

REVELATION 17:1-19:10 ANGELIC EXPLANATION 4 – SEDUCTION

1. Introduction

- a. Revelation 17-18 is one of the most significant end-time prophecies, because it gives us insight into Satan’s strategy to deceive the nations while causing many Christians to fall away from the faith. Those who are deceived by the harlot will end up in the lake of fire; some saints who resist the harlot will be killed (Rev. 17:6). This prophecy deserves much careful study and dialogue.
- b. Revelation 17:1-6, gives us details about the emergence of the harlot Babylon as a one-world religion and describes her evil seductions and cruel persecutions. She will be a counterfeit justice movement that unifies multitudes from the largest religions on earth. The rest of Revelation 17-18 describes her relationship with the Antichrist and how she is finally destroyed.
- c. **Review:** The five chronological sections in the book of Revelation tell us the main storyline of judgment events against harlot Babylon and Antichrist’s empire. After each of the chronological sections, an angel explains to John why these judgments events are absolutely necessary. These explanations function as a parenthesis that puts the story line “on pause” as they answer questions, such as “Why is God’s wrath so severe?” and “What will happen to the saints?”
- d. In the angelic explanation in Revelation 17-18, we are told why the bowls of wrath are necessary, and we are assured of the defeat of Babylon. The angel explains why the bowl judgments are necessary to dash the infrastructure of the nations into pieces by Jesus. It is because the seduction of Babylon’s evil religion will permeate so many of these structures.

Ps. 2:8-9⁸ *I will give You [Jesus] the nations for Your inheritance ...* ⁹ *You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.*

Rev. 2:26-27²⁶ *The nations ...* ²⁷ *shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels*

- e. This angelic explanation gives us insight into the global influence of Harlot Babylon’s **violence** (Rev. 17:6; 18:24; 19:2), **sorcery** (Rev. 17:4; 18:2, 23), **seduction of immorality** (Rev. 17:4) and **greed** (Rev. 17:2; 18:3, 9, 11-19) that will permeate and infiltrate all the structures of society, requiring that every root of this corrupt system be totally destroyed (Rev. 17:15, 18; 18:3; 19:2).

Rev. 17:15,18 *The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues...¹⁸ And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth...*

Rev.18:3 *For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury...*

Rev.19:2 *For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication...*

- f. Whereas, the 7th trumpet focuses on replacing all the evil governmental leaders, the 7 bowls focuses on replacing the social and national infrastructures of every government (legislation, etc).
- g. Rev. 17 is one of the **most straightforward passages** in Revelation, in terms of its main message, making it one of the easiest chapters to understand. The main themes are the seductive power, cruel persecution, along with the inevitable destruction of this Harlot system. It will be both a worship movement that unifies multitudes from the largest religions of the world and a justice movement, presenting itself as caring for the needs of the poor and for the good of mankind.
- i We cannot underestimate its seductive power. Many believers will leave the church to join her as a superior presentation of Christianity. In their minds they won't be falling away from the faith, but leaving religious Christianity to join the modern, unified updated version of what Jesus meant all along.
 - ii The church will operate in great power, as we declare its inevitable destruction by God (Rev. 14:8).
- h. Rev. 17 is also one of the **most symbolic passages** in Revelation, with many intricate details, making it one of the **most difficult chapters** to understand in all of its intricacies. However, since the angel gave John the meaning of the symbols, we have a solid foundation for understanding this passage. Why is this most important prophecy veiled in such cryptic language? One reason is because it causes us to pour over every line of it and discuss it often to understand its every nuance.
- i. It is the **longest prophecy** in the NT (42 verses). The longest prophecy in the OT is Jer. 50-51 (110 verses) and also focuses on Babylon in the end-times, as does Isa. 13-14 (54 verses). This prophecy is so long because God wants us to understand its significance and danger. The second longest prophecy in the NT is focused on the two stages of the descent of the New Jerusalem (33 verses; Rev. 21:1-22:5) and pictures the Bride of Christ in all her glory. The harlot is the counterfeit of the Bride that the Holy Spirit is raising up.
- i The "Harlot of Satan" is the counterfeit of the Bride of Christ. Satan raises up a Harlot and Jesus is raising up a pure Bride and they are at war. The prophetic voice of the saints will be the only ones to expose this false religion of unity, justice and peace. It will have a worldwide following of believers from the poor to the rich, with a tremendous amount of wealth, while being supported by the kings and the merchants of the earth (Rev. 18). It will be instrumental in bringing world "peace" (1 Thes. 5:7).
 - ii The Harlot system will mature the church, as some insincere believers fall away, some sincere believers suffer persecution and others prophesy against her with great power, bringing in the Great End-Time Harvest of souls with signs and wonders backing them up.
- j. The seven bowls of wrath will be necessary to destroy all the wicked infrastructure of society put in place by evil leaders. God's wrath on Babylon will come in two stages or two falls of Babylon (Rev. 17-18).

