



---

# THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

## LESSON 11 – The Scarlet Harlot

---

### LESSON OBJECTIVE

The goal of this lesson is to understand the interpretation of chapter 17 of the Revelation, with particular emphasis on the destruction of religious Babylon.

---

### NOTES ON REVELATION 17

**17:1** “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:”

This chapter is, at the same time, one of the most powerful and most debated chapters in the Bible. We are introduced to, figuratively, a woman who has been called by many, “The Scarlet Harlot.” The most difficult and debated issue will be her identification. Also, as this and the next chapter unfold, we will see that both are about Babylon. Babylon’s fall was pronounced in Revelation 14:8, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” Here in this chapter we get part of the details of Babylon’s sin. One of the seven angels that poured out the Vial Judgments calls John to him to show him the “judgment of the great whore....” This chapter is not about her career but her judgment. Specifically, we will be able to say that this chapter is about the judgment of religious Babylon, whereas chapter 18 will present the judgment of commercial or economic Babylon. From these verses about her judgment, which occurs during the Tribulation, we learn about her career throughout history up to this time. Note that she sits on many waters. The waters are specifically identified in 17:15 as (in my view) the Gentile nations of the world. We will see further support for the interpretation in the verses ahead. Note that she is called a “whore” (Greek *porne*). This same Greek word is often translated “harlot,” and the Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint) typically translates the word harlot into the same Greek term, *porne* (from which we get the English term pornography). Strong’s defines the word as, literally, a harlot, but also it can mean an idolater. What Strong’s is pointing out is that the term is often used in the Bible figuratively; it is translated harlot, but the meaning is idolater. We can make a stronger statement than this. The term is used often in the Bible, and it is God’s term for an apostate. The ordinary, run of the mill pagan is never called a harlot, but the person who worshipped the true living God and turns away to worship false gods is a harlot. Let me defend this view with several citations (Isaiah 1:18-21; Jeremiah 2:20; Jeremiah 3:1, 6, 8; Ezekiel 16:15-17, 20, 25-26, 28; Micah 1:6-7; Hosea 1:2).

**17:2** “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.”

The harlot has committed fornication with the “kings of the earth.” The use of “fornication” here is figurative, indicating apostasy. The harlot has practiced apostasy with the kings of the earth, that is, Gentile rulers. She has also practiced apostasy with the “inhabitants of the earth,” that is, those under the rule of the Gentile rulers. The inhabitants were made drunk with the “wine of her fornication,” that is, they indulged themselves in apostasy. The

picture beginning to form here is that the harlot represents apostate religion, religion that at one time was true worship of God, but turned astray to idolatry.

**17:3** “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.”

John is “carried away in the spirit.” This is similar to John’s statement in Revelation 4:2 that “immediately I was in the spirit,” which preceded his vision of the throne room in heaven. John is in a state that allows him to not only see, but also interact, within visions of other places. He has been taken to the wilderness where he sees a woman riding the beast with seven heads and ten horns on one head and the names of blasphemy on all the heads. Although Satan (the dragon) was similarly described, we are told here that she rides the “beast,” which from its description is the beast from the sea described in Revelation 13 and identified (in the notes there) as the Anti-Christ. The meaning of this picture is unmistakable. Since the woman rides the beast, the point is that she controls the beast. This point is extremely important to understanding the career of the woman, and we will build on it more fully in the notes to follow.

**17:4** “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:”

The woman is wearing purple and scarlet clothing, hence the name she often goes by is the “Scarlet Harlot.” In the ancient world, purple and scarlet clothing were most expensive, a point further confirmed by her array of jewelry. She has a gold (again, she has lavish wealth) cup full (not half full) of her wicked deeds. Those deeds are abominations, that is, offenses against God, and filthiness, that is, sin, and these offenses are in connection with her “fornication,” that is, spiritual apostasy. We will see shortly further detail about the specific nature of her apostasy and sin.

