

## REVELATION – CHAPTER 17

### THE DESTRUCTION OF RELIGIOUS BABYLON

Religious (Ch 17) and Commercial (Ch 18) Babylon represent such a significant entity that they each warrant a chapter in the book of Revelation.

Satan, in the person of anti-christ, is not the only “force” that matters.

These two world systems precede his entrance and are the human’s input and control of the fallen world order. (Satan didn’t make us do it; we did it because we are depraved.)

Religious Babylon is destroyed prior to the end of the Great Tribulation.

Rev 19:1-3 states that she has been destroyed, yet Rev 19:11-16, which describes the Return of Christ, has not yet happened.

It would make sense that her destruction would be brought about shortly after the Great Tribulation begins, because anti-christ sets himself up as the object of worship precluding all others.

Chapter 17 is broken down into two parts: Verses 1-7 describe the Vision, while Verses 8-18 give the meaning of the Vision.

### THE VISION – vs 1-7

Vs 1

One of the Bowl Angels gives John the tour

Note: It has been asked if the angels know the plan of God, prior To its unfolding.

This angel both knows the Vision and is the one who explains its fulfillment.

He knows all this more than 1900 years before its occurrence.

In fact, he is one of the players in the fulfillment of the plan.

Also, realize that, an angel who carries out the plague of God, at one point in time, takes a “walk” with a believer so that he can show and explain that which his God has planned. Rev 7:11-12

## THE JUDGMENT – 2 Peter 3:8-10

### Great Harlot

1. sits on many waters vs 15
2. joined herself to the kings of the earth vs 2
3. served the “wine of her immorality” to the people of the earth vs 2
4. clothed and adorned vs 4
5. holds in her hand a gold cup full of abominations vs 4
6. has a name on her forehead vs 5
7. drunk with the blood of the saints/witnesses of Jesus vs 6
8. carried by the beast vs 7
9. destroyed by the kingdom of anti-christ vs 16
10. she is the great city vs 18

In chapter 18 the vision shifts to the political entity.

It must be remembered that both the religious and the political entity work as a unit.

Sits on many waters – again vs 15

Vs 2 Two spiritual concepts which sum up her prostitution:  
“The people of the earth were made drunk (become controlled by Eph 5:18) with the wine of her immorality which she fed them”,  
and “the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality with her.”

NOTE: Spiritual adultery is not ordinarily used of heathen nations who do not know God, but of people who outwardly carry the name of God while actually worshipping and serving other gods. Israel is often described in this condition in the OT Ezk 16 and 23; all of Hosea.

In the NT Christians are warned to avoid this type of adultery.

Jas 4:4

This body or organization has developed prior to the beginning of the Tribulation period. She is fully functional from the first day. If she carries the name of Christ and yet was not raptured, then this body is made up of professing Christianity from our age. Her organizational structure will also precede the tribulation period. We will see if the further information provided in the chapter will help us determine who this organization might be.

Vs 3-4 The Vision of the Woman on the Beast

- Vs 3            John receives an invitation from the angel, vs 1, which he accepts, vs 3.  
 He is carried into wilderness (no article) in a "spiritual state".  
 (If he entered a state of "in the Spirit" Rev 1:10, and has continued in that state from the time the revelation began, then it would appear he has been transferred to a "new section" and is continuing in that state.)  
 In this transferred place he saw a woman (same one described in vs 1 & 2) sitting on a scarlet beast; the beast having seven heads and ten horns, covered with blasphemous names.
1. The fact that she is riding the beast means that she is not the beast
  2. Her position, that of riding the beast
    - a. indicates she is supported by the beast
    - b. and that she is in a dominant role and at least outwardly she , to some extent, controls or directs the beast
  3. "Church and state" are merged. Religious Babylon is supported by political Babylon and, in fact, has some influence over political Babylon.
  4. The woman has such a close association with the beast that it is clear how apostate the organized Christian church becomes at the time of the end.
  5. The only worldwide church recognized in the Bible is this apostate church. It is the remnant (majority) that is left behind when the rapture occurs.
  6. The description of the beast as having seven heads and ten horns will be explained shortly. Vs 9-13
- Vs 4            The woman is clothed in....The present-day ecclesiastical Churches (Catholic, Russian, and Greek orthodox, etc.), decked in such garb! No church in John's day represented such wealth. The church present today does. (John would never have guessed the transformation if God had not revealed it to him.)
- The golden cup held in her hand stands for the height of abomination committed by her.
- The re-working of the "finished work of Christ" so that it never finishes would be a good candidate for the interpretation.
- Vs 5            The name of the woman
1. Mystery – a descriptive reference to the title, not a part of the title itself. This is the mystery religion that began in Nimrod's time and has circled the Globe, coming to its fullness at the time of the Tribulation.

