

## Revelation

### Notes #5

#### Chapters 17--20

#### I. Destruction of Babylon

##### A. The Great Harlot

*This woman, the harlot, is a literary contrast back to chapter 12 and the woman, Israel, the pure woman in heaven. Notice the parallel layout of the chapters.*

<b>HARLOT</b>	<b>WOMAN IN HEAVEN</b>
<i>Desc. of harlot</i>	<i>Desc. of woman in heaven</i>
<i>Alignment with anti-christ</i>	<i>Bearing of Messiah</i>
<i>Destruction by beast</i>	<i>Perseverance of woman with regard to beast's attacks</i>
<i>Destruction of Babylon (17—18)</i>	<i>Emergence of Jerusalem (21)</i>

#### 1. Identity of the Great Harlot: Literal Babylon

##### a. "Sits on many waters": Rule over the world by Babylon of old.

"The **waters** which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues."

Jer. 51:3, "O you who dwell by many waters, Abundant in treasures, Your end has come, The measure of your end."

##### b. "with whom the kings of the earth committed immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality"

*In Rev. 12 the woman there was the faithful woman who had not been deceived by the Beast (Rev. 13). She had been faithful to Christ as exhibited by the 144,000 "who follow the Lamb" (Rev. 14).*

##### c. "A mystery<sup>1</sup>, Babylon the Great, the mother<sup>2</sup> of harlots and of the abominations of the earth."

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<sup>1</sup> The word "mystery" has provided a multiplicity of interpretations. The question is to what "mystery" refers. Several possibilities exist:

1. "Mystery" refers to "Babylon", thus making Babylon a symbolic name for an actual nation (which is not Babylon, but may be Rome, Israel, the United States, or even the unregenerate church, etc.).

*While in Rev. 12 the woman bore the seed ("who keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus"), now this woman bears all those who are unfaithful to God in following the Beast and objecting to God's revelation of His Son as head of God's nation Israel.*

- d. Drunk with the blood of the saints and the witnesses of Jesus.

*This nation is clearly not only opposed the revelation of Jesus Christ, but is killing (like Cain) those who identify with Him.*

2. The Scarlet Beast on whom the woman sits

- a. Was and is not and is about to come out of the abyss and to go to destruction.

*This contrasts with "the Lamb that was slain" (as a representative of God, resurrected.) Clearly this one is from Satan (both national and individual). He rules the earth, yet there is a link between this man (and his national rule) and the nation Babylon.*

- b. Unbelievers deceived by the beast.

*This references back to Rev. 13 noting his resurrection (?) and the world's worship of him.*

- c. Seven heads: Seven mountains: Seven kings. Sequential kings with seventh resurrected.<sup>3</sup>

*The seven heads<sup>4</sup> are the seven sequential kings (nations) who have ruled over Israel. These would be Egypt (Pharaoh),*

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2. "Mystery" refers to the harlot, thus making the harlot a symbol of a nation. Thus the harlot is not an actual immoral woman, but is a nation which is unfaithful to God. Thus, the name "Babylon, . . ." becomes the real identity of the symbolic harlot, and the nation actually is Babylon.

3. "Mystery" refers to the whole passage and means something previously unrevealed, i.e., previously "secret" (cf. Romans 16:25). If this is the case then this cannot be Babylon of the Old Testament whose doom is prophesied (revealed) in Jeremiah 51. This, then allows this to be the false church (usually the ecumenical or Roman Catholic Church, some also reference the apostasy in 2 Thess. 2:3).

<sup>2</sup> Note that Babylon is also represented by a woman called "Wickedness" in Zechariah 5:7, which has not been literally fulfilled as yet.

<sup>3</sup> The other major view to that presented here is that these are seven sequential Roman kings.

<sup>4</sup> "Heads" are mountains which are kings. This double symbolism seems to stress, not only the national (referred to as mountains frequently in the Old Testament) but also the individual rulership of each nation (i.e., Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 1--4). Quite frequently this will be identified as Rome (thus the Roman Catholic Church as the woman) based on the reference to "seven mountains". Rome has been historically referenced as the "city built on seven hills". Several problems are apparent with this interpretation:

1. The text itself says the mountains are symbolic for kings/nations. To make the mountains literal would infer a double interpretation of a single item, which requires literary evidence.

