

The Harlot of Babylon, Mystery Babylon

By Rich Jacobs, M.D.

Revelation 17: The Harlot of Babylon

Rev 17:1 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters,

Rev 17:2 with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality."

Rev 17:3 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.

Rev 17:4 The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality,

Rev 17:5 and on her forehead a name was written, a mystery, "BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."

Rev 17:6 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.

Rev 17:7 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.

Rev 17:8 "The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will wonder when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come.

Rev 17:9 "Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits,

Rev 17:10 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.

Rev 17:11 "The beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction.

Rev 17:12 "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.

Rev 17:13 "These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast.

Rev 17:14 "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."

Rev 17:15 And he said to me, "The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.

Rev 17:16 "And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire.

Rev 17:17 "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.

Rev 17:18 "**The woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth.**"

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1. **Revelation 17** gives important details about a central actor in the end-times: *Mystery Babylon, Babylon the Great, or the Harlot of Babylon*.

a. This woman is a “harlot”; she is unfaithful to her “husband”; she is sinful or evil. In spiritual terms, God is her husband and she is idolatrous.

b. Not only is she a harlot, but she is the “*mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth.*” (17:5) This seems to imply that she is not only unfaithful herself, but that she induces or coerces everyone else in the world to be unfaithful also.

c. She sits “*on many waters*” (17:1), which, according to **Revelation**, symbolizes “*peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues*” (17:15) -- that is, international power politics, commerce, and multinational affairs.

i. The Harlot “sits” on “*many waters*”. The symbolism may be likened to a rider on a horse. **IMPORTANT:** This means she guides their course but they empower her to go wherever she wants to go! The nations of the world give her power, but the harlot rules over them.

ii. Notice scripture also says the Harlot sits on a “*scarlet beast*” (17:3). Summarizing, the harlot sits on many waters, the harlot sits on a scarlet beast. **IMPORTANT:** This means the “*scarlet beast*” **is** the “*many waters*”; the scarlet beast is international, multicultural, and political in nature.

iii. Notice scripture also says the Harlot sits on “*seven mountains*”, which are also symbolized by “*seven heads*” (17:9). These “*seven heads*” are “*seven kings*” - or perhaps, even kingdoms (17:10, 11). **IMPORTANT:** The “*seven mountains*” are not geographic features, like the seven hills upon which is said to have been built. The seven kings, or mountains, must dominate international power politics and commerce!

(1) The seven kings will not have lived all at the same time (**Revelation 17:10**). **IMPORTANT:** The “*life*” of the Scarlet Beast spans geographical space **and** time. Scripture says that of the seven kings “*five have fallen*”- meaning they lived and had already died by the time John received **Revelation**.

(2) The sixth “*king*” was living when John received **Revelation**. This king would be Caesar, who ruled the Roman Empire. **IMPORTANT:** This means Rome is not the beast, but it is part of the beast. It also implies Rome cannot be the Harlot because the Harlot rides on the beast and is not herself the beast.

(3) The seventh “*king*” had not yet arisen in John’s time; *i.e.* “*has not yet come*”(17:10). Apparently, this king and kingdom, when he does arrive, will not be as enduring as the other kings because scripture says he will only last “*a little while*”.

(4) One of the seven “*kings*” (or kingdoms) that originally were part of the beast, will arise again. It will have seemed like it had perished. Because of his new appearance, he will be like an “*eighth king*”, though he was one of the seven previous kings. This eighth king, or kingdom, will receive his power and authority from ten co-existing rulers or nations (17:11-13). **IMPORTANT:** These 10 horn rulers are contemporaneous with the eighth king; they do not span time as the entire Beast does.

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(5) The Scarlet Beast will “*wage war*” against Christ and His Church. (17:14) The Beast will be ruled (“ridden”) by the Harlot, because the Harlot “*reigns over the kings of the earth.*” (17:18)

(6) Eventually, the Scarlet Beast, which actually hates the Harlot, will destroy her (17:16)

d. These amazing events, of course, are under God’s ultimate control. He motivates the ten kings/nations to give their power to the Beast, who, in turn, reigns over them for their common purpose, which fulfills God’s Word (17:17).

e. **IMPORTANT: Revelation says the Harlot is a city.** In fact, “she” is “*the great city*”. (17:18). Notice the Harlot is not just any great city; she is **THE great city**. She is unique among all the cities in the world. If we can discover which city regards to be “the great city”, we will know who is the Harlot of Babylon.

- *The **great city** was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. **Babylon the great** was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath. (Revelation 16:19)*
- *The **woman** (i.e. “Mystery Babylon” or “Babylon the Great”) whom you saw is **the great city**, which reigns over the kings of the earth (Revelation 17:8)*
- *Woe, woe, the **great city, Babylon**, the strong city! For in one hour your judgment has come (Revelation 18:10)*
- *So will **Babylon, the great city**, be thrown down with violence, and will not be found any longer. (Revelation 18:21)*

2. **Revelation 18**, gives more details about “*the great city*”, the Harlot of Babylon.

a. The Harlot becomes the world capital of demonic power and activity.

Revelation 18:2 - “. . . *She has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird.*” (Note: From the context of this verse, “*the great city*” becomes their prison after it falls.)

b. The nations of the Beast drank all the “wine” of her immoralities.

i. These immoralities include sensuous licentiousness (*i.e.* freedom from moral restraint) and materialism (18:3, 9).

ii. **IMPORTANT:** Her immoralities will include the persecution and martyrdom of God’s people, the Church. She was also the capital city from which end-times international war was waged. **Revelation 18:24** - “*And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on the earth.*”

iii. The Harlot-city will be judged by God because she sought the destruction of the saints.

