

Lesson #37- The Destruction of the Final World Religion

Revelation 17:1–18

I. Introduction

- a. Read
- b. Throughout history, then, Babylon has been an important center of false religion.
- c. In the end times, false religion will come back to where it started.
- d. The devil who deceived the people at Babel, and from there launched false religion over the earth, will deceive the world once again.
- e. The final world religion, depicted as a harlot, is the theme of this vision, which records the exposure of the harlot, the explanation of the harlot, and the extermination of the harlot.

II. THE EXPOSURE OF THE HARLOT.

- a. 17:1–6, 15
- b. That it was **one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls** who **came and spoke with** John connects the judgment of the harlot with the seven last plagues (16:1–21).
- c. Chronology halts in chapters 17 and 18 as the scene shifts from God's judgments to Antichrist's world empire, the target of those judgments.
- d. The **great harlot** that will be judged is not an actual prostitute.
- e. The term **harlot** is a metaphor for false religion, spiritual defection, idolatry, and religious apostasy.

Besides Babylon, several cities in Scripture are designated harlot cities because of their idolatry and pursuit of false religion.

- f. Nineveh (Nah. 3:1, 4), Tyre (Isa. 23:15–17), and, sadly, Jerusalem (Isa. 1:21) are examples of cities that committed spiritual fornication.
- g. John’s vision exposes several aspects of the harlot city of Babylon: her authority, alliances, apparel, abominations, and accusation.
- h. THE AUTHORITY OF THE HARLOT
 - i. 17:1*b*, 15
 - ii. The harlot in John’s vision **sits** in a position of authority and sovereignty like a king on his throne **on** or beside **many waters**.
 - iii. Cities in ancient times were usually located near a source of water, either the ocean, a river, lake, or spring.
 - iv. The phrase **many waters** does not, however, refer to the harlot’s geographical location.
 - v. Instead, as the angel explains to John in verse 15, **“The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.”**
 - vi. The metaphor is an apt one, since a city situated in a commanding position on a great waterway would be highly influential.
 - vii. The **harlot** will not merely influence, but will dominate all the unredeemed **peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues** of the earth

(cf. the similar phrases in 5:9; 7:9; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6).

- viii. The harlot's authority will be universal; the entire world will be committed to the false worship of the Babylonian system, rather than the true God.

i. THE ALLIANCES OF THE HARLOT

- i. 17:2–3
- ii. Her association with the **kings of the earth** reveals that the scope of the harlot's influence will be immense.
- iii. Those at the highest levels of power and influence will commit spiritual fornication with her.
- iv. The phrase **committed acts of immorality** translates a form of the Greek verb *porneuō* ("to commit sexual immorality").
- v. It aptly describes the harlot's interaction with the **kings of the earth**.
- vi. Rulers from around the world will become obsessed with the Babylonian harlot.
- vii. Deceived by the false prophet, Antichrist, and Satan and his demon hosts, they will become enamored with the false world religion.
- viii. But having joined themselves to the harlot, economically, socially, militarily, politically, and religiously, they will share her disastrous fate.
- ix. The harlot will not be allied just with the rulers and influential people of the world.

- x. All **those who dwell on the earth** (a technical term for unbelievers; cf. v. 8; 3:10; 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8, 12, 14; 14:6) **were made drunk with the wine of her immorality.**
1. All the unredeemed will be caught up in the final false religion; they will give their hearts and souls to the abominable Babylonian harlot.
 2. The angel is not describing people who are physically **drunk** with literal **wine** committing sexual **immorality** with an actual prostitute, though that may be happening.
 3. Instead, he is talking about those who are passionately intoxicated with Antichrist's illicit false world religion.
 4. The imagery derives from Jeremiah 51:7, which says of ancient Babylon, "Babylon has been a golden cup in the hand of the Lord, intoxicating all the earth. T
 5. The nations have drunk of her wine; therefore the nations are going mad."
- xi. Before the next alliance of the harlot is revealed, the scene of John's vision changes.
- xii. The angel with whom John had been speaking **carried him away in the Spirit into a wilderness** (cf. 1:10; 4:2; 21:10).

