

*The Book Of*  
**REVELATION**  
**THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS**  
*Revelation 17:1-18*

## Introduction

The book of Revelation is a series of visions

- Given to the apostle John, the last surviving apostle, by the Lord
- With accompanying commentary by Jesus Christ and his angelic servants
- While he was incarcerated on the isle of Patmos

**Revelation 6-18** covers a period of time

- Immediately preceding the return of Jesus Christ
- It is seven years when the earth will experience great tremendous upheaval

There will be political upheaval

- Ten nation confederacy will be established in the first three and a half years
- Followed in the last three and half years, by a one world government
- Built on the remains of this confederacy, led by a single man, Antichrist

There will be economic upheaval

- Food supplies diminish in the aftermath of series of international disasters in the first 3½ years
- Necessitating the control of buying and selling by means of a new economic system in the last 3½ years
- This system will not be cash based
- This system will be through a mark that is received in the forehead or the right hand
- This mark is not only a means by which trade can occur
- It is also a means of identification and worship to the Antichrist and the power behind him, Satan

There will be religious upheaval

- The church of Jesus Christ will have been removed, leaving a spiritual vacuum
- This vacuum will be filled by two religious systems
- The first religious system
- Will occur in the first 3½ years
- It is a united world religion, symbolised by the Great Harlot in **Revelation 17**
- The second religious system
- Will occur in the last 3½ years
- It is a united world religion, administered by the False Prophet, that worships the Antichrist

Throughout these seven years

- A Jewish evangelistic team of 144,000 men will lead many to faith in Jesus Christ
- These tribulation saints will endure great persecution and death during this time
- As they will be opposed to the political, economic and religious systems of the tribulation

The visions John is receives are given in the form of

- Various groups of seven
- With interludes separating them

**Revelation 16** saw seven angels pour seven bowls filled with God's wrath on the earth

- This occurs during the final days of the Great Tribulation
- Come the seventh bowl we saw the end of the tribulation and the return of Jesus Christ

Instead of moving forward into the details of Jesus Christ return

- His establishing of a Messianic Kingdom
- His judgement of believers and unbelievers
- We are met with a final interlude in **Revelation 17 & 18**
- Which gives us more information about the political, economic and religious systems

- In operation during the tribulation
- And their judgement

**Revelation 17** talks about the religious system

**Revelation 18** talks about the economic system

- Throughout them both we see the political system at work
- The overarching name given to the political, economic and religious systems is, “*Babylon the Great*”

The name Babylon has caused many Bible students, commentators and teachers

- To debate whether this means the ancient city of Babylon will be rebuilt
- Some say, “Yes”, some say, “No”

At the core of the name, “*Babylon the Great*” is

- A sign directing the reader to the ancient city of Babylon and its forebear Babel
- As the source or “*mother*” of the political, economic and religious systems seen in the tribulation

## Religious Babylon

As we enter **Revelation 17**, we take a closer look at Babylon the Great – the religious system

### The Great Harlot

**Revelation 17:1-2**

*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 judgement of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth commit fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.”*

John was addressed by one of the seven angels

- Who we were introduced to in **Revelation 15**
- Who had poured one of the seven bowls of wrath

The angel says to John that he will show him “*judgement of the great harlot who sits on many waters*”

- The Great Harlot = Babylon the Great (Religious System)
- The Many Waters = Nations of the world

**Revelation 17** concerns God’s judgement of this religious system

- Called Babylon the Great
- That had international (or global) influence

This global influence is described as fornication which was committed with

- The Kings of the Earth (world leaders)
- The Inhabitants of the Earth (world population)

Fornication is unlawful sexual practices

- In Scripture is a picture of unlawful religious practices
- Often seen as idolatry which in the ancient world incorporate temple prostitutes and sexual rites

The Great Harlot making “*the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication*”

- Is really a picture of this religious system
- Seducing the world with its false religion

### The Scarlet Beast

**Revelation 17:3**

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

After John is addressed by the angel, being told what to expect

- Namely a vision of the judgement of the Great Harlot
- He is “*carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness*” by the same angel
- He is translated into the spiritual dimension to be given the vision

