

The Great Prostitute Who Sits Upon The Beast Revelation 17 Bible Study Notes

'The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place.

And He sent and <u>signified</u> it by His angel to His servant John...'

Revelation 1:1

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, given to John and *signified* by His angel, of the things which must shortly take place.

This word <u>signified</u>, in the original Greek is <u>SEMAINO</u>, which indicates that something is given and expressed by <u>signs or in symbolic language</u>. This explains to us that the book of Revelation was given to John in <u>'sign language'</u> and this language is symbolic, as a result, these signs must be deciphered and decoded in order to establish the Book's message. It is therefore, by studying Scripture and comparing Scripture with Scripture that we are thus able to understand the message in the Book of Revelation.

In order to understand the symbolic language of **Revelation 17** we must have wisdom [**Revelation 17:9**] and wisdom comes only from God [**James 1:5**]. It is not enough to study **Revelation 17**, we must pray that God will give us supernatural wisdom from on high to understand it, for spiritual things are spiritually discerned, [**1st Corinthians 2:14**].

Revelation 17 is one of the most complex and intellectually challenging chapters in the book of Revelation. It contains <u>vivid symbols</u>, <u>mysterious numbers and strange expressions</u>. It is like a giant jigsaw puzzle with each symbol being a piece of the puzzle. Before we can put the puzzle together, we must first carefully analyse the shape of each piece to see where it fits within the puzzle as a whole. Fortunately for us, the first part of the vision (<u>verses 1-8</u>) is explained in great detail by the interpreting angel in the second part (<u>verses 9-18</u>).

vs.1-2

'Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great whore who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication."

If you remember from our last study in **Revelation 16**, John spoke about the seven angels which had the seven plagues. Here again we see one of those same 'plague angels' appear to John to show him the judgement which shall come upon this great harlot.

As we go further into the study of this chapter, we shall see that this harlot is referred to as a woman and from our prior studies we have noticed that in Bible prophecy, <u>a woman represents a Church</u>. Jeremiah 6:2, Revelation 12:3, Matthew 25:1-13, Ephesians 5:25-27,32 all confirm this.

A <u>righteous woman represents a pure Church</u>, i.e., the Bride of Christ, those who make up the kingdom of God in the New Jerusalem, **Ephesians 5:25-27,32**, **Revelation 21:2**, whereas <u>a harlot/whore represents an apostate and fallen Church</u>, we see this all throughout **Revelation 17**, **Revelation 19:2**, **Nahum 3:4-5**, **Ezekiel 16:15,16**.



But what are these waters upon which this harlot, [apostate church] sits? We know from our study in Revelation 16, that Spiritual Babylon sits upon the great symbolic Euphrates as did literal Babylon in the days of the Old Testament. These waters which comprise the great Spiritual Euphrates shall dry up before the fall of Spiritual Babylon, as was the case when the literal Euphrates was 'dried up' in the days of Cyrus the great of the Medo-Persian Empire. It was this drying up of the Euphrates in the days of old which led to the downfall of the Babylonian Empire, of which I went into more detail in our previous study, therefore as it is in the natural, so shall it be in the spiritual; the 'waters' of the symbolic Euphrates shall dry up before the final destruction of symbolic Babylon.

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

'Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up...'

Revelation 6:12

The angel further reveals unto John the meaning of the waters which the great whore sits upon, they are peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues. This great harlot sits or *rules over* the multitudes of the earth, however, <u>the</u> <u>waters represent the wicked in most cases</u> as we see from the below verses.

'Woe to the multitude of many people, who make a noise like the roar of the seas and to the rushing of nations that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters! The nations will rush like the rushing of many waters; but God will rebuke them, and they will flee far away...' Isaiah 17:12-13

'The pangs of death surrounded me, and the floods of ungodliness made me afraid.' Psalm 18:4

This further shows us that this great harlot rules over the multitudes of the wicked people, all those who reject the testimonies of Jesus and refuse to give Him glory in these last days. She has committed fornication with the kings of the earth as the great kings and political rulers of the world are in unison with her, the Church has united with the State. She has caused the inhabitants of the earth to be made drunk by 'the wine of her fornication', i.e., her doctrines, her teachings & her false idolatrous standards.

vs.3

'So, he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw <u>a woman sitting on a scarlet beast</u> which was full of names of <u>blasphemy</u>, having <u>seven heads</u> and <u>ten horns</u>.'