1. **Wilderness** translates *erēmos*, which describes a deserted, desolate wasteland like the region where modern Babylon is located.
- xiii. In that place John **saw a woman**—the Babylonian harlot whom the angel had just described (vv. 1–2).
1. She was **sitting on a scarlet beast**, whose description identifies him as Antichrist (cf. 13:1, 4; 14:9; 16:10).
 2. That the **woman** was sitting on the **scarlet beast** signifies that he was supporting her.
 3. The initial unifying and controlling factor of Antichrist’s kingdom will be religion.
 4. With the heavens and the earth being ravaged by God’s judgments, and the world’s political, economic, and military might crumbling, people will turn in desperation to the supernatural.
 5. The **beast** and the **woman** will coexist for a while; that is, the religion will be separate from the kingdom of Antichrist at first. But eventually “the beast ... will hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire” (v. 16).
 6. It will be at that point that the false prophet will make the whole world worship Antichrist (13:11–14), and everything will

be one in the beast's universal and comprehensive rule.

xiv. **Scarlet** is the color associated with luxury (2 Sam. 1:24), splendor, and royalty.

1. It is also the color associated with sin (Isa. 1:18) and the hue of blood. Antichrist will be a splendorous, royal, sinful, bloody beast, **full of blasphemous names** (cf. 13:1).
2. In his arrogant self-deification, Antichrist will take for himself the names and titles that belong to God. He will not only blaspheme God by what he claims, but also by what he says.
3. Antichrist “will speak out against the Most High.... and will speak monstrous things against the God of gods” (Dan. 7:25; 11:36).

xv. This demonic **scarlet beast** is further described as **having seven heads and ten horns**, showing the extent of his alliances.

1. As will be seen in the discussion of verses 9 and 10 below, the **seven heads** “are seven mountains on which the woman sits, and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while” (vv. 9–10).
2. They represent seven mountains, seven past, present, and future governments.

3. The **ten horns** represent ten kings (v. 12), who will rule as subordinates to Antichrist (v. 13).

xvi. The harlot's alliances will be comprehensive.

1. Her deadly embrace will encompass all the unredeemed, from kings and rulers to common people; all will worship and submit to her religion.
2. Far from being separated, church and state will be united as never before in human history.

j. THE APPAREL OF THE HARLOT

- i. 17:4*a*
- ii. Prostitutes usually dress so as to attract attention to themselves, and metaphorically the harlot Babylon will be no different.
- iii. John saw her **clothed in purple and scarlet**, the colors of royalty, prosperity, nobility, and wealth (cf. Judg. 8:26; Est. 8:15; Lam. 4:5; Ezek. 23:6; Dan. 5:7, 16, 29).
- iv. That she is **adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls** portrays her as a prostitute who is both attractive (cf. Prov. 7:10) and has plied her trade successfully and become extremely wealthy.

k. THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE HARLOT

- i. 17:4*b*–5
- ii. As a further indication of her wealth, the harlot had **in her hand a gold cup**.

- iii. Like prostitutes who want to take everything their victims have, she will make her victims drunk, as did ancient Babylon: “Babylon has been a golden cup in the hand of the Lord, intoxicating all the earth.
- iv. The nations have drunk of her wine; therefore the nations are going mad” (Jer. 51:7).
- v. The harlot’s **gold cup** was **full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality.**
- vi. Commenting on that graphic description Donald Grey Barnhouse wrote: It is also highly significant that the abominations and filthiness should be spoken of as coming from a golden cup. “Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord’s hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad” (Jer. 51:7). To those who are acquainted with the history of ancient religions this significance is heightened by comparisons with the rites of the pagan religious mysteries. A French scholar, Salverte, writing on *The Occult Sciences*, tells of the drinking in connection with these demon ceremonies. “To drink of mysterious beverages,” he says, “was indispensable on the part of all who sought initiation in these mysteries. These mysterious beverages were composed of wine, honey, water, and flour, with various other ingredients used locally. From the nature of the ingredients avowedly used, and

from the nature of others not avowed, but certainly used, there can be no doubt that they were of an intoxicating nature; and till the aspirants had come under their power, till their understandings had been dimmed, and their passions excited by the medicated draught, they were not duly prepared for what they were either to hear or see.” (*Revelation: An Expository Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1971], 324)

