

Revelation 17:1-18
God on the Throne
RV1621

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Revelation

“The City of Man”

INTRODUCTION: I believe that in the heart of every human being there is an innate sense that the end of the world is coming ...

1. I believe this because, I think, the Bible teaches this:

- a) Solomon wrote about our view of *Time*

*For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:
a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to cast away;
a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace. (Ecc. 3:1-8)*

- b) He then summarized this poem with these words

What gain has the worker from his toil? I have seen the business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. (Ecc. 3:9-11)

I perceived that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it. God has done it, so that people fear before him. That which is, already has been; that which is to be, already has been; and God seeks what has been driven away. (Ecc. 3:14-15)

2. Have you ever noticed, especially in the past 20 years, how many *Apocalypse* Films have come out of Hollywood? by that I mean movies about the end of the world –

- a) *Armageddon* (1998)
- b) *Deep Impact* (1998)
- c) *The Day After Tomorrow* (Dennis Quaid; 2004)
- d) *The End of the World* (Flood/ Arks; 2005)
- e) *Earthstorm: We Were Warned* (2006)
- f) *Absolute Zero* (2006)

- g) *Flood (2007)*
- h) TV Mini Series: *Impact (2009)*
- i) *Arctic Blast (2010)*
- j) *Ice Age and 40 Days and Nights* (both in 2012)
- k) In 2013, *100 Degrees Below Zero* and *The End of the World*.

3. I suggest to you that such films are **not** just a celebration of computer special effects but an actual anticipation that Nuclear War, Worldwide Climate Change, Global Warming, or the squandering of earth's natural resources, will trigger *the end of the world*.
4. Also interesting: How often they borrow Biblical words, images or motifs: *End of the world, flood, apocalypse, Armageddon, etc.*
5. Well ... the end of the world is coming. **The City of Man** is soon to be overthrown, judged and destroyed by Jesus Christ Himself.
6. We know this because that is the unmistakable message of **Revelation 17: The Fall of Babylon**.
7. Jesus told us this day would come. And He told us that the basis for this final judgment was a combination of evil deeds and the rejection of Christ:

Then he began to denounce the cities where most of his mighty works had been done, because they did not repent. “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I tell you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I tell you that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you.” (Matt. 11:20-24)

The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. (Matt. 12:41-42)

Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear. (Matt. 13:40-43)

8. **St. Augustine**, in his *magnum opus* titled *The City of God*, reviews the course of human history, Roman history and the Biblical record to compare and contrast the destiny of two cities.
 - a) *The City of God*: The Church (Jerusalem)
 - b) *The City of Man*: The world (Rome/Babylon)
 - c) This City of Man is called *Babylon*: Its Code Name.
9. Babylon is **always** in Scripture pitted against God. It is the “Great City” which organizes fallen man against God and His will –

- a) The “great city” that began the Assyrian Empire in the Age of the Patriarchs.

Cush fathered Nimrod; he was the first on earth to be a mighty man. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord. Therefore it is said, “Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the Lord.” The beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. From that land he went into Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth-Ir, Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city. (Gen. 10:8-12)

- b) The place known as *Babel* – society both opposed to God and confused by God.

Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. And they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly.” And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.” And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. And the Lord said, “Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another’s speech.” So the Lord dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth. And from there the Lord dispersed them over the face of all the earth. (Gen. 11:1-9)

- c) *Babylon* besieged, captured and destroyed Jerusalem, burned the Temple down, and deported the population to Babylonian exile –

Therefore he brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary and had no compassion on young man or virgin, old man or aged. He gave them all into his hand. And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king and of his princes, all these he brought to Babylon. And they burned the house of God and broke down the wall of Jerusalem and burned all its palaces with fire and destroyed all its precious vessels. He took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and to his sons until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia, (2 Chronicles 36:17-20)

- d) In the Church of the Apostles, the code name for Rome was *Babylon* – persecutor of the Christians.

(1) *She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son. (1 Peter 5:13)*

(2) Peter and Mark wrote this from *Rome*.

10. **Babylon** is thus symbolically *The City of Man*

- a) the spiritual capital of fallen humanity
- b) progenitor of false religions and false gods

- c) a place of violence, deception, immoral pleasures and evil doing
- d) The chief persecutor of God's people
- e) The code name for the Imperial Rome of Caesar
- f) The world ripe for judgment and destruction.