- i **The focus of Rev. 17:** the first phase of the fall of Babylon (Rev. 17) relates to a worldwide religious system of toleration and syncretism. This occurs at the beginning of the Great Tribulation at the hands of the ten kings (Rev. 17:16) who burn the Harlot to replace it with Antichrist worship (2 Thes. 2:4; Rev. 13).

Rev. 17:16-17 And the ten horns... these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. ¹⁷ For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled.

- ii **The focus of Rev. 18:** the second phase of her fall will be at the end of the Great Tribulation. It focuses on the collapse of the Antichrist's global economic system at God's hands (Rev. 18:8).

Rev. 18:8 Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her.

2. There are two stages to Satan's end times plan

- a. The Antichrist has a two-fold strategy to cause all the nations to worship him.
 - i He will **use the harlot Babylon's religious "tolerance"** to allure multitudes to take a step back from the allegiance they once had to the religious belief systems they grew up with. Satan's knows that the leap will be too great for a nominal Christian, Jew, Muslim or Hindu to suddenly leave their belief system to become a devoted worshipper of the Antichrist. At this time many nominal Christians will fall away from their faith (1Tim.4:1; 2 Thes.2:3)
 - ii The Antichrist will replace Babylon's "tolerant" religion with his intolerant religion, characterised by a strict rigidity enforced with brutality
- b. The harlot religion will serve as a "forerunner" to prepare the nations to worship the Antichrist. It will be a counterfeit "justice" movement that will masquerade as an answer to the ills of the world. It will allure multitudes by feeding the poor, meeting humanitarian needs, loving peace, and emphasising the dignity of humanity. It will champion diversity and tolerance and have no moral absolutes. The Antichrist will inspire acts of compassion, but for all the wrong reasons
- c. The nations will rejoice in the unity it brings and that it will help establish world peace

1 Thes. 5:3 When they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them.

- d. People will defile their consciences and break relationships that are related to their religious heritage, renouncing both their former beliefs in absolutes and the people who hold to those absolutes. Once people leave their religious ideals, whether Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, or Buddhism, there will be no absolute truth to keep them from worshipping Satan (2 Cor. 11:14).
- e. The voluntary harlot Babylon religion will be replaced by a mandatory Antichrist religion.
 - i **First**, people will voluntarily join the harlot Babylon's one-world religion of tolerance (Rev. 17).

- ii **Second**, all will be forced to be Satan worshippers in the Antichrist religion (Rev. 13:4, 8, 15).

1 Tim. 4:1-31 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, ² speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, ³ forbidding to marry.

- f. Many believers will fall away in the seductions and deceptions of the harlot's religion. There will be a falling away from the faith at the end of the age (Mt. 24:9-13; 2 Thes. 2:3; 1 Tim. 4:1-2; 2 Tim. 3:1-7; 4:3-5; 2 Pet. 2:1-3). A doctrine of a demon is a teaching inspired by demons.

2 Tim. 4:3-4 ³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; ⁴ and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

- g. Sound doctrine teaches obedience to Jesus and His plans. It requires endurance. To turn the ear away means that the people will no longer hear what God intended in various Bible passages. They heap up teachers or zealously follow many teachers who support their desires.

