

Revelation Chapter 17

17:1-7, 15, 18 The Apostate whore

“And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.”

In these passages of scripture we are given information on a great whore. The chapter obviously is not concerned with chronological events. It serves only to provide more details of the tribulation time.

A. One of the seven angels that had been pouring out the vials of God's wrath now talks with John, telling him that he will show him a vision of judgement upon something called the great whore who sits upon many waters. He is told that this great whore has had many lovers. She has committed fornication (a term for both sexual impurity and spiritual impurity as it is here used) with the kings of the earth and reduced them to a drunken stupor. And she has also committed fornication with many inhabitants of the earth.

B. John is then transported in spirit into a wilderness and there he sees a woman who sits upon a scarlet coloured beast. This beast is full of blasphemous names and has seven heads and ten horns. This beast is the same one as encountered in chapter 12:3. It is the great red dragon, a description of the devil! See remarks on chapter 12:3. The devil has been in control of six great kingdoms of earth already and will be in control of one more. See also the comments on chapter 13:1.

C. The woman is described as being arrayed in purple and scarlet, gold, pearls, and precious stones. And she has a golden cup in her hand that's full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. She has upon her forehead a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATION OF THE EARTH. and she is drunken with the blood of saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. John wonders with great admiration at this great sight.

D. What is all this? What is this great whore that has intoxicated and seduces earth?

The answer lies in verse 18, *li*The woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth. *li* And the identity of this city cannot be disputed, it was Rome that ruled in John's day. And it was the politics and religion of that great city that had him banished to the isle of Patmos, chapter 1 :9. This whore, called MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH is clearly the false religious system that was started by the devil and which seduced and infected earth's kings and kingdom and inhabitants up through the centuries. It can be traced back to the tower of Babel in Genesis 11 and up through every anti-God and anti-scripture religion on earth. In John's day it was embodied in Rome and Romanism which later became known as Catholicism. Although this woman represents all false religions in the world, it primarily references Romanism. Notice:

(1) Many false and cultic religions have been swept into Catholicism, verse 2.

(2) The colours of Roman Catholicism clearly match those of verse 3-4. They are purple, scarlet, gold, pearls, and precious stones. And the golden cup matches Catholicism. The doctrines of Romanism are abominable and filthy to God.

(3) And, history is very clear in the matter of Catholicism's persecutions of those who did not submit to it's wishes.

E. The first time we were informed of Babylon's judgement was in Revelation 14:8. This is the second time we are told of her coming judgment. Her judgement is also described in verse 16 and in chapter 18:1-24. The judgement of the Lord will fall upon both the false religious aspect of Babylon (Romanism) and the literal city called Babylon. As already stated this will be either a rebuilt Babylon or modern day Rome.

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17:8-14,16,17 The Antichrist and his kingdom

“The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition. And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.”

A. As commented on in verse 3, and in chapter 12:3, the devil is the beast upon which the woman of false religion rides. In our comments on chapter 12:3 we have provided the seven kingdoms of earth that are the heads of the dragon beast.

B. In chapter 13:1 we provided information on the Antichrist himself and his connection with the devil and his kingdoms.

C. The Antichrist and his kingdom are further explained in these passages of scripture. And when we're told that the beast that John saw in verse 3 was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit and go into perdition, we are to understand that it is the beast as it will be in its seventh head, the Antichrist kingdom, that is in view. And in this description we may notice these things:

(1) The Antichrist person, verse 8.

(A.) The beast was, (this is to say that he existed at some time in the past, and was at some point in history upon the earth.)

(B.) The beast (at the time John is given this information) is not. (This is to say that he was not at that time upon the earth.)

(C.) The beast still exist because he will at some time in the future ascend out of the bottomless pit. See comments on Revelation 11:7. This is to say that he will again be alive upon the earth.

(D.) The arrival of the beast shall cause the unsaved people of earth to wonder.

See comments on Revelation 13:3.

(E.) The beast shall continue on earth for a short space, verse 10. We know this short space is only during the tribulation, particularly the last half of it. Daniel 9:27, Revelation 11:3,7, Matthew 24:21-11.

(F.) The beast is of a kingdom yet future, the seventh kingdom through which the devil will rule, verses 9-10.

(G.) The beast himself is said to be the eight king which rises out of the seventh Satanic kingdom, verse 11. I'll say more about this later.

(H.) The beast will go into perdition, verse 8 and 11.

(2) The Antichrist person is best identified as Judas Iscariot, the historic betrayer of Christ.

(A.) Judas Iscariot did exist and was at one time upon the earth. He was actually numbered among the disciples of the Lord, Acts 1:16-26.

(B.) By the time John receives this book of Revelation and his visions of the AntiChrist, Judas Iscariot was not on earth because he had killed himself, Matthew 27:3-10.

(C.) Judas Iscariot was at the time John receives this information, and still is today, in the bottomless pit. He had gone to hell which is identified as his “own place”. II Acts 1:25, Psalms 9:17, Matthew 25:41.

(D.) Judas Iscariot is called the son of perdition by Christ himself, John 17:12.

And Paul the Apostle tells us that the Antichrist will be the son of perdition, 11 Thessalonians 2:3.

(E.) Judas Iscariot is called “a devil” by Christ, John 6:70. Christ knew he was a devil when he chose him, and he never changed.

