

REVELATION CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

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- I. **Revelation 17:1 (HCSB)** *Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me: “Come, I will show you the judgment of the notorious prostitute who sits on many waters.*
- A. “prostitute”
1. the whore is false Israel
 - a. the faithless church
 2. the rest of the book contrasts the whore (Jerusalem) with the faithful bride (New Jerusalem)
 3. already readers of Rev been told of a “harlot-city” which was apostate Jerusalem
 - a. Scriptures
 - i. Rev 11:8 “And their dead bodies [two prophets] will lie in the street of the GREAT CITY which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, WHERE ALSO THEIR LORD WAS CRUCIFIED.”
 - i. **Revelation 14:8 (HCSB)** ⁸ A second angel followed, saying: “It has fallen, Babylon the Great has fallen, who made all nations drink the wine of her sexual immorality, which brings wrath.”
 - ii. Rev 16:19 ¹⁹ “And the GREAT CITY was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great BABYLON came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.”
- B. “waters”
1. from Jeremiah’s description of Babylon in Jer 50-51
 - a. **Jeremiah 51:13 (HCSB)** ¹³ You who reside by many waters, rich in treasures, your end has come, your life thread is cut.
 - b. refers to Euphrates which ran through the middle of the city
 - i. and to canals surrounding the Euphrates
 2. **Revelation 17:15 (HCSB)** ¹⁵ He also said to me, “The waters you saw, where the prostitute was seated, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and languages.
 - a. Chilton (p438) “Jerusalem could truly be portrayed as seated on ‘many waters’ (i.e., the nations) because of the great and pervasive influence the Jews had in all parts of the RE before the destruction of Jerusalem. Their synagogues were in every city, and the extent of their colonization can be seen in the record of the Day of Pentecost, which tells us that ‘there were Jews staying in Jerusalem, devout men, from every nation under heaven.’” (Acts 2:5)
- II. **Revelation 17:2 (HCSB)** ² *The kings of the earth [rulers of the land?] committed sexual immorality with her, and those who live on the earth [land?] became drunk on the wine of her sexual immorality.”*
- A. “kings of the earth”
1. expression taken primarily from Isaiah’s prophecy against Tyre
 - a. Isa 23:15-17 ¹⁵ “And it shall come to pass in that day, that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king: after the end of seventy years shall Tyre sing as an harlot.
¹⁶ Take an harp, go about the city, thou harlot that hast been forgotten; make sweet melody, sing many songs, that thou mayest be remembered. ¹⁷ And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that the LORD will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall COMMIT

FORNICATION WITH ALL THE KINGDOMS OF THE WORLD UPON THE FACE OF THE EARTH.”

2. throughout her history, Israel had constantly made religious & political alliances w/ powerful heathen kingdoms
 - a. Scr
 - i. Ezek 16:26-29 “²⁶ Thou hast also committed FORNICATION with the EGYPTIANS thy neighbours, great of flesh; and hast increased thy WHOREDOMS, to provoke me to anger. ²⁷ Behold, therefore I have stretched out my hand over thee, and have diminished thine ordinary *food*, and delivered thee unto the will of them that hate thee, the daughters of the Philistines, which are ashamed of thy lewd way. ²⁸ Thou hast played the WHORE also with the ASSYRIANS, because thou wast unsatiable; yea, thou hast played the HARLOT with them, and yet couldest not be satisfied. ²⁹ Thou hast moreover multiplied thy FORNICATION in the land of Canaan unto CHALDEA; and yet thou wast not satisfied herewith.”
 3. at the very moment the promised Bridegroom Jesus arrived, Israel was fornicating with Caesar
 - a. John 19:15 “¹⁵ But they cried out, Away with *him*, away with *him*, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.”
 4. “earth”
 - a. Chilton: it’s not “land” here, but earth
 - i. but note an alternate interpretation
 - A/ one could translate the “rulers of the land”
 - 1/ they one could say the POLITICAL leaders of the land committed acts of immorality with the RELIGIOUS leaders
 - a/ the religious leaders being the whore of Babylon
- B. “drunk”
 1. **Jeremiah 51:7 (HCSB)** ⁷ Babylon was a gold cup in the LORD’s hand, making the whole earth drunk. The nations drank her wine; therefore, the nations go mad.
 - a. the original Babylon also had a golden cup of wine making the nations drunk
- C. “immorality”
 1. how “harlot” (v1) used in the OT
 - a. exclusively used for a city or nation that has abandoned the Covenant and turned toward false gods
 - i. except for two times, always used of faithless Israel (see under v2)
 - A/ only two cities in OT outside of Israel which said to do this were Tyre and Ninevah
 - 1/ [**cites?]
 - 2/. both had been in covenant with God
- B/ listed
 - 1/ Tyre
 - a/ converted to the worship of the true God
 - b/ contracted with Solomon to build the temple (I Ki 5:1-12; 9:13; Amos 1:9)
 - 2/. Ninevah converted under the ministry of Jonah (Jon 3:5-10)

