THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST
CHAPTER 17

Rev 17:1 And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:

v. 1 This aspect of the vision is linked together with the seven vials which have been poured out (chapter 16). We see the link to chapter sixteen by one of the seven angels which had the seven vials coming to talk with John. The angel came to help explain what John had seen by allusion link. The angel wanted to talk with John about the judgment of the seven vials. He invites John to come with him. John would see that the vials were actually the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters.

Understanding this chapter becomes very important when noted that the seven seals were opened releasing seven trumpets which climax with the seven bowls. Here we are given understanding as to what those seals, trumpets, and seven bowls were actually aimed to do. If the meaning of this chapter is grasped then the meaning of all previous chapters will align. This is an extremely important chapter.

John was told in 15:1 that the vials were “filled up the wrath of God.” It is upon the great whore that the wrath of God is actually poured. This is imperative understanding. The wrath was not to be poured upon the planet, as we are told, but poured upon the great whore.

The primary thrust of what John was told is that the judgment was upon the great whore. The intensity of the wording is to be noted. This was more than a whore, this was the great whore. The wording and imageries are intended to shock and do indeed accomplish that purpose. As the following passages are read exposition of them will not be necessary. They are pornographic in imagery and shocking to our minds.

First John is given the vision (verses 1-6). Next he is given the keys to interpret the vision (verses 7-18). There is so much information given us in Scripture that one cannot read the information and not know who the great whore was. John’s readers knew who the great whore was. It is necessary for us to take the time and establish this understanding.

Many scripture passages will follow. The point will not only be made, but overstated. There is “overkill” in the Bible on this subject. Some (many) are listed here to show the unquestionable answer as to who the great whore is.

Isaiah declared that the city Jerusalem, that was to be faithful, had become a harlot:

Isa 1:21 How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers.

Jer 2:23 How canst thou say, I am not polluted, I have not gone after Baalim? see thy way in the valley, know what thou hast done: thou art a swift dromedary traversing her ways;

Jer 2:24 A wild ass used to the wilderness, that snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure; in her occasion who can turn her away? all they that seek her will not weary themselves; in her month they shall find her.

Jeremiah described the nation as a young she camel out seeking sexual satisfaction and as a wild ass in the wilderness sniffing the wind seeking sexual pleasure. Jeremiah pornographically said they that sought her will not seek in vain. They found what they wanted in her month. Jeremiah goes on.

Jer 3:1 They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the LORD.

Jer 3:2 Lift up thine eyes unto the high places, and see where thou hast not been lain with. In the ways hast thou sat for them, as the Arabian in the wilderness; and thou hast polluted the land with thy whoredoms and with thy wickedness.

Jer 3:3 Therefore the showers have been withhold, and there hath been no latter rain; and thou hadst a whore's forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed.

As this passage, and other passages show, the Lord considered Israel to be His wife. Though she had played the harlot, if she had actually returned and been faithful, the Lord would have taken her
back. She did not. Also, there had been so many that she had "lain" with (to copulate). The Lord asked her if there was any place she had not "lain" (to copulate). The NIV translations says, “Is there any place where you have not been ravished? By the roadside you sat waiting for lovers, sat like a nomad in the desert.” Another prophet, Hosea, spoke in this vain.

Hos 9:1 Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy, as other people: for thou hast gone a whoring from thy God, thou hast loved a reward upon every corn floor.

The picture Hosea gave us was of one that performed her whoring at every corn floor (at every threshing floor). Israel gave herself to the nations if they gave her some substance. She sought the goodies from strangers rather than her Husband the Lord God.

Ezekiel prophesied on-and-on and wrote on-and-on about that topic. The entire sixteenth chapter of Jeremiah with its sixty-three verses and the entire twenty-third chapter with its forty-nine verses are consumed in this subject. It is most likely that from these chapters John gave us this allusion for Revelation 17. Though both chapters are lengthy they need to be read. After these chapters are read little doubt will remain about the identity of the great whore. The wording is so graphic that very little needs to be clarified.

Eze 16:1 Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Eze 16:2 Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations,

The Lord clarified Jerusalem’s abominations. In this passage we see why Jerusalem was judged in A.D. 70. The Lord began by explaining how He found Jerusalem and cared for her and took her for Himself:

Eze 16:3 And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto Jerusalem; Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite.

Eze 16:4 And as for thy nativity, in the day thou wast born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all.

Eze 16:5 None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the lothing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born.

Eze 16:6 And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live.

Eze 16:7 I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field, and thou hast increased and waxen great, and thou art come to excellent ornaments: thy breasts are fashioned, and thine hair is grown, whereas thou wast naked and bare.

Eze 16:8 Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine.

This section shows the Lord’s taking Israel, likened to a baby thrown out into a field that no one wanted; it was not cleaned at birth and the navel cord was not cut. It layed dying in its own blood when the Lord passed by and said “Live.” He caused the nation to multiply, bud and become beautiful. Her breasts fashioned and her hair grew. The Lord then took Israel, when she was ready for love, and did “sware unto” her, “entered into a covenant with” her, and she became His. This would be the time from the calling of Abraham until the covenant made at Sinai. The Old Covenant was a vow of marriage with Israel just as the New Covenant is a vow of marriage between the Church and the Lord Jesus. Ezekiel continues with graphic images:

Eze 16:9 Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil.

Eze 16:10 I clothed thee also with embroidered work, and shod thee with badgers’ skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk.

Eze 16:11 I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck.

Eze 16:12 And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head.

Eze 16:13 Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and embroidered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom.

Eze 16:14 And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord GOD.

Wycliff says,


The bleeding virgin was washed, cleansed, and anointed with oil. Lovingly the husband cares for His beauty. He clothed and decked her with the very best. He put a jewel on her forehead, earrings

1 Wycliff Bible Commentary, Bible Research Systems, Austin Texas 196
in her ears, and a crown on her head. She was the queen, the wife of the Lord! She ate as a queen with fine flour, honey, and oil. To the Lord she was “exceeding beautiful.” She prospered into a kingdom and was renown among the nations for her beauty. The Lord had placed His beauty upon her and she looked perfect! She was the apple of His eye and He loved her.

**Eze 16:15** But thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown, and pouredst out thy fornications on every one that passed by; his it was.

The Lord’s love was not enough. Knowing she was beautiful, Israel began to play the game of adultery. She became a harlot, a whore. She began to pour out her fornications with every one that passed by. She began to allow all to have her, none were refused. Whoever came by “his it was.”

**Eze 16:16** And of thy garments thou didst take, and deckedst thy high places with divers colors, and playedst the harlot thereof: the like things shall not come, neither shall it be so.