As we remember from Daniel 7:17,23, a beast represents a kingdom, ruled by a king or ruler, therefore, John sees the same great harlot of Revelation 17:1 'sitting' or ruling on a scarlet beast. Scarlet in the Bible is symbolic of wealth and royalty as well as sin, see: Daniel 5:7,16,29; Mark 15:17,20; Isaiah 1:18.

So, in essence, John sees an apostate Church sitting upon a worldly kingdom or power, which possesses great wealth and riches and is rife with sin and blasphemies. She professes to hold the power of God on earth and to have the power to forgive sins. See the biblical definition for blasphemy in Matthew 9:2-3, Matthew 26:63-65.



Also, notice that this beast has **seven heads** and **ten horns**, which is identical to the first beast of **Revelation 13**, which is also a composite of all the beasts in **Daniel 7**, both of which we have already identified as the **Roman Catholic System.** This view was widely held by the protestant reformers of the Middle Ages and Early Church Fathers; however, the Church today has forgotten the past history of the Papacy and now holds hands with her and have been coerced into an ecumenical relationship with this great whore.

This system of Roman Catholicism, and I refer here to the system and its doctrines & teachings, not the people within the system that know no better, is here described as the great whore. As a Church, she is fallen and is rife with apostasy and false teachings, she has united with the governments and political leaders of the world and has used these governments in times past to execute her will against faithful Bible believing Christians, 538AD-1798AD. Bible prophecy further tells us that this great harlot shall once again receive the civil sword of authority, first from apostate Christianity in America and then from the remaining nations of the world, she shall yet again rule the nations and sit yet again upon the beast which encompasses the many waters or nations. She shall at this time commit fornication with the kings of the earth as she did in times past and shall use them to persecute God's faithful remnant of believers in these last days. See Bible Study Notes on Revelation 13 part 1.

'Rome clearly appears to be meant in this chapter. <u>Pagan Rome</u> subdued and ruled with military power, not by art and flatteries. She left the nations in general to their ancient usages and worship. **But it is well known that by crafty and politic management, with all kinds of deceit of unrighteousness, <u>Papal Rome</u> has obtained and kept her rule over kings and nations. Here were allurements of worldly honour and riches, pomp and pride, suited to sensual and worldly minds.' Matthew Henry Concise Bible Commentary, Revelation 17.**

vs.4

'The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication.'

Not only is the beast clothed in scarlet but so is the woman. She, *Roman Catholicism*, is clothed in wealth and royalty and rife with sin. All one has to do is to take a look at the finances and treasures of the Vatican. What is disclosed is worth more than 50 billion USD and that does not include its stores of gold and art collections. It makes one wonder how an organisation which claims to represent the Almighty God, can be living with such an immense store of wealth and not using it to spread the gospel and to win souls for Christ before His great Second Coming. Jesus Himself was clothed in meekness and humility, are we not, as Christians, called to walk also as He did, [1st John 2:6].

In her hand is a golden cup full of the abominations and filthiness of her fornications which she gives to the nations to drink, for 'the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.' The world has been deceived by her false doctrines, teachings and practices. She teaches for doctrine the commandments of men rather than the commandments of God, all one has to do is study the writings of the Catholic Church and its official documents or observe the plethora of Catholic Church traditions which have no Biblical foundation, yet they are observed in most Churches today as the norm. Why is this one may ask? The reason is, people do not study their Bibles as they should, that is why, they have been deceived by the whore and have drunk of her fermented wine, they have become drunk on her false teachings.

The vesture and decorations of this woman, as brought to view in verse 4, are in striking harmony with the application made of this symbol. Purple and scarlet are the chief colours in the robes of popes and cardinals. Among the myriads of precious stones which adorn her service, according to eyewitnesses, silver is scarcely known, and gold itself is less noticeable than are costly gems. From the golden cup in her hand, a symbol of purity of doctrine and profession, which should have contained only that which is



unadulterated and pure, or only that which is in full accordance with truth, there came forth only abominations, and the wine of her fornication, a fitting symbol of her abominable doctrines and still more abominable practices.

Compare the attire of this harlot in **Revelation 17**, with that of the woman in **Revelation 12**. Both are churches, one apostate and one pure in the sight of God.

vs.5

'And on her forehead **a name** was written: MYSTERY, **BABYLON THE GREAT**, THE **MOTHER OF HARLOTS** AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.'

Here we see the name of the great harlot, <u>Babylon The Great</u>. We first see mention of Babel [Babylon] in <u>Genesis 11</u>, where God confounded the languages of the people and caused the people to go into <u>confusion</u>, not being able to understand one another.