2 Thes. 2:9-10 ⁹ The coming of the lawless one [Antichrist] is...with all power, signs, and lying wonders, ¹⁰ and unrighteous deception...because they did not receive the love of the truth

- h. Loving the truth is more than adhering to it, but taking a firm stand regardless of the cost. Loving truth requires that we commit to accept any new ideas as long as they are substantiated in the Scripture, regardless of how different they are from our religious background. Those who love the truth will conform their agendas to it without bending the truth to fit their agendas.

3. The Great Harlot: her seductions and persecutions

Rev. 17:1-6, 15 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the judgement of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters, ² with whom the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality, and with the wine of whose sexual immorality the dwellers on earth have become drunk." ³ And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns. ⁴ The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her sexual immorality. ⁵ And on her forehead was written a name of mystery: "Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations." ⁶ And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus..... ¹⁵ And the angel said to me, "The waters that you saw, where the prostitute is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages.

- a. **I will show you the judgment:** Before the angel shows John the wealth and counterfeit beauty of the harlot religion, he shows him her inevitable judgment and sure defeat (v. 1). This system will fail and be utterly destroyed.
- b. **Who sits on many waters:** The harlot will sit on, or will have authority over, many nations (v. 1), by seducing and controlling the world's most powerful leaders (kings and merchants) through global networks. It is a religious network (Rev. 17) and an economic network based in Babylon (Rev. 18).

- c. **The great harlot:** She is a harlot because she prostitutes herself to seduce others to be unfaithful to God by offering them her false religion (occult), immorality, pleasure, and murder in context to gaining money (she sells her favours). In the past, God charged Jerusalem with committing spiritual adultery by engaging in the occult, murder, etc. (Isa. 1:21; Jer. 2:20; 13:27; Ezek. 16:17; Hos. 2:5).
- d. **Great:** This refers to the harlot's size, influence, impact, depravity, etc.
- e. **With whom the kings of the earth committed fornication:** Kings will purposefully prostitute themselves for money by using their power to promote her agenda that they know is based on lies. David prophesied that the kings of the earth would plot together against the Lord (Ps. 2:1-3).
- f. **The inhabitants were made drunk with her fornication:** The harlot's system will cause the nations to be drunk with her seductions, or great benefits, including humanitarian aid, a unified religion (which minimizes wars), and a prosperous world economy. The nations will rejoice and get drunk with, or be intoxicated by, her promises of goodness, prosperity, and compassion, and her theology of tolerance based in deception.
- g. **A woman sitting on a beast:** The harlot will *sit on* or depend on the Antichrist who will *carry* her or will provide resource, support, and protection for her even as she exerts some control over him. She will need the Antichrist, and initially the Antichrist will need her influence and power.
- h. **She was arrayed in purple and scarlet:** The harlot religion will have great prominence. It will be arrayed in purple (royal status) and will be respected by the elite financial leaders of the earth who will give their allegiance to her.
- i. **She was adorned with gold:** It will be the wealthiest religious network in all history.

1 Thes. 5:3³ *While people are saying, "There is peace and security", then sudden destruction will come upon them as labour pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.*

- j. **She had a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness:** She will "serve" the nations with her cup, which will appear golden (valuable and good). She will offer unprecedented humanitarian service in helping the poor. Her service is full of abomination and filth. In the Old Testament, *abomination* refers to idolatrous, occultic activities and *filthiness* refers to moral perversions.
- k. The harlot will deceive the nations by sorcery, which is a combination of drugs and demonic power (witchcraft). Her dark supernatural power will fascinate people and appear to be good. Her worship music will be powerful in that it will have a supernatural demonic element to it. As the harlot emerges with religious unity, war will disappear, and for first time in modern history there will be world peace

Rev. 18:2 *For by your sorcery all the nations were deceived.*

- l. Sin will be allowed to reach its fullness in the end times. The harlot Babylon is the context in which the nations will reach the heights of sin and their experience of the demonic realm.