- vii. All idolatry is abominable to God (cf. 1 Kings 14:22–24; 2 Kings 21:1–9; Ezek. 20:30–33), and the gross idolatry of Antichrist’s false religion will be the worst ever.
- viii. No wonder Babylon’s sins will be “piled up as high as heaven” (18:5), bringing her destruction.
- ix. As was customary for prostitutes to identify themselves in the Roman world, the harlot Babylon also had **a name written on her forehead** (cf. Jer. 3:3).
- x. The name John saw was “**mystery BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.**” (The word **mystery** should be rendered as part of the title.)
- xi. The harlot is called **mystery BABYLON** to indicate that BABYLON in this context does not refer to a geographical location.

1. This is not ancient Babylon, the Babylon of John's day, or the rebuilt city of Babylon in the end times.
 2. The details of this vision can't be applied to any actual city.
 3. Here is a previously undisclosed Babylon, a secret reality to be revealed in the end times.
 4. This **BABYLON** is the symbol of all worldly resistance to God; it is described as **THE GREAT** because of its far-reaching influence.
 5. In fact, so great will be its influence that it is called **THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH**.
 6. Babylon will be the source of all the false, idolatrous, blasphemous worship in the end times.
 7. Her designation as the **MOTHER OF HARLOTS** is appropriate, since harlotry in Scripture often symbolizes idolatry (cf. Judg. 2:17; 8:27, 33; 1 Chron. 5:25; 2 Chron. 21:11; Jer. 3:6, 8–9; Ezek. 16:30–31, 36).
- xii. So Babylon, the city that spawned the system that corrupted the world with false religion, will do so again.
- I. THE ACCUSATION OF THE HARLOT
 - i. 17:6

- ii. This **woman** was **drunk**, but not from drinking alcoholic beverages.
- iii. In a graphic indictment of her for her murderous persecution of God's people, the Babylonian harlot is pictured as **drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus**.
 - 1. That vivid expression was commonly used in the ancient world to depict a murderous lust for violence.
 - 2. Some commentators see the **saints** and the **witnesses of Jesus** as two distinct groups, the former being the Old Testament saints and the latter the New Testament saints.
 - 3. More likely, however, the two descriptions refer to the same group and describe God's people throughout history.
 - 4. The important point is that false religion, represented here by the harlot, is a murderer.
 - 5. It has killed millions of believers over the centuries.
 - 6. The history of the church has demonstrated that apostate Christianity is relentless in its persecution of those who hold to true faith in Jesus Christ.
 - 7. While the world becomes drunk with lust for her, the harlot becomes drunk with the blood of God's people.

- iv. The vision was so appalling that **when John saw her, he wondered greatly**; expressing that he was confused, shocked, astonished, and frightened by the ghastly vision of such a contrastingly magnificent figure of the woman and such a deadly intent.

III. THE EXPLANATION OF THE HARLOT

- a. 17:7–14, 18
- b. In response to John's confusion and amazement, **the angel said to him rhetorically, "Why do you wonder?"**
- c. There was no need for John to remain puzzled by the relation of the beast to this beautiful yet bloody woman in the vision; the angel was about to explain to him **the mystery of the woman** (vv. 18) **and of the beast that carries her** (vv. 8–17).
- d. The apostle understood that **the woman** represented a false religious system, and that **the beast** was the Antichrist, as the reference to his **seven heads and ... ten horns** indicates (cf. v. 3; 13:1).
- e. What he did not understand was the connection between the two figures.
- f. It had been revealed to John in a previous vision that the whole world would worship Antichrist (13:4, 8, 12).
- g. That may have been what raised the question in John's mind as to how **the woman** fits into the picture, particularly how it is that **the beast ... carries her**.

