



# *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*

## *"Beasty's Boys"* 17:15-18

### Introduction

We've been following the rise to power of a global religious system that will dominate the world's governments for a time during the Great Tribulation.

It's called "Babylon" because its roots go all the way back to the original religious rebellion at the Tower of Babel. It is described as a "harlot" because it seduces men away from the worship of the true God and our Savior, Jesus Christ.

The harlot is in for a surprise once the antichrist comes into his full power. Her demise is the subject of these closing verses of chapter seventeen.

Revelation 17:15 Then he said to me, "The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.

I won't tire of telling you that the signs and symbols in the Revelation are *not* to confuse you. They are to provide a universal language so the interpretation cannot be misunderstood.

Water is just water in the Revelation unless you're told it represents something else. Here you are told it represents "peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues."

- "Peoples" is a general word to describe all different kinds of people on the planet.
- "Multitudes" refers to any large gathering of people without reference to ethnicity or gender.
- "Nations" commonly refers to all non-Jewish nations of the world.
- "Tongues" is the unique language of a particular people group.

These words are intended to describe all the people on the earth. The Babylonian harlot will bring together all the churches, all the religions, into one monstrous apostate system. The Babylonian harlot will be an ecumenical religious movement.

Walter A. Elwell, in *The Concise Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, defines ecumenism as "The organized attempt to bring about the cooperation and unity among Christians." On an international level, the World Council of Churches represents ecumenism when it states its purpose this way (as taken from its website):

The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior according to the scriptures, and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is a community of churches on the way to visible unity in one faith and one eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and in common life in Christ. It seeks to advance towards this unity, as Jesus prayed for his followers, 'so that the world may believe.'

On a national level, a document called *Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium*, published in 1994 and endorsed by some rather prominent representatives of

Evangelical Christianity and Roman Catholicism, is another example of ecumenism.

On February 26th Muslims and Catholics joined to promote peace. Let me read you excerpts from an article about it.<sup>1</sup>

Muslims and Catholics have much in common when it comes to beliefs about peace, decided participants at an interreligious meeting: Both faiths consider that peace should permeate all aspects of life.

This was a conclusion from the Joint Committee for Dialogue of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Cairo-based Permanent Committee of al-Azhar for Dialogue Among the Monotheistic Religions. The group had their annual meeting on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The committees went on to affirm that religious leaders of both faiths "have the duty to promote a culture of peace, each within his respective community, especially through teaching and preaching." And they contended that a "culture of peace should permeate all aspects of life: religious formation, education, interpersonal relations and the arts in their diverse forms. To this end, scholastic books should be revised in order not to contain material which may offend the religious sentiments of other believers, at times through the erroneous presentation of dogmas, morals or history of other religions."

Ash Wednesday was just a few weeks ago. Ash Wednesday is the day Lent begins. It occurs forty days before Good Friday. The official name of Ash Wednesday is "Day of Ashes." The reason the day became known as Ash Wednesday is that it is forty days before Good Friday, so it will always fall on a Wednesday. The Bible does not mention Ash Wednesday, or Lent either, for that matter.

The period of Lent is intended to be a time where sinful activities and habits are forsaken. Ash Wednesday is the commencement of this period of repentance. The Bible contains numerous Old Testament accounts of people using dust and ashes as symbols of repentance and/or mourning. The tradition is that the symbol of the cross is

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.zenit.org/article-25216?l=english>

made in ashes on a person's forehead as a symbol of that person's identification with Jesus Christ.

More and more evangelicals are discovering Ash Wednesday. Todd Johnson, professor of worship at the evangelical Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, says that such interest is common. "We have a whole generation of people who are familiar with using symbols. Kids have grown up using icons on their computers. Symbols mean more to them than words."

Truth is, you have liberty to observe something like Ash Wednesday. But I'd say, since it is a fast, that you should avoid the ashes! Jesus said that when you fast no one should know about it.