Dan. 8:23 *In the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their fullness, a king [Antichrist] shall arise ... who understands sinister schemes.*

- m. We evaluate a ministry by the lifestyle it produces in others, not by how fast it grows or how much money it has. Because serving the poor and walking in unity is foundational to preaching the gospel, many will think that all who proclaim this represent the truth. This statement by Jesus will reach its greatest fullness in the end times.

Lk. 16:15 *For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.*

- n. The influence of the harlot will cause multitudes to be drunk or intoxicated with the blood of the saints who expose her (v. 6). In killing the saints, the more she kills, the bolder she will become. The one great enemy of the harlot religion will be the saints of Jesus in the prophetic Church.
- o. The Praying Church must expose the harlot for who she really is. The Church will be hated by all nations for this. We declare the seductive nature of her perversion and her judgment.

Mt. 24:9-11 ⁹ *They will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake.* ¹⁰ *Then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.* ¹¹ *Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.*

- p. The kings (political leaders) will understand some of the lies that empower the harlot system. However, they will support her agenda to gain her wealth. In this way, they will knowingly prostitute themselves, or commit fornication with her, knowingly supporting her lies for money.
- q. The harlot will depend on the Antichrist, who will carry her (provide resource and protection).

Rev. 17:3, 7 *I saw a woman sitting on a beast [Antichrist] which was full of names of blasphemy ... ⁷ I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her.*

- r. Surprisingly, the harlot's worldwide religion will be hated and destroyed by the jealousy of the ten primary kings who serve the Antichrist (Dan. 7:7, 20, 24). They will burn the harlot at the beginning of the Great Tribulation (last 3 1/2 years). Satan's kingdom is filled with hatred, not unity. We prophesy that after a short season of prominence, she will be burned by leaders of the Antichrist's empire.

Rev. 17:12, 16 ¹² *The ten horns which you saw are ten kings ...* ¹⁶ *The ten horns ... on the beast will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire.*

- s. In the middle of the final seven years of this age, the Antichrist's plan is to replace the harlot religion of tolerance with Antichrist worship. This new worldwide religion will be strict (without any toleration). All who refuse to worship the Antichrist will be killed (Rev. 13:4-18). Satan's purpose for the harlot religion is as a "forerunner" to prepare the nations for Antichrist worship.

4. The end-time conflict over the truth of who Jesus is

- a. In the end times, there will be a battle for the truth about Jesus. Some believers will give heed to doctrines that lie about Jesus. The conflict will centre on defining who Jesus is and

how we love Him. We must love God on His terms, expressed by allegiance to the Jesus of the Bible.

- b. Allegiance to Jesus is our main issue, along with being lovers of His truth (2 Thes. 2:10). Tolerance is the main issue in the counterfeit forerunner movements to the harlot Babylon. We greatly value the people in different religions knowing they possess great dignity before God. However, we are not willing to let them perish in hell by refusing to tell them the truth about Jesus and His salvation.
- c. Three truths about Jesus that offend humanists include,
 - i First, His deity; thus, His right to establish absolute standards for which the nations are accountable to Him. Jesus does not accept humanistic views of righteousness and love.
 - ii Second, that the only way of salvation is through Jesus.
 - iii Third, that He possesses the wisdom and love to judge sin in time and eternity.
- d. Anyone who confesses the name of Jesus must stand for His deity, or His way of salvation. If they do not, then they are operating under the spirit of a false prophet. This is true of famous people who work in the government, host talk shows, fill stadiums with concerts for the poor, or lead mega-churches. We must apologize to Jesus for so much man-pleasing preaching of lies.
- e. There are counterfeit forerunners who are preparing the nations to embrace the harlot Babylon. These false forerunners tell lies about Jesus. Some are not yet false prophets, yet they operate in the same spirit as one. Some of them are still in the balance. The issue is not being positive or negative but being faithful witnesses to the truth. We are His messengers who will give an account at the judgment seat of Christ.
- f. The end-time Praying Church is to steward the greatest hope and justice movement in history. We have a far superior hope than humanistic movements. Forerunners are the greatest hope bringer in history. They will be filled with love, purity and humility and will do deeds of compassion while giving a clear witness of the truth. They will magnify Jesus' love and wisdom.
- g. We are called to judge people so that we can win them to righteousness, so they may be saved. If people confess to be followers of Jesus, they put themselves under the standards of God's Word.