**Eze 16:17** Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given thee, and madest to thyself images of men, and didst commit whoredom with them,

**Eze 16:18** And tookest thine embroidered garments, and coveredst them: and thou hast set mine oil and mine incense before them.

**Eze 16:19** My meat also which I gave thee, fine flour, and oil, and honey, wherewith I fed thee, thou hast even set it before them for a sweet savor: and thus it was, saith the Lord GOD.

She took all the wonderful garments and fabrics given her by her loving husband, the Lord, and thereupon them, in all the colors, was a harlot. She took the jewels, gold, and silver the Lord had given her and made male images and had sex with those images. NIV translation says, “you made for yourself male idols and engaged in prostitution with them.” She took the Lord’s clothes and put them on the male images. She took the Lord’s cologne and offered it to them. She even gave them the Lord’s food. She cooked for them with the fine flour, oil, and honey. “And thus it was, saith the Lord God!” She is seen as more than a harlot and more than an adulterous, she is seen as a nymphomaniac who cannot be satisfied.

**Eze 16:20** Moreover thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast borne unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured. Is this of thy whoredoms a small matter,

**Eze 16:21** That thou hast slain my children, and delivered them to cause them to pass through the fire for them?

Beyond her whoredoms (plural) she took the Lord’s children that she had borne unto Him and sacrificed them to the fire (Lev 18:21). Not only did she take the Lord’s children from Him, she sacrificed them to idols. This was not a “small matter” to the Lord.

**Eze 16:22** And in all thine abominations and thy whoredoms thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, when thou wast naked and bare, and wast pollute in thy blood.

**Eze 16:23** And it came to pass after all thy wickedness, (woe, woe unto thee! saith the Lord GOD;)

**Eze 16:24** That thou hast also built unto thee an eminent place, and hast made thee an high place in every street.

**Eze 16:25** Thou hast built thy high place at every head of the way, and hast made thy beauty to be abhorred, and hast opened thy feet to every one that passed by, and multiplied thy whoredoms.

**Eze 16:26** Thou hast also committed fornication with the Egyptians thy neighbors, great of flesh; and hast increased thy whoredoms, to provoke me to anger.

Israel forgot all the Lord had done for her and was only interested in her wickedness. “Woe, Woe unto thee! saith the Lord God. Jesus used the “Woe unto thee” in Matthew 23 again and again speaking of the judgment that came upon Jerusalem and the house of Moses that was laid desolate. The wife of the Lord built her “an eminent place” on every street and every corner. She spread her legs to everyone who passed by. She exposed herself and invited them into her whoredoms. She was worse then than ever before. Her whoredoms multiplied. Even with the Egyptians she committed fornication. The Egyptians were very sensual and “great of flesh.” She continued increasing her whoredoms.

**Eze 16:27** Behold, therefore I have stretched out my hand over thee, and have diminished thine ordinary food, and delivered thee unto the will of them that hate thee, the daughters of the Philistines, which are ashamed of thy lewd way.

**Eze 16:28** Thou hast played the whore also with the Assyrians, because thou wast unsatisfied; yea, thou hast played the harlot with them, and yet coudest not be satisfied.

**Eze 16:29** Thou hast moreover multiplied thy fornication in the land of Canaan unto Chaldea; and yet thou wast not satisfied herewith.

**Eze 16:30** How weak is thine heart, saith the Lord GOD, seeing thou dost all these things, the work of an imperious whorish woman;
Eze 16:31 In that thou buildest thine eminent place in the head of every way, and makest thine high place in every street; and hast not been as a harlot, in that thou scornerst hire;
Eze 16:32 But as a wife that committeth adultery, which taketh strangers instead of her husband!
Eze 16:33 They give gifts to all whores: but thou givest thy gifts to all thy lovers, and hirest them, that they may come unto thee on every side for thy whoredom.
Eze 16:34 And the contrary is in thee from other women in thy whoredoms, whereas none followeth thee to commit whoredoms: and in that thou givest a reward, and no reward is given unto thee, therefore thou art contrary.

Israel whored with the Assyrians because she was unable to be satisfied (“unsatiable” v. 28). She thought they could satisfy her, however she still was not satisfied. She multiplied her fornication and whored with Canaan and Chaldea and still could not be satisfied. “You weak willed and bad hearted woman!” says the Lord. “You are a vixen! You do not lay for hire. You lay as a wife that commits adultery and takes strangers instead of her husband! People pay whores, but you pay all your lovers. You hire many at the same time and want them to come into you from every side. There is no other whore like you!” You are a “great whore,” You are the greatest of whores. No other woman in whoredoms was like her. She was the great whore.

Eze 16:35 Wherefore, O harlot, hear the word of the LORD:
Eze 16:36 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thy filthiness was poured out, and thy nakedness discovered through thy whoredoms with thy lovers, and with all the idols of thy abominations, and by the blood of thy children, which thou didst give unto them;
Eze 16:37 Behold, therefore I will gather all thy lovers, with whom thou hast taken pleasure, and all them that thou hast loved, with all them that thou hast hated; I will even gather them round about against thee, and will discover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness.
Eze 16:38 And I will judge thee, as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged; and I will give thee blood in fury and jealousy.
Eze 16:39 And I will also give thee into their hand, and they shall throw down thine eminent place, and shall break down thy high places: they shall strip thee also of thy clothes, and shall take thy fair jewels, and leave thee naked and bare.
Eze 16:40 They shall also bring up a company against thee, and they shall stone thee with stones, and thrust thee through with their swords.
Eze 16:41 And they shall burn thine houses with fire, and execute judgments upon thee in the sight of many women: and I will cause thee to cease from playing the harlot, and thou also shalt give no hire any more.

We clearly see who the great whore was. The Lord said because of her filthiness, nakedness, whoredoms with her lovers, brothels on every street corner, fornication with her idols, and the blood of her children He would gather all her lovers, (those she loves and those she now hates, any who have taken pleasure) round about her. She was to be totally uncovered and the Lord God would judge her. She would be judged as a woman who broke wedlock (v. 38) and as a woman who murdered. She would receive back blood, fury, and jealousy. She would be given into the hands of her lovers who would throw her down, plunder her riches, and leave her naked and bare. She will be stoned with stones, killed with their swords, and burned with fire. She would cease from playing the harlot.

Eze 16:42 So will I make my fury toward thee to rest, and my jealousy shall depart from thee, and I will be quiet, and will be no more angry.

The remaining verses of Ezekiel 16 (all not listed here) tell of Israel’s (actually Judah’s) surpassing wickedness to Sodom and Samaria who were both judged accordingly. What they did was a very little thing compared to what Israel had done (v. 47). Nevertheless, the Lord is satisfied and has dealt with her for what she has done (v. 59). The Lord will remember His covenant that He made with her and will establish her. Paul said that all of Israel shall be saved after the fullness of the Gentiles has come in (Rom 11:25, 26). She will come in faithful, as every other believer comes in. It will be in submission to the Lord and King who is Jesus Christ. There is no other door. Until then the Lord says, “I am pacified toward thee for all that thou has done.”