The word Babel in the Hebrew actually means confusion, Genesis 11:9. STRONGS #H894

In addition, we see that in the Books of the Old Testament, Babylon was a primary enemy of Israel, *God's people*, of which, it was later destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar and led into slavery and captivity. As it is in the natural, so it is in the spiritual, God's people in these last days, *Spiritual Israel*, are called to come out of Babylon and be joined to His Kingdom, **Revelation 18:1-5**. Here, in the Book of Revelation, Babylon is symbolic and not literal and represents that threefold union of apostasy headed by the system of Roman Catholicism, with its **religious confusion** and it is the main antagonist of God's remnant people in these last days, *Spiritual Israel*. It is interesting to note that Babylon does not only consist of Roman Catholicism, as evidenced by the fact that **the harlot has daughters**. These daughters also represented as women, [*Churches-those who profess the name of Christ]* are symbolic of all the other fallen churches in the world today who profess to serve the one true God, however they have also been made drunk on the wine of the great whore. They hold to tradition rather than Bible truth, they reject the Law of God and say it has been nailed to the cross and teach their members that the Law of God cannot be kept, when this is not Biblical. They hold on to the teachings of the Papacy, their *mother*, and as a result are also fallen.

'The Protestant churches that were born from Roman Catholicism in the sixteenth century failed to fully sever their relationship with their harlot mother. Instead of completing the Reformation, they fell into apostasy along with the mother, teaching many of their mother's false doctrines such as the sacredness of Sunday, the immortality of the soul and an eternally burning hell. The book of Revelation clearly teaches that the daughters will be as anxious to join church and state as is their mother. In fact, the daughters will help the mother recover the power she lost at the end of the 1260 years.' Pastor Stephen Bhor

"Babylon is said to be 'the mother of harlots.' **By her daughters must be symbolized churches that cling to her doctrines and traditions and follow her example** of sacrificing the truth and the approval of God, in order to form an unlawful alliance with the world." E.G. White, The Great Controversy, pp. 382, 383

Says the second angel, 'Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.' Revelation 14:8

She is fallen, is fallen, because not only is the great whore in apostasy but also are her daughters. The third part of this threefold union is represented by the civil powers upon which the harlot rules, for she commits fornication



with the kings of the earth. Therefore, in its totality, <u>Mystery Babylon is made up of the Papacy [Roman Catholicism]</u>, the <u>Daughters [the fallen Protestant Churches]</u> and the <u>Dragon [the Civil Powers of the world being used by Satan.]</u> Revelation 16:13

vs.6

'I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marvelled with great amazement.'

This woman, the great whore, is a persecuting power, for she is drunk with the blood of God's people. She persecutes them unto death using the kings of the earth, first during the 1,260-year rule of Papal Supremacy which lasted from the year 538AD-1798AD and again when the mortal wound of the Papacy has been healed and it again rules the nations before the Second Coming of Jesus, Revelation 13:3.

Daniel in his vision of the same time period says the following:

'I was watching; and the same horn was **making war against the saints**, **and prevailing against them**, until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favour of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.' Daniel 7:21-22

'It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.' Revelation 13:7

Here the harlot is referred to as the little horn power and we are told that it will persecute God's people and will prevail in this persecution until the time comes for the saints to possess the Kingdom of God at the 2nd Coming. This great whore sits upon the kings of the earth and rules over all the nations and tribes and tongues and people and all those whore are not sealed by the seal of the living God in their foreheads shall be deceived and shall worship this fallen system.

vs.7-8

'But the angel said to me, "Why did you marvel? 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. The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.'

John wonders and marvels with great amazement at this persecution and the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, but why?

'Was the persecution of the people of God any strange in his [John's] day? Had he not seen Rome launch its most fiery anathemas against the church, himself being in banishment under its cruel power at the time he wrote? Why, then, should he be astonished, as he looked forward, and saw Rome still persecuting the saints? The secret of his wonder was this: All the persecution he had witnessed had been from pagan Rome, the open enemy of Christ. It was not strange that pagans should persecute Christ's followers. But when he looked forward and saw a church professedly Christian persecuting the followers of the Lamb, and drunk with their blood, he could but wonder with great amazement.' Uriah Smith: Daniel & the Revelation

• The Beast which John saw 'was', it once ruled, 538AD-1798AD.