1Cor. 5:1-11 ¹ It is reported that there is sexual immorality among you ... ³ I have already judged him who has so done this deed ... ⁵ Deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus... ¹¹ I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.

- h. We are only to judge in the way we want to be judged (accurately, patiently, and tenderly).

Mt. 7:1-2 ¹ Judge not [with false measures], that you be not judged. ² For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

5. The harlot's origin: the Tower of Babel

Rev. 17:5⁵ *On her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.*

- a. The harlot's name was a mystery. In other words, the angel gave John new information that had not yet been clearly revealed in Scripture. Her name surprised John.
- b. The angel revealed her name as Babylon. This name linked her to her origin, which goes back to the tower of Babel (where Babylon began). This reveals her true nature to us, as we understand what happened at the tower of Babel. Babel was the city in which the first organized religion in history developed, resulting in the first organized rebellion and war against God by mankind.

Gen. 11:4⁴ *They said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."*

- c. The residents of Babel sought to build a tower whose "top is in the heavens." This refers to reaching into the spirit realm (not to the height of the building made of mud bricks). God was not referring to their architectural abilities having no limit, but to their progression in evil.

Gen. 11:6⁶ *The LORD said, "Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them."*

- d. Nothing they set their heart to do will be withheld from them in terms of reaching their full potential in sin. NAS/NIV translates that nothing which they plan to do "will be impossible for them." This refers to their unity in sin in reaching into the demonic realm (top is in the heavens).
- e. In Genesis 11, God scattered their language to slow down the escalation of sin. God scattered the people of Babel so that man would not reach his full potential for evil until God's timing.

Gen. 11:7-9⁷ *Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech."*⁸ *So the LORD dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city.*⁹ *Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth. And from there the LORD dispersed them over the face of all the earth.*

- f. In Acts 2, God reversed the confusion of languages for those who would fully give themselves unto humility, righteousness and obedience to God and His ways. By uniting the saint's language through tongues, the Lord gave the church a great gift to unify and increase the Kingdom exponentially.

6. Jacob's ladder: angels ascending and descending

- a. In Jacob's dream he saw a "ladder" that gave him access to the supernatural realm in the will of God. Jesus prophesied of Himself as "Jacob's ladder" where the heavenly realm of angels would interact with the earthly realm of humans. In obedience to Him, the people of God would once again have access to the power of Heaven in agreement with God's will.

Gen. 28:12 *He [Jacob] dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.*

Jn. 1:51 *He [Jesus] said to him [Nathanael], "Most assuredly, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."*

- b. In the Harlot church, there will be a "ladder of access" to the demonic realm, enabling the nations to escalate in their experience of sin and demons (Rev. 9:20-21). The people of Babel sought this. In the Babylonian language, Babel actually means the "gate of heaven" (in Hebrew it is "confusion"). The people of Babel were attempting to reach a counterfeit "open heaven" outside of God's will (Gen. 28:12; Jn. 1:51).

Rev. 9:20-21 *But the rest of mankind... did not repent... that they should not worship demons... ²¹ And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.*

- c. Satan, along with his angels, will be dislodged from their place in heaven and cast to earth (Rev. 12:7-9,12). Billions of demons will be released to the earth's surface from the bottomless pit (Rev. 9:1-21). They will appear to people and interact with them at a level unprecedented in human history.

Rev. 12:7-12 *And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, ⁸ but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. ⁹ So the great dragon... who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. ¹² Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."*

Rev. 9:2-6 *And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. ³ Then out of the smoke locusts [demons] came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power... ⁵ Their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. ⁶ In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.*

- d. In the end-times, there will be an unprecedented interaction between the demonic and human realm leading to a worldwide judgment, similar to Noah's day (Gen. 6). The time before Jesus' Second Coming is compared to the days of Noah, which includes the demonic realm touching the earth leading to murder, etc.