The vision commences with a woman sitting on a scarlet beast

- The Woman = The Great Harlot aka Babylon the Great (Religious System)
  - The Scarlet Beast = The Sea Beast aka Antichrist and his empire
- The Antichrist and his empire are inextricably linked  
i.e. the ruler perfectly embodies the spirit of the empire

The Woman is sitting on the back of the Scarlet Beast

- i.e. the religious system operates on the back of the Antichrist's empire
- i.e. it derives its authority from the world system
- i.e. it exerts a control over the world system

This Scarlet Beast, this world system, this empire under Antichrist, has three characteristics

1. It is "full of names of blasphemy"
2. It has "seven heads"
3. It has "ten horns"

### Names of blasphemy

- This is a political power that profanes the name of the true God
- The religious system that sits on the political power operates on the back of "names of blasphemy"
- It is a profane and deeply offensive religion to God

### Ten Horns

#### **Revelation 17:12**

*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.*

The Ten Horns

- Are ten kings (world leaders)
- Who form a ten nation confederacy (akin to the United Nations or the European Union)
- The Beast, the Antichrist, will be present in this confederacy
- The beast will derive his power from the ten kings

### Seven Heads

#### **Revelation 17:9**

*The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits.*

Seven Heads = Seven Mountains = Seven Empires

1. Egypt
2. Assyria
3. Babylon
4. Medo-Persia
5. Greece
6. Rome
7. Ten Nation Confederacy

The Great Harlot, this false religious system

- Is not only present during the first three and half years of the tribulation
- Riding on the back of the Scarlet Beast world system
- But has been present throughout history
- Riding on the back of the Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, Roman Empires
- There is a link between the religions all these empires practiced
- They summed up in the fornications of the Great Harlot

### The Adorned Woman

#### **Revelation 17:4**

*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 fornications.*

The woman is now described in more detail:

- She is clothed in purple and scarlet
- She is adorned with gold, jewels and pearls

- She is holding a cup full of abominations and fornications

This woman, the Great Harlot

- Is clothed in expensive clothing
- Is bedecked with expensive jewellery

Yet, the opulence that surrounds her appearance

- Is marred by the abominations in her hand
- The fornications she is engaged in

This is a picture of a high-end prostitute

- Who is clothed in rich refinery
- Nevertheless, is full of abomination and fornication

As you can dress up the woman as much as you like, she is still a prostitute underneath  
So you can dress up the religion as much as you like, it is still an abomination to God underneath

This religious system, is clearly well financed, by virtue of the clothes and jewellery

- It is still an abomination to God
- It is still a corrupt false religion

The abominations and fornications of this Great Harlot

- Are contained in a golden cup
- This is drawing on imagery laid down in the Old Testament

God's judgement on Babylon in **Jeremiah 51**, describes Babylon as a golden cup

**Jeremiah 51:7**

*Babylon was a golden cup in the Lord's hand, that made all the earth drunk. The nations drank her wine; therefore the nations are deranged.*

- As the world became intoxicated with the false religion of Ancient Babylon
- So the world will become intoxicated with the false religion of Babylon the Great

## The Mother of Harlots

**Revelation 17:5**

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

## The Source of False Worship

This Woman, this Great Harlot

- That is the religious system in the first three and a half years of the tribulation
- That sits on the back of the Beast (the Antichrist) and the ten-nation confederacy
- But has been present, sitting on the back of six former world empires
- Is now named as "*Babylon the Great*"

She is also given a second name, "*The Mother of Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth*"

- A mother gives birth to new life, is the source of new life
- This Great Harlot gives birth to, is the source of all harlotry and abominations on the earth
- i.e. all false religion and its abominations finds its source in Babylon the Great

## Babel's Empire

If we go back to the origins of Babylon at Babel in **Genesis 11**

- We see it was both a city and an empire under the man Nimrod
- He was an apostate who rebelled against the Lord
- He set himself up as God

It is stated in **Genesis 11:4**, that he said:

*"Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens"*

In this statement is the intent of Nimrod and the two systems founded in Babel

1. The city - The political/commercial system

## 2. The tower - The religious system

That which has its roots and origins in Babel has its ultimate expression in the Babylon the Great

### Babel's Religion

Let's consider the religious system founded in Babel

Nimrod was married to Semiramis

- It is said that Nimrod met with a violent death (due to a serpent)
- Such was the shock of the death of Nimrod, everyone wept for him
- It is said that Nimrod was resurrected as a Son, named Tammuz
- In so doing he crushed the head of the serpent

Tammuz, the son, was equal to Nimrod, the father

- Together with Semiramis formed a counterfeit trinity (father, mother and son)
- The divine son was depicted in the mother's arms
- Both mother and son were worshipped

Ezekiel is transported in the spirit to the temple, much the same as John was to the wilderness

#### **Ezekiel 8:12**

*So He brought me to the door of the north gate of the Lord's house; and to my dismay, women were sitting there weeping for Tammuz.*

### Mother & Son Worship

This mother and son worship has been in all major world religions

- The mother goes by various titles: Holy Mother, Alma Mater, Queen of Heaven
- The mother goes by various names: Rhea, Venus, Diana, Hera, Athena, Aphrodite, Isis, etc.
- The son goes by various name: Kronos, Ninus, Baal, Bacchus, Osiris, Dionysius, Marduk, etc.

Examples of this Mother and son worship are seen in:

- Babylon - Semiramis & Tammuz
- Buddhism - Madonna Guanyin
- Hinduism - Matrika
- Hinduism - Yasoda & Krishna
- Hittites - Arinna
- Egypt - Queen Ankhnes-meryre II and Her Son, Pepy II
- Egypt - Isis & Osiris (Osiris, Isis, Horus)
- Greece - Irene & Plutus
- Roman Catholicism - Madonna & Child

It follows that,

- The religion that was born in Babel
- Reached maturity in Babylon
- Then mutated into other religions
- Would have its hallmarks on the religions of the world

### Christmas

The Babylonian or Chaldean word for child was, "Yule"

- Yule became associated with the pagan worship of the son (in the mother and son)
- Yule was associated with Odin in Norse mythology
- Yule was the source of the Germanic religions
- His birth began to be worshipped on the 25<sup>th</sup> December

The Mother/Son cult in Egypt and other places

- Celebrated the birth of the son of the Queen of Heaven at the time of the winter solstice
- That was 25<sup>th</sup> December on the ancient calendar
- Part of this celebration consisted of bringing in the yule log on 24<sup>th</sup> December
- The following morning, a young evergreen/palm/fir tree was set up and decorated;
- Sacrifices were then placed under the tree.
- The day was celebrated with a great feast, which originally consisted of a boar's head or goose.

## Easter

- Derived from the pagan name for the goddess, Astarte or Ishtar
- In Babylonian religious tradition, the worship of the goddess

This worship incorporated the decoration of eggs

- Eggs were the symbol of new life
- With these eggs the Babylonians commemorated the death of Nimrod and his reincarnation as Tammuz

Began with a forty day fast, in the spring of the year

- This 'lent' of forty days can be found in the religions of Egypt, Assyria, Rome
- The festival saw the baking of cakes to the queen of heaven, with a cross on the top

## Baptismal Regeneration

In Babylonian religion, baptism via full immersion was required

- As an initiation to its religious rites
- With it carried the idea that being immersed in water will confirm on the participant a second birth

The Biblical teaching is that faith confirms on the person a second birth

- Baptism is the outward symbol of the inward act of faith
- Baptism without belief is just a bath

This baptismal regeneration is present not only in Babylon

- But down through the religions of Egypt, Hinduism, Greece, Persia, Rome
- Eventually finding a home in Roman Catholicism

## Other Religious Markers

- Idols
- Rosary / Prayer Beads (Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Bahai)
- The sign of the cross (Tau – Tammuz)

Babylon the Great

- The religious system of ten nation confederacy
- That has its spiritual origins in Babel and ancient Babylon
- Is the Mother of Harlots
- She has birthed all the pagan religions of the world