Eze 16:58 Thou hast borne thy lewdness and thine abominations, saith the LORD.
Eze 16:59 For thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even deal with thee as thou hast done, which hast despised the oath in breaking the covenant.
Eze 16:60 Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant.
Eze 16:61 Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed, when thou shalt receive thy sisters, thine elder and thy younger: and I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not by thy covenant.
Eze 16:62 And I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD:
Eze 16:63 That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord GOD.

The destruction of the whore in A.D. 70 pacified the Lord God. It was the days of vengeance (Luke 21:22). The great whore was judged.

In chapter twenty-three, Ezekiel moved into the harlotry of Israel again. This time he used a story about two adulterous sisters named Aholah and Aholibah. Aholah was Samaria and Aholibah was Jerusalem. There is no guessing as to who Ezekiel is speaking. He was clear and told his readers exactly who each was in Ezekiel 23:4. The message of Jerusalem being the great whore is such a powerful doctrine that it is difficult to understand why anyone could interpret Revelation seventeen any other way. Yet we know there are many interpretations. Ezekiel’s relentless insistence on the subject cannot be disputed and we do well to allow the Bible to interpret the Bible and not allow our imaginations to create false doctrines.

Eze 23:1 The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,
Eze 23:2 Son of man, there were two women, the daughters of one mother:
Eze 23:3 And they committed whoredoms in Egypt; they committed whoredoms in their youth: there were their breasts pressed, and there they bruised the teats of their virginity.
Eze 23:4 And the names of them were Aholah the elder, and Aholibah her sister: and they were mine, and they bare sons and daughters. Thus were their names; Samaria is Aholah, and Jerusalem Aholibah.

Once more notice that capitol cities are considered mothers. Samaria was the capitol of the northern kingdom of Israel. Jerusalem was the capitol of the southern kingdom of Judah. In the eyes of the Lord they were both whores, but as this prophecy continues Aholibah – Jerusalem – is the great whore.

The time frame is different from that of chapter sixteen. Chapter sixteen seems to begin with Abraham and moves through Sinai into the nation. Chapter twenty-three begins with two nations which would be the time after Solomon’s reign as king.

Eze 23:5 And Aholah played the harlot when she was mine; and she doted on her lovers, on the Assyrians her neighbors, on the Assyrians her neighbors, on the Assyrians her neighbors, on the Assyrians her neighbors, on the Assyrians her neighbors, on the Assyrians her neighbors, on the Assyrians her neighbors, on the Assyrians her neighbors, on the Assyrians her neighbors, on the Assyrians her neighbors, on the Assyrians her neighbors, on the Assyrians her neighbors, on the Assyrians her neighbors, on the Assyrians her neighbors, on the Assyrians her neighbors, on the Assyrians her neighbors, on the Assyrians her neighbors, on the Assyrians her neighbors, on the Assyrians her neighbors, on the Assyrians her neighbors, on the Assyrians her neighbors, on the Assyrians her neighbors, on the Assyrians her neighbors, on the Assyrians her neighbors, on the Assyrians her neighbors, on the Assyrians her neighbors, on the Assyrians her neighbors, on the Assyrians her neighbors, on the Assyrians 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Eze 23:13 Then I saw that she was defiled, that they took both one way,
Eze 23:14 And that she increased her whoredoms: for when she saw men portrayed upon the wall, the images of the Chaldeans portrayed with vermillion,
Eze 23:15 Girded with girdles upon their loins, exceeding in dyed attire upon their heads, all of them princes to look to, after the manner of the Babylonians of Chaldea, the land of their nativity:
Eze 23:16 And as soon as she saw them with her eyes, she doted upon them, and sent messengers unto them into Chaldea.
Eze 23:17 And the Babylonians came to her into the bed of love, and they defiled her with their whoredom, and she was polluted with them, and her mind was alienated from them.
She doted (breathed hard sensually) for the Assyrians. She went after the young men. Jerusalem went the same way Symaria went and increased her whoredoms. She saw their portraits on the wall and lusted at their pictures, she doted (breathed hard sensually) while looking at them. She sent messages to them and invited them to her bed of love. There they defiled her and polluted her. Then after she had them, her mind was alienated from them.
Eze 23:18 So she discovered her whoredoms, and discovered her nakedness: then my mind was alienated from her, like as my mind was alienated from her sister.
She discovered her love to whore. She revealed her nakedness to others. Then the Lord says, “My mind was alienated from her, like as my mind was alienated from her sister.” It is interesting that though the English word “alienated” is used to describe how the Lord’s mind turned from Jerusalem and Symaria that the Hebrew words are different.
Describing how the Lord felt toward Jerusalem, the word yaqa’ is used. It means “to sever oneself; abandon.” Describing how the Lord alienated from Symaria the word naqa’ is used meaning “to feel aversion, distaste, disgust”. The hurt and emotional rejection was much more severe toward Jerusalem than toward Symaria. Her harlotry brought about the Lord’s severing and abandoning His woman. He left her. Ezekiel now becomes very graphic describing how the great whore went about her whoredoms. She multiplied them and did every imaginable and unimaginable act of lust.
Eze 23:19 Yet she multiplied her whoredoms, in calling to remembrance the days of her youth, wherein she had played the harlot in the land of Egypt.
Eze 23:20 For she doted upon their paramours, whose flesh is as the flesh of asses, and whose issue is like the issue of horses.
The meaning of the above verse needs no interpretation. It only needs to be pointed out that this is the way the Lord God saw Jerusalem. She was the vixen of vixens. She was the nymphomaniac of nymphomaniacs. She was without question the great whore.
Eze 23:21 Thus thou calledst to remembrance the lewdness of thy youth, in bruising thy teats by the Egyptians for the paps of thy youth.
Eze 23:22 Therefore, O Aholibah, thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will raise up thy lovers against thee, from whom thy mind is alienated, and I will bring them against thee on every side;
Eze 23:23 The Babylonians, and all the Chaldeans, Pekod, and Shoa, and Koa, and all the Assyrians with them: all of them desirable young men, captains and rulers, great lords and renowned, all of them riding upon horses.
Eze 23:24 And they shall come against thee with chariots, wagons, and wheels, and with an assembly of people, which shall set against thee buckler and shield and helmet round about: and I will set judgment before them, and they shall judge thee according to their judgments.
Eze 23:25 And I will set my jealousy against thee, and they shall deal furiously with thee: they shall take away thy nose and thine ears; and thy remnant shall fall by the sword: they shall take thy sons and thy daughters; and thy residue shall be devoured by the fire.
Eze 23:26 They shall also strip thee out of thy clothes, and take away thy fair jewels.
Eze 23:27 Thus will I make thy lewdness to cease from thee, and thy whoredom brought from the land of Egypt: so that thou shalt not lift up thine eyes unto them, nor remember Egypt any more.
Eze 23:28 For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will deliver thee into the hand of them whom thou hastest, into the hand of them from whom thy mind is alienated:
Eze 23:29 And they shall deal with thee hatefuly, and shall take away all thy labor, and shall leave thee naked and bare: and the nakedness of thy whoredoms shall be discovered, both thy lewdness and thy whoredoms.
Eze 23:30 I will do these things unto thee, because thou hast gone a whoring after the heathen, and because thou art polluted with their idols.
Eze 23:31 Thou hast walked in the way of thy sister; therefore will I give her cup into thine hand.
The Lord will now turn Aholibah/Jerusalem over to her lovers. Just as He did Symaria in this chapter verse nine. Everyone she fornicated with will turn against her and destroy her. This is what John says will happen to the great whore in
Revelation seventeen. The Lord says to Jerusalem, “I will set my jealousy against thee, and they shall deal furiously with thee... I will do these things unto thee, because thou has gone a whoring after the heathen...” (v. 25-31). Because Jerusalem went this way she is given the cup of Samaria. The great whore in Revelation has in her hand a cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication.

