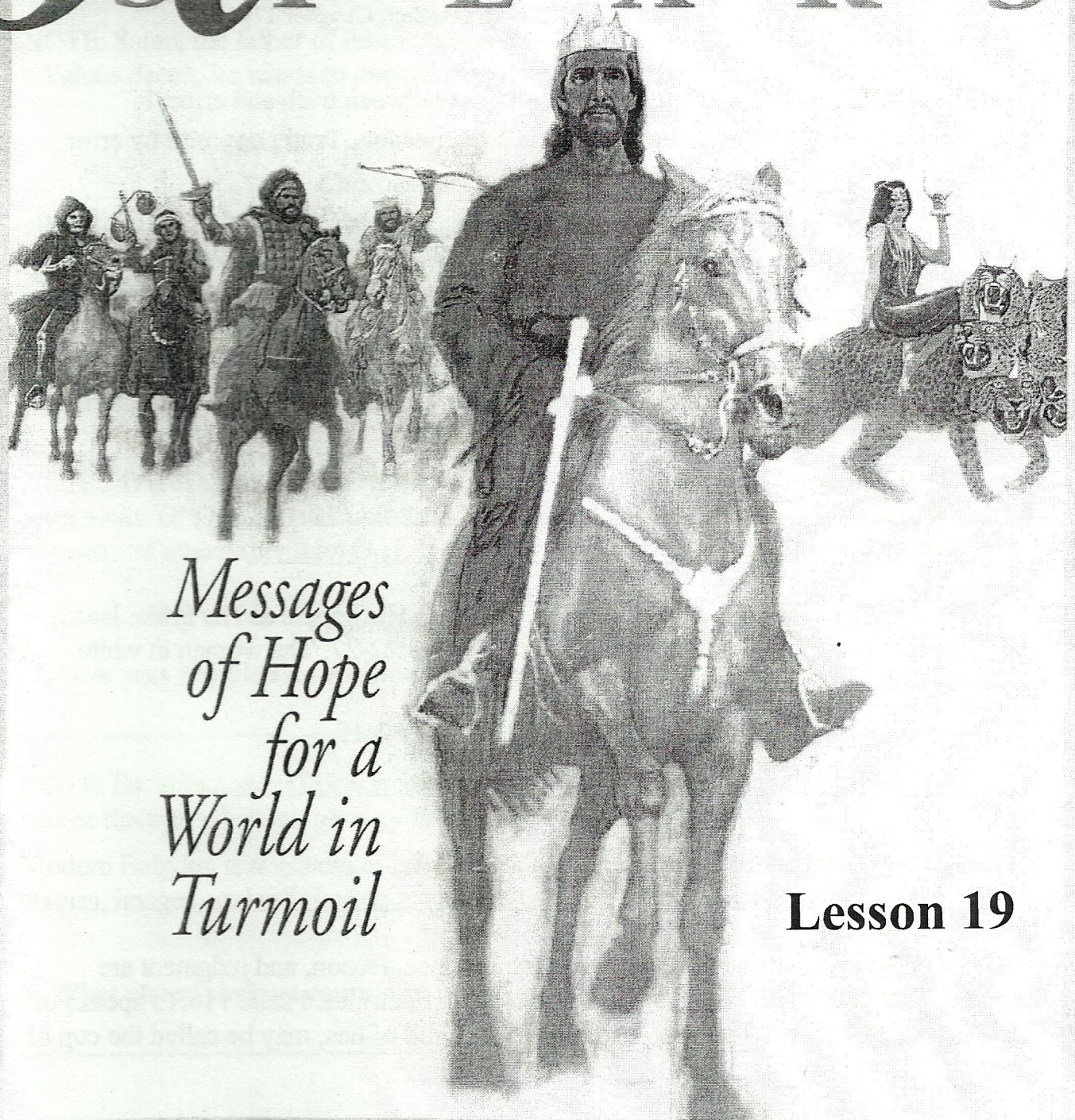


Revelation

S P E A K S



*Messages
of Hope
for a
World in
Turmoil*

Lesson 19

Spiritual Babylon Revealed

[This chapter is based on Revelation, Chapter 17]

The book of Revelation portrays a great conflict between truth and error. It graphically describes two systems of worship in collision. Truth, opposed by error, triumphs.

A pure, chaste woman represents a true church, while a harlot represents the fallen church. The bride of Christ, the true church, radiates the glory of God, revealing His truth to the world. The apostate church, pictured as a harlot, offers her wine of false doctrines, confusing minds and leading multitudes to destruction.

In this study we will notice especially the characteristics of this false system of worship so we can flee from it. At the same time, we will discover the characteristics of true worship so we can embrace it.

1. How does God describe the true church? Revelation 12:1.

NOTE: In each of the following texts God describes His people as His bride: Isaiah 54:5, 6; Hosea 2:19; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:22-27. The woman in white represents the bride of Christ.

2. What does the Lord call His church? 1 Timothy 3:15.

3. How is the false church pictured? Revelation 17:1-5.

NOTE: Wine affects the forebrain, where conscience, reason, and judgment are located. As such, it signifies the confusion of false doctrines. Psalm 116:13 speaks of the "cup of salvation." The wine cup of Babylon, full of lies, may be called the cup of death.

Revelation Speaks - 2

Revelation's Babylon represents a false religious system which carries over the principle of Old Testament Babylon into religious worship in the Christian era. An understanding of Old Testament Babylon enables us to positively identify New Testament Babylon and flee its errors.

