

Revelation 17:6-18 THE CONQUERING LAMB

I hate substitutes. I hate substitutes of things that I know that I need or want, and I impetuously buy a different brand of something that I've never heard of and almost every time I end up disappointed at my choice. Porsche came out with a famous advertising slogan in the '70s "Accept no substitutes."

My wife has a horrible time surprising me for my birthday, because I've all ready spent 3 or 4 months prior researching and looking at a particular thing that I want, and she knows that I've done the research and made it up in my mind, so usually what happens is she will contribute to the thing that I want and I need, and I appreciate that. I think I get this from my dad.

John Walvoord entitles/categorizes Revelation 17 and 18 as "The Destruction of Ecclesiastical Babylon"

Ecclesiastical Babylon is really a descriptive title of what is shown here in informing the reader on these somewhat cryptic and symbolic visions that John is seeing.

Ecclesiastical pertains to the church and Babylon pertains to many things and holds weight not only in the Jewish context but in the Christian context as well.

Babylon begins all the way back in Genesis 10 at the Tower of Babel, where man continued in his endeavor, which began all the way back in the garden to attain himself to the stature and power of God. In the Jewish story this melds into the personification of foreign evil and pagan worship in the invading Babylonian Empire so described in Daniel and the prophets.

And now we arrive here to John's vision of this seductive woman, beautiful and terrifying, riding a beast, and she is revealed to be Babylon the Great: The culmination of man's desire and man's evil all rolled into one: [This WHORE is the CHURCH of the WORLD.](#)

And that should speak to everyone in here, because everyone of us as sinners has dined at her table. Everyone of us here are enticed daily to kiss her feet, and SHE IS A POOR SUBSTITUTE FOR THE BRIDE OF CHRIST.

1-6 Describes the whore and follows a symbolic narrative

Revelation 17:3-6 (ESV): 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. When I saw her, I marveled greatly.

Now v.3 should spark some mental tinder in us because it points particularly to another account of a man who filled by the Spirit entered into the wilderness:

Luke 4:1-2 (ESV): And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness 2 for forty days, being tempted by the devil.

Friends, we are approached by the world's invitation to come worship at its church at a daily basis. From the moment we wake to the closing moments of drifting to sleep we are at entrance of two church doors, the worship of God as we were created to be, or the worship of the world and all of its enticements.

The changing point to all of this, Luke 4 is that Jesus was the first one to go into the wilderness, to the Babylon the Greats doorstep and declare, "I will not be won over."

He stepped in between us and the evil of this world, and made it possible for us to stand. The same Spirit that has filled Christ into the wilderness temptation, fills us, and He leads us to sit and dine at the table of our enemies and not be swayed.

Description of this Whore:

1. She wears purple and scarlet as representative of her royalty in this world.
 1. This color combination alongside she wears corresponds with the garb of the High Priest in Exodus 28. She is the leader of her substitute church.
2. She is adorned with gold and jewels that represent her power and influence
3. She holds her cup that represents her providence and power, gold on the outside, but inside is full of what her power represents: abominations, impurity, and sexual immorality.

4. Her crown reveals her name: Babylon the Great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations.
 1. What is impressive about this, is she doesn't entice with deception, but is bold in her approach, this world sees her, and doesn't have a moment of moral quandary on whether they should give her worship. She is out in the open and she is stating her claim on the earth.
5. She is drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus
 1. She doesn't see the human soul as neutral ground, but sees it as territory to grasp, and she is the enemy of the church.
 1. APPLICATION: Friends, humanity is not our enemy. Muslims are not our enemies, the LGBTQ community is not our enemy, Democrats or Republicans are not our enemy: This Whore, this evil is our enemy, and we do her a favor when we attack the personhood of those who are entangled in her web and who worship at her feet.

John in seeing this woman who rides the beast, is enchanted. He MARVELS greatly. Any of us would, at the extent of her power and influence. She represents the farthest distance that evil can take us.

She is Eve and Adam to their final evil.

Revelation 17:7–8 (ESV): But the angel said to me, “Why do you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman, and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns that carries her. 8 The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction. And the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will marvel to see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come.

The angel asks the right question: WHY DO YOU MARVEL? As if to bring John out of his enchanted stupor.

Why marvel? Because she is the culmination symbol of human evil and demonic power. It's the weakness of John that marvels.

It's the same weakness in us as humans to both be afraid at the extent of evil we can produce and at the same marvel at the opportunity to power that evil offers.

This messenger of God brings the proper question to us: Why marvel at the greatness of evil?

I mean what a disrespectful question from the angel. I LOVE IT!

In a large way, before we knew Christ, we were only contributors to the power of this Whore of Babylon. If you are a believer in Christ then you have come to the conclusion that what dwells in your heart is of no good thing, until Christ stepped in to pay for your sin.

John Owen, a puritan writes about this wonderful exchange

“I am a poor, weak creature; unstable as water, I cannot excel. This corruption is too hard for me, and is at the very door of ruining my soul; and what to do I know not. My soul is become as parched ground, and an habitation of dragons. I have made promises and broken them; vows and engagements have been as a thing of nought. Many persuasions have I had that I had got the victory and should be delivered, but I am deceived; so that I plainly see, that without some eminent succour and assistance, I am lost, and shall be prevailed on to an utter relinquishment of God. But yet, though this be my state and condition, let the hands that hang down be lifted up, and the feeble knees be strengthened. Behold, the Lord Christ, that hath all fulness of grace in his heart, all fulness of power in his hand, he is able to slay all these his enemies. There is sufficient provision in him for my relief and assistance. He can take my drooping, dying soul and make me more than a conqueror.³³ ‘Why sayest thou, O my soul, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint,’ Isa. xl. 27–31. He can make the ‘dry, parched ground of my soul to become a pool, and my thirsty, barren heart as springs of water;’ yea, he can make this ‘habitation of dragons,’ this heart, so full of abominable lusts and fiery temptations, to be a place for ‘grass’ and fruit to himself;” Isa. xxxv. 7. So God staid Paul, under his temptation, with the consideration of the sufficiency of his grace: “My grace is sufficient for thee,” 2 Cor. xii. 9.

