# REVELATION

# Chapter 17

# Overview

John describes in highly metaphorical language a filthy religious prostitute.

### Intro to Babylon

- Most discussed subjects in the Word of God. It is referred to more than 260 times in Scripture.
- The destruction of Babylon was referred to in Revelation 14:8 and 16:9, but it is described in detail here in chapter 17 and 18.
- Chapter 17 emphasis is on religious Babylon. Babylon is both a city and a system. Chapter 17 is about the system and chapter 18 is about the city.
- Babylon had its beginnings with the building of the Tower of Babel in Genesis 10:10; 11:1-9. It later flourished under Nebuchadnezzar.
  - Ancient historian, Josephus, points out they built the tower of "burnt brick, cemented together with mortar, made of bitumen, that it might not be liable to admit water." In other words, it suggests that disbelieved God's promise that God would never again send a global flood, and they made their tower waterproof to keep from drowning!

# Learning from Babel...Foundations of Man-Made Religion

- Rejection of God's promises faithlessness
- Rebellion against God's commands disobedience
- Refusal of God's grace legalism

Babylon is a man-made construction of a heavenly city on earth.
 Babylon means "the gate of God". It is a center for man made power and religion.

### Theories for what Babylon represents...

- This Babylon is to be physically rebuilt on the banks of the Euphrates River at the head of the Persian Gulf.
- This Babylon presents a system of life and culture whose essential principal is alienation from God. They believe that it could represent a great city anywhere in the world.
- Used for a system. Babylon could represent systems like Wall Street and Madison Avenue. Although they are actual streets, they also stand for the financial and advertising enterprises of our nation.

# 1. THE INFORMATION IN REGARD TO THIS PROSTITUTE (17:1-6)

- A. Her corruption (17:1-2, 4)
- 1. She commits adultery with both potentates and people of this earth (17:2).
- 2. She says blasphemous things about God (17:4b).
- 3. She is utterly materialistic (17:4a).
  - Shows riches that are controlled by the harlot. Why does the wicked control the wealth?
- **B. Her compromise** (17:3). She has aligned herself with the godless political systems of this world.
- C. Her caption (17:5): On her forehead is written, "Babylon the Great, Mother of All Prostitutes and Obscenities in the World."
  - Symbolic meaning of God's people greatest enemy.
- D. Her cruelty (17:6). She is drunk with the blood of martyrs she has murdered.
  - Persecution and killing for refusal to submit to manmade laws of worship. Can we even see police brutality in connection and even relationship of increased violence?

### Meanings

- What does the harlot represent?
  - Those who worship something other than the true God, or have once worshiped God, but later turned away from God.
- What does the beast represent?
  - Those governments which use their powers in order to persecute God's people.
- Harlot riding this beast?
  - It shows a close relationship between the great harlot and the beast. These powers join forces and help each other control the people of the earth.

# II. THE INTERPRETATION IN REGARD TO THIS PROSTITUTE (17:7-18)

- A. What John sees (17:7): He sees a woman riding a beast with seven heads and ten horns.
  - Seven heads-7 refers to completion, Complete civil authorities and empires, kings who symbolize kingdoms
  - 10 horns-10 refers to harmony, perfection, The ten horns refers to complete number of kingdoms which are to have power with the beast.
- **B. What John is told** (17:8-18)
- 1. The woman represents a corrupt religious system depicted by the city of Babylon (17:8).
- 2. The beast represents various kings (17:9).
- a. Some have already ruled (17:10-11).
- b. One king will be the most powerful (17:13).
- c. Ten kings are yet to rule (17:12).
- d. These kings will destroy the woman but will themselves be destroyed by the Lamb (17:14-18).

### Summary of this horrible harlot

- Her influence will be worldwide (17:1)
- This influence will be used to corrupt the entire earth (17:2)
- She will possess vast and unlimited wealth (17:4)
- She is drunken with the blood of God's saints (17:6). Only eternity will reveal how many tens of millions of believers have been cruelly murdered in the name of religion.
- She teams up (for awhile) with the beast (antichrist) (17:3,7)
- She has her name written on her forehead (17:5). In the time of John it was common for prostitutes to wear their name in jewelry upon their forehead, thus advertising their trade.
- She may have her headquarters in Rome (17:9). Rome sits upon seven mountains.

# The Destruction of the World's Religious System

#### Historically

- Tower of Babel
- Nimrod (Noah's wicked and apostate grandson) marries an evil and demonic woman like himself. Her name was Semerimus. She institutes a system of religion where she and her son were the objects of worship. Drawing the attention to Genesis 3:15, God's promise of a future Savior. This city was destroyed in 539 BC by the Persians.
- The theme has spread throughout history. Mother and child.

#### Currently

• NT writers describe latter day activities (Paul-2 Timothy 3:1-5, 4:3,4; Peter-2 Peter 2:1; John-Revelation 3:15-17)

#### Futuristically

Religious systems and control of politics. The systems of government will not engage.
 Is politics pure? Doom will be met.

## **Important Truths**

- Religious activity feels full and alive but is, in truth, empty and dead.
- Satanic strategy appears to be impressive and effective but is, in truth, impotent, and deceptive.

Common False Statements of Self Reliance or Self Condemnation	True Biblical Statements of Reliance on God's Grace and Mercy
If I'm a good person, I'll go to heaven when I die.	We have eternal life not because of anything we do but because of what Jesus did on our behalf (Romans 5:8; Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 2:8-9)
The Lord holds back blessings because of my lack of faith or my disobedience.	The Lord's sole motivation for blessing is His own grace. He delights in blessing His children with gifts they don't deserve and can't earn (Luke 11:11-14; Ephesians 3:14-21)
When I go through tough times or suffer, it must be because of my sin or faithlessness.	Though we might experience hardship as part of God's loving discipline to lead us to maturity (Hebrews 12:5-11), God never condemns or punishes us for sin (Romans 8:1, 28). Because we live in a world corrupted by sin (Romans 8:20-23), we will experience difficult circumstances, but because of Christ we will never be punished for our sins.
If I strive to live a holy, blameless life, God will protect me from harm.	The Lord never promised that we would not be harmed (James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 4:12-14); nevertheless, He promised that everything that happens will be for our good (Romans 8:28) and that nothing can ultimately separate us from His love and salvation (Romans 8:38-39)

#### TRUST IN GOD

- God wants us to rely on Him in all things, rather than on our own strength.
  He will provide all our needs.
- John 15:3-5 You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me. "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.
- Proverbs 3:5-8 Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. Don't be impressed with your own wisdom. Instead, fear the Lord and turn away from evil. Then you will have healing for your body and strength for your bones.
- Philippians 4:19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.