**17:5** “And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.”

In the Bible, names of people are often significant as they tell us about the person or the person’s ministry. For instances, Daniel means “God is judge,” Haggai means “festive,” and Nahum means “comfort,” and all of these are appropriate to the contexts of the books they wrote. The woman’s name is Babylon the Great. In the Greek text, there are no quotation marks; it may well be that what her forehead reads is “Babylon the Great” and the rest, “mystery ... the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth” is John’s explanation. In either event, the point is the same. God gives us significant clues to understanding the career of the woman. She is Babylon, not so much the literal city, but all that the city stands for throughout the Bible that is opposed to God. Recall that Babel (Genesis 11) is where formal religious idolatry had its genesis. They built the tower for worship purposes, and the idolatry that was a way of life in Babel would become the heritage of Babylon. We see some of this reflected in Jeremiah 51, which addresses God’s overthrow of the city in 539 B.C. (see, e.g., Jeremiah 51:7, 44, 47, 52) and is a precursor for this final destruction of Babylon and all her wickedness. In Daniel 3, Nebuchadnezzar would have the people bow to the statue and worship. Later, in Daniel 5, his grandson Belshazzar uses the utensils stolen from the Temple in Jerusalem for his party. Babylon can be identified with idolatry, but there is more. She is the “mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.” Babylon (Babel) is where formal idolatry began, and it continued through history and gave rise (birth) to daughter harlots, more idolatrous religions that spread beyond

Babylon to the rest of the earth, and this idolatry is an abomination to God. We are getting closer to being able to put together the complete picture of the harlot's career, but God still has some more details to provide.

**17:6** "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."

She is not only idolatrous religion, but she has persecuted the true worshipers of God. She has not done this in small degree, but as it were, has become drunk on martyrs' blood. She has killed millions throughout history. John marvels at what he sees, and he has questions.

**17:7** "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."

Recall that this is one of the angels that poured out one of the seven Vial judgments on the earth. John is asked why he marvels at the Scarlet Harlot. As we often see in apocalyptic literature, God shows the symbols *and* their meaning. The angel readily agrees to tell John the explanation of the woman and the beasts she rides.

**17:8** "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."

The beast existed, then did not exist, and then ascends out of the bottomless pit (or the abyss) and goes into perdition (i.e., destruction). The unsaved people on the earth during the Tribulation marvel at the beast because of his actual or apparent death and resurrection ("that was, and is not, and yet is"). The beast has seven heads, and they are sequential kingdoms in time. For instance, the first head was Egypt, which was a major Gentile power that dominated Israel but not in John's day; the country still exists, but its role as the world superpower with dominance over Israel had long since ended. The same could be said of the second head (Assyria), the third head (Babylon), the fourth head (Medo-Per-sia), and the fifth head (Greece). And yet now the beast "yet is," that is, John sees another incarnation of the beast (Anti-Christ).

**17:9** "And here *is* the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth."

Prior to this point, I have focused my defense of the identification of the seven heads of the beast on Daniel 2 and 7 primarily, not wanting to jump ahead in the Revelation. But here, the angel specifically identifies the heads of the beast as mountains, a figure indicating a kingdom, which point is made explicit in the next verse (e.g. Daniel 2:35, Amos 6:1). The fact that the woman is sitting on seven mountains has given rise to a very common interpretation that she is the Roman Catholic "Church". Rome is well known in history as the City on Seven Hills. I do not believe she is the Roman Catholic "Church" *only*, although in part she is the Roman Catholic "Church." I will address this point in much more detail below. We still need a few more details to build the picture of the Scarlet Harlot's career. But note for now that God says seven mountains, not seven hills, and God does not misspeak.

