

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Revelation: God's Revelation To His Servants Today On Events About To Occur

Part IV: "The Things Which Shall Be Hereafter": Events After The Rapture Of The Church

C. The Great Tribulation Period, Revelation 6:1-19:21

5. A Second View Of The Great Tribulation Guiding Us To Avoid Group Idolatry, Revelation 11:1-19:21

h. God's Insight On The CURRENT FORM Of Evil "Babylon the Great" To Avoid

(Revelation 16:17-21 with Zechariah 5:1-11)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Many believers know God will judge the Revelation 17-18 "Babylon the Great," but according to the article, "Babylon as Seen in Scripture: An Introduction to Revelation 17-18" on bible.org, a web site influenced largely by Dallas Seminary grads, that passage is so hard to interpret, even conservative expositors differ on **defining** this entity.

However, if **God** will severely *judge* "Babylon the Great," we believers **TODAY** *need* be *able* to **IDENTIFY** it in its **CURRENT FORM** that we might be able to **AVOID** participating in its *evil!*

Need: So we ask, "*How can we discern 'Babylon the Great's' current form to avoid participating in its evil?!*"

- I. **Revelation 16:17-21 introduces God's last bowl judgment that comes on this "Babylon the Great" entity:**
 - A. When the last bowl judgment is poured out, a voice from heaven's temple says, "It is done," and expressions of God's wrath follow in the form of thunders, lightnings and the worst earthquake in history, Rev. 16:17-18.
 - B. The "great city" called "Babylon the Great" in Rev. 17:18 then splits into 3 parts, the world's cities collapse, every island and mountain moves away, hailstones weighing a "talent," about 100 pounds apiece, fall and men blaspheme God due to the hail's severity, Rev. 16:19-21; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Rev. 16:21.
- II. **From signals in this Revelation 16:17-21 passage, we can identify "Babylon the Great" in its CURRENT form, for in the wide context, they point us BACK to "Babylon the Great's" ROOTS in Zechariah 5:1-11:**
 - A. In this last bowl judgment, "Babylon the Great" comes to God's remembrance (Rev. 16:19b), meaning *a past Bible passage(s) introduce(s) this entity without its yet being judged*, and that points us to Zechariah 5:5-11: there, an ephah, a vessel used for marketplace measuring, with a woman personified as "wickedness" sitting in it, is taken to "the land of Shinar," Babylon (Dan.1:1-2; 2 Chron. 36:7), without the woman then being judged.
 - B. The Rev. 16:17a bowl is poured out into the *air*, Satan's realm (Eph. 2:2), and Zech. 5:9 claims 2 women with unclean stork wings who typify demons carry the ephah into the *air*, Merrill F. Unger, Zechariah, 1974, p. 98.
 - C. Each hailstone in Rev. 16:21 weighs a **talent** (Greek *talantiaios*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 811), and the woman in the Zech. 5:8 ephah has a **talent** (Hebrew *kikkar*, The.Wrdbk. O.T., v. I, p. 456) of lead thrust down on her by an angel to confine her there for later judgment, *Ibid.*, Unger, p. 96-97.
 - D. The Rev. 16:18 thunders, lightnings, earthquake and great hail recall Rev. 11:19 where these signs occur as the **heavenly temple** opens to signal *judgment* on the Rev. 11:1-2 *apostasy* re: **Jerusalem's temple**, and as seen in our next section, *sin* re: the **Jerusalem temple of Zechariah's day** leads to the **Zech. 5:1-11 prophecy!**
- III. **Zechariah 5:1-11 in turn reveals that "Babylon the Great" in Zechariah's era was (a) the ancient Babylonian Semiramis cult starting to spread worldwide, (b) but that this apostasy was also beginning to indulge in material lust as it compromised itself with Satan's budding evil world commercial system:**
 - A. Zechariah 5:1-11 follows Zech. 4:1-14 where God had predicted that after Israel's return from the Babylonian Captivity, Israel's high priest and governor would overcome a "mountain" to finish rebuilding the temple.
 - B. Zech. 5:1-4 thus exposes a key part of that "mountain" as idolatrous materialism (Col. 3:5c) marked by lying and stealing that Israel had picked up while back in Babylon and that prophet Haggai critiqued, Haggai 1:1-4; Ezra 5:1-2; *Ibid.*, Unger, p. 91-92. Thus, with a *flying* scroll **opposite the demonic [flying] evil that fueled this materialism**, a scroll the length and width of the O. T. tabernacle (Zech. 5:2; Ex. 26:15-25; *Ibid.*, Unger, p. 85) to signal God's focus on seeing His temple rebuilt, the Lord in Zech. 5:1-4 (with Hag. 1:1-4) condemns the materialism marked by lying and stealing that kept Israel's people from rebuilding **His** "house" while they instead built up their own luxurious, wood-paneled houses, buildings God would thus destroy in judgment.
 - C. However, **that judgment on houses** has **YET** to occur, for it is **worldwide**, on "the face of the whole earth," **in the Great Tribulation** (*Ibid.*, p. 86; Zech. 5:3-4), **explaining why the world's cities collapse in Rev. 16:19!**
 - D. Then, Zechariah 5:5-11 **clarifies** the **FUTURE LONG-TERM ADVANCE** of this apostasy as a **SYSTEM:**
 1. Zech. 5:5-11 shows that its era's materialism was part of a budding Satanic commercial system, as women with unclean stork wings, 2 demons, lift the ephah up into the demonic realm of the *air*, *Ibid.*, p. 98.

