



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Holy Book of Revelation

Chapter 17

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Introduction

- This chapter is, on several accounts, very important and a key chapter particularly as it appears to explain several of the most remarkable symbols in the book
- It explains the mystery of the great harlot and the beast
- In Revelation 17 and 18, the fall of Babylon is carefully detailed

Chapter Outline

- The Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast (1-6)
- The Mystery of the Woman and Beast Explained (7-18)



Introduction: Babylon

The Historical Story of Babylon

- It was mentioned in Genesis 10:9, that Nimrod is the founder of the city of Babylon
- He was a tyrant, a disobedient man who led many to the disobedience of God
- This city was known for the worship of idols, especially her greatest god Maroudach
- After the flood, Babylon was the seat of the civilization that expressed organized hostility to God
- It was called Babylon, “because there, the Lord confused the language of all the earth” (Genesis 11:9)



Introduction: Babylon

- That happened when men wanted to build a tower, to protect themselves from God
- For the Church of the Old Testament, Babylon was a source of terror
- Babylon, to them (the Jews), was the essence of all evil, the image of cruelty, the enemy of God's people, and the lasting type of sin, carnality, lust and greed
- Therefore the word "Babylon," became an indication of the opposition to God, the love of the world, and cruelty to human beings



Introduction: Babylon

The Mystery of Babylon

- “Babylon,” appeared in the Book of Revelation, as an adulteress, and as a great city
- A woman in the Holy Bible indicates a certain system, or a certain group
- Jesus Christ has a real bride, which is the Church (Eph. 5:23-32)
- She is a holy woman, immaculate and blameless
- The Antichrist has also a bride, which is “*Babylon*.” She is his people who works against the true faith, opposes God, and urges others on defilement



Introduction: Babylon

- A city indicates the habitation, and as holy Jerusalem indicates the dwelling of God among human beings, therefore it is called Holy
- We can say that every soul is also the Holy Jerusalem, because God dwells in her
- The great Babylon indicates the dwelling of the “Antichrist” among human beings
- It was thus called “*great*,” because the Antichrist is violent
- What we can say is that every soul opposing God is ‘Babylon,’ because it is the dwelling place of Satan



Introduction: Babylon

Then who is Babylon?

- St. Augustine and Tichon the African answer is that it indicates the wicked company, that is to say those who love the world, its glory, wealth, and lust, and are attached to it
- Most of the early Fathers think, that it indicates the kingdom of the Antichrist and his satanic deeds, as Babylon will be rebuilt and become the administrative center for the opposed satanic planning
- Babylon will not necessarily be in the same old site
- There is no need to call her literally “Babylon,” although some think that it will be called literally, and it will stand in the same place as the old Babylon



Introduction: Babylon

- Some think, that Babylon is a metaphoric image of the form of the religious and political organization of the Antichrist, with all it carries as tools of evil, that Satan can use in his work to oppose the Lord
- Babylon was the great city, whose splendor dazzled, and whose power destroyed Jerusalem, Isaiah 39:1-8, 13:19, 14:4, 14:13-14, 47:5-8
- Against Babylon the voices of the prophets were lifted up, Isaiah 21:9; Jeremiah 51:25
- Babylon is mentioned 287 times in the Scriptures, more than any other city except Jerusalem

The Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast 17:1-6



- This whole verse is a preface to a new vision which St. John had
- *one of the seven angels*, Most probably this was the seventh angel; for, under the seventh vial, great Babylon came in remembrance before God, and now St. John is called upon to see her condemnation and execution; saying, *Come, I will show you...* Which is now circumstantially described
- *came and talked with me*, He conversed with him in a friendly manner, Zechariah 1:9 and desires him to come nearer to him and go along with him

The Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast 17:1-6



- *the great harlot*, Well-known and famous one, known before to St. John by the names of Jezabel and Babylon, who taught and caused many to commit fornication, Revelation 2:20, 14:8
- That idolatrous worship is frequently represented in Scripture under the character of a harlot, is evident from numerous passages, 1 Chronicles 5:25; Ezekiel 16; Ezekiel 23, etc
- The woman mentioned here is called *the great harlot*, to denote her excessive immorality and wickedness, and the artful nature of her idolatry

The Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast 17:1-6



- This is an image of the prophet Jeremiah's description of Babylon in his great oracle judgment against the city in Jeremiah chapters 50-51
- The literal reference to *many waters* in Jeremiah 51:13 is the Euphrates River, which ran through the middle of the great city and to the canals which surrounded the city
- *many waters*, The interpretation of this passage is given in verse 15, where the waters are stated to be people, multitudes, nations, and tongues
- She presides over many nations

The Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast 17:1-6



- It may seem to people that *many waters* is an indication of wealth and prosperity
- However, this water is of this world which Christ described it saying, “*Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst.*” (John 4:13-14)
- Many water, is an indication to multitude of lusts, bad desires, immorality, and to much evil thought just as seas of water
- *the great harlot* is sitting on much wickedness that overwhelmed and sank the whole world

The Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast 17:1-6



- That the harlot sits on many waters also shows us that the faithless people is to be found distributed amongst “peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues”
- She is represented as sitting upon many waters, to show the vast extent of her influence, Revelation 17:13
- *kings of the earth*, Is used here (as it frequently is) for the worldly as distinguished from the righteous

The Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast 17:1-6



- *the inhabitants of the earth* , And not the *kings only of the earth*, but the generality of the people, have been influenced
- The two classes mentioned indicate the universality of this faithlessness - it is not restricted to any one grade of society
- *committed fornication*, Spiritual adultery
- As we have seen, in verse 1 and Revelation 14:8, the figure of fornication is repeatedly used to describe unfaithfulness towards God

The Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast 17:1-6



- The verse, therefore, declares that the unfaithful has chosen rather to render to the world that love which is due to God, and to be connected rather with the powers of this world than to have its treasure in heaven
- What an awful picture this is of the state of the religion of the world in subjection to this harlot!
- Kings have committed spiritual fornication with her, and have drunk deep, dreadfully deep, into the doctrine of her awful vile errors

The Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast 17:1-6



- The spirit carried him to her place, "*the wilderness*," for she lives in a spiritual death and dryness
- For the world that embraces her, whatever its wealth and pleasure are, it is still a dry wilderness, which cannot satisfy the hunger, or the thirst of the soul
- This woman is in a "spiritual desert," an dwelling of demons, Matthew 12:43 Jesus said, "*When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none.*"

The Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast 17:1-6



- In chapter 12 we saw the Woman, the True Bride, being forced to flee from the dragon into the desert for a time where God protected her
- But to the false bride the wilderness is her element where she chooses to remain
- The woman clothed with the sun, Revelation 12:1, persecuted by the dragon is persecuted, but not forsaken; she can joy in tribulation
- The scarlet woman, in the midst of all her dazzling surroundings, is still in a wilderness

The Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast 17:1-6



- This woman hides underneath her a beast
- It is Satan who works inside her, on which sits all enmity towards God, as a throne that embraces sin and sinners
- The woman sits upon the beast denotes, not that she exercises control and guidance over it, but rather that the woman relies upon the beast for support and safety
- Thus presenting an accurate description of those who prefer to trust to the power and influence of the world rather than to God

The Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast 17:1-6



- As for his color, the *scarlet*, it points to the shedding of blood
- Some commentators suggest the color is an indication of ungodly conduct, Isaiah 1:18 "*sins are like scarlet*"
- And that the color stands in sharp contrast to the white garments of the elect
- Scarlet may also signify either
 1. The worldly pre-eminence and power of which it is the sign, and for which the woman allies herself with the beast; or
 2. The blood-stained persecution of which the beast is the author

The Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast 17:1-6



- Ibn-el-Assal thinks, that this beast is the army of the Antichrist, on which he relies in resisting the Church, and who works through the spirit of Satan
- Being full of blasphemous names points to what he thinks of
- *Full of names of blasphemy* is a description taken from the sea-beast of Revelation 13
- *Having seven heads and ten horns* is taken verbatim from the description of the scarlet dragon of Revelation 12:3
- The seven heads denote universality of earthly dominion, and the ten horns denote plenitude of power, Revelation 13:1

The Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast 17:1-6



- *Purple* has a rich history in the Scriptures as a symbol of status
- It was often worn by royalty, Esther 8:15; Lamentations 4:5; Daniel 5:7
- *Scarlet* suggests wealth, Proverbs 31:21; Jeremiah 4:30
- This description suggests that the great harlot has attained wealth and status
- *The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet*, These words, taken in connection with those that follow, seem to signify the worldly magnificence which may be the portion of the unfaithful

The Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast 17:1-6



- It is expressive of her grandeur, authority, and power, sitting as a queen, and sovereign in the empire, ruling over kingdoms and nations in it
- Some writers see an allusion to the purple robe of Christ, John 19:2
- *adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls*, Similar descriptions are given in Ezekiel 16:13 and Ezekiel 28:13
- Her beauty is not natural, but artificial and deceiving

The Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast 17:1-6



- What a big difference between this bride and the bride of Jesus, the Church who is embellished (Revelation 12)?!
- The first is adorned with the worldly, to deceive
- And heaven adorns the second, and she is clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet and on her head a crown of twelve stars
- The first has in her hand a cup full of disgrace, shame, and of filthiness of her fornication

The Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast 17:1-6



- The other one is pregnant, crying with pain and labor to give birth
- She is walking in the way of the cross
- The first offers all worldly pleasures to her children
- The second does not find a place, thus God prepares a place for her to support her, 12:6
- The first is sitting on Satan's throne
- And the second is the subject of the dragon's envy, and he aims at devouring her

The Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast 17:1-6



- *a golden cup* , The wine of her fornication is the blood of the Saints and the blood of the witnesses (martyrs) of Jesus
- It is in contrast to the holy and pure golden cup of Christ's blood that He offers those of the Covenant who are in a state of grace
- This account is sufficiently characteristic of the world's attractions
- *abominations*, Are all things that are displeasing to God
- *fornication*, Revelation 14:8 and Revelation 17:1,2; it signifies unfaithfulness towards God

The Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast 17:1-6



- *on her forehead a name was written*, Tertullian says, that in the past the adulteresses used to write their names on their doors, so that those who desire them may come in
- This woman was so disrespectful, to the extent that instead of writing her name on her door, she writes it on her forehead, proud of her sin, daring and adhering to her deeds
- In Revelation 14:1 and Revelation 7:3 the faithful members of God's Church have His Name in their foreheads

The Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast 17:1-6



- Here the unfaithful ones, represented by the harlot, exhibit a false and fake imitation
- As God's Name marked the faithful as His, so the name Babylon, etc., marks the unfaithful as belonging to the world, Revelation 16:19, 17:5, 18:2
- “*Mystery*,” it is a prefix which tells us that the name is not literal, but symbolical
- “*Babylon*” The opposition to God; it is the dwelling of the wicked, who resists God

The Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast 17:1-6



- As the Church is called “Jerusalem,” and “Zion,” because she became consecrated to God
- Thus the kingdom of the Antichrist is called “*Babylon*,” the city of Satan, the symbol of the spiritual adultery and obstinacy
- Her name is symbolic as the namesake of the ancient city that was the essence of rebellion against God in Genesis 11:1-9, the Tower of Babel
- And Jeremiah chapters 50 & 51, Babylon who had rejected God and His many blessings

The Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast 17:1-6



- The woman is now the *Mother of Harlots*, an expression suggestive of the Harlot Queen of Israel, Jezebel and her "children" which Jesus spoke of in Revelation 2:20-23 and the prophet Ezekiel's description of Jerusalem as a mother of harlots in Ezekiel 16:44-48
- Not mere harlot but one that bred up harlots, and nursed up idolatry, communicating it to others
- Others, in smaller spheres, will follow her example; but she is the origin and type of all

The Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast 17:1-6



- It is astonishing that this woman who is adorned and beautified, and who shows gentleness and sweetness, is in reality a shedder of the blood of the innocent saints
- She enjoys nothing but the resistance to the Lord Jesus, by killing His martyrs
- Another point of contrast between this woman and the woman of Revelation 12; the former persecutes, the latter is persecuted
- The description *drunken with*, etc., is similar to that of Babylon in Revelation 18:2; and also in Jeremiah 51:7

The Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast 17:1-6



- *I marveled with great amazement:* Perhaps the wonder is caused by the fact that such a thing should ever be permitted to be; this leading to the following explanation, which shows how the unfaithfulness is punished
- He is also wondering about God's patience with her

The Mystery of the Woman and Beast Explained 17:7-18



- John did not wonder at her with a sinful admiration, so as to have her in great veneration, and to do reverence and worship to her, as the inhabitants of the world wondered after the beast, Revelation 13:3
- But his admiration was an amazement, or confusion of mind, joined with resentment at her; and this is said by the angel to lead on to what he had to declare unto him
- *the mystery of the woman*, What is mysteriously or mystically designed by her; for till it was made known to John by the angel, it was a mystery to him

The Mystery of the Woman and Beast Explained 17:7-18



- And when it was revealed, the interpretation is given in such an obscure manner, that it is only understood by the mind that has spiritual wisdom; and still remains a mystery to carnal men, just as the Gospel itself does
- *the beast that carries her*, The mystical sense of the beast, its heads and horns, and which is also delivered in a mysterious manner, will be explained