*Assyria, Babylon (Nebuchadnezzar), Medo-Persia (Darius), Greece (Alexander the Great), First Century Rome (Caesar) and Seventieth Week Rome (the Beast, the seventh and the eighth).*<sup>5</sup>

- d. Ten horns: Ten kings who receive authority as kings with the beast.

*This is a reference to Daniel 7:7-8 referencing the ten kingdom federation which the Beast takes over.*

- e. The rejection of the harlot by the beast (Dan. 11:36-39)

*This is referenced back to Daniel 11 indicating the rejection of all religions and powers except for his own. Thus the harlot will be eaten by the beast. This is a reversal of order (woman eaten by the very beast she dominated).*

3. Babylon's destruction (17)

- a. Contrast Babel (Babylon) and Abram (Israel) as competing national representatives (links or reconcilers) of God (Gen. 11-12)

*Genesis 10--11 revealed nations and particularly Babylon (Babel - Gen. 11) who is contrasted with Abraham (Israel - Gen. 12). Babel attempted to be the nation (city) and the tower (bridge) to God and was destroyed since it was accomplished by human self-glorifying efforts. It was replaced by Abram (the nation of God) and Melchizedek (the bridge to God) which would be accomplished by God. Refer also to Genesis 28<sup>6</sup> where Jacob (the nation) has the covenant reaffirmed to him and dreams regarding a ladder<sup>7</sup> (the bridge) to God.*

- b. Babylon and Israel - Old Testament (1 Kings 1--11 with 2 Kings 25)

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2. Multiple cities in the ancient near east are referenced as being built on seven hills. Further this is a historical reference (extra-Biblical) and must hermeneutically take a back seat to the Biblical referent of mountains indicating nations/kings.
3. This view then would make the national beast as Rome and the harlot as Rome. This has led to the division of chapter 17 and 18 as religious (17) and political (18).
4. Satan has the same seven heads (12:3) which seems to indicate a greater extent of time than simply the final Roman empire.

<sup>5</sup> Refer to the paper by Darryl Dike, April 1987, "Revelation 17:8-11: The Seven Heads of the Beast."

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 28 has multiple literary parallels back to Genesis 11 (Babel and the Tower). For instance, Babel built a tower whose top was to reach to heaven, yet God had to come down indicating that the Babylonians had not succeeded in reaching God. In Genesis 28 the ladder has a top which reaches into heaven and YHWH stood at the top. Jacob's ladder (provided by God) was successful in bridging the gap (mediating) for Israel to God. Hebrews 5--7 spends considerable time on this issue, showing how Melchizedek indicated the required mediator between God and Israel. And this Melchizedek was Christ, whom Israel had rejected. Thus the nation was operating without access to God.

<sup>7</sup> Jesus fulfills this in John 1:51ff.

*The national contrast continued in the Old Testament as a fully developed Babylon took Israel into captivity and again the beast nation (Dan. 7) dominated God's nation Israel.*

- c. Babylon and Israel (Rev. 12 woman with Rev. 17 harlot).

*The contrast continues in Revelation as Israel (and others faithful to the Lamb) emerges victorious over the Beast (Rev. 14-15) while the Harlot Babylon is destroyed by the Beast.*

4. Description of Babylon's destruction (18)

*In references to Jeremiah 51 (and other references) Revelation finalizes which had been partial in the Old Testament, the destruction of literal Babylon.*

18:4	Isa. 52:11	Depart, depart, go out from there, Touch nothing unclean; Go out of the midst of her, purify yourselves, You who carry the vessels of the LORD.
18:5	Jer. 51:9	For her judgment has reached to heaven And towers up to the very skies.
18:6	Jer. 50:15	As she has done <i>to others</i> , so do to her.
18:7	Isa. 47:7	Yet you said, I shall be a queen forever . . .
18:8	Isa. 47:9	In one day
18:8	Jer. 50:34	Their Redeemer is strong
18:20	Jer. 51:48	Heaven and earth shout over Babylon's destroyers
18:21	Jer. 51:63	Babylon, like a great stone thrown into the Euphrates