Mt. 24:37 *But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.*

2 Pet. 2:4-6 *God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; ⁵ and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly... ⁶ making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly...*

- e. The people in Gen. 6, walked in a "counterfeit" open heaven, as demons interacted with humans in the natural realm in an evil way (Gen. 6:4; 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6). At this time, there was an unprecedented connection between the natural and supernatural demonic realm. It resulted in great violence causing God to destroy the earth with the flood in Noah's day (Gen. 6:7; 7:1-24).

Gen. 6:4 *There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God [fallen angels] came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.*

Gen. 6:5-7 *The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶ The LORD... was grieved in His heart. ⁷ The LORD said, "I will destroy man...from the face of the earth."*

Gen. 6:11-13 *The earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹² So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. ¹³ God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth."*

- f. John was also surprised that Babylon was the "mother of harlots" or source of all false religion through history, as well as, the primary source of false religion and abominations in the end-times. Her offspring (false religions throughout history) will crescendo as they return to their "mother" in the end-times.

Rev. 17:6 *I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marvelled with great amazement.*

- g. The Harlot will have a murderous heart despite her humanitarian appearance. John marvelled at this mysterious plan that will result in bringing forth the salvation of Israel, as it purifies and empowers the Church to be used in the end-time revival. When we understand this prophecy, we will marvel like John, as we feel the weightiness of what is in God's heart.
- h. Humanists believe that man is basically good and innocent, thus they hate God's judgments. Many even within the church are naïve about the depth of sin in which many will walk during the end-times.

Rev. 9:21 *They did not repent of their murders... sorceries... sexual immorality or thefts.*

Jn. 15:24,25 *They... hated both Me and My Father. ²⁵...They hated Me without a cause.*

Mt. 24:9 *They will... kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake.*

Rev. 16:9,11,21 *And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory... ¹¹ They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds... ²¹ And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.*

7. The mystery of the Antichrist and his 7 heads (Rev. 17:7-11)

Rev. 17:7 *⁷But 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.*

- a. The angel told John about the mystery of the harlot and the Antichrist and their relationship (17:7). The 7 heads represent 7 specific empires that persecuted Israel—Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, ancient Rome, and a future empire (12:3; 13:1; 17:3, 7-17; cf. Dan. 2:41-42; 7:7, 20, 24).

Rev. 17:8-11 *⁸The 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...when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. ⁹"...The seven heads are seven mountains on which the [harlot] woman sits. ¹⁰There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is [Rome], and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time. ¹¹The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.*

- b. The Antichrist's 4-fold journey—he was; he is not; he will ascend and yet is; he will go to perdition (17:8). He is a counterfeit of the Lord as the One who is and who was and who is to come (1:4).
- i Stage #1 **He was**: The Antichrist is described as “he was”—he was living on earth for a season.
 - ii Stage #2 **He is not**: He is described as “he is not” or is not on the earth referring to his future death. The Antichrist will appear to suffer a mortal wound of one of his heads (13:3). One of his heads was wounded (13:3)—this speaks of his personal death and the death of one of his kingdoms.

Rev. 13:3 ³I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast...

- iii Stage #3 **He will ascend**: The Antichrist will ascend out of the bottomless pit to live on earth (17:11). For the Beast to ascend out of the bottomless pit implies that he descended to it. This refers to the Antichrist as a person because a kingdom cannot descend to and ascend from the pit. My view is that the Antichrist will ascend from the bottomless pit *after* his head wound is healed.
 - iv Stage #4 **He goes to perdition**: He will surely be defeated and cast into the lake of fire (19:20).
- c. **The 7 heads are 7 mountains**: The Antichrist has 7 heads which speaks of 7 kingdoms and their kings (17:9). Daniel spoke of kings and their empires in nearly a synonymous way (Dan. 7:17, 23). The 5 kingdoms that persecuted Israel are Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. The 6th kingdom identified as “one is”—i.e. existed in John's generation—is the Roman empire.
- d. **The seventh**: The 7th kingdom which “has not yet come” must come after the Roman Empire *but before* the Antichrist's empire. The identity is debated—some see it as the 10-nation confederation, while others see it as Antichrist's rule over them (before he receives great power after his death).

