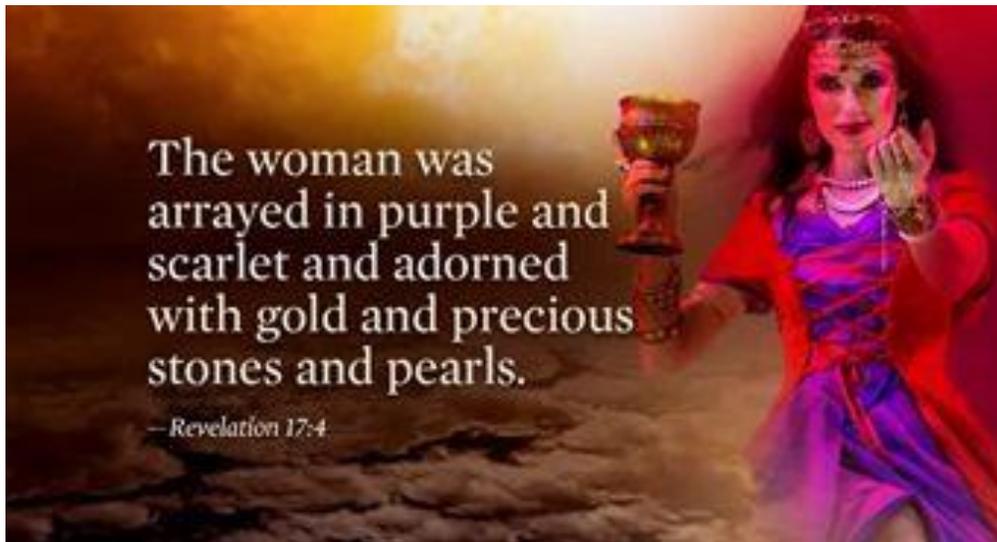


**Don't blame Jesus Christ when Christians
share in the Harlot's blood-filled cup of abominations for profit**



Don't blame Jesus Christ when Christians share in the Harlot's blood-filled cup of abominations for financial profit,

In Revelation 17-18, the Apostle John depicts the socio-economic-political (SEP) of the Roman Empire as an extremely wealthy and seductive woman who drinks out of a cup of abominations. This picture is John's way of depicting the nature of the SEP of the world—the nature of the social, economic, and political forces of the world. This vivid portrayal has three references: (1) The powerful Roman Empire of John's time, (2) the nature of SEP forces throughout history, and (3) the final world power in the last days.

I have noted how John depicts her, beginning with her seductive beauty only to cap it off with her drinking abominations out of a cup. In John's day, the contents of the cup were "the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (Rev. 17:6). I have also noted how the world loves her for her wealth: Revelation 18:11-13, "And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore: merchandise of gold and silver (from Spain), precious stones and pearls (from Africa), fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet (from the East), every kind of citron wood (from Morocco), every kind of object of ivory (from Africa), every kind of object of most precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble (from Greece); 13 "and cinnamon and incense (from Arabia), fragrant oil and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat (from North Africa), cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and bodies and souls of men."

According to the Book of Revelation, ancient Rome with its consumerism and imperialism is not glorious. In fact, the Book of Revelation is the most anti-imperial book in the New Testament. Although Rome was the most powerful nation in the world in that it conquered nations and extracted their natural resources, John reveals that she really is nothing more than a drunken whore drunk from the blood of Christians dripping from her lips. In other words, her wealth and

power were gained by unspeakable atrocities in which money, fame, and power were more important than human beings as indicated in the last phrase of the above passage where the commodities included "the bodies and souls of men."

I wonder what John would have thought about the church joining the Harlot. I wonder how he would have reacted to seeing the church drink out of the blood-filled goblet with the Harlot. In the first century, Rome was the enemy of the church. In the ten periods below, the church was no longer the enemy, it was the lover of the currently SEP.

There are at least ten periods in human history when the church got in bed with the whore and shared her goblet of blood for social success, economic success, and political success: e.g., the era of (1) Constantine (313), (2) Crusades (1100-1300), (3) Inquisitions (1231-1834), (4) Colonialism/imperialism (1400-1800), (5) Antebellum South in America (1650-1863), (6) Reconstruction (1863-1877), (7) Jim Crow South (1877-1960), (8) Nazi Germany (1930-1940), (9) consumer/prosperity Gospel (1950-2018), and (10) modern political Christianity on the Right and the Left (1950-2018).