## Religious Persecution

### **Revelation 17:6**

*I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.*

The true nature of this woman, this religious system

- Is seen in her dealings with true believers in Jesus Christ
- She is responsible for the death and martyrdom of the saints
  
- As, she made the nations drunk on the wine of her fornications
- So, she makes herself drunk on the blood of the saints

One thing false religion hates, more than anything else

- Is the disciples and practitioners of true religion

God's faithful remnant has always faced persecution

- Cain slaying Abel
- Egypt seeking to slay the male children of Israel
- Assyria invading the kingdom of Judah under Hezekiah
- Babylon ordering the death of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego when they refused the pagan worship
- The false prophets opposing Jeremiah
- The Rabbis seeking to kill first Jesus, then His disciples
- Rome ordering ten separate persecutions of Christians

- Hindu's killing Christian pastors in India
- Islam killing Christian's in South Sudan
- The Spanish Inquisition

Behind them all, a false religion rooted in the Great Harlot, Babylon the Great

## John's Reaction

### **Revelation 17:6b-7**

*And when I saw her, I marvelled with great amazement. 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."*

NASB *"When I saw her, I wondered greatly."*

John's reaction to the woman is to marvel, be amazed, is wonder

- Greek literally is wonder with wonder
- Hence, *"marvelled with great amazement"*

The angel's reaction to John's reaction is critical

- *"Why did you marvel?"*
- i.e. don't admire her

The angel determines to explain to John two mysteries

1. Mystery of the woman
2. Mystery of the beast
  - Which carries the woman
  - Has seven heads
  - Has ten horns

## The Beast From The Abyss

### **Revelation 17:8**

*"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."*

NASB: *The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction.*

## Four States

The Angel having given

- More information about the Woman
- No provides more information about the Scarlet Beast, now simply referred to as *"the Beast"*

The Beast John saw is described as having a four states

1. *was*
2. *is not*
3. *will ascend out of the bottomless pit*
4. *will go to destruction (perdition)*

The term Beast sometime refers to

- The Antichrist
- The world empire he rules
- Both combined

In this instance the great emphasis is on the man, Antichrist

1. *was* - He is revealed and established during the first half of the tribulation
2. *is not* - He receives a mortal wound and appears to die
3. *will ascend* - His apparent resurrection, but there is something demonic about it
4. *will go to perdition* - His judgment and casting into the Lake of Fire

The inhabitants of the earth (earth dwellers)

- Will react to the beast, in the same way John did to Great Harlot - wonder, they “*will marvel*”
- This wonder, this amazement is due to the counterfeit resurrection of the Antichrist
- To underline that is this apparent resurrection that is the source of amazement
- We are told they will marvel, “*when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.*”

Not only is the end of the Antichrist foretold in this verse, “*and go to perdition*”

- But the end of those who marvel at him and his counterfeit resurrection is told to us
- *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.*

## Three Books Of Heaven

1. The Book of Life
2. The Lamb’s Book Of Life
3. The Book Of Works

### The Book of Life

- A record of all who have lived
- The wicked and the righteous

When a person puts their faith in Jesus for salvation

- They become a citizen in heaven ***Philippians 3:20-21***
- Our names are written in heaven ***Luke 10:20***

When the wicked die without Christ

- Their names are removed from the Book of Life

### The Book of Works

At the Great White Throne judgement ***Revelation 20***  
“*and books were opened*”

- The Book of Life
- The Book of Works

“*And the dead were judged according to their works*”

When the wicked are raised

- Their names are sought for in the Book of Life
- When they cannot be found
- Their deeds are measured and the degree of punishment is determined (based on their works)

### The Lamb’s Book of Life

Only the names of the righteous remain in the Book of Life

- That Book becomes the Lamb’s Book of Life
- All whose name is found in that book
- Have access to the New Jerusalem
- Pass into the eternal state with Christ

## Rise & Fall Of Empires

### ***Revelation 17:9-13***

*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. 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.*