**17:10** "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."

The mountains are kings. Note here that in the Bible, the idea of a king and a kingdom are sometimes readily interchanged, and we should not understand the use of “king” here to necessarily mean specific individuals (see, e.g., Daniel 8:3-8, 20-22). This latter point is crucial. Some commentators force this to refer to seven individuals, usually taken to be Roman emperors. From this understanding, the verse says that five Roman emperors (beginning with Augustus) have come and gone, one is alive, and a future emperor will come. From the view, then, that John is writing during the reign of the sixth Roman emperor, they argue that the book was written just after Nero’s reign and before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. While this has some superficial appeal, the better view is that God is indicating kingdoms, which view is also consistent with Daniel 2 and 7. Understanding the heads as kingdoms, the five which are fallen are, in this order: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece. The sixth king/kingdom (“one is”, that is, presently exists when John writes) is obviously Rome. At the time John writes, Rome is the world Gentile power that dominates Israel, and yet a seventh head that will do likewise “is not yet come,” that is, the seventh kingdom is future from John’s standpoint. That seventh kingdom, which I argued in the notes for Chapter 12 and 13 is the revitalized or new Rome based on Daniel 2 and 7, will only continue a “short space.” This is consistent with the idea that the New Rome basically is a world power during the Tribulation, a short space compared to the much longer reigns of the first five heads of the beast. We will return to the career of the Scarlet Harlot below, but note at this point that if she controls the beast, and the beast has had many incarnations in the form of these various Gentile powers, then she has been around a long time.

**17:11** “And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.”

The beast (Anti-Christ) is of the seven. This confirms that the seven heads are to be understood as kingdoms, not individual kings, for otherwise, it makes no sense to say that the Anti-Christ is of the seven. The point is that the Anti-Christ is a part of one of the seven heads; his rise to power comes through one of these kingdoms (recall, he is the beast from the sea, and the sea represents Gentile nations). Since the first six heads are kingdoms that have come and gone, the Anti-Christ must come out of the seventh head, the New Rome. The seventh head is a kingdom, but Anti-Christ is himself (as an individual king) so powerful that he is like an eighth head. And the Anti-Christ goes to destruction (recall, this is a judgment chapter, not a career chapter).

**17:12** “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.”

If the seventh head were an individual king, then this verse would not make sense. Contextually, the best sense is that the seventh head is a kingdom, and the ten horns are its ten kings (see parallel use of a beast with horns in Daniel 8). These kings do not have a kingdom until they receive it for “one hour,” that is, a short time, along with the Anti-Christ. Recall from Daniel 7 that the Anti-Christ was an eleventh horn called the “little horn,” and in fact, he destroys three of the ten kings in order to secure his power over the seventh head or New Rome.

**17:13** “These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.”

This ten king (understand, ten country) federation is allied with the Anti-Christ (“one mind”) and they pledge their power and strength (money, military) to the Anti-Christ.

**17:14** “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.*”

The Anti-Christ and his allies wage war with Jesus (the Lamb), and unsurprisingly, they are defeated. The reason: Jesus is Lord of lords and King of kings. He has absolute power, for he created the universe, and so easily overcomes Anti-Christ and his forces. Those that identify with the Lamb (Christians) are complimented.

**17:15** “And he saith unto me, *The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.*”

Now, back to the Scarlet Harlot. She sat on waters, and the waters are Gentile nations (“peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues”). Obviously, she cannot be the literal city of Babylon, but instead, what is in view here is her influence and control over the Gentile nations of the world. Now, we essentially have all the pieces so that we can put together the puzzle and understand her career. Verse 18 further explains that she reigns over the kings of the earth, which is an explanation of her riding the beast; she has the real political authority over the Gentile nations. We can now turn to the question of who the Scarlet Harlot is. Let’s start with who she is not. Often, she is identified as the Roman Catholic “Church,” primarily because she rides the seven-headed beast, and the heads are seven mountains. Rome was known in the ancient world as the City on Seven Hills, and it is not hard to see how people would identify the beast as Rome and the harlot as the Roman Catholic “Church,” which certainly controlled the Roman Empire for many years. But this interpretation does not quite capture the whole picture. First, note that it is the City on Seven Hills, not seven mountains. Second, we are told in verse 10 that the mountains are really kingdoms, not literal mountains. Let’s begin by listing the clues we have thus far:

- She is a harlot (spiritual apostasy)
- She sits on many waters (Gentile dominance)
- She sits on the beast with seven heads and ten horns (dominates the beast)
- Arrayed in purple and scarlet, and decked with jewels (has great wealth; indicates that her motivation is the acquisition of wealth and power)
- She is Babylon
- She is the mother of all harlots (all other harlots start with her)
- She is the mother of abominations (against God; connected with idolatry)
- Drunk with blood of saints (she kills the saints)