- h. Skipping for the moment the angel's digression in verses 8–14 describing the beast, verse 18 identifies **the woman whom John saw as the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth.**
- i. Some commentators deny that **the great city** is a literal city, preferring to see it as a symbol of the religious aspect of Antichrist's empire. Some of those who view **the great city** as an actual city identify it as Rome, others as Jerusalem.
 - ii. But the angel quite clearly and repeatedly refers to Babylon on the Euphrates throughout chapters 17–18.
 - iii. The description of Babylon's destruction (cf. 18:10, 18, 21) also suggests that an actual city is in view.
 - iv. Thus, a rebuilt city of Babylon will be closely identified with Antichrist's world empire, perhaps as its capital city.
 - v. That city will be the center of his kingdom, the extent of which will be the whole earth.
 - i. The Old Testament predictions of Babylon's total destruction (e.g., Isa. 13:1–14:27; Jer. 50–51) also favor identifying **the great city** with Babylon on the Euphrates.
 - j. The detailed description those passages give of Babylon's destruction was only partially fulfilled when the Medes and Persians sacked the ancient city of Babylon. As is the case with many Old Testament

prophecies, those predictions had both a near and a far fulfillment.

- k. Henry Morris noted that Babylon, indeed, will be permanently destroyed, as recorded in the very next chapter (18:21), but this has not happened yet. The prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah also refer to this future destruction, not merely to Babylon's present-day condition, as is evident from the following considerations, among others: (1) The destruction will take place in the time that the stars and sun are darkened (Isaiah 13:1, 9, 10). (2) The city will become as desolate as Sodom and Gomorrah, burned completely, with no remains whatever (Isaiah 13:19; Jeremiah 50:40). (3) It shall become desolate forever, with neither man nor beast entering it any more (Isaiah 13:20; Jeremiah 51:62). (4) It will be a time of judgment not only for Babylon, but for all nations (Isaiah 13:11–13; Jeremiah 51:49). (5) Its destruction will be followed by universal rest and peace (Isaiah 14:7, 8). (6) Its destruction is directly associated also with the casting of Lucifer into Sheol (Isaiah 14:12–15). (7) Babylon's stones will never be used in future construction elsewhere, whereas the present-day ruins of Babylon have been frequently plundered and reused in later constructions (Jeremiah 51:26). (*The Revelation Record* [Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale, 1983], 348)

- l. The site of modern Babylon is strategically located at the crossroads of Asia, Europe, and Africa and is not far from the Persian Gulf.
 - i. It is also near the world's richest oil fields and has a virtually unlimited water supply from the Euphrates.
 - ii. Those considerations led the famed historian Arnold Toynbee to proclaim that Babylon would be an ideal site for an important political and cultural center (Morris, *Revelation Record*, 349).
- m. In verses 8–14 the angel gives John a lengthy description of the beast.
- n. He is explaining to John the relationship between the harlot and the beast, which had mystified the apostle (vv. 6–7).
- o. But for John to grasp that connection, the angel needed first to give him further details about the beast.
- p. This further describes the nature of the beast and his kingdom, enhancing the description of him in chapter 13.
- q. As previously noted, the **beast that John saw** is Antichrist, the satanic ruler of the last and most powerful empire in human history, who will serve as Satan's instrument to attack Israel, persecute believers, conquer the world for Satan, and oppose Christ.
 - i. Scripture portrays him as an intellectual genius (Dan. 7:8); an outstanding orator (Dan. 7:20); a military leader without parallel in human history (Dan. 7:23); a shrewd, calculating, manipulating

politician (Dan. 8:25; 11:21); and the ultimate religious charlatan (2 Thess. 2:4).

- ii. The angel briefly reviews the detailed description of him given in 13:1–10.
- r. The **beast** is described as one who **was, and is not, and is about to come** again.
 - i. That phrase refers to Antichrist’s faked death and resurrection.
 - ii. The false prophet will use that alleged miracle to deceive the entire world into worshipping Antichrist (13:14).
 - iii. Up till that point, Antichrist’s political and economic empire will coexist with the false religious system headed by the false prophet.
 - iv. But after his staged “resurrection,” Antichrist, then indwelt by a powerful demon **out of the abyss** will turn on the false religious system and destroy it. He will tolerate only one religion—the worship of himself.
 - v. Antichrist’s faked resurrection and his destruction of the false religious system will take place approximately halfway through the Tribulation period.
 - vi. At that point, he will be the undisputed ruler of the world, with unilateral power.
 - vii. He will appear to have reached the apex of his sovereignty, and be ready to thwart the coming of Christ and His kingdom.

