

The Harlot Babylon & Her Demise

I. Overview of The Harlot Babylon

- a. **Revelation 17 & 18** once again put the main storyline of the book of Revelation on pause to fill us in on certain details related to the final 3 ½ years of this age (The Great Tribulation), namely The Harlot Babylon & her demise.
- b. At this point in the storyline, we have examined most of the *key figures* and *major sign events* that will take place at the end of the age. In the last parenthetical section of the book of Revelation (**Revelation 12-14**), **Revelation 14:8** mentions the fall of “*Babylon the great*”. **Revelation 17 & 18** give us insight into this key figure in the book of Revelation.

(Revelation 14:8 NASB) “*And another angel, a second one, followed, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality.”*”

- c. The Harlot Babylon is one of the most important end time topics for believers to get bible-centered insight on. Much is written about the Harlot Babylon throughout the narrative of scripture, which means we don’t really have to theorize about a lot. It is supremely important that we allow scripture to be our guide as we study the Harlot, lest we develop any dogmatic non-biblical opinions related to the Harlot.
- d. **Revelation 17 & 18** clearly explain a few simple facts related to the identity of the Harlot Babylon. In summary, the Harlot Babylon is a literal “megacity” and “consumer city” located in the desert and close to the coast. It will be a global system with international influence, which will touch the political, economic, and religious spheres and ultimately prepare the earth for Antichrist. Harlot Babylon is dynamically related to the ancient city of Babylon, and will function as a primary eschatological opponent to the city and people of Jerusalem as well as the worldwide body of Christ.

II. Literal Megacity & Consumer City Located in the Desert & Close To The Coast

- a. Literal City - **Revelation 17:18** clearly defines the “mysterious identity of Babylon”. The Greek word used for city, “*polis*”, literally means city or town.

(Revelation 17:18 NASB) “*The woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth.*”

- b. Megacity - The Harlot is referred to over and over again as a “great city”. The Greek word used for great, “*me-gas*”, speaks of something’s external space or dimensions related to it’s “largeness” or loudness.
- c. Consumer city – When the “great city” is destroyed, the merchants of the earth weep and mourn because no one buys their cargoes any more. **Revelation 18** tells us what kind of cargoes those are.

(Revelation 18:11-13 NASB) “*And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, because no one buys their cargo any more— 12 cargo of gold, silver, precious stones, and pearls; fine linen, purple, silk, and scarlet; every kind of citron wood, every article of ivory, and every article made from very valuable wood, bronze, iron, and marble; 13 cinnamon, spice, incense, perfume, frankincense, wine, olive oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle, sheep, and cargo of horses, carriages, slaves, and human lives.*”

- d. Located in the desert – The angel carries John away “into the wilderness” to show him the “great city”. The “wilderness” can be a confusing term, as many associate it to a forest. The usage of the Greek word used here, “*eremos*”, means a solitary, lonely, and uninhabited place; desert. Wilderness in scripture is most often used to speak of the desert.

(Revelation 17:3 NASB) “And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns.”

- e. Close to the coast – In **Revelation 18**, when the “great city” is destroyed, the shipmasters and all who make their living by the sea lament the demise of the city. It’s important also to note that the Greek word used for cargos, “gomos”, refers specifically to freight carried by ship or boat.

(Revelation 18:17-18 NASB) “For in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste!’ And every shipmaster and every passenger and sailor, and all who make their living by the sea, stood at a distance, 18 and were crying out as they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, ‘What city is like the great city?’

III. Global System With International Influence That Will Touch the Political, Economic, & Religious Spheres,

- a. Global System With International Influence - The angel explains to John, that the “waters she sits upon (**Revelation 17:1**)”, represent peoples, multitudes, nations, and languages

(Revelation 17:18 NASB) “The woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth.”

(Revelation 17:15 NASB) “And he said to me, “The waters which you saw where the prostitute sits are peoples and multitudes, and nations and languages.”