Let's note the cup in (5) above. What happens when the church adopts the ways of the Harlot rather than the better way of Jesus Christ? What happens when the church values profit as more valuable than human beings? The seductive power of materialism can be seen in the fact that even in the Christian and Bible-saturated South, many Christians valued money over fellow human beings and by doing so got in bed with the Harlot and shared her goblet filled with abominations—again, all for social, economic, and political profit.

Consider the prices placed on human beings in antebellum Georgia for a male and female black slave (field hands) between the ages of 18-21:

1828 - \$700
1835 - \$900
1837 - \$1,300
1839 - \$1,000
1840 - \$700
1844 - \$600
1848 - \$900
1851 - \$1,050
1853 - \$1,200
1859 - \$1,650
1860 - \$1,800

Consider the value of slaves between the ages of 8 and 21 through the South in 1859-1860:

Virginia - \$1,275 to \$1,425
South Carolina - \$1,283 to \$1,325
Georgia - \$1,250 to \$1,900
Alabama - \$1,192 to \$1,635
Mississippi - \$1,450 to \$1,625
Texas - \$1,403 to \$2,015

Considering the number of slaves that each of these states enjoyed, the total cash value of these human beings was astronomical. Consider the number of slaves in 1860 in the various states:

South Carolina - 402,406 slaves

Mississippi - 436,631 slaves

Florida - 61,745 slaves

Alabama – 435,080 slaves

Georgia – 462,198 slaves

Louisiana – 331,726 slaves

Texas – 182,566 slaves

Virginia – 490,865 slaves

Arkansas – 111,115 slaves

Tennessee - 175,719 slaves

North Carolina – 331,059 slaves

Delaware – 1,798 slaves

Kentucky – 225,483 slaves

Maryland – 89,189 slaves

Missouri – 114,931 slaves

Total of slaves in 1860 = 3,950,511

As an aside, one could see why the practice of slave-breeding was popular in that the children of female slaves became the property of the mother's owners. Undeniably, money was the guiding ethic--even for many Bible-loving Christians. Recall that at this time the South was saturated with Bible churches, which regularly quoted the Bible for validation of their race-based slavery. The economic prosperity only further confirmed to them that what they were doing had the approval of Jesus Christ and Almighty God as per Manifest Destiny.

I wonder how the Apostle John would have reacted to see Christians engage in these activities of the whore, especially since he told them "to come out of her" (Rev. 18:4)-- and illustrated the disgusting standards of the world in enslaving "the bodies and souls of others" for profit. I wonder what John would have thought to see Christians joyfully sharing her goblet filled with the blood of others for personal profit?

I wonder about the look on his face if he has seen Christians in the Bible South doing what Rome was doing depicted in Revelation 18:12-13: living for "merchandise of gold and silver (from Spain), precious stones and pearls (from Africa), fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet (from the East), every kind of citron wood (from Morocco), every kind of object of ivory (from Africa), every kind of object of most precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble (from Greece); 13 "and cinnamon and incense (from Arabia), fragrant oil and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat (from North Africa), cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and BODIES AND SOULS OF MEN."

I wonder how Christians in Sweden, who outlawed slavery and serfdom in 1350, would have reacted to see such a scene. I wonder how Muslims react, given that they freed their slaves after their slaves became Muslims. I wonder how many unbelievers look at these abominations that

Christian Southerners claimed had biblical and divine approval and became disgusted with this image of “Southern benevolent Christianity.”

No doubt it would have disgusted all of the above, but no one should blame Jesus Christ or the Bible when the church gets in bed with the Harlot, when she mixes Roman/Greek ethos of slavery with Christianity, when she drinks from her cup of abomination for profit, when she marries SEP entities for earthly gain. To his credit, the abolitionist William Loyd Garrison correctly identified this barbaric practice in the South with activities of the Harlot of Revelation 17-18.

May we heed the exhortations of Scripture to guard our love for the Lord against the world's temptations (1 Jn 2:15-16; Matt 5:19-24). May God give us the grace to find our identity and thus transcendent wealth in Him (Gal. 2:10) rather than what the world values, offers, and thinks. The Lord's ways are always different from the world's ways. I am OK with that because His ways are always better--true/good/beautiful.

In His Matchless Grace,

Pastor Don