Dan. 7:24⁴...another [Antichrist] shall rise after them [the 10 kings in 4th beast kingdom]...

- e. **The eighth**: The Antichrist is the 8th king ruling this 8th kingdom which is a “composite kingdom” in the sense that it incorporates the evil characteristics and geographic regions of the 7 kingdoms. Part of the mystery is that this trans-historical beast finds its ultimate expression in a man.

8. The mystery of the Antichrist's 10 horns (Rev. 17:12-14)

Rev. 17:12-14, 17 ¹²And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received royal power, but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast. ¹³These are of one mind, and they hand over their power and authority to the beast. ¹⁴They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.”

- a. The 10 horns are seen as being 10 kings who rule as contemporaries of the Antichrist (17:13). Their *one hour* under the Antichrist speaks of 42 months—similar to Satan’s short time (12:12).
- b. **Hand over their power and authority:** the ten nations will obey the Antichrist and submit their resources to him.
- c. **Make war:** they will go to war against Jesus

¹⁶And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will hate the prostitute. They will make her desolate and naked, and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire, ¹⁷for God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by being of one mind and handing over their royal power to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled.

- d. **Hate the prostitute** (harlot): surprisingly the harlot religion will be hated and destroyed by the jealousy of the ten primary kings who serve the Antichrist. They will burn the harlot at the beginning of the Great Tribulation so that the Antichrist can replace the harlot’s “voluntary religion” of tolerance with his own “mandatory religion” that will be forced on everyone with the threat of death (Rev.13:14-17).
- e. **God put it in their hearts:** God has a significant purpose for allowing the Antichrist to rally such a large resource base that will involve the political, military and financial strengths of the ten strong nations. Before Jesus returns to rule all the nations in righteousness, God will allow Satan to make his “best offer” to call the nations to follow him and his ways of evil. God wants the nations to choose between Jesus and Satan, holiness and wickedness.

9. The fall of the great city of Babylon (Rev. 18:1-3)

- a. An angel with great authority decrees the fall of the city of Babylon (18:1-3). “After these things” in 18:1 designates events occurring after the harlot is burned in 17:16.

Rev. 18:1-2 ¹After these things I saw another angel...having great authority...²And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!”

- b. **Prison for every foul spirit:** The city of Babylon will be the prison of demons. The land of Edom (part of Jordan) and Babylon (part of Iraq) border each other, and both are described as being a place of perpetual burning and resulting in such destruction that humans cannot live there (Jer. 49:13, 18, 20; 50:9-40; 51:43; cf. Isa. 13:20; 34:10; Ezek. 35:9, 14-15; Mal. 1:3-4).
- c. The Lord calls His people to leave the city of Babylon (18:4-8; cf. Jer. 50:8; 51:6-9, 45).

Rev. 18:4-5 ⁴I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. ⁵For her sins have reached to heaven...

- d. God’s indictment against Babylon is to destroy her because of her pride and brazen sin (18:6-8).

Rev. 18:6-8 Pay her back as she herself has paid back others, and repay her double for her deeds; mix a double portion for her in the cup she mixed. ⁷As she glorified herself and lived in luxury, so give her a like measure of torment and mourning, since in her heart she says, ‘I sit as a queen, I am no widow,

and mourning I shall never see.⁸ For this reason her plagues will come in a single day, death and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for mighty is the Lord God who has judged her."