(1) **Revelation 18:8** - “. . . *she will be burned up with fire; for the Lord God who judges her is strong.* “

(2) **Revelation 19:2** - “. . . *He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality, and he has avenged the blood of his bond-servants on her.*”

(3) When this happens, the nations of the Beast will mourn (18:9, 10), but the beleaguered saints will rejoice (18:20; 19:1, 2)

c. The Harlot of Babylon is the principal target of the plagues of God’s wrath (18:4, 8).

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3. Revelation 11, provides the key to identifying “*the great city*”, the **Harlot of Babylon**.

- a. Two Godly prophets will live during the last 1260 days, or 42 months (3.5 years) of the end times (11:1-3)
 - i. They will be lonely testimonies to God’s Truth in the midst of a wicked world (11:4).
 - ii. They will invoke the Trumpet plagues of **Revelation 8-11 (11:6)**.
 - iii. They will be divinely protect by God during the 42 months of their ministry (11:5)
 - iv. At the end of the 1260 days, the Beast upon which the Harlot rides will be able to kill these two witnesses (11:7).
- b. Scripture spiritually or mystically calls the place where they live and die “*Sodom and Egypt*” (11:8), meaning that it is a place of sensual wickedness and idolatry -- just like the Harlot of Babylon.
- c. The two witnesses reside where God’s Temple is located (11:1). Historically, God Temple has resided in Jerusalem.
- d. **Revelation 11:8 also calls the place where they lived and died “*the great city*”, adding “*where also their Lord was crucified.*” Jesus was crucified in Jerusalem!**

Jerusalem is the Great City.

The Harlot of Babylon is the Great City.

This means the Harlot of Babylon is Jerusalem!

4. More evidence that Jerusalem is the Harlot of Babylon

- a. Jesus said Jerusalem was the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her (**Matthew 23:17**). In fact, this is the principal activity that leads to God’s divine destruction of the Harlot of Babylon, as already has been discussed.
- b. **Isaiah** prophetically and explicitly calls **Jerusalem** a **harlot**. The prophecy has significant end-times “overtones”.

*See how the faithful **city** (Jerusalem, see **Isaiah 1:1**, for this context) has become a **harlot**! She once was full of justice; righteousness used to dwell in her but now, murderers. (**Isaiah 1:21**)*

- i. According to Isaiah, **Jerusalem**, the **harlot**, will be the place where “*the strong man*” will live. This “*strong man*” will bring about both his destruction and the desolation of Jerusalem (**Isaiah 1:31**). The “strong man” is Antichrist, who will make Jerusalem the center of his Beast Kingdom and demonic world religious system (**2 Thessalonians**). This fits the description described in **Revelation** exactly, requiring Jerusalem to be Mystery Babylon, the Harlot of Babylon.
- ii. God will judge Jerusalem for her bloodshed (**Isaiah 4:4**) in the same way the Harlot of Babylon is judged by God in **Revelation**.
- iii. Jerusalem will become a “*desolation*” as a result of her abominations (**Isaiah 64:10**). The desolation of the Harlot of Babylon is also described in **Revelation**, as was discussed.

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- c. Ezekiel prophecies regarding Jerusalem in the context of the end-times (not just in the context of Jerusalem's destruction by Nebuchadnezzar).
 - i. Ezekiel calls **Jerusalem** a **harlot** because of her abominations (**Ezekiel 16**). As a result of this, she will be destroyed by the ones who collaborated in her wickedness! This fits the events outlined in **Revelation** and means Jerusalem is Mystery Babylon.
 - ii. Through **Ezekiel**, the Lord also promises four terrible plagues against Jerusalem; sword, famine, wild beasts, and plague. (**Ezekiel 14:21**) These match the Seals and Trumpets of **Revelation**, but only if Jerusalem is the Harlot of Babylon.
- d. **Daniel 9** declares the unfaithfulness (adulterousness) of Jerusalem.
- e. **Jeremiah** calls Jerusalem a "great city" that was a fornicating princess (i.e. a harlot), destined for judgment (**Jeremiah 22:8; Lamentation 1:1, 2**).
- f. The only other city other than Jerusalem that prophetically is called "the great city" in scripture is Nineveh (**Jonah 1:2; 3:2, 3; 4:1**) -- not Rome, not even historical Babylon is given this term. Historically, Nineveh was the capital of Assyria, not Babylon. Jonah, who arguably symbolizes the end-times remnant of Israel, is saved from destruction by God and is sent to "redeem" Nineveh. In the same way, the remnant of Israel will return to Jerusalem as part of its redemption. (**Revelation 14:1-4**).
- g. One final clue. When the Apostle John first sees the Harlot, he was very surprised (**Revelation 17:6**). For a Jew, like John, this would have been true if the Harlot was Jerusalem, but not if "she" was Rome or Babylon.

5. Summary

- Jerusalem is the Harlot of Babylon, also called Mystery Babylon
- Jerusalem will be the capital of Antichrist's Beast empire, the center of his earthly power base and economic riches.
- Jerusalem will become the religious capital for world-wide Satan worship
- Jerusalem will become the headquarters for directing, coordinating, and prosecuting the attempted destruction of the Church and the remnant of Israel. It will also become the center of ritualistic apostasy. The Harlot symbolizes the city that leads all this.
- Jerusalem will become a place where demonic "miracles" are used to deceive many people
- Jerusalem will be the place from which two witnesses will pronounce God's judgement plagues on the world (see **Revelation 11**).
- The divine judgment of the Harlot of Babylon results in the destruction of Jerusalem
- When Christ reclaims Jerusalem as His capital (**Revelation 11**), the nations of Antichrist's empire ("the Beast") will attack the city (they hate the harlot now), but will be destroyed by the Lord at Armageddon.
- Jerusalem, the Harlot, though her sins be as scarlet, will become as white as snow (**Isaiah 1: 18**), when she is redeemed by the Lord.