## II. The Preparation for the Kingdom (19:6-21)

- A. Preparation for the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (19:6-10)

1. The sound of many waters (Ezekiel 1:24, 43:2)

*The reference to Ezekiel 43:2 seems to indicate that the return of God to claim the kingdom is imminent. Jesus, the Glory, is seen returning to the Temple from which the Glory had departed (Ezekiel 10). Refer to Malachi 3:1, Luke 19, Acts 1:11-12 for references to the departure and the return of the Glory of God.*

2. The Bride<sup>8</sup>: (19: cf. 21:9-10)

- B. The Return of the Lord (19:11-16)

1. The White Horse Rider (6:2): New ruler

*Now the bookend from Rev. 6:2 becomes a physical reality. The final "coming" of the Lord (Zech. 14:1ff.) takes place. Jesus physically comes to rescue His people.*

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<sup>8</sup> Note that the word used in 19:7 for "bride" is literally "woman" or "wife". The exact form is used in Rev. 12 and 17 to refer to the woman Israel and the woman Babylon. However, only in 21:9 is this one referred to as a "bride" utilizing parallelism. The word for "bride" is used also in 21:2 to show the holy city coming down from heaven.

2. Faithful & True (The Revelation of God)
3. Wages war in righteousness (Isaiah 11:4)
4. Diadems: contrasted with 'stephenos'.

*This crown is contrasted with the crown on the White Horse Rider of 6:2. This is a crown of rulership.*

5. A Robe dipped in blood (Isa. 63:3).

*The vengeance of the Lord is apparent here on His garments. This also matches up with 14:19 where the winepress of His fierce wrath took place outside the City of Jerusalem.*

6. Name is called the Word of God
7. Armies in heaven (Psalm 149:5-9)<sup>9</sup>
8. Smites nations/rule with rod of iron/fierce wrath of God.

*The institution of the powerful rule of Jesus Christ is now beginning, a fulfillment of Psalm 2. Note also that this O.T. reference was used in Rev. 2:26-27, indicating participation of the church in this rulership.*

9. KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS: The eternal rightful Ruler.

C. Conquering the Kings of the Earth (19:17-21).

1. The Great Bird Supper (Ezekiel 39:17-20).

*Other than the nominal reference in 20:8, this is the most quotable reference of Ezekiel 38--39 regarding the Battle of Gog and Magog. It is here that this Old Testament battle takes place, suppressing the nations under the rule of the Glory of God, Jesus Christ.*

2. The End of the Beast & False Prophet
3. The End of those who followed them

### III. The Kingdom on Earth (20:1-6)

A. The Binding of Satan (20:1-2)

1. The binding of the Serpent (Genesis 3:1-15).

*Satan's deception will not operate during the 1000 year kingdom, but will, for a short time (20:7-10) operate following that period.*

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<sup>9</sup> There is some difficulty here in that only the church has resurrected bodies (1 Thess. 4:13-17) at this point. So whom does the army include? The most identifiable allusion is to Zechariah 14:1-5. It is there that it states regarding the coming of the Lord "Then the LORD, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him" (14:5) (LXX: pantej oi agioi met' autou, Heb: כָּל־קְדוֹשִׁים עִמָּו). The question of who are the "holy ones" may indicate angels (Dan. 8:13) or the saints of Israel (compare Dan. 8:13 with 8:24, also Deut. 14:1-2). However, the issue of whether unresurrected saints can participate in a physical battle or not may not be an issue. All saints clearly have some identifiable (though not resurrected) body in heaven (6:9-11), 7:9-17).

2. The 1000 year kingdom<sup>10</sup>

*Jesus Christ rules physically over the earth in power.*

B. The Rule of Man (20:3-6)

1. The reward of the Martyrs - Rule and Judgment

*The church will rule with Him, as well as those Old Testament saints and Israelite martyrs of the tribulation period. The Gentile nations must come through Israel to see the king, at least once a year (Zech. 14:16-19). During the rest of the year the Israel (Isaiah 66:19), and its co-heir, the church members (Luke 19:11-27<sup>11</sup>, Matt. 25:14-30<sup>12</sup>), will take the word of Jesus Christ to the nations).*