- b. We’ve seen how the Harlot Babylon will impact the economic system through being a consumer city, but that’s not all she will do. The demonically inspired ideologies of the Harlot Babylon system will influence both the political and religious spheres as well.
- c. Political sphere – **Revelation 17:18** says she “reigns over the kings of the earth”. The “kings of the earth” denote political leaders. The influence of the Harlot’s ideologies will impact the global political infrastructure. There’s room for us to speculate on exactly how that will take place, but in order for her to be an effective forerunner for the Beast, we can be confident that her global influence will be expressed in international politics.
- d. Religious sphere – Her religious impact is seen in her identity as a Harlot, more suitably in her title as the “Mother of all Harlots (**Revelation 17:5**)”. The term “mother of all harlots” means she is the biggest, greatest, most significant “harlot” committing “abominations” (Abomination Gk. – *bdelygma* – a foul and detestable thing related to idolatry). Throughout the scriptures, the metaphor of harlotry refers to spiritual idolatry. Her religious impact will be united to that of the Beast [Islamic], and her intolerance will be violent and bloody (*she will be drunk on the blood of the saints*). The Harlot Babylon will be the greatest (largest) and most violent false religion the earth has ever seen.

(Revelation 17:1-2 NASB) “I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who sits on many waters, 2 with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of sexual immorality, and those who live on the earth became drunk with the wine of her sexual immorality.

(Revelation 17:5-6 NASB) “On her forehead a name was written, a mystery: “BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. When I saw her, I wondered greatly.”

IV. Prepare the Earth for the Antichrist

- a. The Harlot shares a unique and twisted relationship with the Beast. It’s important for us to examine their eccentric relationship. Before we do so, let’s examine the “main players” in **Revelation 17**.

- i. Great Harlot/Woman (**Revelation 17:1, 17:3**) – The Harlot Babylon

- ii. Scarlet Beast – Same as the “*beast from the sea*” described in **Revelation 13**, it represents the Antichrist and His Empire.
- iii. Seven Heads - In **Revelation 17:3** we see the Beast (*Antichrist Empire*) who, like the dragon, also has seven heads and ten horns. **17:7-11** leads us understand with clarity that the 7 heads represent 7 historical nations that functioned in the “*antichrist spirit*” by conquering and persecuting Israel. The seven Nations are: *Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, and Turkish/Ottoman Empire (Islamic Caliphate)*.

(Revelation 17:7,9-10 NASB) “And the angel said to me, “Why do you wonder? *I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns...*9 *Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains upon which the woman sits, 10 and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while. The beast which was, and is not, is himself also an eighth and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction.*”

- iv. Ten horns - Based on the context in **Daniel**, we know that the ten horns are ten kings that will emerge and side with the Beast at the end of the age. Furthermore, an angel tells John once more what the 10 kings are in **Revelation 17** and explains that these ten kings will give their authority to the Beast.

(Revelation 17:12-13 NASB) “The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour. 13 These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast.”

- b. **Revelation 17:3** shows the woman sitting on the scarlet beast, displaying that 1) For a season she will have control over the Beast 2) He will support and promote her agenda. The Harlot Babylon system will emerge in prominence for decades before the Great Tribulation (*The final 3 -1/2 years of this age*). The Harlot will function as a forerunner for Beast. Her false religion system will create a culture prominent in evil greed, sexual immorality, and deep hatred and the beast will only take it to the next level.

(Revelation 17:3 NASB) “**(Revelation 17:3 NASB)** “And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns.”

- c. The Antichrist and the Ten Horns are involved in the destruction of Babylon. The Antichrist being described as a “*beast*” speaks of his uncontrollable and unpredictable behavior. Right before the final 3 ½ years of the age tension between the Beast and the Harlot will arise leading to the beast hating and overthrowing the Harlot. *God will use the motivation of Satan to destroy his own plans, perhaps this is why He sits in heaven and laughs (Psalm 2).*

(Revelation 17:16-17 NASB) “And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the prostitute and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire. 17 For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God will be fulfilled.

