

A Study Of The Book Of Revelation

May 23, 2021

Revelation 17

"The Two Women and The Two Cities"

- In Chapter 12 the woman represented all God's redeemed ones
 - In Chapter 17 several positions have been proposed:
 1. Apostate Palestinian Jerusalem, the head of hostile Judaism (Foy E. Wallace, The Book of Revelation)
 2. Apostate church which developed in the centuries following Pentecost.
 - a. Some apply this to the Roman Catholic church.
 3. Pagan Rome, which in turn represents the world of lust, all that is evil.
- (Homer Hailey, *Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary*, Pages 341-342)

Revelation 17

"The Two Women and The Two Cities"

- **This section (Revelation 17:1-19:10) falls into three parts:**
 1. The harlot and her seductive wives. (chapter 17)
 2. The judgment and fall of the harlot. (chapter 18)
 3. The hallelujahs of heaven over her fall and the victory of the saints. (19:1-10)
- (Homer Hailey, *Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary*, Page 342)

Revelation 17:1-5

REVELATION 17:1

"And there came one of the seven angels that had the seven bowls, and spake with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the judgment of the great harlot that sitteth upon many waters"

Revelation 17:1-5

REVELATION 17:2

"with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and they that dwell in the earth were made drunken with the wine of her fornication."

Revelation 17:1-5

REVELATION 17:3

"And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness: and I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet-colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns."

Revelation 13:1

Revelation 17:1-5

REVELATION 17:4

"And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stone and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations, even the unclean things of her fornication"

Revelation 17:1-5

REVELATION 17:5

"and upon her forehead a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."

"abomination" (bdelugmaton) = "to be detestable, loathe, abhor" (Moulton 68).
Note: God's view of the harlot and what she represented was loathsome, abhorrent, disgusting, and detestable. There is no stronger word for God's disposition toward unauthorized practices (see Deuteronomy 7:26)

Revelation 17

BABYLON'S PAST

Pride: Proverbs 16:18, "*Pride (goeth) before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.*"

Note Context:

- Habakkuk 2:4, "*Behold, his soul is puffed up, it is not upright in him; but the righteous shall live by his faith.*"
- Isaiah 14:13-14, "*And thou saidst in thy heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; and I will sit upon the mount of congregation, in the uttermost parts of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.*"
- Isaiah 47:7, "*And thou saidst, I shall be mistress for ever; so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end thereof.*"
- cf. Isaiah 13:11, "*And I will punish the world for (their) evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.*"
- Isaiah 13:19, "*And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans' pride, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.*"

Revelation 17

BABYLON'S PAST

Full of idols.

- Jeremiah 50:1-10, 38
- Jeremiah 51:17-18, 47, 52
- Isaiah 46-47
- Isaiah 21:8-9, "*And he cried as a lion: O Lord, I stand continually upon the watch-tower in the day-time, and am set in my ward whole nights; and, behold, here cometh a troop of men, horsemen in pairs. And he answered and said, **Fallen, fallen is Babylon;** and all the graven images of her gods are broken unto the ground."*

Revelation 17

BABYLON'S PAST

Cruelty in war.

Isaiah 14:4-6

Jeremiah 51:25, 33-35

Habakkuk 1:6-16

Jeremiah 50:10, "*'Chaldea will become plunder; All who plunder her will have enough,' declares the Lord.*" NASU

Revelation 17

THE HARLOT

- The **harlot (mother of harlots)** — the object of coming judgment — the **sentence** is pronounced
 - In the OT three cities are designated as "harlots" and another as a mistress given to pleasure.
 - Nineveh. Nahum 3:1, 4
 - Tyre. Isaiah 23:15-17
 - Babylon. Isaiah 47:5-15
 - Israel and Judah. Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, and Micah
- Angel** brings the message
- Awful harlot in **contrast** with the bride of Christ
- Follows the **pouring out** of the bowls of God's wrath
- Now will receive some of the "**details**"

Revelation 17

THE HARLOT'S DESCRIPTION

- **“Sitteth upon many waters”**
cf. Jeremiah 51:13
 - City that reigns over the kings of the earth. (verse 18)
 - **“With whom the kings of the earth committed fornication”**
 - Her alliances – all the nations who joined in her ungodly conduct
- **“Inhabitants of the earth made drunk with the wine of her fornication”**
 - Her evil corrupted nations and individuals to share in her wealth and sin! (cf. 13:11-18)

From Revelation 14:8 and 16:19

Judgment of Wicked Babylon

- “It is true that Jerusalem [and Israel – *mg*] was described by the Jewish prophets as a ‘*harlot*’ (Ezek. 16) [Isaiah 1:21; 57:3-12; Ezekiel 16:3-43; 23:1-49; Jeremiah 2:20, 25-28; 13:22 – *mg*], but she is not the only Old Testament city to wear such a name.
- “Nineveh was called a ‘*harlot*’ (Nah. 3:1-4), as was Tyre (Isa. 23:15-16; Ezek. 26; 27), and Babylon (Isa. 47:5-15; Jeremiah 50; 51).
- “Much of the imagery found in Revelation 18 is that which is found in these Old Testament references of pagan cities which had committed spiritual harlotry.”
(Robert Harkrider, *Revelation*, Truth Commentaries, Page 327)