Eze 23:32 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou shalt drink of thy sister’s cup deep and large: thou shalt be laughed to scorn and had in derision; it containeth much.

Eze 23:33 Thou shalt be filled with drunkenness and sorrow, with the cup of astonishment and desolation, with the cup of thy sister Samaria.

Eze 23:34 Thou shalt even drink it and suck it out, and thou shalt break the potsherds thereof, and pluck off thine own breasts: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD.

Jerusalem would drink the cup. She would suck the cup empty. The cup is the judgment that will come upon her. It will cause her to be drunk and will bring astonishment and desolation! The Lord has spoken it, saith the Lord God.

Eze 23:35 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast forgotten me, and cast me behind thy back, therefore bear thou also thy lewdness and thy whoredoms.

Eze 23:36 The LORD said moreover unto me; Son of man, wilt thou judge Aholah and Aholibah? yea, declare unto them their abominations;

Eze 23:37 That they have committed adultery, and blood is in their hands, and with their idols have they committed adultery, and have also caused their sons, whom they bore unto me, to pass for them through the fire, to devour them.

Eze 23:38 Moreover this they have done unto me: they have defiled my sanctuary in the same day, and have profaned my sabbaths.

Eze 23:39 For when they had slain their children to their idols, then they came the same day into my sanctuary to profane it; and, lo, thus have they done in the midst of mine house.

Eze 23:40 And furthermore, that ye have sent for men to come from far, unto whom a messenger was sent; and, lo, they came: for whom thou didst wash thyself, paintedst thy eyes, and deckedst thyself with ornaments,

Eze 23:41 And satest upon a stately bed, and a table prepared before it, whereupon thou hast set mine incense and mine oil.

Eze 23:42 And a voice of a multitude being at ease was with her: and with the men of the common sort were brought Sabeans from the wilderness, which put bracelets upon their hands, and beautiful crowns upon their heads.

Eze 23:43 Then said I unto her that was old in adulteries, Will they now commit whoredoms with her, and she with them?

Eze 23:44 Yet they went in unto her, as they go in unto a woman that playeth the harlot: so went they in unto Aholah and unto Aholibah, the lewd women.

There is definite overkill making this point. However, once the point is made and established in our thinking, there is no doubt as to the meaning of the Revelation. When Jerusalem is seen as “the lewd woman” (Eze 23:44), the great whore, little persuasion is needed to understand what John was seeing. She forgot the Lord in the “lewdness of her whoredoms” (v. 35). On her hands was the blood of the prophets and the children of the Lord, who she herself birthed (v. 37). She defiled His sanctuary as a woman would defile a man’s house using it for a house to whore in. She washed herself, painted her eyes, decked herself with jewelry, then sat upon the bed waiting for her lovers to come and have her. She brought out the Lord’s incense and oil to enhance her lewd adultery. She had no favorites. She was a whore to any and all. From kings to the common sort she laid and gave them gifts given her by her Husband. She is now old and continues in her whoredoms. They go in unto her as they go in unto a woman that playeth the harlot.

Eze 23:45 And the righteous men, they shall judge them after the manner of adulteresses, and after the manner of women that shed blood; because they are adulteresses, and blood is in their hands.

Eze 23:46 For thus saith the Lord GOD; I will bring up a company upon them, and will give them to be removed and spoiled.

Eze 23:47 And the company shall stone them with stones, and dispatch them with their swords; they shall slay their sons and their daughters, and burn up their houses with fire.

Eze 23:48 Thus will I cause lewdness to cease out of the land, that all women may be taught not to do after your lewdness.

Eze 23:49 And they shall recompense your lewdness upon you, and ye shall bear the sins of your idols: and ye shall know that I am the Lord GOD.

This will be discussed later, but it is necessary to note it now. Speaking of Jerusalem and those who fornicated with her, Ezekiel 23:45 says that righteous men would judge them. This was not only because of the adultery, but also because of the blood in their hands. Revelation 20:4 says, “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them.” These are those
who have experienced the first resurrection (water baptism). The souls of the martyred saints cried out for vengeance under the altar (Rev 6:10) and the imprecatory prayers of the saints resulted in the pouring out of the judgment (8:5). The righteous judged through their position in the throne (3:21; Eph 2:6). They judged through prayer.

Ezekiel 23:46-49 tells of the horror of the siege against Jerusalem by the Romans; who Jerusalem did fornicate with (John 19:12, 15; 11:48). A great company did come. Great stones were thrown against the walled city. Over a million people perished through famine and the sword. The Jewish sons and daughters were killed. The city and the houses were burned with fire. The adultery of Jerusalem ceased!

Great time and space has been spent on this verse of Revelation 17:1. The reason is that once it is understood who the Biblical great whore is, the remainder of the chapter and even all of Revelation is far greater understood.

Rev 17:2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

v. 2 The imagery John is seeing is a sickening vision. When the mind is released to attempt to imagine the image which John is invited to see, it is nearly a “stomach turning” experience. The product produced from the fornication union of the great whore and the kings of the earth is drank by the inhabitants of the earth. This substance is called the wine of her fornication. The inhabitants of the earth are made drunk by this horrible excretion. How unimaginable is the image! John is invited to go see this horrible sight and accepts the invitation.