- b. implication
 - i. the whore is someone who violates a covenant with God
 - A/ i.e., Israel
 - 1/ Scripture
 - a/ Isa 1:21 “²¹ How is the FAITHFUL CITY become an HARLOT! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers.”
 - b/ Jer 2:20-24 “²⁰ For of old time I have broken thy yoke, *and* burst thy bands; and thou saidst, I will not transgress; when upon every high hill and under every green tree thou wanderest, playing the HARLOT.²¹ Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me? ²² For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, *yet* thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord GOD. ²³ How canst thou say, I am not polluted, I have not gone after Baalim? see thy way in the valley, know what thou hast done: *thou art* a swift dromedary traversing her ways; ²⁴ A wild ass used to the wilderness, *that* snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure; in her occasion who can turn her away? all they that seek her will not weary themselves; in her month they shall find her.”
 - c/ Jer 3:1-3 “¹ They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the HARLOT with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the LORD. ² Lift up thine eyes unto the high places, and see where thou hast not been lien with. In the ways hast thou sat for them, as the Arabian in the wilderness; and thou hast polluted the land with thy WHOREDOMS and with thy wickedness. ³ Therefore the showers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain; and thou hadst a WHORE'S forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed.”

III. **Revelation 17:3 (NASB)** *And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns.*

- A. “wilderness”
 - 1. the true bride had been forced there
 - a. but the false bride, the whore, went there voluntarily
 - 2. symbol of cursing, demons, desolation
- B. “scarlet,” “blasphemous names,” “seven heads and ten horns”
 - 1. woman intimate with both the Dragon (Satan) and the Sea Beast (RE)
 - a. Dragon
 - i. “scarlet”
 - A/ cf. “red dragon,” 12:3
 - ii. “seven heads and ten horns”
 - A/ cf. “red dragon having seven heads and ten horns” (12:3)
 - b. the Sea Beast
 - i. “seven heads and ten horns”
 - A/ cf. “ten horns and seven heads,” Rev 13:1
 - ii. “blasphemous names”
 - A/ cf. “on his heads were blasphemous names” (Rev 13:1)

iii. “many waters” (v1)

A/ implies beast which had come out of the Sea

iv. Chilton

A/ “Israel was dependent upon the RE for her national existence and power; from the testimony of the NT there is no doubt that Jerusalem was politically and religiously ‘in bed’ with institutionalized paganism, cooperating with Rome in the crucifixion of Christ and the murderous persecution of Christians.”

C. “on”

1. the fact that the harlot is on, and thus SEPARATE from, the Sea Beast proves she’s not RE
2. the whore’s throne, her source of power, is the RE

IV. Revelation 17:4 (NASB) *The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality,*

A. “purple,” “scarlet,”

1. whore is sitting as a queen
 - a. **Revelation 18:7 (NASB)** ⁷ "To the degree that she glorified herself and lived sensuously, to the same degree give her torment and mourning; for she says in her heart, 'I SIT *as* A QUEEN AND I AM NOT A WIDOW, and will never see mourning.'
2. two of the colors of the high priests vestments
 - a. vestments of high-priest were gold, blue, PURPLE and SCARLET
 - i. **Exodus 28:6 (HCSB)** ⁶ “They are to make the ephod of finely spun linen embroidered with gold, and with blue, purple, and scarlet yarn.