(F.) The scripture tells us that Satan entered into Judas Iscariot, John 13:27.

And this is not said of others.

(G.) So, it seems clear to me that at this very moment Satan has the spirit of Judas Iscariot retained in the bottomless pit, and at the time allowed, the spirit of Judas Iscariot will ascend out of the bottomless pit, Revelation 11 :7, and it, and the soul of Satan will enter the body of the man yet to be revealed as Antichrist who has been assassinated in the middle of the tribulation and will raise that body back to life and rule with bloodthirsty horror upon the earth, Revelation 13:3,5,12,14, for the last three and a half years of the tribulation.

(3) The Antichrist kingdom, verses 9-14 and 16-17.

(A.) In verse 9 we are told that it is wise to understand that the seven heads are seven mountains on which false religion rides. A mountain is here symbolic of a kingdom.

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(B.) The woman of false religion rides high on all of her historical kingdom. She had her way in Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome, and she will definitely be involved in Revived Rome, the Antichrist empire. In fact, false religion will aid the Antichrist in his rise to power and play a great role in gaining the allegiance of the people.

(C.) There are seven kings over these seven kingdoms through which the devil rules in great wickedness. Give of these kings are kingdoms had already fallen and were no longer the world power by the time John lived. Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Media-Persia, and Greece. And one is, or was, in existence in John's day. That was obviously Rome. And the other one, the seventh, had not, and still has not, come. It is a future kingdom and it will be known Revived Rome or Antichrist Empire, verse 10.

(D.) This coming world empire of Revived Rome is closely connected with a person. Notice, "and when he cometh, he (Antichrist) must continue a short space. See comments on verse 8, the Antichrist person.

(E.) In verse 11 the beast that was, and is not, (referring to the Antichrist, verse 8) is also said to be the eight, and of the seventh kingdom, (Revived Rome). Admittedly, this can be confusing. How is it that there's only seven heads, or mountain kingdoms over which Satan ruled, and how is it that there are seven kings, verse 10, and yet we find an eight king which is said to be of the seventh kingdom? It helps at this time to look at both Daniel's and John's description of the Antichrist Empire. Notice the following: 1. In Daniel 7:7-9,19-28 Daniel sees in his vision, what is called the fourth beast. It is his description of the same Revived Rome, or Antichrist Empire that John sees. Here, we find the same ten horns that John also speaks of And they are clearly said to be ten kings which will arise in the days of the Antichrist, Daniel 7:24. But, Daniel not only sees ten horns (kings), Daniel 7:7,24, as he considers them, he sees another little horn that comes up from among the ten horns. This is another king (or an eleventh king), Daniel 7:8,24. There is no indication of an eleventh kingdom or nation, there are only ten nations involved. But, there is an eleventh man that rises from among one of these nations and becomes king. As he rises to power he subdues or overthrows three of the first ten kings. He is called the little horn which is destroyed at the return of Christ, Daniel 7:9-14,27. He is the Antichrist.

(2) Now, this seems to help us understand why John says the Antichrist is the eight and of the seven. During Antichrist's day, there are ten confederated nations which will rule with and be a part of the Antichrist Empire. There are ten kings, plus another, an eleventh man arises among the ten confederated nations. He knocks out three of the first ten in his rise to power. This reduces the number of kings down to seven, plus himself, the one that rises which will bring the number to eight. $10 + 1 = 11 - 3 = 8$. This could be

why John calls the Antichrist man the eight king. The number of kings could be reduced without reducing the number of nations.

(F.) Verse 12 speaks of the ten confederated nations and their ten kings before they receive their power as kings. But tells us that they will receive power and their kingdoms in one hour's time. It does not take them long to collude and consolidate their strength politically, verse 13. It would be after this that the number of the kings is reduced as described above.

(G.) In verse 14 we find that these nations shall make war with Christ. This happens when they, in allegiance with Antichrist and his armies converge on Israel to destroy her and resist the return of Christ to earth, see comments on Revelation 16:12-16.

(H.) Verse 16 and 17 tell us that these united kingdoms hate the woman of false religion and turn on her and destroy her. What seems to actually is this, the false religious system of this world aids the Antichrist in his rise to power, then, since the devil only uses religion for what he can get out of it, after his power is well established and he no longer needs it, his political leaders destroy the false church. If you sell your soul to the devil he eventually claims it! And notice also that, it is God that puts it in the heart of these united kingdoms to destroy the false religious whore. You see, God even uses the devil to accomplish his will! God's word will be fulfilled. False religion will be destroyed by its own bed fellows.

17:14 The Assurance of Christ's victory

"These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful."

A. The victor at the battle of Armageddon is of course Jesus Christ, Revelation 19:11-21.

B. Those that are with him at his return are also victors and are said to be the called, chosen, and the faithful. This is primarily a reference to the armies which are in heaven, Revelation 19:14, which return with Christ to the earth to rule upon it for a thousand years. These are said to be the called. The church epistles tell us that the Christian is the called, and that they are the chosen, and the scripture tells us that the faithful Christian will receive rewards in heaven which they will obviously be able to use upon the earth during the Millennium. Hence these mighty victors accompanying Christ are those who have been faithful and who have by their good works earned reward and the right to employ them during the Millennium, 1 Corinthians 6:3, 11 Timothy 1:9, 2:12.