The Mystery of the Woman and Beast Explained 17:7-18



- The mystery of the beast is first explained, and the beast is considered first in general, under a threefold state or succession, as existing, and then ceasing to be, and then reviving again
- It is obvious that this beast is Satan who *was...* that is to say who had authority over human beings, accusing and capturing them
- *and is not,* Because he has no more authority over us, as by the cross, the kingdom of God became within us
- Now we enjoy the freedom of the children of God, the conquerors over whom Satan, his soldiers or his works have no authority

The Mystery of the Woman and Beast Explained 17:7-18



- Christ overcame the world, John 16:33; henceforth to all true believers there is "peace," although they may "have tribulation" in the world, John 16:33
- For the faithful Christian the power of the world - the beast - *is not*
- Yet, though for the true servant of God there is a sense in which it may be said that this power has no existence, it nevertheless exists in the abyss, that is, in its natural abiding place in the world, among the worldly minded, and thus may cause "tribulation" to the faithful

The Mystery of the Woman and Beast Explained 17:7-18



- The Holy Bible says, *“Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, ‘Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.’ And He said to them, ‘I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.’”* (Luke 10:17-19)
- *“having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. ¹⁵ Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.”* (Colossians 2:14-15)

The Mystery of the Woman and Beast Explained 17:7-18



- And as St. Chrysostom says, “In prayer make the sign of the cross on your forehead, then demons can not approach you, because you are well equipped.”
- The Holy Bible, the sayings of the Fathers, and the biography of the saints... all are full of what assures the fall down of the authority of Satan over the believers
- Thus, the Book of Revelation says about him, “*was, and is not,*” because his power is destroyed
- A further downfall is, therefore, prepared for it - that which will take place at the last day, when it *will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition*

The Mystery of the Woman and Beast Explained 17:7-18



- *who dwell on the earth*, This occurs nine times in Revelation and refers to the living earth-dwellers who are hostile to God and His people
- The followers of the Antichrist who are earthly will wonder when they see the beast i.e. Satan, who had authority and was stripped of him, came to being
- They are defined as those *whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world*

The Mystery of the Woman and Beast Explained 17:7-18



- *“Here is the mind which has wisdom,* Attention is asked to the fuller explanation which follows
- It needs true wisdom to behold many incidents of the world’s history and not find stumbling-blocks in them, Psalm 73:2-3, 119:165
- But the *wisdom* required is not merely the ability of guessing riddles; it is the wisdom enlightened from above
- *The seven heads are seven mountains,* The diversity of opinions on the interpretation of this passage is mainly owing to the fact that writers are not consistent in their application of symbols and numbers

The Mystery of the Woman and Beast Explained 17:7-18



- In one place interpreting figuratively, in another literally
- We have repeatedly seen that the language of the Apocalypse and its numbers are symbolical
- The seals are not literal seals, the Lamb is not a literal Lamb, the beast is not a literal beast, etc
- So here, the mountains are not literal mountains
- A mountain is a symbol of power, Revelation 8:8
- Seven is the number significant of universality, Revelation 1:4, 5:1, etc.

The Mystery of the Woman and Beast Explained 17:7-18



- The plain meaning of the passage, therefore, is that the woman relies upon a visibly universal power
- Of course, the most prominent form of this world power in St. John's time was heathen Rome, hence some writers believe that "the seven-hilled city," Rome, is referred to here
- *seven kings*, It has been debated whether these kings are individual sovereigns, or forms of government, or kingdoms
- Here we have the same idea as in verse 9 with a somewhat different aspect

The Mystery of the Woman and Beast Explained 17:7-18



- The phrase in verse 9, "seven mountains," regarded the world power as one universal indivisible whole, without respect to particular times or modes in which it might be exhibited
- In this phrase, "seven kings," we have the same world power viewed in its successive exhibitions by different nations
- Though here again we must be on our guard not to interpret the number seven literally of seven nations
- The kings represent worldly states or kingdoms; seven, again, betokens universality

The Mystery of the Woman and Beast Explained 17:7-18



- We are thus told that this world power on which the woman relies is exhibited in the manifestation of power by successive nations
- *Five have fallen*, Here, again, not literally five
- Some believe that St. John divides the whole series of anti-theistic world powers into three groups, and he would say, some, probably the majority, of these are passed away; the second group embraces the world power as it is exhibited now, whether Roman, Jewish, or any other; in the third group are included those yet to come

The Mystery of the Woman and Beast Explained 17:7-18



- Thus those writers who list Egypt, Nineveh, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Syria, etc., in the first group, are partially correct, and only wrong in so far as they attempt to limit and define the kingdoms
- And similarly also those who in the third group place the Roman empire after the barbarian invasions, or imperial Germany, etc.