Both words earth are translated “ge” in verse two. As previously learned “ge” means soil or land and referred to the land of Israel. The leaders of Israel had committed fornication with the whore. The people have drank of this fornication and become drunk. As learned from Ezekiel chapters sixteen and twenty-three, Jerusalem was not “picky” about who she fornicated with. Though obviously fornication with the leaders of Jerusalem is evident, she also fornicated with the kings of Rome.

As stated earlier sacrifices were offered for Caesar every day. God’s covenant did not allow sacrifices for any King, this was an adulterous act. Taxes were given for Caesar. The Lord viewed this as adultery. His bride is giving another man the gifts and money that He gave her.

The angel told John that the land (ge) was made drunk with the wine of her fornication. The people were in a stupor. They were made drunk, not made to drink. By following the false doctrines of the Pharisees and drinking, they were made drunk. The wine of her fornication is easily seen as the false doctrine they drank. The doctrine one drinks determines the judgment one has. This is proven here. They drank the unclean image and drank the judgment. They were so drunk they could not recognize the Messiah. Instead they preferred to fornicate with Rome. Jerusalem turned her back on her Husband and caused her and her children to drink the wine of her fornication.

It is interesting that these were drunk. By contrasting this drunkenness with the drunkenness of Acts, chapter two when the Holy Spirit was poured out we learn there are two states of spiritual stupor. One is invoked by false doctrine. One is invoked by the Spirit.

Rev 17:3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

v. 3 Here we have the official beginning of the third primary section of the Revelation. Section one began in 1:9 with verse ten saying, “I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.” The second section began in 4:1 with verse two saying, “And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.” Now the third section begins with he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman. As explained earlier each section begins with an expedition into the spirit realm with a primary header vision that has many other sub-headed visions (see discussion 1:10; 4:2). Each vision explains what it is concerned with. The first vision is concerned with the Son of Man. The second vision is concerned with the wrath of the Lamb and how He goes about this
wraith. The third vision is concerned with a woman sitting upon a beast.

As already noted this woman is the object of the wrath of God which was poured out in the seven vials (17:1). She is in direct contrast to the other woman in the wilderness shown in chapter twelve who the Lord nourished and protected from the dragon. The woman of chapter twelve is all those who labored to birth the Son of man (man child). A noticeable distinction of “two’s” are unveiling. The term wilderness is used here. Chilton says that the wilderness is a sign of the curse (Mat 12:43). It appears to me that the wilderness is more an aspect of the journey where the decision is made to enter the kingdom and possess the abundance there or to die in the wilderness (Num 14:2, 23, 24, 29; Josh 1:8). Jesus made that decision in His temptation. The apostle Paul went into the desert of Arabia to make his decision (Gal 1:17).

The “two’s” are given clearly in each great vision. In the first great vision there are “two” types of people in the church. There are the “overcomers” and those the Lord has fought “against” (2:4, 14, 16, 20; 3:2, 15). In the second great vision there are those who receive the mark of the Lord and those who receive the mark of the beast. In this great vision we will also see the “two’s.” There is the woman who is the great whore and there is the woman who “hath made herself ready,” “clothed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints” (19:7, 8). One woman is a whore. The other woman is clean, pure, and righteous. John was first taken and shown the woman referred to as “BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” (17:5).

This woman was portrayed as sitting upon a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. This great whore was not seated in the heavenly places in the throne of God, she was seated in the wilderness and her throne was the beast in 17:3 – many waters in 17:1. This was to show that the “many waters” and the “beast” were one in the same.

Which beast was the great whore Jerusalem sitting upon? Was she riding the dragon, the sea beast, the land beast? Or, could this be a different beast? Below is a chart attempting to differentiate and find if what John shows us is one of the previous beast or if it is an entirely new beast.

From the comparison some similarities are seen, however, there is not a perfect match. We have not seen this exact beast described prior to this point even though this beast has been mentioned. This beast was mentioned in 11:7 as the beast that makes war with the two witnesses. The noticeable difference of the beast was their origination. The dragon actually originated in heaven (12:3). The sea beast originated from the sea (13:1). The land beast originated from the land or “ge” (13:11). This beast originates from hell itself referred to here as out of the bottomless pit. Interestingly enough this is the exact place that the dragon who is called the serpent, the devil, and satan will find himself in 20:3. This same pit was unlocked in chapter 9 by a star from heaven who released the demons held there.

The point made clearly here is that the day and hour had come for this particular beast to come forth. It was the days of Daniel 2:44, when a world power would exist during which the “God of heaven” would “set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed.

Dan 2:44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

This beast simply fulfilled the will of God in destroying the great whore (17:17). Its primary resemblance is the sea beast. At any rate, this beast is the world power of those days. This particular world power is Rome.

The beast is full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. There is no need to interpret these heads and horns further here. The angel will clearly interpret these mysteries for us in later verses of this chapter.

Rev 17:4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:

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2. Chilton, The Days Of Vengeance, page 428
The woman was arrayed in purple. Purple and scarlet were primary colors for the tabernacle in the wilderness (Exo 25:4) and a primary color for the temple (2Ch 2:7). Knowing that John is referring to Jerusalem and to the religion of Moses these colors are used to identify the temple worship which decked the harlot. The temple was also decked with gold and precious stones.

"Now the outward face of the temple in its front wanted nothing that was likely to surprise either men's mind or their eyes: for it was covered all over with plates of gold of great weight, and, at the first rising of the sun, reflected back a very fiery splendor, and made those who forced themselves to look upon it to turn their eyes away, just as they would have done at the sun's own rays... On its top it had spikes with sharp points, to prevent any pollution of it by birds sitting upon it... Before this temple stood the altar, fifteen cubits high, and equal both in length and breadth."  

This was also the description given of the harlot Jerusalem. She took the wonderful goods that were given her from her Husband the Lord and defiled them:

Eze 16:13 Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and embroidered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom.

Eze 16:14 And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord GOD  

Eze 16:16 And of thy garments thou didst take, and deckedst thy high places with divers colors, and playedst the harlot thereupon: the like things shall not come, neither shall it be so.  

Eze 16:17 Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given thee, and madest to thyself images of men, and didst commit whoredom with them  

Rev 17:5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.  

Rev 17:6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.  

v. 5 It may be important to notice that the woman is not said to be Babylon, but rather labeled Babylon. She is marked with the mark of Babylon. Thus she will receive the judgment that Babylon received. It is to this reference that John gives us our allusion link:  

Jer 51:6 Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the LORD'S vengeance; he will render unto her a recompense.  

Jer 51:7 Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD'S hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad.  

Jer 51:8 Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed: howl for her; take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed...  

Jer 51:13 O thou that dwellst upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thine end is come, and the measure of thy covetousness...  

Jer 51:37 And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling place for dragons, an astonishment, and an hissing, without an inhabitant...  