- viii. Yet in reality, Antichrist will be about to be crushed and sent **to destruction**—eternal damnation in the lake of fire (19:20; 20:10).
- ix. That will be the appropriate punishment for the “son of destruction” (2 Thess. 2:3), who dared in his insolent pride to copy the sin of Lucifer (cf. Isa. 14:12–14) and challenge the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.
- s. Antichrist’s phony resurrection and swift destruction of the false religious system will shock the world.
 - i. As it does throughout Revelation, the phrase **those who dwell on the earth** describes unbelievers (cf. v. 2; 3:10; 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8, 12, 14; 14:6).
 - ii. They are the ones **whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world** (see the discussion of 13:8 in chapter 4 of this volume), since the names of the elect are recorded in the book of life (3:5; 20:15; 21:27; Phil. 4:3).
 - iii. Amazed and deceived by Antichrist (cf. 2 Thess. 2:9–10), his followers **will wonder when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come**.
 - iv. The specific cause for their amazement will be Antichrist’s seemingly miraculous return to life after receiving an apparently fatal wound (cf. 13:3–4).

- v. Only the elect will not fall for Antichrist's deception (Matt. 24:24).
- t. The angel's statement **here is the mind which has wisdom** invites John and his readers to pay close attention to what follows.
- u. This unusual expression introduces a difficult and complex aspect of this vision.
 - i. It will take much wisdom and spiritual insight to understand it, and perhaps only those alive at the time will fully comprehend it.
- v. The first aspect of the vision that needs to be understood is that **the seven heads** of the beast (v. 3) **are seven mountains** or hills **on which the woman sits**.
 - i. Some commentators associate the **seven mountains** with Rome, famous for being built on seven hills, and identify the **woman** as the Roman Catholic Church.
 - ii. But such an interpretation is too narrow; something more than just Rome must be in view, because Antichrist's empire is worldwide.
 - iii. Nor can the **woman** be the Roman Catholic Church, since, as noted above, verse 18 identifies her as the city of Babylon.
 - iv. Also "when the woman sits on the 'many waters' (v. 1) this must be taken as metaphorical since it is interpreted in v. 15; when the woman sits upon 'a scarlet coloured beast' this again is symbolic; thus when she sits upon the 'seven mountains'

this too must be figurative” (James Allen, *What the Bible Teaches: Revelation* [Kilmarnock, Scotland: John Ritchie Ltd., 1997], 424).

- v. Finally, the angel’s call for spiritual discernment would have been pointless if the seven mountains were an obvious geographical reference to Rome.
- w. All such speculation is unnecessary, because the text plainly identifies the mountains as **seven kings**.
 - i. Mountains are sometimes used metaphorically in the Old Testament to represent rule, or power (e.g., Ps. 30:7; Isa. 2:2; Jer. 51:25; Dan. 2:35).
 - ii. Here they represent seven world empires embodied in their rulers.
 - iii. The angel tells John that **five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come**.
 - iv. The five Gentile world empires that had fallen by the time of John’s vision are Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece.
 - v. The **one** that existed at that time was obviously Rome.
 - vi. The **other** one that **has not yet come** is Antichrist’s final world empire. Commenting on the significance of the first six empires, Henry Morris writes, Though none of these empires ever actually ruled the whole world, each was the greatest kingdom of its own time, particularly in reference to the land and people of Israel and these kingdoms’ opposition to the proclamation of God’s Word and the accomplishment of His

purposes in the world....These, of course, have not been the *only* kingdoms that have been at enmity with God and His purposes. In this category could also be placed such kingdoms as Syria, Edom, Moab, Midian, and many others, but none of these were empires of great size and influence. On the other hand, there were other great and powerful empires in the ancient world—China, India, and the Incas, for example—but these had only peripheral contact with the Word of God and the chosen people. There were only six kingdoms that met both criteria up to the time of Christ and the apostles. Furthermore, all six of these were not only legitimate heirs of political Babel but also of religious Babel as well. Babylonia, Egypt, Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome were all strongholds of the world religion of evolutionary pantheism and idolatrous polytheism. Thus, they appropriately are represented as six heads on the great beast that supports the harlot. (Morris, *Revelation Record*, 337. Italics in the original.)

- x. The angel further explains that **when** Antichrist comes, he must remain a little while (cf. 12:12).
 - i. His empire will be short-lived; he will be given “authority to act for forty-two months” (13:5; the second half of the Tribulation).
 - ii. Then the angel offered the enigmatic comment that **the beast which was and is not, is himself**

also an eighth and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction.