From Revelation 14:8 and 16:19

Judgment of Wicked Babylon

- “Some expositors identify Jerusalem as the harlot of the book of Revelation, and they see the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 at the hands of the Romans as the battle of Armageddon.
 - “Such an interpretation radically changes the thrust of the visions.
- “The beast (Roman Empire) and the false prophet (paganism) are the ones being punished by God. [Revelation 13-14 – *mg*]
- “Other Scriptures did prophesy that God would use the Romans to destroy Jerusalem (Matt. 24; Luke 17, 21), but those are different contexts than Revelation.
- “The point is that what may be true of one context does not necessarily mean that every other context using the same words has the same application.”
(Robert Harkrider, *Revelation*, Truth Commentaries, Page 322)

From Revelation 14:8 and 16:19

Judgment of Wicked Babylon

- The **ONE** great conflict in Revelation is between Satan and his allies against Christ and His army.
 - That conflict was not between the Roman Empire and Judaism; instead, it was the Lord versus Satan with his allies, the beast (Rome) and false prophet (Paganism) of Revelation 13.
- This conflict draws to a climax in Revelation 16:12-17 when the forces of evil are described as gathering for **“the battle of that great day of God Almighty”** (16:14) at Armageddon. cf. 19:19-21
- While it is true, the prophet Isaiah referred to apostate Jerusalem as “*the faithful city become an harlot ! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers.*” (Isaiah 1:21; cf. Matthew 23:34ff)
- Why would the vision be sidetracked from its major theme to present alleged details of conflict between Rome and Judaism?
- **Note: What Babylon does, the Beast does. cf. Revelation 14:8-10**

Revelation 17

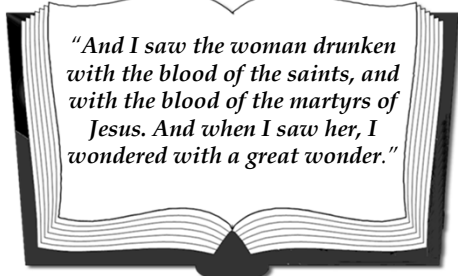
Judgment of Wicked Babylon

“The designation ‘**Babylon the great**’ (used consistently throughout Rev: e.g., 14:8; 16:9; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21) goes back to Daniel 4:28-33 and emphasizes, as Henry Barclay Swete says, ‘the Nebuchadnezzar-like self-importance of the rulers of Rome rather than the actual size or true greatness of the city’ (p. 183).”
(Robert Harkrider, *Revelation*, Truth Commentaries, Page 262)

“The Seer ascribes to Rome a character which the Prophets of Israel had ascribed to more than one of the great pagan cities of antiquity.”
(Henry Barclay Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John*, Page 184)

Revelation 17

REVELATION 17:6



“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 a great wonder.”

Revelation 17
<p align="center">THE HARLOT'S DESCRIPTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John carried away (<i>by the angel</i>) "in the Spirit" • Into the "wilderness" a safe place to see as she really is! • Sitting on a "scarlet beast" – the civil power – made scarlet by Satan's power <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – City of Rome answers to the emperors! • "Full of names of blasphemy" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Actions against God and His people • "Seven heads – ten horns" (13:1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Full power and authority

Revelation 17				
<p align="center">BEAST BEFORE?</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>CHAPTER 13</th> <th>Chapter 17</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out of the sea (verse 1) • 7 heads, 10 horns (verse 1) • Warred with the saints (verse 7) • One head wounded to the death, healed (verse 3) • All the world wondered (verse 3) </td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out of abyss (verse 8) • 7 heads, 10 horns (verses 3-4) • Makes war with the Lamb (verse 14) • Was, Is not, is ... (verse 8) • Earth shall wonder (verse 8) </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	CHAPTER 13	Chapter 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out of the sea (verse 1) • 7 heads, 10 horns (verse 1) • Warred with the saints (verse 7) • One head wounded to the death, healed (verse 3) • All the world wondered (verse 3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out of abyss (verse 8) • 7 heads, 10 horns (verses 3-4) • Makes war with the Lamb (verse 14) • Was, Is not, is ... (verse 8) • Earth shall wonder (verse 8)
CHAPTER 13	Chapter 17			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out of the sea (verse 1) • 7 heads, 10 horns (verse 1) • Warred with the saints (verse 7) • One head wounded to the death, healed (verse 3) • All the world wondered (verse 3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out of abyss (verse 8) • 7 heads, 10 horns (verses 3-4) • Makes war with the Lamb (verse 14) • Was, Is not, is ... (verse 8) • Earth shall wonder (verse 8) 			

Revelation 17
<p align="center">THE HARLOT'S DESCRIPTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woman arrayed in purple and scarlet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Well dressed prostitute • Adorned with gold and precious stones, pearls <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A sign of wealth and position • Revelation 17:4, <i>"having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations, even the unclean things of her fornication"</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Loved by her – intoxicating history of the persecutions of the church

Revelation 17
<p align="center">THE HARLOT'S DESCRIPTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On her forehead a name written: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Mystery (cf. 10:7; 17:7) – Babylon the Great – The Mother of Harlots – Abominations of the Earth – Title indicates her ungodliness, impurity, and filthiness – Mystery, a wonder, producing amazement to those who saw her – Rome a fitting image of Babylon!