2. Then, *sitting at ease in the ephah* is "**one woman**," i. e., "*all apostate religious movements from their inception in ancient Babylon,*" as apostasy in Scripture is often presented as a woman, in compromise with the ephah, indulging herself with materialism in Satan's budding evil commercial system, Zech. 5:7; Ibid., p. 95-96. We saw this "woman" in Rev. 2:12-29 began as Babylon's Semiramis cult that has corrupted world religions, including Christendom, and will lead the Great Tribulation apostasy (Bryce Self, "Semiramis, Queen of Babylon" and Harry A. Ironside, "Babylonian Religion," Idolphin.org)
3. The Zech. 5:8 angel thrusts a "talent" of lead upon her to confine her in the ephah for judgment that, in part, occurs by hailstones fittingly weighing a "talent"! The woman at the end will see her doom and try to flee, but it will be in vain, Ibid., Unger, p. 97. God has thus destined the "woman" to be confined in the "ephah" with which she compromises herself to be destroyed there, for her compromise makes her party to the "ephah's" sins (Ibid., Unger, p. 97). Rev. 17:16-17 shows God will use the antichrist to destroy her.
4. In Zechariah's era, this **compromise of ecclesiastical apostasy**, later "Babylon the Great," with **Satan's evil commercial system**, is taken by **demons** to "the land of Shinar" where a temple is built for it by Satan for it fully to develop, and there the whole compromised union is set upon an idol pedestal, Zech. 5:9-11.
5. Some claim Zech. 5:11 teaches the **literal** city of Babylon will be rebuilt for the Great Tribulation (B. K. C., N. T., p. 969-970), but this verse's phrase "land of Shinar" **figuratively** refers to a **system** as Rev. 13:1-2 explains: the Great Tribulation world empire will be a **composite** of **surviving parts** of the **successive past Babylonian** (lion), Medo-Persian (bear), Grecian, (leopard) and Roman (7 heads, 10 horns) **empires** (Dan. 7:1-28; Ibid., Ryrie ftns.). Thus, the world religious apostasy begun by Nimrod's wife, Semiramis, but then fully developed, will finally sit on a commercial idolatry pedestal that began with Babylon like Zech. 5:11 predicted: she will sit on **surviving parts** **FIRST** of **Babylon**, **then** of **Medo-Persia**, **then** of **Greece** and (as we will learn next) **last** of the **revived Roman Empire**, the 7 heads of Rome as "Babylon the Great" in full religious apostasy and commercial idolatry, Revelation 17:1-5, 9, 18!

Lesson: "*Babylon the Great*" is the developing world religious apostate system that was begun by Semiramis in ancient Babylon, and it increasingly compromises itself with Satan's developing evil world commercial system that was begun in Babylon in idolatrous materialism. God will spur the antichrist to destroy this religious system in Revelation 17, the commercial system's merchants will grieve its loss in Revelation 18 and Christ will destroy the commercial (and political) system(s) of the world at His Second Coming. (Daniel 2:40-45)

Application: (1) May we trust in Christ to be saved, John 3:16. (2) May we avoid **RELIGIOUS** apostasy, "*Babylon the Great*," (3) and **ALSO COMMERCIAL** apostasy, the **SATANIC** system of **MATERIALISM**, 1 Timothy 6:6-19!

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

We **illustrate how** to **avoid** the "ephah," the "woman" in the "ephah" and her **compromise** with the "ephah":

(1) Re: the "ephah," videos of Jonathan Gruber, an architect of Obamacare, show him claiming that "the law only passed because of a 'lack of transparency' that became a 'huge political advantage' because of 'the stupidity of the American voter.'" (John Fund, "Gruber's Deception," 11/17/2014, nationalreview.com) Gruber has since made \$2 million "helping states set up health-care exchanges," so he "deceived the public in order to pass a measure from which he stood to profit handsomely," Ibid. **We must avoid such a lust for money that makes one deceive and steal!**

(2) Re: the "woman" in the "ephah," or "Babylon the Great," in "his 1993 tour of Africa the pope 'sought common ground with believers in voodoo . . . suggesting that they would not betray their traditional faith by converting to Christianity.'" (Dave Hunt, A Woman Rides the Beast, 1994, p. 417, citing the Los Angeles Times, 2/5/1993) The next year, 1994, Evangelical and Catholic leaders signed the "'Evangelicals and Catholics'" document agreeing not to evangelize one another as both were "'Christian'" (Brannon Howse, Religious Trojan Horse, 2012, p. 254). That opens the door for Evangelicals to endorse voodoo! **We must avoid such unbiblical ecumenical error!**

(3) Re: the **compromise** of the "woman" in the "ephah" with the "ephah," the May 23, 2005 issue of Business Week ran William C. Symonds story, "Earthly Empires," that told how "savvy" Evangelicals "are creating Sunday Schools that look like Disney World and church cafes with the appeal of Starbucks" to reach "untapped masses" in offering "an upbeat message intertwined with a religious one," p. 80-84. However, Scripture directs pastors to "preach the Word" and **not** other content as people will "turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Timothy 4:2-4). Besides, Brannon Howse (Religious Trojan Horse, 2012, p. 213-215) warned this "church-growth movement" was fathered by Peter Drucker "to merge government, corporations, and community organizations (such as churches) . . . for global governance." **We must avoid such compromise with evil commercialism!**