Truth is, we should be repenting from sin every day, not just for a specified period of time.

Rituals tend to take the place of reality. We like the shadow when Jesus is the substance. More-and-more evangelicals taking ashes is a move in the wrong direction. It's a move towards ecumenism we can do without.

Biblical Christianity and Roman Catholicism are two different systems that practice and believe different things about how one is saved, the authority of the Bible, the priesthood of believers, the nature of man, and the work of Christ on the cross. The list of irreconcilable differences between what the Bible says and what the Roman Catholic Church says makes any joint mission between the two absolutely impossible.

Fueling the ecumenism of the Great Tribulation will be the absence at the beginning of true believers. We will have been raptured prior to the Great Tribulation.

It will create a climate that fosters ecumenism. The antichrist will see in organized religion an opportunity to rise to power. His rise, and the

reign of the harlot, occur during the first three and one half years of the seven year Great Tribulation.

In the middle of the Trib, after the antichrist has been mortally wounded but raised from the dead and indwelt by Satan, he will turn against the harlot.

Revelation 17:16 And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire.

The “ten horns” represent the final form of global government under the authority of the antichrist. We believe them to represent ten regions of the world rather than ten nations.

The phrase “on the beast” is more accurately translated “and the beast.” The “beast,” the antichrist, is not only involved, it is for his sake that the global religious system is overthrown because he demands to be worshipped as God.

By eliminating the apostate church, the way is cleared for the worship of Antichrist, as advocated by his sidekick, the False Prophet.

Ultimately, the Antichrist will not tolerate any worship except of himself: “The son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he sits in the temple of God, showing *himself that he is God*” (Second Thessalonians 2:3-4)

This is a very graphic depiction of what happens to religion. It is in keeping with the imagery of religion as a woman, a harlot. She will be brutally killed, cannibalized, burned.

Probably this means that Buddhist temples, Muslim mosques, Catholic churches, and other religious gathering places will be confiscated or outright destroyed. Some of the practitioners of the various religions will no doubt be murdered.

Revelation 17:17 For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled.

History is being overseen by God. We like to refer to human history as the unfolding drama of redemption. Scene after scene brings us closer to the redemption of the human race and of creation itself. Just as you see the nations of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome being used by God for His redemptive purposes, so in the future will the revived Roman empire be used.

God's Word cannot fail. It is not a warning that we will be destroyed if we don't solve the problems of the economy or the ecology. There's no way to dodge the bullet of the Great Tribulation by advances in society or science. God must intervene in our affairs and save us.

Revelation 17:18 And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth."

In chapter eighteen we'll see that there will also be a literal city of Babylon rebuilt on its ancient site in Iraq. It will be the capital of the global government.

Here in our verses we are looking at a religious system with its own capital city.

What religious "city" with Babylonian roots has reigned "over the kings of the earth?" **Only the Roman Catholic Church based in Rome, in Vatican City, can qualify.**

The association of this harlot with Rome doesn't mean that the Roman Catholic Church is identical to Babylon, though apostate Roman Catholics will definitely be a part of this great harlot. J. A. Seiss writes,

It is most direct in Paganism; but it is in Mohammedanism, in Papalism, in the degenerate Catholicism of the Eastern churches, and in all the heretical isms, infidelities, and mere goodishness which afflict our Protestant Christianity as well.

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Our values must remain spiritual. We are to bring glory and honor to God. Regarding the lost of this world, Christians bring glory to God when God uses the believer to further His kingdom through evangelism and discipleship. This is to be the motivation our interaction with the world.

Too often those who push for unity have a political or social agenda. They are too willing to set aside the preaching of the Gospel.

Thus we can unite with other Bible-believing Christians in the work of evangelism and discipleship. Along the way we can help the needy.

Franklin Graham's organization, Samaritan's Purse, might be a good example of this. They supply much needed help to the poorest people groups on the planet, but always in the name of Jesus Christ and always with the preaching of the Gospel.