

## Revelation 17- 19

### What does the prostitute Babylon represent?

- In the past communicators have tended to identify Babylon solely with ungodly Roman culture, or the apostate church, or apostate Israel, it is better to see these identifications as not mutually exclusive. Nevertheless, the wicked religious-economic culture of the evil Romans world system is the focus, and the apostate church and unbelieving Israel are included inasmuch as they have become part of the sinful world system. (Beale, p. 886)
- **Hence, we conclude that also the harlot represents the world as center of antichristian seduction at any moment of history.** That the harlot Babylon was present in one form or embodiment in John's day is clear from Revelation 17: 9 (Hendriksen, p. 201)
- These interpretations fit very well with verse 18: *The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth.* (Revelation 17: 18 NIV)

### What does the scarlet beast represent?

- ***It is the sea born beast and symbolizes the world as center of persecution.*** *This spirit of persecution finds expression in the governments and peoples of this world; particularly, in the great world-empires that follow one another in history.* (Hendriksen, p. 200)
- John sees this beast in the wilderness, for there the radiant woman of Revelation 12—representing the church had fled.

### What do the seven heads on the beast represent?

- "The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits. (v. 9)
- "Here is the reference is clearly to Rome." Hence, Hendriksen also sees the harlot as representing Rome to the first readers of Revelation. (Hendriksen, p. 201)
- They are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; but when he does come, he must remain for a little while. (v. 10)
- Some have tried to harmonize this with the Roman emperors who had reigned and were about to reign. Such attempts have, according to Hendriksen and Beale proven to be unconvincing. Hendriksen understands them to refer to the great empires that succeeded each other in that part of the world, as identified by the prophet Daniel in his interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream (see Daniel 2: 24- 48 and Daniel 7- 8), saying that the seventh empire is symbolic of all the empires between the Roman empire and Christ's return. (Hendriksen, p. 203-205)

- Beale emphasizing the number seven (as symbolic of a complete number) says that **“the seven kings are figurative for kings throughout history through whom the beast acts.”** (Beale, p. 871)
- Beale’s view seems to fit best will verse 11, which says <sup>11</sup>The beast who once was, and now is not, is an eighth king. He belongs to the seven and is going to his destruction.

### What do the ten horns represent?

- **“The number 10 does not likely refer to ten literal kings, but is figurative for great power of these future kings”** (Beale, p. 878)
- **“And now the 10 kings. All the mighty one of this earth in every realm: art, education, commerce, industry, government, insofar as they serve the central authority, are indicated.** (Hendriksen, p. 205)
- <sup>14</sup>*They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings—and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers.”* (Revelation 17: 14 NIV)
- Throughout history, especially throughout this entire dispensation, the Lamb constantly defeats and shall defeat every form of antichristian dominion.

**What are the waters?** *Then the angel said to me, “The waters you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations and languages. Revelation 17: 15 NIV*

### What does it mean that the ten horns will turn on the prostitute? (see v. 16)

- *The beast and the ten horns you saw will hate the prostitute. They will bring her to ruin and leave her naked; they will eat her flesh and burn her with fire. Revelation 17: 16 NIV*
- “There comes a time when these same worldly people—who together with their unchristian governments constitute the beast—who were infatuated with the harlot, that is with the seduction of this world, its pleasures and allurements, its culture and its luxury, see what great fools they have been. But, this is forever too late” (Hendriksen, p. 206)

## Chapter 18

### **An angel comes from heaven and announces God’s judgment on “Babylon.”**

*Ruined, ruined, Great Babylon, ruined! A ghost town for demons is all that’s left! A garrison of carrion spirits, garrison of loathsome, carrion birds. (Revelation 18: 2 The Message)*

- Here Babylon’s fall is announced as if it already occurred
- God’s judgment here in the Apocalypse reveals Babylon’s devilish nature, which she has been able to mask behind idolatry in order to attract and deceive her devotees throughout the ages.