- At this point in time in John's vision which he is receiving, the Beast 'is not', it is no longer ruling at this time. This indicates that John in his vision is at a point in history after the beast received its mortal wound [after losing its power as a ruling kingdom in 1798] until when that mortal wound is about to be healed, Revelation 13:3.
- The Beast shall also <u>'ascend out of the bottomless pit'</u>. This represents the time which is soon to come to past when the mortal wound shall be healed, and Papal Rome shall yet receive the same power to rule the nations of the world as she once had during the 1,260 years of Papal Supremacy. This will come about from the 'Beast out of the earth [also called the daughters and the false prophet], who shall do all in its power to help the Papacy [the Beast out of the sea], to regain its power, thus healing its mortal wound. Revelation 13:11-12,14,3; Revelation 16:13, Revelation 19:20.

Because of this, all the wicked shall wonder and follow after the beast, choosing to obey its commands and traditions and disregarding the Holy Law of God. Ultimately, they will observe the Sunday law when it is passed firstly in America and subsequently when the other nations follow suit, as a result they shall receive the mark of the Beast.

vs.9-10

'Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time. The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.'

At this time one of 'plague angels' proceeds to explain to John the symbols which he saw in the vision which he received.

We see that the beast has seven heads. The seven heads are seven mountains and also seven kings.

In Bible prophecy, a mountain, just like a beast is symbolic of a Kingdom.

'Now it shall come to pass in the latter days, that **the mountain of the LORD's house**Shall be established on the top of **the mountains** and shall be exalted above the hills.
And all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, "Come, and **let us go up to the mountain of the LORD...**" Isaiah 2:2-3

'Behold, I am against you, O **destroying mountain**, who destroys all the earth," says the LORD. "And I will stretch out My hand against you, roll you down from the rocks and make you a **burnt mountain**." **Jeremiah 51:25**

Also see: **Ezekiel 17:22-23; Daniel 2:35,43,44**

We also noticed earlier that this beast has seven heads, just like the *Beast out of the sea*, in **Revelation 13** and the *Great red dragon* in **Revelation 12**. In addition to this, we see that the *four great beast* of **Daniel 7** all had a total of seven heads. I would suggest you go back and read the previous mentioned chapters.



What this shows us is that this final beast upon which the great harlot sits, is the same apostate power as seen in all the previous chapters just mentioned which satan uses to persecute God's people throughout the ages. It is always a unification of world powers uniting with the church to persecute God's faithful Christians who adhere to true Bible based religion and the Commandments of God. This is always satan's strategy and he will use it again these last days.

Roman Catholicism, which is the final representation of this beast in these last days is a composite of all the previous world powers which satan has used in times past to persecute God's faithful people.

Five of these heads have fallen, one is and the other has not yet come.

As this prophecy of the beasts is first given in **Daniel 7**, we must use the period of Daniel as a template in order to understand this part of the Revelation.

These seven heads (mountains) most probably represent the 7 Monarchies or Kingdoms which have oppressed God's people throughout history from the days of Daniel until the end of time.

Five have fallen:

Babylonian Empire [the lion with eagle's wings of Daniel 7]
Medo-Persian Empire [the bear with 3 ribs in its mouth of Daniel 7]
Greek Empire [the leopard with 4 heads of Daniel 7]
Pagan Roman Empire [the great dragon like beast of Daniel 7]
Civil Powers of Europe controlled by the Papal Roman Empire [the beast out of the sea of Revelation 13]

One is:

The King of the South (State Atheism) [Daniel 11]- Atheism & secularism, first seen in the nation of France and further spread to the other nations of Europe, inflicted the deadly wound of the Papacy. Thus, a new power made open war against the Word of God. See study notes on **Revelation 11**. The Spirit of The King of the South is still alive and well today- atheism, LGBT movement, abortion movement, widespread immorality, and so on.

One is not yet come:

The Civil power of the United States under apostate Protestantism [the lamb like beast of Revelation 13]. By its decrees, it shall cause the deadly wound of the Papacy to be healed, to bring morality back to the world, because of the calamities that are falling upon it. Ultimately, this will lead to Sunday being enforced and the Sabbath of the Lord to be outlawed.

We are also told by John that 'The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven.' We identified this beast as the Papal Roman Empire at the end of time, shortly before the second coming of Jesus, which shall use the nations of the earth to persecute God's commandment keeping people once again like it did during the dark ages.

Therefore, this 'beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven', represents a <u>revived</u> <u>Papal Roman Empire</u> allied with the kings of the entire world as we shall come to see shortly in the next few verses. He is the eighth king, yet he is also part of the seven as he existed before.



vs.12-14

"The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast. These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful."