- e. **I sit as queen:** Babylon will be filled with pride and false optimism. She will say in her heart that she sits, or rules, over the nations, with the royal status of a queen with great strength and dignity. Her false optimism is seen in refusing to believe that God's judgement could ever destroy her. As the Church boldly prophesies Babylon's destruction, she will be provoked to great anger.
- f. **Her plagues:** a fourfold judgement from God of death, mourning, famine and fire will come suddenly and unexpectedly

Rev. 18:9-18⁹"The kings of the earth who committed fornication...with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning,¹⁰standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city Babylon...For in one hour your judgment has come.'" ¹¹"The merchants of the earth will weep...over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore... ¹⁵The merchants...who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment... ¹⁷Every shipmaster...stood at a distance ¹⁸and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning.

- g. John describes the kings of the earth lamenting (18:9-10). Three groups mourn her fall—the kings (18:9-10), the land merchants (18:11-16), sea merchants (18:17-19). Each mourns at a distance (18:10, 15, 17), maintaining that Babylon was a great city, not a guilty city (18:10, 16, 18-19).
- h. Babylon's wealth comes from international trade and her leaders will accumulate great wealth. At her destruction the kings of the earth will mourn because her economic crisis will greatly affect them. The merchants and the shipping industry will mourn their great financial loss and stand in strong disagreement with God's judgement on her.
- i. Her fall will come suddenly, *in one hour*, and unexpectedly. She will be utterly destroyed (v.19) and devoid of inhabitants. This is in great contrast to her once thriving streets filled with people.
- j. The righteous will rejoice at the fall of Babylon (18:20).

Rev. 18:20²⁰"Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you..."

- k. The angel performs a prophetic act to symbolise the fall of Babylon (18:21-24):

Rev. 18:21-24²¹Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down and shall not be found anymore...²³for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived. ²⁴And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth."

10. Heavenly multitudes rejoice over Babylon's judgment (Rev. 19:1-4)

- a. John saw a multitude celebrating the judgment of Babylon (19:1-3) and the marriage of the Lamb (19:7). This gathering occurs after the rapture of the Church at the 7th trumpet and after Babylon is judged (Rev. 18) at the 7th bowl (16:19), yet *before* the Antichrist is destroyed (19:19-21).

Rev. 19:1-3¹*After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia!...²For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot...and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her."*³... they said, "Alleluia!"

- b. **Great multitude in heaven:** John describes the first gathering of the redeemed from all history in heaven praising God for judging Babylon in fulfilment of Rev.18:20. This is in great contrast to the angry attitude of the unbelievers on earth to God's judgement on her.
- c. **Alleluia:** God is praised with great enthusiasm as seen in the four uses of the word *alleluia* (19:1, 3,4,6) This is the only time the word *alleluia* is mentioned in the New Testament. *Alleluia*, meaning "praise the Lord" is used in the OT and is usually used in the context of God's judgements on His enemies.
- d. **Judged the harlot:** immorality and bloodshed are the two main reasons that she received such severe judgement (rev.19:21; 17:4; 18:3,9; 19:2)

11. The Marriage of the Lamb (Rev. 19:5-10)

- a. John gives three reasons for the redeemed to rejoice with certainty (19:6-7): God will openly manifest His reign on the earth; the marriage of the Lamb has come; and His Bride is prepared.

Rev. 19:7-8⁷ "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."⁸ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

- b. **Made herself ready:** John emphasized the role of the individual's freewill to choose obedience in cooperating with grace. We daily make decisions for righteousness to express our love for Jesus.
- c. **Marriage supper of the Lamb:** their marriage will be celebrated with a supper. The marriage supper may continue for the entire 1,000years of the Millennium. Jesus is the Bridegroom God who is betrothed to His Bride in this age (2Cor.11:2-3) The marriage will be consummated at the time of Jesus' return. The Bride is the redeemed from all history.
- d. **Arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright:** Part of the saints' reward will be seen in the clothing they receive, which will express their love and obedience for Jesus in this age. The rewards were given at the 7th trumpet (Rev.11:18)

Rev. 19:9-10⁹ He said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb'...¹⁰For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

- e. **Spirit of prophecy:** the essence of true prophecy is to reveal what is near and dear to Jesus' heart, as confirmed in scripture.

Suggested reading:

Babylon: The resurgence of History's most infamous city by Peter Herder

False Justice by Stuart Greaves