2. Babylon the great
3. The mother of harlots
4. The mother of the abominations of the earth

Vs 6 Apostate Christendom is unsparing in its persecution of those who attempt to maintain a true faith in Jesus Christ.

The only death toll larger than that of the followers of Jesus will be those who refuse to receive the mark of the beast.

Both martyrs come from the same group (believers), but Babylon the whore of the first half of the Tribulation will be replaced with the image of the beast in the second half.

I saw the woman.....I wondered greatly!

Vs 7 The angel tells John that he will explain what he has just shown him. He explains the beast first in detail, then the woman and subsequent action relating to her.

Vs 8 The beast that you saw – Rev 13:1-9; 11:7; 12:3; Dan 7:7,19-28 was...is not...is about to come up out of

1. was – a world government that has ruled in history – the Imperial Roman Empire
2. is not – disappears
3. is about to reign again for a short period – the Revived Roman Empire

The final form of this empire will be so closely connected with the dragon that it will be indistinguishable with his purpose and his ways.

This empire, which will fulfill all Satan's desires will go to destruction – the kingdom of this world will be destroyed by the kingdom of Christ.

And that part of the human population who has not been chosen from the beginning for salvation.

2 Thess 2:13-14; Rom 9:21-24; Eph 1:4-12 (written...from the foundation Matt 25:34) will be so impressed with the beast, with the fact that it has resurrected and that it displays such awesome power. Rev 13:4

Vs 9-11 The Revelation that is to follow is difficult and complex

1. A common interpretation believed by many:  
The seven heads are seven mountains – Throughout its history Rome has been described as the city of seven hills. The base for

the beast, geographically is Rome; the woman's (religious Babylon) base will be Rome also.

2. An alternative interpretation worth considering:
  - a. The seven heads are both seven mountains and seven kings.
    1. The term "mountain" is used as a descriptive term for a political empire.  
Ps 30:7; Jer 51:24-25; Dan 2:35; Isa 2:2, etc
    2. The woman has been carried by all of these empires.  
(It is not the papacy alone that is described but rather it is a form of false religion carried and supported by these consecutive "mountains".)
    3. Each kingdom or mountain is known for its greatest ruler.
    4. The seven mountains would be:
      - Five have fallen:
      - >Egypt
      - >Assyria
      - >Babylon
      - >Medo-Persia
      - >Greece
      - One is:
      - >Rome
      - One is to come
      - >Anti-christ's kingdom

NOTE: Daniel's visions involved 5 kings which were current or yet future to Daniel. The first two had already seen their day.

Remember that these "mountains" are the empires that affected Israel and are not in contradiction with the other empires of world history.

It is the one yet to come that is the object of this revelation. Anti-christ is the focus. The final empire will be in existence when the Tribulation begins. It will have a leader or ruling tribunal (3 horns). Anti-christ, the eighth king will rise up over the 3 horns; tear them out and replace them. He is the eighth. As to being one of the seven, he will reign with them before he makes his move and reigns over them.

THE ANTI-CHRIST GOES TO DESTRUCTION - Rev 19:20

Vs 12-15

The ten horns are ten kings joined in a confederacy which forms the final Gentile world empire.

Unlike the seven previous kings who rule consecutively, these reign as one. They begin by reigning with the anti-christ.

1. These 10 have the same purpose (heart) as the anti-christ. Their united vision will include the extermination of the Jews.
2. They give their authority to the beast, he does not take it. They use their power to support his vision.
3. They, as one, wage war with the Lamb.  
The Lamb will overcome them Rev 19:11-16
4. Those who are with Him Zech 14:1-6, are called-  
Rom 8:28
  - a. chosen 1 Pet 2-10
  - b. faithful
5. The waters which the harlot sits upon and the 8 kings rule over is an empire which contains many languages, nations, and people. (An EU type of set-up)  
The situation described is one of great political power, shared with the woman who controls the multitudes of the world.

Vs 16

The ten horns along with the beast will destroy the harlot.

This means that she will be destroyed before the beast removes the three horns.

1. make her desolate
2. naked
3. eat her flesh
4. burn her up with fire

Vs 17

God works all things to accomplish His purpose. Nothing about the Tribulation is outside of God. Every player in the period was given its part by God. He wrote it!

Vs 18

The woman – false Christianity the final form which Nimrod began will be headed by the great city. There will be a united world “Christian” church operating during the first half of the tribulation. This apostolic church will be headed by a religious center – ROME???

The church centered in this city will finally reign over the kings of the earth