B. “gold,” “precious stones,” “pearls”

1. loud, bawdy, tacky clothes of a harlot
2. in imitation of the adornment of the True Bride
 - a. Ezek 16:11-14 “¹¹ I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck. ¹² And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head. ¹³ Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment *was of* fine linen, and silk, and brodered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom. ¹⁴ And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it *was* perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord GOD.”
 - i. the Old Israel, when faithful, was beautifully adorned

C. “abominations”

1. unclean food
2. word often used in connection w/ worship of false gods
 - a. Scr
 - i. Deut 29:17 “¹⁷ And ye have seen their ABOMINATIONS, and their idols, wood and stone, silver and gold, which *were* among them:)”
 - ii. Ezek 5:11 “¹¹ Wherefore, *as* I live, saith the Lord GOD; Surely, because thou hast defiled my sanctuary with all thy detestable things, and with all thine ABOMINATIONS, therefore will I also diminish *thee*; neither shall mine eye spare, neither will I have any pity.”

- D. “unclean things of her immorality”
 - a. the signified thing is obvious, but what is the actual symbol?
 - i. blood of the saints
 - A/ cf 17:6
- E. “gold cup”
 - 1. original Babylon described as a gold cup
 - a. Jer 51:7 “⁷ Babylon *hath been* a golden cup in the LORD'S hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad.”
 - 2. J. Massyngberde Ford, *Revelation*, p288
 - a. “a parody of the high priest on the Day of Atonement wearing the vestments especially reserved for that occasion and holding the LIBATION OFFERING.”

V. **Revelation 17:5 (HCSB)** *On her forehead a cryptic name was written: **BABYLON THE GREAT THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES AND OF THE VILE THINGS OF THE EARTH.***

- A. “forehead”
 - a. a common technique John uses in Rev
 - i. who has a name on their forehead
 - A/ saints (3:12, 7:3, 14:1)
 - B/ followers of the Beast (13:16,17)
 - b. **Exodus 28:36 NASB** "You shall also make a plate of pure gold and shall engrave on it, like the engravings of a seal, 'HOLY TO THE LORD.' **37** "You shall fasten it on a blue cord, and it shall be on the turban; it shall be at the front of the turban. **38** "It shall be on Aaron's FOREHEAD,..."
 - c. J. Massyngberde Ford, *Revelation*, p288
 - i. “However, instead of the sacred NAME UPON HIS BROW the ‘priest-harlot’ bears the name Babylon, mother of harlots and the abominations of the earth...”
- B. “Babylon”
 - 1. in OT, epitome of rebellion against God
 - a. Scr
 - i. Gen 11:1-9
 - A/ the tower of “Babel” is the tower of Babylon
 - ii. Jer 50-51
- C. “mystery”
 - 1. the identity of the whore was a mystery
 - a. until it was further explained to John
 - i. **Revelation 17:7 NASB** “⁷ And the angel said to me, "Why do you wonder? 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.”
 - 2. note that some translations (e.g., ASV) have “Mystery Babylon the Great” as part of the name
 - a. and the reason Babylon is thus called seems to be a mystery to most commentators

VI. **Revelation 17:6 NASB** *and I saw the woman DRUNK with the BLOOD OF THE SAINTS, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. And when I saw her, I wondered greatly.*

- A. “drunk”
 - 1. the blood of the saints was the wine of her abominations and unclean things of her immorality
 - a. the ultimate unclean food

B. “blood of the saints”

1. Jews killed all the prophets, Jesus, and the early apostles, prophets, and evangelists
2. RE wanted to crush Xy as well as Judaism
 - a. Sulpitius Severus, quoted in Michael Grant, *The Twelve Caesars*, 1975, p228
 - i. “Titus is said, after calling a council, to have first deliberated whether he should destroy the temple, a structure of such extraordinary work. For it seemed good to some that a sacred edifice, distinguished above all human achievements, ought not to be destroyed, inasmuch as, if preserved, it would furnish an evidence of Roman moderation... But on the opposite side, others and Titus himself thought that the temple ought specially to be overthrown, in order that the religion of the Jews and of the Christians might more thoroughly subverted; for that these religions, although contrary to each other, had nevertheless proceeded from the same authors; that the Christians had sprung up from among the Jews; and that, if the root were extirpated, the offshoot would speedily perish.”

VII. **Revelation 17:7 NASB** *And the angel said to me, “Why do you WONDER? I shall tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that CARRIES her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns.”*

A. “wonder”

1. i.e., “marvel”
 - a. angel is not rebuking John for not knowing, but for marveling
 - i. all whores look beautiful at the point of seduction
A/ and the power, the majesty, the glory, the beauty of Rome and Jerusalem wd be marvelous to behold
2. cf Rev 13:3 “ And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.”