- iii. How can the **beast** (Antichrist) be **an eighth** king and also **one of the seven**?
- iv. The answer lies in the phrase **the beast ... was and is not.**
- v. Antichrist will be one of the seven kings before his supposed demise and resurrection and **an eighth** king afterwards during the second phase of his rule.
- vi. As noted earlier in verse 8, Antichrist will go to **destruction**—eternal damnation in the lake of fire (19:20; 20:10).
- vii. Unlike the first six empires, his empire will be destroyed by a direct act of God.
- y. The angel further explained that **the ten horns which John saw are ten kings.**
 - i. They cannot be known to any earlier generation because they **have not yet received a kingdom**, since they are part of Antichrist's future empire.
 - ii. **They will receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour.**
 - iii. Perhaps Antichrist's empire will be divided into ten administrative regions, which these **ten kings** will rule under him.
 - iv. The reference to **one hour** is a figure of speech that emphasizes the brevity of their rule; their reign will be short-lived because their master's empire itself will be short-lived. During their

brief reign, they will be unanimously devoted to Antichrist; they will **have one purpose, and will give their power and authority to the beast.**

- v. They will do his will, and his will alone.
- z. The agenda of the **ten kings**, like that of Satan and Antichrist, will be to **wage war against the Lamb** at the Battle of Armageddon.
 - i. Three exceptionally deceitful and powerful demons will be the agents to gather them for that battle:
 - ii. John will describe this ill-fated battle in detail in chapter 19, so here he merely notes that **the Lamb will overcome them.**
 - iii. The battle will in reality be a slaughter; the Lord Jesus Christ will utterly destroy the forces gathered against Him at His second coming.
 - iv. The reason all the forces of hell cannot defeat the Lamb is **because He is Lord of lords and King of kings** (cf. 19:16; Deut. 10:17; 1 Tim. 6:15).
 - v. With Christ when He returns will be **the called and chosen and faithful**—a reference that can only apply to believers (cf. 19:14; Matt. 22:14).
 - vi. The terms are rich in their definition of believers as the eternally elect, **chosen** in the Son before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4); the **called**, summoned in time by the Father to repentance and faith that saves (John 6:44); and **faithful**, demonstrating the true saving faith, the genuine

eternal life that endures by the power of the Spirit (Rom. 8:9).

- vii. The Lord Jesus Christ will effortlessly crush the greatest armed force ever assembled when He returns with His elect and the holy angels (Matt. 24:30–31; 2 Thess. 1:7).

IV. THE EXTERMINATION OF THE HARLOT

- a. 17:16–17
- b. Antichrist's alliance with the false religious system will not last.
- c. Eventually **the ten horns** (the ten kings who rule under Antichrist) and **the beast** (Antichrist himself) will come to **hate the harlot**.
- d. Having used the false religious system to help him gain control of the world, Antichrist will discard it.
- e. In his rampant megalomania, he will want the world to worship only him.
- f. He will also no doubt covet the vast wealth of the false religious system. Thus, he will turn on the harlot **and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire**.
 - i. That graphic language of extreme violence is used to make clear that Antichrist and his henchmen will utterly and completely obliterate all vestiges of the false religious system.
 - ii. Antichrist's self-serving, satanically inspired actions are, however, precisely in the scope of God's sovereign plan. In fact, it is **God** who will **put it in the hearts** of Antichrist's followers to

execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast.

- g. God's power is behind the destruction and consolidation of the evil empire; as always, Satan is the instrument of God's purposes.
 - i. The one-world unification government so long sought by the humanists will have finally arrived, only to be destroyed in one great act of divine judgment.
 - ii. All **the words of God**—every prophecy of Christ's return and the setting up of His kingdom—**will be fulfilled** completely.
- h. God hates every form of false religion and will not tolerate those who seek to rob Him of His glory (Isa. 42:8).
 - i. Antichrist's religious empire will be judged and destroyed.
 - ii. So also, as chapter 18 of Revelation reveals, will be the political and economic aspects of that evil world empire.

¹ John F. MacArthur Jr., *Revelation 12–22*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 2000), 160–172.