For thus the Lord said to me:

*"Go, set a watchman;
let him announce what he sees.
When he sees riders, horsemen in pairs,
riders on donkeys, riders on camels,
let him listen diligently,
very diligently."*

Then he who saw cried out:

*"Upon a watchtower I stand, O Lord,
continually by day,
and at my post I am stationed
whole nights.*

*And behold, here come riders,
horsemen in pairs!"*

*And he answered,
"Fallen, fallen is Babylon;
and all the carved images of her gods
he has shattered to the ground."*

*O my threshed and winnowed one,
what I have heard from the Lord of hosts,
the God of Israel, I announce to you. (Isaiah 21:6-10)*

11. These times in the Apocalypse John repeats the message of Isaiah: "Fallen, Fallen is Babylon"

- a) *Another angel, a second, followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality." (Rev. 14:8)*
- b) *And he called out with a mighty voice,
"Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!
She has become a dwelling place for demons,
a haunt for every unclean spirit,
a haunt for every unclean bird,
a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast. (Rev. 18:2)*

12. Satan *mimics* everything God does; so ...

- a) Just as God had Israel as his *wife*
- b) Just as Jesus calls the Church his *Bride*
- c) So Satan has a mistress: *Babylon*; not a bride or wife, but a quite fittingly a *prostitute*
- d) *a pretend wife, for immoral relations, with a false god.*

13. Babylon is the symbolical image of “the world”

- a) *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:15-17)*

- b) **Bruce Metzger:** *Breaking the Code*; p. 85

Chapters 17 and 18 are a literary triumph of imaginative power. More than once John had found comfort for himself and his people by proclaiming the fall of Rome. So certain is he that God will judge the persecutors of the church that he now devotes two chapters to an account of the crashing down of the fabulous “grandeur that was Rome.” To say directly that God will destroy imperial Rome would have been, of course, altogether treasonous in the eyes of the imperial authorities. So, like a prisoner writing in code from a concentration camp, John characterized the power of evil as Babylon. Just as Babylon represented to the Hebrews all that was wicked and symbolized persecution, so for John Rome was another Babylon, the source and fountainhead of all seductive luxury and vice, living in voluptuous materialism and selfishness. Here John paints a picture of Rome in colors highly figurative and repellent.

- c) *... and God remembered Babylon the Great, to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath.” (Rev. 16:19)*

- d) **Babylon is the fleshly culture of this world; consort of the Devil.**

14. Revelation 17:1-18 records the Fall of Babylon; the end of the City of Man.

15. Chapter 17 of Revelation breaks itself down into two parts –

- a) John’s vision of Babylon the Great (17:1-6)
- b) The Angels Explanation of Babylon the Great (17:7-18)

I. UNDERSTANDING THE VISION OF BABYLON (Rev. 17:1-18)

A. John’s Vision of Babylon the Great (17:1-6)

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

2. One of the Angels who poured out one of the Bowls of Wrath comes to John and invites John to join him in viewing the destruction of worldly society.
3. He identifies this worldly culture as “*the great prostitute*”

- a) not because she is a literal prostitute engaged in sexual immorality (although she does love fornication)
- b) but rather a *spiritual prostitute* who is involved in *spiritual adultery/fornication* = the worship of false gods.
- c) Often the imagery for idolatry employed by the Prophets
 - (1) *The Lord said to me in the days of King Josiah: "Have you seen what she did, that faithless one, Israel, how she went up on every high hill and under every green tree, and there played the whore? And I thought, 'After she has done all this she will return to me,' but she did not return, and her treacherous sister Judah saw it. She saw that for all the adulteries of that faithless one, Israel, I had sent her away with a decree of divorce. Yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but she too went and played the whore. Because she took her whoredom lightly, she polluted the land, committing adultery with stone and tree. (Jeremiah 3:6-9)*
 - (2) *"How sick is your heart, declares the Lord God, because you did all these things, the deeds of a brazen prostitute, building your vaulted chamber at the head of every street, and making your lofty place in every square. Yet you were not like a prostitute, because you scorned payment. Adulterous wife, who receives strangers instead of her husband! Men give gifts to all prostitutes, but you gave your gifts to all your lovers, bribing them to come to you from every side with your whorings. So you were different from other women in your whorings. No one solicited you to play the whore, and you gave payment, while no payment was given to you; therefore you were different. (Ezek. 16:30-34)*
 - (3) *"No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. (Matt. 6:24)*
 - (4) *You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. (James 4:4)*
 - (5) *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (1 John 2:15)*