Jer 51:42 The sea is come up upon Babylon: she is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof.  

Jer 51:43 Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness, a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth any son of man pass thereby...  

Jer 51:45 My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the LORD.

The mark on the forehead would be an obvious sign to everyone of the occupation this harlot held. It would be a brash and unashamed advertisement. Speaking to Jerusalem the Lord says, "... thou hadst a whore's forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed" (Jer 3:3). The great whore is the mother of harlots and the mother of abominations of the earth. These tremendous abominations are linked with her drunkenness from the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. This was seen earlier from Ezekiel about Jerusalem.

First Jerusalem is the mother of harlots. The Lord has clearly stated that she was even more of a harlot and had greater abominations than even her sister city Sodom did. None can compare with her whoredoms. Jerusalem is the greatest of the harlots. She is the mother of harlots.

Eze 16:34 And the contrary is in thee from other women in thy whoredoms, whereas none followeth thee to commit whoredoms: and in that thou givest a reward, and no reward is given unto thee, therefore thou art contrary.  

Eze 16:48 As I live, saith the Lord GOD, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters.

3 Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book V, 6, page 555
Jerusalem was also the mother of abominations. These abominations primarily come in the form of drinking the blood of the saints. Again this is specifically linked to Jerusalem.

Eze 16:36 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thy filthiness was poured out, and thy nakedness discovered through thy whoredoms with thy lovers, and with all the idols of thy abominations, and by the blood of thy children, which thou didst give unto them;

Eze 16:37 Behold, therefore I will gather all thy lovers, with whom thou hast taken pleasure, and all them that thou hast loved, with all them that thou hast hated; I will even gather them round about against thee, and will discover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness.

Jesus Himself condemned Jerusalem because they had killed the prophets, wise men, scribes, and those that Jesus sent - His saints. Jerusalem was drunk on the blood of the saints. Because of this, desolation came. It is though the Jews were in a drunken stupor not able to even recognize their own Christ.

Mat 23:34 Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city:

Mat 23:35 That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

Mat 23:36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

Mat 23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

Mat 23:38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

When the angel showed John the great whore called Mystery Babylon the Great, John says, “I wondered with great admiration.” The word translated admiration is “thauma” and means “wonder.” John began to look closely in great wonder, not admiration. He was not admiring the great whore, he had great wonder. He did not understand it totally and needed some help.

Rev 17:7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

Rev 17:8 The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

GREAT RED DRAGON

appeared in heaven

great red dragon

seven heads

ten horns

seven crowns

serpent, called the Devil, and Satan

dragon worshiped

BEAST OF THE SEA

rose out of the sea

a beast

seven heads

upon his heads the name of blasphemy one head wounded

ten horns

ten crowns

like a leopard feet like bear mouth of lion dragon gave power seat of great authority exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him

world wondered after

beast worshiped

blasphemy against God, tabernacle, and them that dwell therein

given unto him to make war with the saints overcome them

power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations

BEAST OF THE LAND

rose out of the earth (ge)

another beast

doeth great wonders power to give life unto the image of the beast

causeth all to receive a mark
BEAST FROM THE BOTTOMLESS PIT  
rose out of the bottomless pit  
scarlet colored beast  
seven heads  
full of names of blasphemy  

vv. 7, 8 The angel told John that he would explain this mystery concerning the woman and the beast that carrieth her. The angel began explaining the beast. The angel says, “The beast that thou sawest was ...”

The beast was, is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition. After a few more words of this riddle is given the angel said, “they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.” Then the angel adds a very key element to the riddle.

Rev 17:9 And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.

v. 9 We gain much from this verse. The only city with the famed seven mountains is Rome Italy!

“This early city was built on seven hills; Capitoline Hill and the Palatine Hill (nearest the east bank of the Tiber) was the first site of the city, and between them was the Roman Forum. Farther out, the Aventine, Caelian, Esquiline, Viminal, and Quirinal hills provided vital protection to the city. The city eventually became the capital of the Roman Empire (see Rome, ancient).”

“In early Roman mythology, Quirinus was an important deity who was ranked in a trinity with Jupiter and Mars. Of Sabine origin, he was a god of war and was sometimes identified with Mars. Later, he became identified with Romulus, the legendary founder of Rome, and gave his name to the Quirinal Hill, one of the seven hills of Rome.”

Rome, Italy is not the only city on the earth with “seven hills.” For example, Istanbul has seven hills, but it in no way fits into this chapter. However, Rome Italy fits perfectly. It was the “is” spoken of in verse eight.

For proper interpretation of the revelation it is necessary to point out the “is” of 17:8. This places the emphasis of this book in the time in which it was written. At the time the Revelation was written this beast “IS”! This beast was alive and active in the day the Revelation was written. This has been discussed somewhat previously (see discussion 11:7; 13:1). By adding a little more information to the description at this time, the riddle will become clear.

Rev 17:10 And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

Rev 17:11 And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

vv. 10, 11 The seven heads are not only seven hills, they are also seven kings. Five of these kings have fallen, and one IS, and the other is not yet come. Again the insistence by the angel of the present time is noted. The angel tells John that one is. This is so very important. The angel has given enough information to begin now. The world power that existed at the time of the writing of the Revelation was Rome. No one will argue that point. By knowing what the Scriptures say about the days of this empire and the days of these kings, we know also that it is the days in which God took the stone, cut out of the mountain, and established a kingdom.

Dan 2:44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

Dan 2:45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

According to Daniel’s interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in Daniel two, the third world power, after Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom, would be the days of the stone cut out of the mountain. That stone was Jesus who came in the days of the Roman empire. Thus, the Roman empire is the seven headed beast which is the city...
with seven hills and which has had, at this time, six kings or emperors. Five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. The Roman empire’s heads begin with Julius Caesar, even dispensationalists teach this. If this is accurate, then the sixth head should be the head alive in the day which the Revelation was written. John is told “one is.” To find the person John wants to show us we simply find who the sixth head of the Roman empire was. It was none other than Nero. Accurate history lists; Julius, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, and Claud, then Nero (number six), and Galba. For further proof the angel tells John that the seventh head, which is not yet, will come and he must continue a short space. The seventh was Galba who ruled for only seven months - a very short space. This can all be verified in encyclopedias and history books, which we did in chapter thirteen when interpreting the beast of the sea.

Julius Caesar began a dynasty called the Julio-Claudian Dynasty. His memory and methods were brought back to life with Octavian (later Augustus), Caesar's grandnephew and heir. This would be the head that died but lived (Rev 13:3). There would be eight official Caesar's that would make up the Julio-Claudian Dynasty. Vitellius would be the eighth ending the dynasty. The new dynasty would be called the Flavian Dynasty, started by Flavian Vespasian who became emperor during the war with the Jews.