2. The reward of those who rejected the anti-christ and were faithful.

*The martyrs of the tribulation have died with Christ (overcome by the serpent) and now live (rule) with Him (overcome the serpent).*

3. Those who have part in first resurrection.

*In this resurrection is included the church (at the rapture, cf. also 2:10, 11 for a similar reference of attribute), the Old Testament saints (Daniel 12:13), and of course, the just referenced Tribulation martyrs. It is interesting that only those who have died are mentioned in these three verses, emphasizing the importance of those who are willing to die for the sake of Jesus Christ (cf. 12:11). Note that the rapture is considered part of the first resurrection (phase one).*

*This is an explanation of Daniel 12:2, that the two resurrections (saved and unsaved) will be separated (cf. also John 5:28-29).*

#### IV. The Final Judgment (20:7-15)

A. The Final Rebellion of Satan (20:7-10)

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<sup>10</sup> That this is a literal 1000 years is absolutely clear from:

1. The multiple use of the term "1000".
2. The inability to compare the term "1000" to anything symbolic either in the O.T. or N.T.
3. The use of a relative term "a short time" in 20:3 ("1000" is a specific term).
4. The promise of the literal kingdom in the Old Testament and continued in the N.T.

<sup>11</sup> In Luke 19:11-27 the slaves who received the mina are receiving the message of God's mercy, which they personally have sampled (become saved), and need to confess. These are rewarded with rule over cities (responsibility to pass the word of Christ to that city).

<sup>12</sup> In the Parable of the Talents, the first two slaves are given talents which they multiply. This is the word of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount, that of God's holiness, man's depravity, and provision of righteousness through the King. During the delay before His return the servants are to confess (teach) the word. The reward is that they get more of Christ's word in the Kingdom to spread throughout the land. (The third slave hears the word but does not understand it (believe) and thus does not confess it (he is works oriented) and is rejected from the Kingdom (he is unsaved).

1. The release of Satan
2. The rebellion of nations against the rule of Christ and believers.

*Note clearly that this is not the battle of Ezekiel 38--39, the Battle of Gog and Magog. These are the same people, not the same battle. Only the title of the people are mentioned. There is no other similarity here to the Ezekiel passage, and based on John's nature of using attributes to identify, that is very important here. The attributes of the battle are in Rev. 19:17-18.*

3. The destruction of the rebels.
4. The entrance of Satan into the Lake of Fire

B. The Final Judgment of Unbelievers (20:11-15)

1. The Great White Throne: Son of Man (John 5:22-23)

*Here, now is the ultimate Adam (who did not judge creation on behalf of God), who will now judge all of creation, since He alone has the right as the perfect representative to do so.*

2. The dead.

*The dead here are all those without "life". This is the other half of the resurrection that is referred to in Daniel 12:2, John 5:28-29. Also see Rev. 20:5.*

3. The Book of Life

*Normally this book when referenced is the record of those who are to live in the City of Jerusalem. With the addition of "life" it is clear that this is the ability to represent God and Jesus in the Kingdom.*

4. The deeds of the dead.

*The contrast with the Book of Life is clear. Entry into the Lamb's book of life is only through the blood of Christ (imputed, substitutionary). The Book of the deeds is the record of their works, and they are not adequate to ascend to the holiness of God.*

5. The Lake of Fire.

*Once one enters the Lake of Fire there is no return or resurrection. The "death" referred to is the finality of the absence of being able to represent God. This, particularly means that they not only do not understand God (His word) they have no ability to do so (access to God's word is taken away (Matt. 25:28:30). So not only are they physically in agony, they are spiritually in agony since depravity and lack of understanding is their eternal tormentor.<sup>13</sup>*

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<sup>13</sup> Note the eternity of the Lake of Fire. Scripture never indicates anything other than the fact that this will continue forever (Isaiah 66:24; Mark 9:44,46,48). Note also that the eternal punishment is the opposite of eternal enjoyment of life. With God there is always an opposite in order to see His attributes fully. His attribute of love (the giving of His only Son for His enemies, Romans 5:1ff.) is seen in light of His wrath (judgment on those who rebel against Him and reject His great sacrifice). Thus, anything less than eternal fire would lessen the value of the eternal life which He gives.