

# The Book Of Revelation - Chapters Seventeen & Eighteen

## Chapter 17 - Religious Babylon Destroyed

## Chapter 18 - Political Babylon Destroyed

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: 2 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. 3 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. 4 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: 5 And upon her forehead [was] a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. 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 great admiration.

7 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. 8 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. 9 And here [is] the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. 10 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. 11 And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition. 12 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. 13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

14 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. 15 And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. 16 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. 17 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. 18 And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

- Beginning in chapter 17, John describes the Lamb's step-by-step victory over the Beast and his kingdom:
  1. Rev. 17 - religious system judged
  2. Rev. 18 - political and economic system judged
  3. Rev. 19 - military system judged
- There are TWO BABYLONS in Rev. 17 & 18, but while they share the same name and Satanic motivation, they are different entities:
  - 17** - this Babylon destroyed at midpoint of Tribulation
    - this Babylon destroyed by men who hate her
    - John "wondered" at this Babylon (ie: he never saw it before)
      - this destruction never mentioned in other Bible prophecies
      - this Babylon called Great Whore, woman, mother of Harlots
        - this Babylon makes herself rich
        - **this Babylon portrays a false ecumenical world church**
    - 18** - this Babylon destroyed at end of Tribulation
      - this Babylon destroyed by God's judgment; men mourn over it
        - John recognized this Babylon as God's ancient opponent
        - this destruction prophesied in the O.T. (Isaiah 13:1,6,19)
        - this Babylon is described as a queen
        - this Babylon makes the merchants of earth rich
        - **this Babylon portrays a world political-economic system**
  - Religious Babylon (ch.17) is identified with a city that reigned in John's day (in v.18, "reigneth" is present tense) - ROME!
  - Rome had "grown out of" the Babylonian system (ie: Daniel 2)
  - Rome is the only city consistently identified with "seven hills"
  - this woman is the "mother of harlots" (ie: birthed all false religions)

### THE BABYLONIAN RELIGION

The key to Babylonian worship is the exaltation of the individual "to become like god" (the word "Bab-el" means "the gate of God" - see Gen. 11:1-9). This demonic system motivated every ancient false religion and is behind each modern New Age cult that opposes the true worship of God. The city and empire of Babylon was founded by Nimrod, the "mighty hunter" (ie: mighty rebel, mighty in sin) according to Genesis 10:8-10. The name Nimrod became a proverb for a great apostate or evil rebel against God. Nimrod had a wife named Semiramis, according to ancient tradition. Their son, Tammuz, was killed. The occult tradition claims his mother prayed for forty days and he was revived. This story of Semiramis and Tammuz was known to the Greeks as Aphrodite and Eros, to the Romans as Venus and Cupid, and to the Egyptians as Isis and Osiris. The Assyrians called her Ishtar and her son Tammuz but the Phoenicians, who inhabited Palestine, called her Astarte and her son Baal. This primeval Babylonian myth traveled to Assyria, Egypt, Greece and Rome. It became the source of many of the occult mystery religions of the ancient world. The worship of Astarte involved offering incense and weeping for forty days until they celebrated her son's resurrection by exchanging Astarte eggs. This mysterious Babylonian cult was a continual temptation and snare for the Children of Israel. The prophet Jeremiah confronted the idol worshippers in Israel who were still burning incense to Astarte and offering a host, a wafer of bread, to honor "the queen of heaven." (Jer. 7:9,18; 44:15-19) Later, the prophet Ezekiel was taken by God into the secret chamber of the Temple to observe the occult worship of the pagan mother Astarte and the child. "Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the LORD'S house which [was] toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz." (Eze. 8:14)

- harlot riding beast with 7 heads (7 mountains - v.9, also 7 kingdoms - v.10); five kingdoms fallen (Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece had already dominated Israel), one is (Rome a world power in John's day), the other is not yet come (future worldwide empire - the beast's 10 horns, or 10 kingdoms, are future to John - v.12)
- because the Beast's nature will change drastically in the middle of the Tribulation after his deadly wound is healed (Rev. 13:3, 17:8), he can be said to be "of the seven" (ruler of revived Roman