V. The Ancient city of Babylon & The Primary Eschatological Opponent to the Body of Christ.

- a. One of the most obvious clues related to the identity of the Harlot is found in her name “*Babylon The Great*”; namely Babylon. Scripture has a LOT to say about ancient Babylon. In the Old Testament, there are two ancient “*Babylons*”. They are the same city, with the same name, in the same location, but separated by about 1700 years.
 - i. The first is the most ancient city of Babel, seeming founded by Nimrod.
 - ii. The second is the city built upon the remains of babel and made great by Nebuchadnezzar

- iii. In the Hebrew bible both “cities” are called “Babel” but the Greek name for the city is “Babylon” so English translations call Nebuchadnezzar’s city, Babylon.
- iv. Babylon is located roughly 60 miles south of Baghdad, Iraq.
- b. Nimrod’s Babel was a city characterized by a unified rebellion against God. Clearly this will also characterize end time “*Harlot Babylon*”.
- c. Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylon was used as a rod of chastisement against Israel, and so will the end time “Babylon”. Just as many (specifically Jewish people) were taken into captivity in Babylon, the same will be true at the end of the age. In Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar commanded all the people within Babylon to worship a 90 foot tall golden idol, and if they didn’t they’d be burned alive. Enforced worship is an overwhelmingly significant similarity between ancient Babylon and last days Harlot Babylon.

(Daniel 3:4-6 NASB) “Then the herald loudly proclaimed: “To you the command is given, you peoples, nations, and populations of all languages, 5 that at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe, and all kinds of musical instruments, you are to fall down and worship the golden statue that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up. 6 But whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be thrown into the middle of a furnace of blazing fire.”

- d. The Harlot Babylon, will for decades, be the primary opponent for the body of Christ in Jerusalem and around the world. She will be “*drunk with the blood of the saints*” and institute most of the framework related to persecution and martyrdom for the Antichrist’s reign. Those she can’t deceive, she will strive to imprison and/or kill.

(Revelation 17:6 NASB) “I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus.”

(Revelation 18:24 NASB) “And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slaughtered on the earth.”

- e. End Time Harlot Babylon will be a home for demons, unclean spirits, and it’s leaders will be demonically empowered to attract the multitudes. The sexual immorality, wealth, luxury, and deception of this city/culture will corrupt people throughout the earth, and if possible even the elect. In **Revelation 18**, God calls out to His people to “*come out of her and not participate in her sins so as to not receive her plagues*”. Part of the “Great Falling Away” is a direct result of the Harlot Babylon.

(Revelation 17:2 NASB) “The kings of the earth committed acts of sexual immorality, and those who live on the earth became drunk with the wine of her sexual immorality”

(Revelation 18:2-4 NASB) “She has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird. 3 For all the nations have fallen because of the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed acts of sexual immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich from the excessive wealth of her luxury. I heard another voice from heaven, saying, “Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive any of her plagues””

(Matthew 24:24 NASB) “For false christs and false prophets will arise and will provide great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.”

VI. The Demise of the Great Harlot

- a. The demise of the Harlot Babylon is inevitable. There are an ABUNANT amount of scriptures in both the Old Testament and New Testament that speak about the dramatic fall of Babylon at the end of the age.

(Revelation 14:8 NASB) “And another angel, a second one, followed, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality.”

(Revelation 16:19 NASB) “The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. Babylon the great was remembered in the sight of God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath.”

(Isaiah 13:19 NASB) “And Babylon, the beauty of kingdoms, the glory of the Chaldeans’ pride, Will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.”

b. God’s judgment of the Harlot includes a twofold destruction process:

- i. At the beginning of the Great Tribulation (final 3 ½ years), The Beast and the Ten Horns will overthrow and burn her capital city.

(Revelation 17:16 NASB) “And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the prostitute and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire.”

- ii. Babylon’s final judgment occurs as a process throughout the Great Tribulation but is complete at the pouring out of the 7th bowl at the tail end of the Great Tribulation (***Revelation 18***).

VII. Victory promised for the Lamb & His Followers

- a. Despite the wickedness and destruction associated with Harlot Babylon, ***Revelation 17:14*** gives us one of the most important promises within the entirety of scripture. Jesus will overcome the rage of this Harlot culture.

(Revelation 17:14 NASB) “These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them because He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful.”

- b. No matter what happens, Jesus has promised us victory in the end times. We are not passive participants in the end time drama, but we’re called to be active participants in His story. If we endure, we’re victorious, and if we’re martyred, we’re victorious. It doesn’t matter how bad things look or what the “cultural scoreboard” says, we WILL BE victorious because of the blood of the Lamb.

(Luke 21:17-19 NASB) “You will be hated by all people because of My name. 18 And yet not a hair of your head will perish. 19 By your endurance you will gain your lives.”

(Revelation 12:11 NASB) “They overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.”