Why marvel at what the world offers, when Christ offers us GRACE!

The angel will now explain the cryptic symbolism behind the whore of Babylon and the beast.

Revelation 17:8–10 (ESV): The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction. And the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will marvel to see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come. 9 This calls for

a mind with wisdom: the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated; 10 they are also seven kings, five of whom have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he does come he must remain only a little while.

V.8 is puzzling because the angel speaks as if time jumps around, especially concerning the beast. What connects us to the beast is when we encountered him in chapter 13:

Revelation 13:1–4 (ESV): And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. 2 And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority. 3 One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and the whole earth marveled as they followed the beast. 4 And they worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?"

Speculatively, the "is not" and "is about to rise" could have connection with the mortal wound upon its head and its rising up, in pseudo-resurrection substitute, as if it were co-equal with Christ Himself.

The seven heads are seven mountains with seven kings: This as a pastor I simply don't even seek to make an authoritative answer, many have accustomed this to Rome.

Potentially these seven kings would also have reference to the five empires in John's history:

1. Egypt,
2. Assyria
3. Babylon
4. Medo-Persia
5. Greece,
6. and the one present would be Rome for John, and speaking of a future kingdom or empire that will rule like and unlike any of those ever before on the earth: a supposed utopian society that is ruled by the work of the Anti-Christ and the red dragon: Satan himself.

Revelation 17:11–12 (ESV): As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to destruction. 12 And 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.



The beast itself will mark a ruling nation, that will be the epitome of man's intellect and rule, which will be marvelous to see and yet also the epitome of evil, and through the lens of John's vision, we see the end of him and his kingdom even before he gets started because of God and His absolute control over the nations of this world.

V.12 says we encounter ten kings who have not received royal power yet but will: Again these ten kings can be a symbol for a confederation of ten European powers that form a coalition or Union. And the easy temptation is to now google a ten nation confederacy and attach it to this scripture.

I find it interesting that whenever we read the scriptures like this we always point to Europe

and we never point to ourselves in our speculations. We have the assumption that because we are a moralistically Christian nation we are on the spectating side of the tribulation, Lord have mercy on us.

However, when we see these ten kings, it provides us to a connecting point to Daniel's vision of the Statue of Empires, and its ten toes connected to the iron / clay feet, the future weak empire of the Anti-Christ.

Revelation 17:13–14 (ESV): These are of one mind, and they hand over their power and authority to the beast. 14 They 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."

The language here of the ten kings having one mind is appropriate, because in Scripture, we come to an evil substitution of the church: The church having one mind: The Mind of Christ.

These kings hand their power and authority to the beast: WHY? Because He is the substitute messiah and his kingdom is the substitute

church. They give themselves over to one mind and that is mind of the beast, and that is why they are devoted to destruction.

They make war against the Lamb: Notice here, they make war not against our worldview, our ethics, not about spiritual forces vs spiritual forces but they make war against the LAMB who is Jesus Christ. Christ meets them in the final battle of Armageddon and destroys them.

Now John's Vision contrasts this with the TRUE MESSIAH and HIS TRUE KINGDOM:

The LAMB will conquer them for He is LORD OF LORDS KING OF KINGS = and his people are CALLED CHOSEN and FAITHFUL.

The Lamb who is coming to conquer is coming and he is bringing his chosen faithful with him:

Jude writes that the Lord is coming and bringing tens of thousands of his saints with him executing judgment on the ungodly.

This bled out Lamb of God is coming to conquer on His day:

Psalm 110:5–7 (ESV): The Lord is at your right hand;
he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath.

6 He will execute judgment among the nations,
filling them with corpses;
he will shatter chiefs
over the wide earth.

7 He will drink from the brook by the way;
therefore he will lift up his head.

Revelation 17:15–18 (ESV): And the angel said to me, “The waters that you saw, where the prostitute is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages. 16 And 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, 17 for 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. 18 And the woman that you saw is the great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth.”

Peoples, multitudes, nations, and languages give the idea that the voice of the beast and his high priest the whore of babylon is the very identity of the culture in the future.

God's sovereign control of the affairs of history is a constant theme behind the events of the book of Revelation. *Everything* that transpires occurs by His sovereign permission. From the riding forth of the first horsemen who was *given* a crown, to rising of the [Beast](#) from the sea who is *given* authority

to continue forty-two months (Rev. 13:5) and who was previously restrained (2Th. 2:6-8), God is ultimately in full control. God turns the hearts of kings according to His purposes—whether they know Him or not (Deu. 2:30; Ezra 7:27; Ps. 105:25; Pr. 21:1; Isa. 10:5-7; 14:27; 66:4; Acts 4:28). God determined that Pharaoh would not heed Moses so that Egypt might be judged (Ex. 7:4). He named and brought forth Cyrus to rebuild Jerusalem, although Cyrus did not know Him (Isa. 44:26-45:4; 46:11). It was God who gave Nebuchadnezzar his kingdom and power, although for much of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar did not know God (Dan. 2:37)