B. “carries”

1. Jerusalem could not have carried out its persecutions without the Roman Empire’s assistance

VIII. **Revelation 17:8 NASB** *The beast that you saw WAS AND IS NOT, AND IS ABOUT TO COME up out of the ABYSS and to go to destruction. And those who dwell on the EARTH [LAND] will wonder, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast, that he WAS AND IS NOT AND WILL COME.*

A. “was and is not and will come”

1. “was”
 - a. RE strong from Julius Caesar till death of Nero in 68
2. “is not”
 - a. RE came close to disappearing in the “year of the four emperors” (69)
3. “will come”
 - a. Vespasian returned from the seige of Jerusalem and restored the empire
 - b. options
 - i. Roman Empire eventually destroyed by God (“go to destruction”)
 - ii. Roman Empire was destroyed after Nero killed himself (68 AD)

B. “abyss”

1. sea beast is so closely tied to Satan, that the beast is said to come out of the abyss where Satan is
 - a. Satan is king of the Abyss
 - i. Rev 9:11 “¹¹ And they had a king over them, *which is* the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue *is* Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath *his* name Apollyon.”
 - b. Satan killed the witnesses in 11:7
 - i. Rev 11:7 “⁷ And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.”

C. “land” or “earth”?

1. p’y earth
 - a. because all in RE would wonder about the RE’s miraculous recovery
 - i. not just Jews in Israel

IX. Revelation 17:9-10 NASB “*Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are SEVEN MOUNTAINS on which the woman sits, (v10) and they are SEVEN KINGS; FIVE HAVE FALLEN, ONE IS, the other has NOT YET COME; and when he comes, he must remain A LITTLE WHILE.*”

A. “seven mountains”

1. this obviously identifies the scarlet (Sea) beast as RE
 - a. further symbolism: “seven kings”
 - i. “five have fallen”
 - A/ the first five emperors of the RE
 - 1/ listed
 - a/ Julius Caesar
 - b/ Augustus Caesar
 - c/ Tiberius
 - d/ Caligula
 - e/ Claudius
 - ii. “one is”
 - A/ Nero
 - 1/ he was ruling as John was writing Revelation
 - iii. “not yet come”
 - A/ Galba
 - 1/ the seventh Caesar who reigned for less than seven months
 - a/ cf. “a little while”
 2. Wikipedia, “The Seven Hills of Rome”
 - a. “the **Seven Hills of Rome** east of the Tiber form the heart of Rome. The Seven Hills of early Rome were the Cermalus, Cispius, Fagutal, Oppius, Palatium, Sucusa, and Velia, figuring prominently into Roman mythology, religion, and politics; the original city was held by tradition to have been founded by Romulus on the Palatine Hill (*Collis Palatinus*). The other six are now the [Aventine](#) (*Collis Aventinus*), the Capitoline (*Capitolinus*), the Quirinal (*Quirinalis*), the Viminal (*Viminalis*), the Esquiline (*Esquilinus*), and the Caelian (*Caelius*).”

B. cf. Rev 13:1ff “¹ And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore. Then I saw a beast coming up out of the SEA, having ten horns and SEVEN HEADS, and on his horns *were* ten diadems, and on his heads *were* blasphemous names.”

X. **Revelation 17:11 NASB** *And the beast which was and is not, is himself also an EIGHTH, and is ONE OF THE SEVEN, and he goes to destruction.*

A. “eighth”

1. the end of Galba (#7) meant that many thought RE was finished
 - a. the Xn might have thought persecution from the Romans was over
 - i. to the contrary, the beast himself lives on
2. a symbol for the rest of the Caesars of the RE
 - a. starting with Otho (#8)
 - b. they live on, but...
 - i. they are slated for eventual “destruction”
A/ so the church must be patient until then
1/ RE eventually died out fifth century
 - c. since #7 (Galba) only to last for “a little while” (v10), readers might think thus RE finished
 - i. but no, the same beastly empire will survive
A/ starting with Otho (#8)
B/ but the good news is, the RE will go to destruction