John is told by the angel that the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition. Vitellius was the eighth Caesar, who is of the seven. Vitellius ended this aspect of the beast. The Julio-Claudian Dynasty went into perdition when Vespasian was made emperor. Perdition is the Greek word “apoleia” meaning “ruin or loss.” This aspect of the beast went into perdition, not the lake of fire. The beast was not cast into the lake of fire until Revelation 19:20. Once in the lake of fire it never returned. Again, this aspect of the beast went into perdition.

Rev 17:12 And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

Rev 17:13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

This was discussed in 13:1. Rome had ten provinces and each province had its own king. These provinces were Achaia, Asia, Syria, Egypt, Africa, Spain, Gaul, Britain, and Germany. Each province was then divided into smaller “kingdoms” and appointed a “king.” For example the king of Judea was Herod.

Mat 2:1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaeh in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem

These ten kings actually have no kingdom. They were totally subject to Roman rule with a limited amount of authority. What power they did have was only with the beast of Rome.

Their mind was made one in destroying Jerusalem. The angel explains to John that these kings gave their power and strength unto the beast. This was also discussed in chapter thirteen. It bears need of discussing again. Josephus describes the tremendous army that was put together by these kings under the beast Nero: “There were also a considerable number of auxiliaries who got together, that came from the kings Antiochus and Agrippa, and Sohemus, each of them contributing one thousand footmen that were archers, and a thousand horsemen. Malchus also, the king of Arabia, sent a thousand horsemen, besides five thousand footmen, the greatest part of whom were archers; so that the whole army, including the auxiliaries sent by the kings, as well as horsemen and footmen, when all were united together, amounted to sixty thousand.”7 The kings were in one mind with the beast to lay Jerusalem desolate.

Chilton makes a very important point. Whenever the number “10” is used, or any of its derivatives, it does not have to be exactly ten. The number is meant to be symbolic.8 The symbolism is, all of Rome was determined to destroy Jerusalem.

Rev 17:14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

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7 Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book III, IV, 2, page 504
8 Chilton, The Days Of Vengeance, page 437
The king of the heathen kings was Caesar. That king of the kings is now contrasted to the true Lord of lords, and King of kings. The King of kings is Jesus, not Caesar. The ten kings and beast make war with the Lamb. Not one soul will argue that this did not happen under Nero’s reign or any other Roman emperor until Constantine defeated the emperor Maxentius in 313 A.D.

“Maxentius was the last Roman persecutor of the Christians, whom Constantine set free [Christians] after three hundred years of oppression and death. Constantine so firmly established the rights of Christians to worship God that it would be a thousand years before they would again suffer for their faith. For three hundred years, the strongest and rightest rulers in the world had tried to snuff out Christianity, using force, politics, torture, and death - everything at their disposal. Now all those emperors were gone, while Christ and His Church still stood.”

The portrayal the angels gave John was not one of the Lord’s armies only being saints who had died or “raptured.” The angel said, “and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.” There were those called, chosen, and faithful ones who were in the presence of the Lord (2Cor. 5:8). There were also the called, and chosen, and faithful alive and warring. The note made is, these called, chosen, and faithful were with the Lamb in His overcoming of the enemies. The called, and chosen, and faithful are a warring people who war for the Lamb.

Attempting to imagine the comfort of the angel’s words and John’s writing to the Christians of the first three Centuries is impossible. They read about and had preached to them that the Lamb shall overcome them, however, they and their loved ones constantly became martyrs. The only position of faith they found was in the word. The only comfort they found, and held on to, was in the word.

Rev 17:15 And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

Rev 17:16 And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

vv. 15, 16 The effect the Jewish religion had on the world was truly global in scale. The angel pictures this world wide influence as the waters thou sawest in 17:1. These waters are clearly interpreted for us as peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. The Jews were in “every nation under heaven” with their synagogues and teachings against the Christ. This is seen in Acts 2:5:

Act 2:5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

The entire Roman Empire was influenced by the whore as she sat in every city doing her whoredoms. Along those same lines, in every city under heaven the ten horns (ten provinces with their kings) shall hate the whore and burn her with fire. This is exactly what happened all over the Roman empire. Josephus writes of Alexandria Egypt.

“Tiberius Alexander, the governor of the city ... sent out upon them those two Roman legions that were in the city, and together with them five thousand other soldiers, who, by chance were come together out of Lybia, to the ruin of the Jews. They were also permitted not only to kill them, but to plunder them of what they had, and set fire to their houses. These soldiers rushed violently into that part of the city which is called Delta, where the Jewish people lived together, and did as they were bidden though not without bloodshed ... they [Jews] were destroyed unmercifully ... which houses were first plundered of what was in them, and then set on fire by the Romans; wherein no mercy was shown to the infants, and no regard had to the aged till all the place was overflowed with blood, and fifty thousand of them lay dead upon heaps...”

Rev 17:17 For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

Rev 17:18 And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

vv. 17, 18 The destruction of Jerusalem and the termination of its society was absolutely the will of God. Jesus said it would happen. The city would be laid desolate (Mat 23:38).

Mat 23:38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

The desolation would come upon the generation that rejected and pierced Him (termed by Jesus as “this generation”).

Mat 23:36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

Mat 24:34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

Jesus Christ as the Son of man would do it as He came in the clouds of Glory and in the name of the Lord.

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9 Foxe’s Christian Martyrs of the World, page 21

10 Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book II, XVIII, 8, page 494
Great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

The great whore is none other than Jerusalem, the great city.

Contemporary Theological View(s)
Revelation 17:1 And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:
Revelation 17:2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.
Dispensational teaching says the great whore is a world wide religious system. Van Impe says, “Here we discover that this worldwide religious system holds both earth’s leaders and people within its grasp. The fornication committed is between the worldly leaders and the church. Remember that fornication spiritually speaking, has to do with idolatry, including all its evil connotations and associations. ...During the Tribulation hour, a vast international religious system (the great whore of verse one) creates impure alignments with kings, rulers, and presidents in an unprecedented way. Her control is so overwhelming that humanity becomes mentally superfluous of hypnotically drugged as they are made drunk with the intoxicating brew of these religious/political alliances.”
Revelation 17:8 The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.
Phillips says,
“The scarlet beast represents the final stage of a Gentile world empire headed up by an individual, the Beast, who embodies all its characteristics, ambition, and powers. This empire is administered by ten subordinate kings. It is a blasphemous empire, thoroughly antichrist in character and opposed to everything holy and true.”
In reality, the word earth is the Greek word ge meaning soil, region, land (Strong’s #1093). Those drunk are not of the entire globe. They are the religious leaders which Jesus rebuked. They are the scribes, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, etc. Jesus spoke of “the drunken” in Matthew 24. Obviously He was warning his disciples not to revert and spend time with the religious system. If they did, they would be judged as the system.