Here we see more symbolism which is further explained by the angel to John.

This end time beast upon which the harlot sits and rules the nations has 10 horns.

The Bible shows us that a horn in the Bible can represent a king or a kingdom, but it can also represent power and strength. See: Daniel 7:24, 8:5,21,22 and Zechariah 1:18,19

In the context of this verse, we will see that it represents the nations of the world. From the study of Scripture, we can see that 10 in the Bible is used to denote something in its entirety or fullness.

For e.g. The entirety of God's Law is His 10 Commandments. We see in Matthew 25, that those who profess the name of Christ in these last days are referred to as the 10 virgins and in Luke 19, the Church is referred to as the 10 servants who shall receive their due reward at the return of a 'certain nobleman'. See: Exodus 20, Matthew 25:1-13, Luke 19:11-27.

Therefore, we see here that these ten kingdoms here represent the entire powers and kingdoms of the world which shall all give their power and authority to the beast [Roman Catholicism], they shall all be of 'one mind'.

'For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth...' Revelation 16:14

'And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth." Revelation 17:18

Whereas the seven heads are **consecutive** [they all follow each other in the stream of time], the ten horns are **contemporaneous** [they all rule at the same time]. This is made clear by the fact that all ten horns will rule (when they receive the kingdom) simultaneously on the seventh head when the beast resurrects from its death wound [Revelation 17:12].

The kings of the earth shall unite with the beast in making war against the Lamb, in the person of His saints. They shall not literally make war with Christ as He is in the Heavenly Sanctuary, however, because Christ dwells in our hearts by His Holy Spirit, they shall be indirectly making war with Him through the persecution and martyrdom of His people. We must remember that this great harlot was 'made drunk by the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs.'

However, despite this, we shall be victorious for the beast and the false prophet [the lamb like beast] shall be destroyed and thrown into the lake of fire, and the remnant of the wicked who shall remain shall be slain with the sword of him who sits upon the white horse. Revelation 19:20-21

We shall overcome for we have Jesus on our sides, let us not fear for perfect love cast out all fear.

vs.15

'Then he said to me, "The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.'



Here the description of the waters which was mentioned earlier is given. The great harlot sits/rules upon the multitudes of the wicked.

vs.16-17

'And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. For God has put it into their hearts to fulfil His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled.'

A time will come when all the nations of the world shall see that they have been deceived by the great whore. They will hate the beast, and will withdraw their support from the beast, both nations, and the wicked. It is at this time that **the great river Euphrates shall be dried up** and the fall of Babylon shall commence. She shall be left naked and desolate for her sins have reached unto Heaven and God hath remembered her iniquities.

Cries the angel with a strong voice, 'Babylon is fallen, is fallen.' Revelation 18:2

As it was in the days of literal Babylon, when the literal Euphrates river was dried up just before its demise, so in the days of Spiritual Babylon, when the symbolic waters are dried up then shall it's destruction be nigh.

'Now then, <u>O harlot</u>, hear the word of the LORD! Thus says the Lord GOD: "Because your filthiness was poured out and your nakedness uncovered in your harlotry with your lovers, and with all your abominable idols, and because of the blood of your children which you gave to them, surely, therefore, I will gather all your lovers with whom you took pleasure, all those you loved, and all those you hated; <u>I will gather them from all around against you and will uncover your nakedness to them, that they may see all your nakedness</u>. And I will judge you as women who break wedlock or shed blood are judged; I will bring blood upon you in fury and jealousy. I will also give you into their hand, and they shall throw down your shrines and break down your high places. They shall also strip you of your clothes, take your beautiful jewellery, and leave you naked and bare.' Ezekiel 16:35-39

Observe what the Lord says through the prophet Ezekiel to Israel in the days of their apostasy and harlotry when they departed from God to foreign Gods, thus 'breaking wedlock'. The same applies to the Church in these last days, led by the Papacy, they have departed from the one true God and committed harlotry with many lovers and fornication with the kings of the earth and lo, she shall be left naked and desolate.

vs.18

'And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.'

The woman is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth and that woman is the Roman Catholic Church.

She is the great harlot who commits fornication with the kings of the earth, breaking the marriage vows between her and the one true God. She is the great harlot who has made the inhabitants of the earth drunk on the wine of her false teachings and doctrines and as a result she shall be cast into the lake of fire along with her daughters.



Let us therefore come out from amongst them and be separate says the Lord. It is time to flee from Babylon lest we are destroyed with her.

'Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities'

Revelation 18:4-5