Just as the beast has seven heads, which represent sequential Gentile superpowers from Egypt to the New Rome, the Scarlet Harlot has existed throughout history; like the beast, which culminates in Anti-Christ, the woman will also culminate during the Tribulation in a “superchurch” worldwide apostate religious system. The beast has taken on many forms throughout history, and so has the woman. She represents religious systems that (1) have turned away from God, (2) are motivated by wealth and power, (3) are predominantly Gentile, (4) exercise political power, and (5) use that political power to martyr God’s true worshippers. In short, she is “state” religion with all of its evils, and she was born in Genesis 11:1-9. Note in this familiar passage that the building of the idol was corporate activity undertaken by the governmental leadership, Nimrod (Genesis 10:8-10). Throughout history, whenever the worship has joined with politics, apostasy, corruption, and violence follow. In Babel, their goal was not true worship, but to make a name for themselves (i.e., acquisition of wealth and power) (Genesis 11:4). This sort of thing has repeated itself many times

through history, at Babylon and elsewhere. It is beyond the scope of these notes to address the apostasy of Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon, but I do want to make some remarks about Christian apostasy. To be sure, the apostles laid a foundation of solid local churches. They were not without problems (e.g., Corinth), but their ecclesiology (doctrine of the church) was sound. Each local church governed itself, and was therefore responsible for its own actions. But a trend began to set in during the second century that would lead to the heretical concept of a universal church, and in turn the idea that the universal church is the kingdom, which in turn means political dominance. Dr. Earl Radmacher summarizes this historical development:

“It has been seen that during the first four centuries there gradually developed a trend toward external unity. The motivation for such an emphasis was perfectly natural. Ancient Christianity faced the confusion of views in interpreting its fundamental facts. There needed to be a common faith. This sense of need of a common faith was steadily productive of a catholic consciousness, an instinct for unity of all Christian forces. And unity always raises a demand for centralization. As early Christians drifted more and more away from an appreciation of the spiritual values of their religion and toward tangible expression and externalism, they came more to gravitate around an earthly center of control.

...First, was the appearance of the monarchical bishop to whom fellow elders were obedient. Difference of opinion on questions of doctrine and consequent confusion resulted in turning to the dominant person among the elders for a final verdict. Thus, the bishop came to be regarded as the custodian of the faith...

Secondly, there was the development of the ecumenical domination. It was inevitable that the bishops of the great cities should gain pre-eminence in influence and prestige.... Thus, the pattern of an episcopacy for the whole church was being developed. Hand in hand with this growth of the episcopacy was the blossoming of the universal consciousness and practical disappearance of the concept of the local congregation as related to Christ.

The final step, then, was the development of Roman supremacy. The concept of a universal church, which began to find expression in Ignatius and was definitely advocated by Irenaeus, demanded a centralizing of authority and control. What more obvious place could be chosen than Rome, the capital of the empire...[Augustine] became the first to distinguish between an invisible church within the one, holy, visible, catholic church, outside of which is neither possibility of salvation nor knowledge of the truth. The local churches were no longer conceived of as separate units, but as part of the universal church. They were only regarded as true churches as long as they were loyal to the catholic church as a whole. Thus, four centuries produced a complete reversal of emphasis as to the local church.”

Earl D. Radmacher, *The Nature Of The Church*, Schoettle Publishing Co. (1996), pp. 50-51. The above quotation is not to suggest that all churches followed Rome. Though beyond the scope of this note to explore the independent churches in any detail, be aware that history bears out that Christ always had a testimony in true, legitimate local churches. Now, once the concept of a universal church seated at Rome was well-accepted, the next step was a growing political power within the universal church, corruption, and violence, especially violence against Christians who would take a stand for issues like the independence of the local church, baptism by submersion following a profession of faith, and

separation of church and state. The Baptist historian, John T. Christian, summarizes this development:

“A forced religion is no religion at all. Unfortunately, the successors of Constantine from the time of Theodosius the Great (385-95) enforced the Christian religion to the exclusion of every other; and not only so, but they enforced so-called orthodoxy to the exclusion of every form of dissent, which was punished as a crime against the State. Absolute freedom of religion and worship is a fact logically impossible on the church-state system. The government of the Roman empire was too absolute to abandon supervision of religion, so that the edict of Constantine was only temporary. Further, the rising power of episcopacy fitted into the monarchical system. Many of the bishops and monks were “men in black clothes, as voracious as elephants, and insatiably thirsty, but concealing their sensuality under an artificial paleness.”