Mat 23:33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?
Mat 24:30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.
This would be the “great tribulation” unlike any captivity or desolation before then or since.
Mat 24:21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

Tremendous insight is given as we see that God put in their hearts to fulfill His will. The their was the Roman empire. They fulfilled the will of God by desolating Jerusalem and Judaism. It was in all actuality the words of God fulfilled.
The chapter ends with a clear description of who the woman John saw is. She is that great city. This was stated, by the angel, in a way that John and his readers would know who she was by simply knowing who that great city was. The Scriptures use the term “great city” to describe several cities (Gen 10:12; Jos. 10:2; Jon 1:2; 3:2, 3; 4:11) Resen of (Gen 10:12) no longer existed. Nineveh (Jon 1:2; 3:2, 3; 4:11) had long since been destroyed. The only one of relevance was Jerusalem. Jeremiah referred to this in Jeremiah 22:8 which is one of the allusions links John refers to:
Jer 22:6 For thus saith the LORD unto the king’s house of Judah; Thou art Gilead unto me, and the head of Lebanon: yet surely I will make thee a wilderness, and cities which are not inhabited.
Jer 22:7 And I will prepare destroyers against thee, every one with his weapons: and they shall cut down thy choice cedars, and cast them into the fire.
Jer 22:8 And many nations shall pass by this city, and they shall say every man to his neighbor, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this great city?
Jer 22:9 Then they shall answer, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD their God, and worshiped other gods, and served them.

However, a more powerful and clearer usage was already given by John in 11:8. Though John does not use the name Jerusalem, it is more than clear that Jerusalem was the city he speaks of and the obvious city his readers would immediately grasp. The same term – great city – is used in Revelation 11:8 and here in Revelation 17:18.
Rev 11:8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where

11 Dr. Jack Van Impe, Revelation Revealed, page 230-231
12 John Phillips, Exploring Revelation, page 204
Matthew 24:48  But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;
Matthew 24:49  And shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;
Matthew 24:50  The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of,
Matthew 24:51  And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Revelation 17:10  And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

Phillips says,
"The seven kings referred to here surely are seven individuals. One of them, the last, is brought up out of the abyss and is eventually cast into the lake of fire (17:8, 11; 19:20; 20:10). This last fate he shares with the false prophet, who is certainly an individual. The kings, then, are actual kings. This view being adopted leads to a most interesting conclusion. Of the kings referred to, five had come and gone at the time John wrote the Apocalypse. We are not told who they are, and we have no means of finding out who they were. We are not told whether they were Roman rulers or rulers from various Gentile empires that preceded that of Rome. One of the succession of kings was alive and ruling when John wrote this chapter and presumably was the emperor Domitian, a cruel, lustful, and blasphemous man who delighted to be addressed, as Seutonius tells us, as "our Lord God." One king was yet future in John's day, and upon his ascension to power, he would 'continue a short space.' We do not know who this king is or whether he has yet lived on earth." 13

Actually it is not one of the seven individuals that is cast into the lake of fire, it is the entire beast. This is important because it shows us there will never be another world power such as Rome. That beast is in the lake of fire burning with brimstone.

Revelation 19:20  And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshiped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

I do not understand why Phillips avoids naming the kings. He says, "We have no means of finding out who they were." However, he implies that Domitian was the king. It is probably because he looked at it historically and discovered that Domitian would not fit. We will discuss that fact next.

One of the most interesting forms of interpretation of this verse is done by Jack Van Impe. Not interesting in the truth he shows, interesting in the pitiful way he attempts to make his doctrine work. We have previously discussed this in 13:1 so we will only mention it now.

One of the seven kings was ruling as John wrote the Revelation. The Roman Empire ruled the known world at that time. We know the time in which John lived and can look to see historically who this was. The accurate historic list of Roman emperors was Julius, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, and Claud, then Nero (number six), and Galba. For further proof, the angel tells John that the seventh head, which is not yet, will come and he must continue a short space. The seventh was Galba who ruled for only seven months - a very short space. This can all be verified in encyclopedias and history books which we did in chapter thirteen when interpreting the beast of the sea.

What Van Impe does is nearly unspeakable and angers those attempting to properly interpret the Revelation. Van Impe devises his own list of emperors. Van Impe writes,
"As John receives this vision of the seven kings, five have already fallen. They were (1) Julius Caesar, (2) Tiberius, (3) Caligula, (4) Claudius, and (5) Nero. Number (6) – Domitian – is, at the time John receives this revelation, alive and on the throne. Number 7 is yet to come. He, of course, is the Antichrist whose reign will last briefly, or a short space."14

Van Impe skips Augustus which makes Nero number five (It was Nero who declared war upon Judah in 66 A.D.). Van Impe also skips Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian, and Titus to get to Domitian. He attempts to make Domitian the emperor at John’s writing for this places the writing around 100 A.D. rather than 65 A.D. The 65 A.D. time would clearly be seen as the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Van Impe also attempts to portray that Domitian was the “last” Roman emperor. This is so wrong. There were eighty-nine historical emperors of the Roman empire. Domitian was number twelve. Following is the accurate historical listing of the Roman emperors.

1. Julius Gaius   33. Gordian III   238-44
234-44
34. Philip   244-49

13 John Phillips, Exploring Revelation, page 215
14 Dr. Jack Van Impe, Revelation Revealed, page 237, 238
### The Revelation Of Jesus Christ Chapter 17

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<tr>
<th>Roman Emperors</th>
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"At various times, but especially after 283, the Roman imperial title was shared by two or more rulers. In 395 the empire was divided permanently into eastern and western portions. The year 476 marks the traditional end of the empire in the West; the empire in the East (the Byzantine Empire) continued to exist for nearly 1,000 years."15

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15 1997 Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia, Emperors of Rome

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2 Peter 3:16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. (KJV) (emphasis added)

The Greek word *strebloo*, translated *wrest* in the King James version, means “to twist and pervert.” Below is a word study of the word strebloo.

- *wrest* - 4761 strebloo {streb-lo'-o}
  - from a derivative of 4762
  - (1) to twist, turn awry
  - (2) to torture, put to the rack
  - (3) metaph. to pervert, of one who wrests or tortures language in a false sense

People will twist the Word of God and pervert it to make their doctrine work. Sadly this will destroy those who do this and those that listen to it. The Living Bible paraphrases 2 Peter 3:15-16 this way.

2 Peter 3:15-16 ...there are people who are deliberately stupid, and always demand some unusual interpretation - they have twisted his letters around to mean something quite different from what he meant, just as they do the other parts of the Scripture - and the result is disaster for them. (TLB)