The Mystery of the Woman and Beast Explained 17:7-18



- Father Hyppolitus thinks, that the five heads who have fallen were five kings, representing great countries who reigned and dominated the world; Nebuchadnezer, the Chaldean; Cyrus, the Median; Darius, the Persian; Alexander the Greek; The four kings who reigned after him
- And *one is*, Is the Roman Empire, the state which existed during the writing of the book of Revelation
- And *has not yet come*, Is the kingdom of the Antichrist which will come at the end of ages

The Mystery of the Woman and Beast Explained 17:7-18



- And St. Irenaeus thinks that they represent a multitude of unjust kings, who persecuted the believers across the centuries, without being restricted to certain names or a certain number
- *one is*, The one who actually exists (during the writing of Revelation) is Domitanos the persecutor of the Church,
- And the one coming is the Antichrist, Satan has dominated over all hearts
- *he must continue a short time*, Describes the remainder of the time of the world's existence

The Mystery of the Woman and Beast Explained 17:7-18



- *is of the seven*, The beast himself consists of, and is formed by, what has been denoted by the seven kings
- We have already interpreted the beast as the worldly power - Satan in his capacity of "prince of this world"
- We have also shown that the "seven kings" describes this worldly power as it exists throughout all ages
- The beast is the sum total of what has been described under the form of seven kings

The Mystery of the Woman and Beast Explained 17:7-18



- He mentioned him alone, to show that what he stirred up against the Church is incomparable to all persecutions and troubles that the church had endured from Adam to the coming of the Antichrist
- This is what the prophecy reveals to us about the Antichrist, who in his wickedness, will surpass all evils which were stirred up against God since the creation of mankind

The Mystery of the Woman and Beast Explained 17:7-18



- It has been noticed that the wild beast does not “fall,” like the others, but goes into destruction
- There are no more world-powers like those who have fallen, but the wild beast is left, a last power reserved for destruction, a final antichrist, the lawless one whom the Lord will destroy with the brightness of His coming
- His final doom is also reasserted, *is going to perdition* verse 8 and Revelation 19:20

The Mystery of the Woman and Beast Explained 17:7-18



- *The ten horns*, As we have seen, are symbolical of power and ten signifies completeness and sufficiency, Revelation 13:1
- By the *ten horns*, therefore, is expressed widespread, complete power
- But this power, says St. John , has not come into existence as yet
- He thus points to a coming power, hostile to God, such as is described in that part of the account of the seven kings which states *the other is not yet come*, verse 10

The Mystery of the Woman and Beast Explained 17:7-18



- *one hour* denotes a short time, the end will be very near when the ten horns appear in their final and unmistakable form
- A short time in which way the Bible constantly describes the period of the world's existence, and especially that period which intervenes between the time of St. John and the judgment day, Romans 16:20; 1 Corinthians 7:29; Revelation 6:11, 12:12, 22:20, etc.
- One hour also denotes a limited power

The Mystery of the Woman and Beast Explained 17:7-18



- Ten horns are united in *one mind*
- They move as the wild beast directs
- Their work and tendency of their power is hostile to Christ
- St. Jerome, in his interpretation of Daniel, chapter seven says the same as Ibn-el-Assal does, that ten kings will submit to the Antichrist, who will deliver to him all their capabilities and energies, to wage war against the Lamb

The Mystery of the Woman and Beast Explained 17:7-18



- *make war*, This connects the description with Revelation 16 and with Revelation 19:11-21
- This war between the Lamb and the powers of evil is that which extends throughout the history of the world
- It occupies the "one hour" of verse 12, which is equivalent to the period of the world's existence
- But St. John in this verse looks forward also to the termination of the conflict, the result of which, here briefly indicated, is soon to be narrated more fully

The Mystery of the Woman and Beast Explained 17:7-18



- *He is Lord of lords and King of kings*, This is the reason given to the Israelites, Deuteronomy 10:17 for obedience to God, also Daniel 2:47; 1 Timothy 6:15; and Revelation 19:16
- Though the beast may exercise this world dominion and power as "prince of this world," yet the Lamb is King still greater, to whom the beast must finally submit
- He is thus King above the kings of Revelation 17:2,10
- Not only Christ wars and overcomes, but those associated with Him are permitted to share in the battle and the victory