John T. Christian, *A History Of The Baptists*, Bogard Press (1922) p. 41. History under Catholic influence has been a bloody history marked by corruption and sin (especially sexual sin, a fact that has not changed). Details go beyond the scope of this note, but we would be remiss if we did not recognize one of the largest of Catholicism’s evils, the Crusades. These were wars fought, ostensibly, on God’s behalf (as if He needed help) to reclaim the holy land; the truth is that corrupt popes, aware of their shrinking power, found a way (like Hitler) to rally people around an ideology of hate and murder that is totally contrary to Jesus’ teaching. But what of the great reformers? Did they not put down the woman on the beast? Many people today have invested a great deal of time and money to cover up the truth; the mother of harlots had daughters, new state religions that simply replaced the old one (Catholicism) in certain geographical areas, but a harlot is still a harlot. A few examples will illustrate the widespread problem. First, consider an example from Germany (where Luther, the famous reformer, had separated himself from his Catholic roots):

“Several other leaders were imprisoned and condemned at Augsburg, amongst whom were Gross, Hut and Snyder. The ‘Martyrology’ says, that many of the Baptists there were branded and one had his tongue cut out. Haus Koch and Leonard Meyster were put to death in 1524, and Leonard Snyder in 1527. Hut had refused to bring his babe to baptism in 1521.... The circular which called for his capture described him as ‘a very learned man;’ his conduct shows him to have been brave and even daring. In his prison he kindled straw to burn the beam and loosen the chain which bound him, and was suffocated with the effort. His corpse was brought out amidst the ringing of the city bells and burnt on the public square, and his ashes thrown into the Wertach. In 1527 the Dukes of Bavaria issued decrees for the arrest and imprisonment of all Baptists. This document was posted in the market-places and read from all state pulpits. Duke William was very zealous, and wrote a fully description of one poor offender to the Bishop of Passau: ‘His name is Anthony, born at Salzburg, a last-maker, a big, heavy fellow, thirty years old, lame in his right hand, wears a red cap, left Augsburg without a coat, will stop with Hermann Kheil, a brother, on the fish market.’ Soon the prisons were crowded with Baptists, many died in prison, others were branded, burned or drowned in the Isar; but few left the Falcon Tower unpunished. At Augsburg it was made the duty of one of the city councilors to be present at the opening and closing of the gates, so that no Baptist should enter. Sender, a monk of the city, kept an account of the daily outrages practiced upon them: January 12, 1528, twelve driven out of the city; 13<sup>th</sup>, thirty were imprisoned; 18<sup>th</sup>, ten

perpetually exiled; 19<sup>th</sup>, twenty driven out of the city; 22<sup>nd</sup>, seven scourged out of town; 23<sup>rd</sup>, three men and five women driven out; 24<sup>th</sup>, one refusing to take the oath was branded on the cheek. The barbarous crusade ran on till February, when a general sweep was made. At Easter two hundred were surprised at the house of Ducher, as they were holding a 'love-feast;' then Seebold preached and his sermon cost him his life, for he was slaughtered April 25<sup>th</sup>, his congregation being driven in all directions; a little later twelve were slain at Augsburg."

Thomas Armitage, *A History of the Baptists, Volume 1*, The Baptist Standard Bearer, Inc. (orig. 1890), p. 392. And likewise, in the Netherlands reformation, torture and death was given to those not conceding to the authority of the new state church:

"The rack was the court of justice; the criminal's only advocate was his fortitude ... The victim, whether man, matron or tender virgin, was stripped naked and stretched upon the wooden bench. Water, weights, pullies, screws, all the apparatus by which the sinews could be strained without cracking, the bones crushed without breaking, and the body racked exquisitely without giving up the ghost, was not put in operation. The executioner, enveloped in a black robe from head to foot, with his eyes glaring at his victim through holes cut in the hood which muffled his face, practiced successively all the forms of torture which the devilish ingenuity of the monks had invented. The imagination sickens when striving to keep pace with these dreadful realities."