B. “one of the seven”

1. the rest of the Roman emperors have same beastly nature as the first seven

XI. 17:12 *“And the TEN horns which you saw are ten kings, who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive AUTHORITY as kings with the beast for ONE HOUR.*

A. “authority”

1. rulers are subject to, and allied with, the RE

B. “ten”

1. Chilton
 - a. a symbol of “manyness,” numerical fullness
 - i. *totality* of allied or subject kings who aided Rome in persecution of Christianity
2. refers to the literal ten provinces of Rome
 - a. Italy, Achaia, Asia, Syria, Egypt, Africa, Spain, Gaul, Britain, Germany
 - b. problem
 - i. the number of provinces changed dramatically over the course of the Empire
A/ answer
1/ Strabo tells us that Augustus divided the whole empire into 20 provinces (Poole)(Gill)
a/ he reserved 10 provinces to govern himself
i/ gave the other 10 to the people to govern
A/ this explains “authority *with* the beast”

C. “received”

1. how can a king “not yet receive a kingdom”
 - a. answer
 - i. haven’t received an autonomous kingdom they can rule on their own

D. “one hour”

1. DLT: the constituent nations of RE didn’t last nearly as long as the RE itself

XII. **Revelation 17:13,14 NASB** *“These have one purpose and they give their power and authority to the beast. (v14) These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will OVERCOME them, because He*

is the Lord of Lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful.”

A. “overcome”

1. Jesus wins!
 - a. how backwards things are in the spiritual world
 - i. a Lamb overcomes a Beast
2. That Christianity conquered the RE is an elemental fact of world history

XIII. **Revelation 17:15 NASB** *And he said to me, “The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.*

A. “waters”

1. the sea is a common symbol for the pagan world
 - a. Scriptures
 - i. Isa 17:12-13 “¹² Woe to the multitude of many people, *which* make a noise like the noise of the SEAS; and to the rushing of NATIONS, *that* make a rushing like the rushing of mighty WATERS! ¹³ The NATIONS shall rush like the rushing of many WATERS: but *God* shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind.”
 - ii. Isa 57:20-21 “²⁰ But the WICKED *are* like the troubled SEA, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. ²¹ *There is* no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.”

B. “sits”

1. the Jews had great and pervasive influence everywhere in RE
 - a. that is, until AD 70
 - b. evidence
 - i. synagogues were in every city
 - A/ Harnack: 7% of the RE were Jews at time of Christ
 - B/ intertestamentary period saw huge Jewish missionary operations
 - ii. the Septuagint opened up the Jewish religion to the West
 - A/ because now the West could understand the Jewish Scriptures, written in Greek
 - iii. had colonized all over the RE
 - A/ Acts 2:5 “⁵ And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of EVERY NATION UNDER HEAVEN.”

XIV. **Revelation 17:16 NASB** *“And the TEN HORNS which you saw, and the beast, these will HATE the harlot and will make her DESOLATE and naked, and will EAT HER FLESH and will burn her up with FIRE.*

A. “hate”

1. just like the Romans and the Jews were once at peace, so were the sea beast and the whore
 - a. and just like the Romans turned on the Jews in 66, so the beast turns on the whore

B. “desolate”

1. cf. Scriptures
 - a. Matt 24:15 “¹⁵ When ye therefore shall see the abomination of DESOLATION, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)”
 - b. Mk 13:14 “¹⁴ But when ye shall see the abomination of DESOLATION, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains:”

c. Luke 21:20 “²⁰ And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the DESOLATION thereof is nigh.”

C. “eat her flesh”

1. another whore, Jezebel, had her flesh eaten by dogs (I Ki 21:23-24; 2 Ki 9:30-37)

D. “burn”

1. just like a priest’s daughter was to be “burned with fire” (Lev 21:9)

E. “ten horns”

1. intense hatred felt towards Jews by neighboring nations

a. Tacitus

i. Arab auxiliaries of Titus were filled w/ animosity towards the Jews

b. Josephus, ii.xviii.

i. wholesale massacres of Jews in Middle East just before Jewish War
A/ whole Jewish population of Caesarea were massacred in one day
B/ Scythopolis, upwards of 13,000 Jews were butchered
C/ atrocities against Jews in Ascalon, Ptolemais, Tyre
D/ Alexandria

1/ worst massacre here

a/ 50,000 corpses lay in ghastly heaps in the streets

F. “fire”

1. just like Jesus foretold

a. Matt 22:2-7 ² The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, ³ And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. ⁴ Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and *my* fatlings *are* killed, and all things *are* ready: come unto the marriage. ⁵ But they made light of *it*, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: ⁶ And the remnant took his servants, and entreated *them* spitefully, and slew *them*. ⁷ But when the king heard *thereof*, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and BURNED UP THEIR CITY.”

