

**WHAT DO THE “BURNING MOUNTAIN” AND
THE “SHIPS” SYMBOLIZE?**

(Excerpt from my book, “The Book of
Revelation Decoded”, pages 280-289)

In Revelation 8:8-9, we read:

“⁸And the second angel trumpeted. And as a great mountain which was burning with fire was cast into the sea. And the one third of the sea became blood; ⁹and the one third of the creatures which (were) in the sea, those who had souls, died; and the one third of the ships was corrupted.” (AT)

Explanation of verses 8 and 9

The above verses present a very powerful prophecy. In order to understand its encrypted meaning, we must examine the symbolic terms it contains, the timing of its fulfillment and the history of the “church” throughout the Christian era. Let us begin with the symbolic terms:

1. The “*burning mountain*”.
2. The “*sea*”.
3. The “*creatures in the sea which had souls*”.
4. The “*ships*”.

What does the “*burning mountain*” symbolize?

In the explanation of Revelation 6:14^b, we learned that a “*mountain*” pictures a “*kingdom*”, whether it is political or religious. We will return to the “*burning*” part soon.

- 1.

What does the “sea” symbolize?

In the explanation of Revelation 7:1-3, we determined that the symbolic term “*sea*” refers to the “*world*”, to the unbelieving (in Jesus) mankind!

What do the “creatures in the sea which had souls” represent?

In Matthew 13:47-49 Jesus said:

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a large net thrown into the sea that gathered all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen hauled it ashore. Then they sat down, sorted the good fish into containers, and threw the bad ones away. That is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will go out and separate the evil from the righteous.”

In the above verses, we meet three symbols:

- a) The “*net*”, which, as Jesus said, represents “*the kingdom of heaven*” (which is thrown into the “*sea*”, i.e., into the world, through the preaching of the gospel),
- b) the “*sea*”, which represents the “*world*”, the unbelieving (in Jesus) mankind, and
- c) the good or bad “*fish*”, which, according to our Lord, represent **people** (whether they are “*righteous*” or “*evil*”).

By the way, the fact that these individuals live in the symbolic “*sea*” which some day will cease to exist (Revelation 21:1), **does not indicate that they will remain unsaved and unrighteous forever.** Through the preaching of the

gospel some will be pulled out of the "sea" and they will be "sealed" with the Holy Spirit for the day of redemption (Revelation 7:3; Ephesians 4:30). This is the reason, in Luke 5:10, Jesus said to Simon that he will be a **fisher of men**.

In Matthew 8:21,22, we read:

"Another disciple said to Jesus, "Lord, let me wait till I bury my father." Jesus answered, "Come with me, and let the dead bury their dead.""

In 1 Kings 17:18-22, we read:

"¹⁸And she said to Elijah, What have I to do with you, O man of God? Have you come to me to cause my iniquity to be remembered, and to cause my son to die? ¹⁹And he said to her, Give me your son; and he took him out of her bosom, and caused him to go up into the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his own bed. ²⁰And he cried to Jehovah and said, Jehovah my God, have You also brought evil on the widow with whom I am staying by slaying her son? ²¹And he stretched himself on the child three times, and called to Jehovah and said, O Jehovah my God, I pray, let the soul of this boy return to him. ²²And Jehovah listened to the voice of Elijah, and the soul of the boy returned to him, and he lived."

From the above words, we realize that Jesus views all those who do not believe in Him "dead" --- **without soul!**

In John 17:11-16, we read:

“¹¹And no longer am I in the world, yet these are in the world; and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, those whom You gave to Me, that they may be one as We are. ¹²While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name; I guarded those whom You gave to Me, and not one of them was lost, except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. ¹³And now I come to You, and I speak these things in the world, that they may have My joy being fulfilled in them. ¹⁴I have given them Your Word, and the world hated them because they are not of the world, as I am not of the world. ¹⁵I do not pray that You take them out of the world, but that You keep them from the evil. ¹⁶They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.”

From the above verses, we realize that **the creatures which are in the sea and have souls** are those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ --- the born-again; **these believers are “in the world” but they are not “of the world”!**

Please bear with me! Next, we must deal with the symbolic term “*ships*”, and then, we will make the connection.

What do the “ships” symbolize?

In Revelation 18:17 we read,

“For in one hour such great wealth was desolated. And every captain and all company on the ships, and sailors, and as many as work the sea, stood from afar”

In the above verse, we met five symbolic terms:

1. The “*ships*”.
2. The “*captains*”.
3. The “*company on the ships*”.
4. The “*sailors*”.
5. Those who “*work the sea*”.

As the born-again Christians are in the symbolic “*sea*” but they are not part of it, likewise the symbolic “*ships*” are in the “*sea*” but they are not part of it.

The “*ships*” symbolize **Christian Churches**. As a ship has a **captain**, likewise a church has a **leader --- a pastor**. As a ship has **sailors** and other **officers** who assist the **captain** to carry out his responsibilities, likewise a church has “*elders*” and other “*officers*” to assist the **pastor**. As a ship has “*company*” on it, in other words, **passengers**, likewise a church has the **fellowship** or **the churchgoers**.