4. Who is the author of all false doctrine? John 8:44.

NOTE: Satan, the father of lies, counterfeits truth. He attempts to deceive us. Through religious deceit, he wants to capture the minds of thousands.

Characteristic #1-Rebellion

5. What is the origin of Old Testament Babylon? Genesis 11:5-9.

6. Was the Old Testament Babylon centered in God's way or man's way? Daniel 4:30.

NOTE: Old Testament Babylon was established in direct opposition to the plain commands of God. It was a human system of religion based on the traditions and authority of men rather than God. It was man-centered rather than God-centered.

Characteristic #2-Idolatry

7. How was Babylon's rebellion against the true God revealed? Ezekiel 6:4

NOTE: Dr. Alexander Hislop stated it dearly when he said, "Babylon is the prime source through which all idolatry flowed."

Modern Babylon is a system of religion which uses other gods in its worship. Its statues, images, and religious icons revive the idolatry of ancient Babylon.

8. What clear, obvious command had God given His people? Exodus 20:4, 5.

Revelation Speaks - 3

Characteristic # 3-Immortality/ Ancestor Worship

9. What was the ancient Babylonian concept of death? In Ezekiel 8:14, who were the Jewish women weeping for?

NOTE: Tammuz, the god of vegetation, was one of the many deities of Babylon. The Babylonians believed that in the hot weather, with no rain, Tammuz died, but that in the season of fertile crops, he was revived again.

This is just a sample of the Babylonian thought pattern that the dead do not die but live on.

The concept of the immortal soul was at the heart of Babylonian worship. The thought that the soul leaves the body at death comes directly from paganism.

10. What does the Bible teach regarding death? Ecclesiastes 9:5; Psalm 115:17; Psalm 146:4.

Characteristic #4-Pagan Sun Worship

11. What Babylonian worship practice mingled with the worship of Israel for a time? Ezekiel 8:16.

12. What sign had God given His people? Ezekiel 20:12, 20.

NOTE: The following historical quotations enable us to discover how the pagan day of worship gradually slipped into the Christian church:

The History of the Christian Church by Arthur B. Stanley: "His [Constantine's] coins bore on one side the letters of the name of Christ, on the other the figure of the sun god, as if he could not bear to relinquish the patronage of the bright luminary. . . . Absolutely amazing. On Constantine's coins, on one side, Christ and on the other side, the sun god. A wedding took place, a wedding between Christianity and paganism. A wedding between the church of Rome and the pagan emperors of Rome."

Revelation Speaks - 4

In *The History of the Christian Church*, Arthur B. Stanley says this (page 184): "The retention of the old pagan name of Dies Solis, or sun day, is in great measure owing to the union of pagan and Christian sentiment with which the first day of the week was recommended by Constantine to his subjects, pagans and Christians alike, as the venerable day of the sun."

13. How did many religious leaders relate to this union of true and false religion in Bible times? Ezekiel 22:26.

NOTE: Spiritual Babylon's principles run through many religious organizations today. They include:

- * Looking to a visible, earthly head rather than Christ
- * Any form of idol/image worship
- * A misunderstanding of what happens to a person when he dies, prayers to saints, veneration of dead loved ones, etc.
- * Worship on Sunday

14. What appeal does God give to those still in Babylon? Revelation 18:4.

NOTE: God's call is not to stay in Babylon and reform it, but to come out of Babylon. Soon the plagues will fall on those who choose to stay in Babylon. In love, God has sent you a message to come completely out of this false system of worship.

My Response

- ☐ Today I accept God's invitation to come out of Babylon.
- ☐ It is my determination to place myself on God's side.

ANCIENT, LITERAL BABYLON	SYMBOLIC BABYLON
<p data-bbox="272 317 724 352">"You who dwell by many waters." Jer. 51:13.</p> <p data-bbox="272 422 716 457">"A golden cup in the Lord's hand." Jer. 51:7.</p> <p data-bbox="272 527 586 562">"Babylon has fallen." Jer. 51:8.</p> <p data-bbox="272 632 659 701">"I shall be mistress forever . . . I shall not sit as a widow." Isa. 47:7, 8.</p> <p data-bbox="272 770 797 806">"God out of the midst of her, my people." Jer. 51:45.</p> <p data-bbox="272 875 695 945">At her fall, "the heavens and the earth . . . shall sing for joy." Jer. 51:48.</p> <p data-bbox="272 1014 672 1083">As a stone, "shall Babylon sink, and rise no more." Jer. 51:64.</p>	<p data-bbox="967 317 1360 352">"Seated upon many waters." Rev. 17:1.</p> <p data-bbox="967 422 1295 457">"Hold 'a golden cup.'" Rev. 17:4.</p> <p data-bbox="967 527 1341 562">"Fallen, fallen is Babylon." Rev. 14:8.</p> <p data-bbox="967 632 1382 667">"A queen I sit, I am no widow." Rev. 18:7.</p> <p data-bbox="967 770 1373 806">"Come out of her, my people." Rev. 18:4.</p> <p data-bbox="967 875 1401 945">At her fall, "heaven, . . . saints and apostles and prophets rejoice." Rev. 18:20.</p> <p data-bbox="967 1014 1409 1121">"Like a great millstone [thrown] . . . into the sea . . . so shall Babylon . . . be thrown down." Rev. 18:21.</p>