XV. **Revelation 17:17 NASB** “*For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by GIVING their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God should be fulfilled.*”

A. “giving”

1. it is a sin for the nations to give their power to Rome

a. but “God put it into their hearts”

i. God is NOT the author of evil

A/ but he always uses the desires of evil people to carry out his judgments

1/ nothing evil that happens in this world is out of his control

XVII. **Revelation 17:18 NASB** “*And the woman whom you saw is the GREAT CITY, which REIGNS over the KINGS OF THE EARTH.*”

A. “great city”

1. shows the harlot is Jerusalem, which is called the “great city”

a. Rev 11:8 “⁸ And their dead bodies *shall lie* in the street of the GREAT CITY, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.”

- b. Rev 16:19 “¹⁹ And the GREAT CITY was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.”
- B. “kings of the earth”
 - 1. Chilton, p442
 - a. “It is perhaps this verse, more than any other, which has confused expositors into supposing, against all other evidence, that the Harlot is Rome.”
 - i. this is the main preterist split
 - A/ the-whore-is-Jerus prets vs. the-whore-is-Rome prets
 - 2. problem
 - a. how can Jerus wield this kind of political power over all the kings of the earth?
 - i. Chilton’s answer
 - A/ Rev not about politics, but about a spiritual kingdom
 - 1/ “Jerusalem *did* reign over the nations. She *did* possess a Kingdom which was above all the kingdoms of the world. She had a covenantal priority over the kingdoms of the earth. Israel was a Kingdom of priests (Ex 19:6), exercising a priestly ministry of guardianship, instruction, and intercession on behalf of the nations of the world. When Israel was faithful to God, offering up sacrifices for the nations, the world was at peace; when Israel broke the Covenant, the world was in turmoil. The Gentile nations recognized this...”
 - B/ Scriptures Chilton uses to show Gentile nations recognized Israel as priest
 - 1/ I Ki 10:24 “²⁴ And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart.”
 - 2/ Ezra 1:1-2 “¹ Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and *put it* also in writing, saying, ² Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which *is* in Judah.”
 - C/ Josephus
 - 1/ “This celebrated place... was esteemed holy by all mankind”(v.i.3)
 - 2/ cf. v.ix.4; v.xiii.6
 - 3/ the Jewish rebels’ halting of daily sacrifices for the Emperor was the single event which finally precipitated the Roman war against the Jews (ii.xvii.2-4
 - ii. translate “king” (basileus) as “prince” or “commander” and “earth” as “land”
 - A/ this makes Jerusalem the leader over the princes of Israel
 - 1/ thus solving the problem

B/ support

- 1/ Crosswalk lexicon def'n of "basileus"
 - a/ leader of the people, prince, commander, lord of the land, king
- 2/ Act 4:26,27 "²⁶ 'THE **KINGS** OF THE EARTH TOOK THEIR STAND, AND THE RULERS WERE GATHERED TOGETHER AGAINST THE LORD, AND AGAINST HIS CHRIST.' ²⁷ "For truly in this city there were gathered together against Thy holy servant Jesus, whom Thou didst anoint, both **HEROD** and **PONTIUS PILATE**, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel,
 - A. Herod and Pontius Pilate here are explicitly called kings
 1. even though they were only rulers of subdivisions of Israel

C/ problem

- 1/ possibly contradicts Rev 17:2, where "kings of the earth" is RE
 - a/ Rev 17:2 "² with whom [i.e., the harlot] the kings of the earth committed *acts of immorality*, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality."
 - i/ one could translate the "rulers of the land"
 - A/ they one could say the POLITICAL leaders of the land committed acts of immorality with the RELIGIOUS leaders
 - 1/ the religious leaders being the whore of Babylon

C. "reigns"

1. John identified the harlot as a CURRENT phenomenon
 - a. "reigns" is PRESENT tense
 - i. hard to say that John wrote the book AFTER the destruction of Jerusalem