*Then I heard another voice from heaven say: "Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues; for her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes. (Revelation 18: 4 NIV)*

- The admonition to leave Babylon is addressed to God's people in all ages. (see Isaiah 48: 4, Jeremiah 50: 8, 51: 54, Zechariah 2: 7, 2 Corinthians 16- 18)
- To depart from Babylon means: not have fellowship with hersins, not to be ensnared by her allurements and enticements. (Hendriksen, p. 208)

*Give back to her as she has given; pay her back double for what she has done. Mix her a double portion from her own cup. Revelation 18: 6 NIV)*

- Call for justice
- Double: duplicate punishment for her sins. (also see Isaiah 40: 2, Jeremiah 16: 18)

*When the kings of the earth who committed adultery with her and shared her luxury see the smoke of her burning, they will weep and mourn over her. <sup>10</sup>Terrified at her torment, they will stand far off and cry (v. 9) The merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her because no one buys their cargoes any more—: v. 11 Every sea captain, and all who travel by ship, the sailors, and all who earn their living from the sea, will stand far off...<sup>19</sup>They will throw dust on their heads, and with weeping and mourning cry out. (Revelation 18: 9, 11, 17- 18 NIV)*

- Those seduced by Babylon will grieve. Her loss will be theirs.
- Whereas the wicked base their entire hpe upon the luxuries and pleasures of this life, when the "fashion" of this world perishes, they perish with it! Their all vanishes! (Hendriksen, p. 213)

*Rejoice over her, O heaven! Rejoice, saints and apostles and prophets! God has judged her for the way she treated you." Revelation 18: 20 NIV*

- Prayers for justice have been answered
- Those who separated from Babylon should rejoice over her judgment because it means the vindication of their faith of God's just character." (Beale, p. 915)

*Then a mighty angel picked up a boulder the size of a large millstone and threw it into the sea, and said: "With such violence the great city of Babylon will be thrown down, never to be found again (Revelation 18: 21 NIV)*

- Violence and finality of the punishment
- This is the end—introduces chapter 19

## **REVELATION 19**

Heaven's Song of Praise to the Lord (Hallelujah):

1. For his judgment of the prostitute Babylon
2. For the Wedding of the Lamb and his Bride

### Elements of a Jewish Wedding (Hendriksen p. 215)

- i.* the betrothal—more binding than our engagement. The terms of the marriage are accepted in presence of witnesses and God's blessing is pronounced upon the union. From this day groom and bride are legally husband and wife.
  - Christ is the lamb and the church is his bride (also based on Old Testament passages of the relationship between the Lord (Yaweh) and his people—Isaiah 50:1ff, 54:1, 62: 5; Jeremiah 2: 32; Hosea 2: 1 and on the gospels and on the letters of Paul: Matthew 9: 15; John 3: 29, 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5: 32)
  - In Christ the bride was chosen from all eternity
  - Throughout the entire Old Testament the wedding was announced.
  - When Jesus came to earth, the betrothal took place
  - Christ has paid the dowry with his death on the cross
- ii.* the interval— between the betrothal and the wedding feast. During this time the groom pays the dowry to the father. (Genesis 34: 12) Sometime the dowry is in the form of service rendered (Genesis 29: 20) Then the procession at the close of the interval. The bride prepares and adorns herself. The groom is wearing his best clothes, accompanied by his friends who sing and bear torches, proceeds to the home of his betrothed. He receives the bride and takes her with a returning procession to his own home or to the home of his parents (Matthew 9: 15; 25: 1)
  - The interval of separation between Christ and the church has come.
  - The church is putting on her wedding garments (righteousness and holiness—see Ephesians 4: 24
  - At the end Christ, the lamb comes for his bride
- iii.* the wedding-feast ( including the wedding supper) The usual festivities lasted 7- 14 days. (Matthew 22: 1)
  - the feast will not last one or two weeks, but through all eternity
  - It shall be a holy, blessed, ever lasting fellowship: the fullest realization of the promises of the gospel

### The Victory of the Faithful and True Rider on the White Horse

1. Note the way he wins his victory and slays his enemies:
  - With justice he judges and makes war.

- Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. That sword is the word of God (see Rev. 2: 16, Ephesians 2: 17, Hebrews 4: 12)
2. This “war” is one to end evil and judge the wicked.
    - Symbolic picture of Judgment Day
  3. Invitation to the birds—indicates the certainty of the defeat.
  4. Also see Ezekiel 38- 39 (Battle of Gog and Magog), especially 39: 17 ff.
    - The portrayal in Ezekiel 39 has been included because its main point is that God will make known his holy name both to Israel and Israel’s oppressors during the captivity by defeating Gog and Magog.
    - God name is revealed so that Israel and the nations will know “I am the Lord.” (Ezekiel 39: 7, 22, 28) The revelation of Christ’s name is the main concern in Revelation 19: 11- 16.