*Ibid.*, p. 412. And in Switzerland, with the hearty approval of the great reformer Zwingli:

"The civil authorities of Zurich set an example of severity scarcely surpassed by Protestants, and of the deplorable execution of the sentence many examples are on record. The persecutors delighted to fit the penalty, as they cruelly judged it, to the fault, and so they put the Baptists to death by drowning.

Upon the very day of the decree of the Senate of Zurich against the Baptists, Zwingli, who evidently was greatly pleased with the action of the Senate, wrote to Vadian: "It has been decreed this day by the Council of the Two Hundred (of Zurich) that the leaders of the Catabaptists shall be cast into the Tower, in which they formerly lay, and allured by bread and water diet until either they give up the ghost or surrender. It is also added that he who after this is dipped shall be submerged permanently."

Christian, p. 122. There is seemingly no end to the historical examples from the reformation until now of the atrocities done by various state "churches," daughter harlots. These are various manifestations of the Scarlet Harlot, who will culminate during the Tribulation as a global "superchurch" religious system. As we have already seen, that will be a time of great persecution of Christians. So who will she manifest herself as during the Tribulation? What we are witnessing in our day is a breakaway from the recognized authority and sufficiency of the word of God. People are seeking signs and experiences and feel good "MacSermons" rather than the truth of the Word of God. Groups still riding the coattails of Christianity, meeting in buildings that say "church" on them, are not really churches. They are ecumenical, political movements (NOTE: Christianity is not a political or social movement.) that have abandoned the gospel message as the only means of salvation for sinners, abandoned the inerrancy of Scripture, and abandoned a Biblical view of who Jesus is. In place of this, they have various political and social agendas. The groups are slowly finding common ground in their growing ecumenicity, and with this, a growing political power base. We have liberal alliances like the World Council of Churches. So who will the



woman be during the Tribulation? She is a conglomeration, in my opinion, of several apostate groups that will include Catholicism, many protestant groups, Mormons, etc., and some Baptist groups that have liberalized and abandoned sound doctrine for political aspirations. The real Christians were raptured at the beginning of the Tribulation, but these counterfeits remain, and they continue to go through their religious motions. But the real motivation of these religiously unsaved is money and power. And we must tie all of this in with the rise of Anti-Christ and the False Prophet. It seems likely that in the ultimate culmination of the woman, the worship of Anti-Christ and the leadership of the False Prophet are embraced, or at least accepted, for a time. What we are seeing is a single, universal religion.

**17:16** “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.”

The ten horns are the ten kings that form the alliance with Anti-Christ. They do not like the Scarlet Harlot because they have no interest in being dominated by her, or sharing their political power with her. Fitting to who she is, the beast rebels against the rider, and the Scarlet Harlot is made naked and desolate. Her wealth and authority is taken from her and she is devoured and burned (a fitting death for the one who caused so much martyrdom). We cannot be dogmatic, but it is likely that the destruction of religious Babylon, the apostate worldwide superchurch, happens in the latter half of the Tribulation, perhaps near the end. This destruction probably occurs before the destruction of economic Babylon in chapter 18. This does not mean that the religious followers end their apostasy, but they cease to be a corporate political power. Having manipulated the harlot to aid their rise to power, the kings turn on her and destroy her and the destruction, which really flows from the hand of God through these wicked rulers, is total and complete.

**17:17** “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.”

The ten kings think it is their own idea, but in reality, God uses them as pawns to fulfill his judgment of the Scarlet Harlot. Similarly, God allowed them to make an alliance with Anti-Christ. This is permitted to continue until “the words of God shall be fulfilled,” that is, until the end of the Tribulation (the words of God indicating the completion of all of the judgments).

**17:18** “And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.”

John is plainly told that the woman – Babylon – reigned over the kings of the earth. She is apostate state religion.

---

## COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY

Henry M. Morris, *The Revelation Record*, Tyndale House Publishers (1983)

---

## RECOMMENDATION

It is highly recommended that each person taking this course read chapter 17 for this lesson and chapter 18 for next week in Henry M. Morris' commentary.