The Mystery of the Woman and Beast Explained 17:7-18



- Christ's saints are called here to battle
- In Revelation 19:9 they are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb, also the exhortation to faithful in Revelation 2:10
- The three categorizations describe the progressive life of those who share Christ's victory
- They *are called*, As all men are - to serve Him
- Having heard the call, they dedicate their lives to His service, and become His chosen servants
- Finally, having remained faithful to Him, they share in His victory

The Mystery of the Woman and Beast Explained 17:7-18



- *he said to me*, Having explained the mystery of the beast, to whom the woman looks for support, the angel now proceeds to unfold the mystery of the harlot herself
- *The waters which you saw*, Now John receives the explanation of the waters in 17:1
- *peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues*, The fourfold description of the human race, Revelation 5:9, etc., which, as a whole, serves the beast, Revelation 13:3,8,12,16, and out of which are selected the redeemed, Revelation 5:9, 9:9

The Mystery of the Woman and Beast Explained 17:7-18



- This is the beginning of the Victory of the Lamb over the Antichrist and his followers
- He lets evil corrupt itself by itself, and we do not know what will happen
- Probably the ten kings will turn to hate Babylon, the harlot, which is the work center of the satanic beast
- Or, the two powers will split up, the earthly and the spiritual (the satanic), of the Antichrist and his followers

The Mystery of the Woman and Beast Explained 17:7-18



- Therefore the kings will rise against her and will *make her desolate*, that is to say they will strip her of her vitality, so the human beings will not bear to look at her, and will not accept her
- The harlot was seen in splendid apparel riding on the wild beast; now the wild beast turns with the ten horns of his power upon her, makes her deserted, strips her of her adornments, consumes the ruin, for this is what is meant by *eat her flesh and burn her with fire*
- *burn her with fire*, Until no trace will be left of her
- This was the habit of kings when they conquer great cities

The Mystery of the Woman and Beast Explained 17:7-18



- These words describe the fate in store for these who will follow Satan
- That world, to which she trusts, shall turn and rend her
- This is exactly the description given of the harlot in Ezekiel 16:37; also Ezekiel 23:22

The Mystery of the Woman and Beast Explained 17:7-18



- *God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose*, God has a purpose in allowing the deeds of the ten kings and the beast
- The sovereign plan of God is worked out through the deeds of the kings and the beast
- In context, it is the judgment of God that the ten horns and the beast executes for God upon the harlot
- While the world power is apparently performing the will of the beast, God is working above all; only by His permission can anything be done, *"it was given"* of Revelation 13

The Mystery of the Woman and Beast Explained 17:7-18



- The kings give their kingdom to the wild beast; their authority and might is used for him, whether in making war upon the Lamb, Revelation 17:14 or in casting down the harlot
- In these endeavors they act united
- *to be of one mind*, But they are only carrying out the righteous will of God; God wills that the harlot shall fall; and even in their war upon the Lamb, they are but preparing for the crisis when the enemies of the righteous King shall fall, Revelation 19:19

The Mystery of the Woman and Beast Explained 17:7-18



- *to give their kingdom to the beast*, Indicates that the goal of the kings is the defeat of the Lamb
- The avenue they think will accomplish their objective is to give their assets to the beast in hope that it will be enough to defeat the Lamb
- The *words of God* are His denunciations and condemnations against those who trust the world, Ezekiel 16:37, quoted on verse 16

The Mystery of the Woman and Beast Explained 17:7-18



- *And the woman whom you saw is that great city*, With these words the angel's explanation of "the mystery of the woman", Revelation 17:7 ends
- *great city*, Meaning a city of evil in every age
- Once it was Babylon another was Rome, a third is the power of evil and apostasy in our current time
- And in every age and era most kings and rulers were controlled by her and followed her directions and orders



Discussion

- Who is the *“great harlot who sits on many waters”*? How did she “make” people partake of her immorality?
- Why is the woman *“clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls”*?
- What made John *“wonder greatly”* at the sight of the woman?
- Who are the ones with the Lamb who are the *“called and chosen and faithful”*?



Discussion

- How does the great harlot come to her end?
- How must we understand the words, *For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose?*
- What does the woman represent according to v18? What city would this be?
- Which temptation and anti-Christian influences do you recognize today?