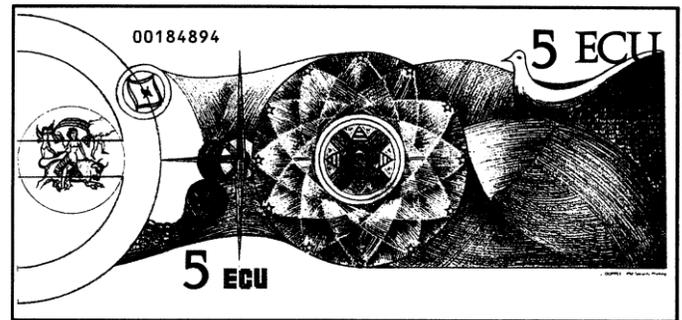
empire) and "the eighth" (satanically-possessed ruler during last 3.5 years)

- when John saw the apostasy of the false church after the Rapture, he "marveled" (Rev. 17:6) - his experience in the first-century church was of a small, powerless group under continual persecution by the Roman Empire, but now he sees a rich, powerful and apostate church killing tribulation saints who reject her demonic doctrines!
- *the only people present-day ecumenical groups oppose are those believing in fundamental biblical truths that cannot be compromised!*

And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. 2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. 3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. 4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. 5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. 6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. 7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. 8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong [is] the Lord God who judgeth her.

9 And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, 10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. 11 And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: 12 The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, 13 And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. 14 And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all. 15 The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, 16 And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! 17 For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, 18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What [city is] like unto this great city! 19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate. 20 Rejoice over her, [thou] heaven, and [ye] holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. 21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast [it] into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. 22 And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of

whatsoever craft [he be], shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; 23 And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. 24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and



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- Babylon - not only an ancient city and a powerful empire, but also the symbol of mankind's rebellion against God
- in Revelation 18, it represents the Beast's world system, particularly its economic and political aspects
- **Where will the Antichrist's capital be?**
  - possible: Rome, Jerusalem, Babylon, UN headquarters
  - many scholars equate "Babylon" in ch. 18 with "Rome," particularly since the Harlot and the Beast cooperate during the first 3.5 years of the Tribulation
  - Peter used "Babylon" as a code word for "Rome" in 1 Peter 5:13, and John's readers would definitely think of the Roman Empire's headquarters!
- chapter 18 of Revelation includes four voices:
  1. **THE VOICE OF CONDEMNATION (v. 1-3)**
    - announcement of Babylon's destruction earlier in 14:8
    - foreshadowed by destruction of ancient Babylon, prophesied in Jeremiah 51-52)
    - 18:2 ("is fallen, is fallen") and 18:6 ("double unto her double") indicate dual destruction (chapters 17 & 18)
    - 18:2 - birds also a type of Satan in Matthew 13:31-32
    - "drunk ... fornication" - tempting world through LUSTS
  2. **THE VOICE OF SEPARATION (v. 4-8)**
    - message parallels Jeremiah 51:6, 51:45 - GET OUT!
    - God's people have to separate themselves from the worldly, anti-God, Babylonian system in every age!
    - sins of Babylon: idolatry, pride, worship of pleasure
  3. **THE VOICE OF LAMENTATION (v. 9-19)**
    - kings (v.9) and merchants (v.11) mourn the destruction of Political Babylon (government, business intertwined)
    - this section is an exact description of trade as it existed in ancient Rome (v.13 - one third of Rome's population were slaves, as many as 10,000 auctioned in one day!)
    - last day citizens will be "enslaved" to the economic system of the Beast in a literal sense!
    - this destruction will be swift ("one hour" - v. 10, 17); Babylon will drop out of sight like a millstone (v. 21)
  4. **THE VOICE OF CELEBRATION (v. 20-24)**
    - the same things that cause mourning on the earth cause rejoicing in Heaven (and vice versa) - WE NEED TO LOOK AT THINGS FROM GOD'S POINT OF VIEW!
    - compare 18:24 with 17:6 - Satan has used both politics (economics) and religion to persecute God's people, but God will avenge the blood of His saints!

- note the refrain "no more!" (see also Rev. 21:4)

- at this point, the Antichrist's Religious, Political and Economic systems have been destroyed; all that remains is for Christ to come from Heaven and personally defeat the Beast and his armies (Military system) in chapter 19