## The Seven Empires

The Angel continues to describe the Beast

- But shifts from the focus on Antichrist
- To the empire he is involved with

The seven heads of the Beast, are seven consecutive world empires



*five have fallen*

1. Egypt
2. Assyria
3. Babylon
4. Medo-Persia
5. Greece

*one is*

6. Rome

*the other has not yet come*

7. Ten Nation Confederacy

*And when he comes, he must continue a short time.*

- The Ten nation Confederacy is short-lived
- Only present during the first three and a half-years

## The Eighth Empire

*The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.*

The Antichrist himself is the eighth world empire

- i.e. the ten nation confederacy will fall
- A new world empire will emerge
- With Antichrist at the centre
- A one world government, with a one world leader
- This is the world empire that rules for the last 3½ years, during the Great Tribulation

The Antichrist was “*of the seven*”, he was in the empire of the first 3½ years

- He, himself, is the eighth world empire
- The Antichrist will have a 3½ year ministry like Jesus

The power and authority of Antichrist

- Is derived from the ten kings
- *they will give their power and authority to the beast.*

We know from **Daniel 7**, that Antichrist is the Little Horn

- He will arise and subdue three kings
- This will cause the remaining seven to yield their power and authority to Antichrist
- There is a hostility during the mid-point of the tribulation
- Where Antichrist ceases to be a player in the ten-nation confederacy
- Performs a coup d'etat to seize power and become the president or emperor

## The War

### **Revelation 17:14**

*These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is the Lord of Lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.*

Two armies are spoken of

- The army of the beast
- The army of the Lamb

The beast's army is made up of the ten kings

The Lamb's army is made up of the called, chosen, and faithful

The beast's army are the aggressors

- They make war with the Lamb
- The Lamb will be victorious

This is describing events that occur at the end of the last 3½ years of the eighth empire of Antichrist

- When the armies of Antichrist will gather in har Megiddo
- Then march south on Jerusalem

The Lamb will return and defeat Antichrist and His armies

## Judgement Of The Harlot

### **Revelation 17:15-18**

*Then he said to me, "The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits are people, multitudes, nations, and tongues. 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. And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth."*

## The Death Of Religion

The angel continues to guide John:

- He explains the waters, on which the harlot sits
- They are the people and nations of the world

He explains that the ten-horns, of the beast, will hate the harlot

- They will persecute, attack and destroy her
- They will be God's tools of justice on her

God will not only put in their heart to attack the harlot

- But also to yield their kingdom and authority to the beast

The judgement of the Great Harlot, foretold to John in **Revelation 17:1**

- Is executed through this ten-nation confederacy at the end of the first 3½ years of the Tribulation
- They don't want her control and manipulation
- They want to cast off this false religion

## The Rebirth of Religion

But what a master stroke of Antichrist

- He uses the ten-nation confederacy to get rid of the Great Harlot
- Then He subdues and takes over the ten-nation confederacy to become world leader
- Then through an apparent mortal wound and counterfeit resurrection
- Presents himself as the Messiah
- A final world religion is born centred around worshipping Antichrist
- Administered by the False Prophet

## Conclusion

However, we know that the Beast

- Antichrist and his world empire
- The False Prophet and his world religion
- Will be cast into the Lake of Fire

We also know that the true Messiah, Jesus Christ

- Will fulfil his promise to come for us
- He will establish His kingdom on the earth
- He will reign for a thousand years
  
- There will be no false religion
- There will be no corrupt world leaders
- There will be no economic manipulation of people

We will be able to go to Jerusalem

- Sit at our Saviours feet
- To worship and learn from Him in person

### **2 Thessalonians 3:5**

*And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.*

Appendix  
Mother & Son Worship

Babylon

Semaramis & Tammuz



Buddhism

Madonna Guanyin, Goddess of mercy



# India / Hinduism

Matrika



# Hinduism

Yasoda and Krishna



## Hittites

Sun goddess of Arinna



## Egypt

Queen Ankhnes-meryre II and Her Son, Pepy II



Egypt  
Isis & Osiris



Greece  
Irene & Plutus



# Roman Catholicism

## Mary & Jesus

