

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

NOVEMBER 24TH, 2024 // REVELATION

THE PROSTITUTE (REVELATION 17:1-2) A FLASHBACK FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

John is receiving a new vision that will carry us through 21:8. However, the start of this new vision takes a different perspective of the events that unfolded in Chapters 15 and 16.

- One of the 7 angels who was seen previously pouring out the wrath of God pauses what John is seeing and explains in greater detail what will happen.

A TALE OF TWO CITIES

In this vision, John sees two women who personify two cities: Babylon the Great and The New Jerusalem.

- The 1st city, symbolized by a **“notorious prostitute,”** is called Babylon the Great. It will be the last great city of the Earth and the epicenter of all technology, culture, and pleasure.

THE SECOND CITY CONTRASTS THE FIRST

We learn more about the 2nd city, known as The New Jerusalem in Ch. 21. This city, personified as a “pure bride,” is a depiction of God’s people redeemed and submitted to Him.

- Babylon was seated on the Euphrates River. It was the pinnacle of civilization after the flood (Genesis 11:1-9), the essence of everything evil, and of opposition to God’s people.

GRAPHIC IMAGERY

One of the 7 angels invites John to see the **“judgment of the notorious prostitute who is seated on many waters.”**

- **“Many waters”** means all people of the Earth, not just **“the kings of the Earth,”** will participate in this **godless, seductive culture that delights in the perversion and destruction of God’s creation.**

INCREASINGLY PERVERSE AND IDOLATROUS

The kings of the Earth will lead those who dwell on the Earth to commit **“sexual immorality with her”** and **“become drunk on the wine of her sexual immorality.”**

- This shows that **humanity will become “intoxicated” on perversity, corruption, immorality, greed, and hatred of God and His people.**

DRUNK WITH BLOOD (REVELATION 17:3-6)

ANOTHER WOMAN IN THE WILDERNESS

John is carried away and sees another woman in the wilderness. The woman in Ch. 12 differs from this woman who is sitting on a scarlet beast (the Antichrist).

- Again, John points out that the beast was covered in blasphemous names, meaning that the Antichrist will utter blasphemous claims to divinity.

JOHN DIVERTS HIS ATTENTION FROM THE BEAST

John sees 7 heads and 10 horns on the beast but quickly has his attention drawn to the woman riding the beast and notices she is dressed in purple and scarlet and adorned with gold, jewels, and pearls.

- This doesn’t mean fashion and jewelry are bad, but that this culture will seduce with its outward beauty and decadence.

“SHE HAD A GOLDEN CUP IN HER HAND”

A golden cup was a sign of great wealth and power, but this cup was filled with **“everything detestable and...the impurities of her prostitution.”**

- This shows the true nature of evil by being alluring and beautiful on the outside but detestable on the inside (Genesis 3:6). **Sin has an attractiveness to it but will always end in destruction.**

A MYSTERY ON HER FOREHEAD

The three cryptic names give us more insight into this woman. **“Babylon the Great”** will be like the original and this city will create a global culture. **“Mother of Prostitutes”** means the seduction and pursuit of pleasure of this culture has been around in many cultures (Rome in John’s time), and she is the source and final embodiment of all the **“Detestable Things of the Earth.”**

SHE WAS “DRUNK WITH THE BLOOD OF THE SAINTS”

Not only does the woman persecute the saints and witnesses to Jesus, but she also becomes “intoxicated” with her persecution of the godly as a drunk does with wine.

- Just as the “Babylons” of the past have done, this final city of ultimate wickedness will also wage war against followers of Jesus.

THE WOMAN & THE BEAST (REVELATION 17:7-14)

“WHY ARE YOU ASTONISHED?”

John was **“greatly astonished”** at this vision, but the angel quickly addressed him, assuring him that he would explain the vision.

- The angel explains that the beast is the Antichrist—the final political leader who will lead the whole Earth astray during the last days. The beast **“that was, and is not, and is about to come”** is further blasphemy against Jesus.

DISCERNMENT OR DECEPTION

The beast rises out of the “abyss,” which in the 1st Century meant the home of demons. This has led some to believe that the Antichrist is not just influenced by the demonic but an actual demon with human appearance.

- V. 8 tells us that **those who are not Believers will be astonished by the beast’s apparent divine status.**

“THIS CALLS FOR A MIND THAT HAS WISDOM”

V. 9 uses the same language seen in Ch. 13 describing the mark of the beast. It is a subtle reminder to seek God’s wisdom to discern the “sign of the times.”

- **“The 7 heads are 7 mountains”** is understood in the context of the time it was written. In the 1st century, Rome was known for its 7 hills, so this is **symbolic language of the type of city this will be.**

7 HEADS ARE ALSO 7 KINGS

Most scholars agree that this represents 7 eras of powerful kingdoms that stood in opposition to God: The five that had fallen (*Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece*), the one that is (Rome), and the one yet to come (*the Antichrist’s final world empire*).

- V. 10 tells us that the 7th king “must remain for only a little while.”

THEIR RISE AND FALL

V. 11 is difficult but says the beast (the Antichrist) is the 8th king, which belongs to the 7th.

- This shows that the last kingdom (the 7th) will give all authority to the Antichrist to be king of the 7th kingdom and it will share characteristics of the previous empires. Just like the previous empires that stood in opposition to God, it is also going to be destroyed.

10 HORNS OF THE BEAST ARE 10 OTHER KINGS

This could possibly be in reference to the **“kings of the East”** in Ch. 16. This is a prophecy about some sort of global government as the 10 kings, who have yet to come into power, support the Antichrist for a short time (**“one hour”**), probably the last half of the tribulation.

- **They have “one purpose” to unite in battle against Jesus, but they will be conquered** (v. 14).

THE GREAT CITY (REVELATION 17:15-18)

“THE WATERS YOU SAW...”

The beast was previously explained to John, and here, the angel explains the woman riding the beast.

- The **“waters”** she sat on represent **“peoples, multitudes, nations, and languages,”** meaning that while the prostitute represents an actual city, she (the city) will **influence culture and lead astray all not marked by God as saved.**

THE GREAT CITY IS DISMANTLED

V. 16 takes an interesting turn as John is told that the 10 kings (“horns”) and the Antichrist (“beast”) hate the city, Babylon the Great (“prostitute”).

- This city and perverse culture will be brought to ruin by the one that influenced it, and she will become “desolate” and “naked” as everything is stripped away from her.

SATAN’S TRUE NATURE

The beast and the 10 kings will **“devour her flesh, and burn her up with fire”** which is a fitting end for an evil city/culture, and is also a foretaste of Hell that follows.

- Satan influences and uses people to destroy other people then eventually turns and destroys them. **Satan hates God and humanity and intends to steal, kill, and destroy** (John 10:10).

FOLLOWING THE BEAST LEADS TO BEING DEVoured

This great city and seductive culture literally existed to please the flesh and, in the end, will meet destruction.

- In v. 17, John is told by the angel that this whole scenario was orchestrated by God; that **He used evil to punish evil.** This should solidify in our hearts that **God is sovereign over everything.**

WHERE IS OUR RESIDENCE?

- Have we been seduced by the allure and attraction of this world?
- Do our actions show that we are citizens of Heaven or Babylon?
- We must make sure we are not seduced by her and take a stand against the perverse culture of our age with **love, servitude,** and by **telling people around us about Jesus Christ.**