The above hierarchy is similar to that of old Israel. Let us read Deuteronomy 29:10. There it says,

“Ye stand this day all of you before the LORD your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel” (KJV)

In the foregoing verse, Revelation 18:17, we also met those who “work the sea”. Who are they?

Those who work the “sea” are **those who preach the true gospel of salvation to the unbelieving (in Jesus) mankind** (Romans 10:14,15).

Now that we have decoded the symbolic terms which we met in verses 8 and 9, we must keep in mind one more thing before we identify the “*burning mountain*” which fell into the “*sea*”: That the book of Revelation does not present events which will take place in the very last days only, but, events which will take place **during the entire Christian era** --- from the first century (like the birth of the male child of chapter twelve) until all things become perfect and mankind’s last enemy, **death**, is no more (1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Revelation 20:14). Now, let us continue our study on the “*burning mountain*”.

What took place when the “*burning mountain*” fell into the “*sea*”?

Let us refresh our memory:

“⁸And the second angel trumpeted. And as a great mountain which was burning with fire was cast into the sea. And the one third of the sea became blood; ⁹and the one third of the creatures which (were) in the sea, those who had souls, died; and the one third of the ships was corrupted (WH/GNT: ‘διεφθάρησαν’).”

From the above words, we see that,

1. The one third of the “*sea*” became blood!

2. The one third of *“the creatures which (were) in the sea, those who had souls, died”!*
3. The one third of the *“ships”* was corrupted!

Now, let us present the foregoing verses by incorporating the meaning of the above symbolic terms:

“⁸And the second angel trumpeted. And as a great mountain which was burning with fire was cast into the unbelieving (in Jesus) world. And the one third of the unbelieving (in Jesus) world became blood; ⁹and the one third of the born-again Christians who were in the world, died; and one third of the Christian churches were corrupted.”

The apostle Paul prophesied about the upcoming corruption also. In Acts 20:27-31, he said,

“²⁷For I did not keep back from declaring to you all the counsel of God. ²⁸Then take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit placed you as overseers, to shepherd the assembly of God which He purchased through His own blood. ²⁹For I know this, that after my departure grievous wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; ³⁰and out of you yourselves will rise up men speaking perverted things, in order to draw away the disciples after themselves. ³¹Because of this watch, remembering that I did not cease admonishing each one with tears night and day for three years.”

Paul’s words, *“after my departure”*, help us realize that the prophesied corruption would take place early in the history of the church.

Can we identify the “*burning mountain*” which would:

- a) **turn a big part of the unbelieving (in Jesus) world into blood,**
- b) **bring death of so many born-again Christians, and**
- c) **bring about the corruption of Christian churches?**

The answer is, “**Yes, we can!**”

At first, I thought that the “*burning mountain*” was **Babylon**, the great harlot of chapters 17 and 18, for the following reasons:

1. A “*mountain*” represents a **kingdom** and in Revelation 17:18 we read about Babylon,

“And the woman whom you saw is the great city, having a kingdom over the kings of the earth.”
2. Revelation 17:6 says about her,

“And I saw the woman being drunk from the blood of the saints, and from the blood of the witnesses of Jesus....”
3. In Jeremiah 51:25 we hear Jehovah saying against Babylon:

"Behold, I am against you, O destroying mountain, declares Jehovah, who destroys all the earth. And I will stretch out My hand on you, and will roll you down from the rocks, and I will make you a burned (HOT: 'burning') mountain,"

4. In Revelation 18:21 it says,

"And one strong angel lifted a stone like a great millstone, and threw it into the sea, saying, This way, on a violent impulse, Babylon the great city will be thrown down, and it will never more still be found."

The similarities between the "*burning mountain*" of chapter 8 and "*Babylon the great*" are overwhelming! And yet, **they are not one and the same** --- something does not fit in! "*Babylon the great*" will be thrown into the "*sea*" **in the future** and this action will mean her end! The "*burning mountain*" of chapter 8 was cast into the "*sea*" **in the past** and it had time, a lot of time, to corrupt Christian churches and to bring premature death to many born-again Christians! And yet, these two entities look so similar that they can confuse the reader!!!

And I prayed to the Lord, and I asked Him to help me see the "*burning mountain*" which was cast into the "*sea*", in other words, **amongst the Pagan nations** and brought so much bloodshed, killed so many born-again Christians by the sword and with **fire** and corrupted so many primordial Christian churches. Yes, I asked the Lord to help me identify the "*burning mountain*" which led the simple and uninformed Christian masses into practicing **idolatry, demon**

worship, creature worship, necromancy, murders, sorceries, thefts and sexual immorality, bringing thus upon them the fiery judgment of God, sickness and death, for partaking of the body and of the blood of Christ unworthily! (Revelation 9:20,21; 1 Corinthians 11:29,30)

And the Lord God showed me **the first and the greatest of the harlot daughters of Babylon the great which, before the schism took place in the 11th century between East and West** (between the Roman Catholics and the Greek Orthodox), constituted the so-called "**Christian religion**" which was supported, protected and used by the Pagan emperor Constantine the great and by other "Christian" emperors of the Byzantine Empire, who had no idea that **Christianity is not a religion**, but a faith, a walk and a personal relationship with God! And for the first time I realized **how much a harlot daughter can look and act like her harlot mother!** (Revelation 17:5)