d) **Spiritual adultery is loving the world.**

4. Five times in Revelation 17 John uses the words *porne* (prostitute) and *porneia* (sexual immorality). These two things **always** go hand in hand in idolatry –
 - a) in ancient idolatry, in modern idolatry ...
 - b) *false gods and sexual immorality*
 - c) **Tim Keller:** *Counterfeit Gods: Money, Sex and Power*
 - d) The world is absolutely *drunk* with these things
 - e) Lust of the flesh (*immorality*), lust of the eyes (*greed*), pride of life (*power*)

5. John describes the woman Babylon –

- a) *And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns. The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her sexual immorality. And on her forehead was written a name of mystery: “Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations.” And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. When I saw her, I marveled greatly. (Rev. 17:3-6)*
- b) Godless, Gaudy, Grotesque

6. Notice these three things about this *Girl named Babylon* –

- a) **First:** *She's stunningly beautiful. The prettiest woman you've ever seen.*
 - (1) dressed to kill: Royal purple, sensual scarlet
 - (2) gold, jewels, pearls: decked out with ornaments
 - (3) Every person who sees her lusts after her
 - (i) Men want to possess her and her pleasures
 - (ii) Women desire to be like her: sexy
 - (4) ... at least until they are converted and fall in love with Christ and His Bride – the true Beauty.
 - (5) *I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works. (1 Tim. 2:8-10)*
 - (6) But ... she's a “painted whore”; pretty on the outside full of death, disease, disgrace on the inside.
 - (7) *My son, be attentive to my wisdom;
incline your ear to my understanding,
that you may keep discretion,
and your lips may guard knowledge.
For the lips of a forbidden woman drip honey,
and her speech is smoother than oil, but in the end she is bitter as wormwood,
sharp as a two-edged sword.
Her feet go down to death;
her steps follow the path to Sheol;
she does not ponder the path of life; her ways wander, and she does not know it. (Proverbs 5:1-6)*
- b) **Second:** *She is fun to be with; a true “Party Girl”; always full of rebellious “fun”*
 - (1) she holds a golden cup and she's intoxicated

- (2) her expertise: sexual immorality
- (3) The lustful of the earth have an impossible time resisting her charms, allurement and seductions
- (4) *For at the window of my house
 I have looked out through my lattice,
 and I have seen among the simple,
 I have perceived among the youths,
 a young man lacking sense,
 passing along the street near her corner,
 taking the road to her house
 in the twilight, in the evening,
 at the time of night and darkness.
 And behold, the woman meets him, dressed as a prostitute, wily of heart.
 She is loud and wayward;
 her feet do not stay at home;
 now in the street, now in the market, and at every corner she lies in wait.
 She seizes him and kisses him,
 and with bold face she says to him, "I had to offer sacrifices,
 and today I have paid my vows;
 so now I have come out to meet you, to seek you eagerly, and I have found you.
 I have spread my couch with coverings,
 colored linens from Egyptian linen; I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes,
 and cinnamon.
 Come, let us take our fill of love till morning;
 let us delight ourselves with love.
 For my husband is not at home;
 he has gone on a long journey;
 he took a bag of money with him;
 at full moon he will come home."
 With much seductive speech she persuades him;
 with her smooth talk she compels him. All at once he follows her,
 as an ox goes to the slaughter,
 or as a stag is caught fast
 till an arrow pierces its liver;
 as a bird rushes into a snare;
 he does not know that it will cost him his life. (Prov. 7:6-23)*
- (5) But – know this – her orgies always end in the same: **death!**
- (6) She doesn't like Bloody Marys, but Bloody Saints!
- (7) *And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. When I saw her, I marveled greatly. (Rev. 17:6)*
- (8) **Bruce Metzger:** *Breaking The Code;* pp. 85-86

The reference here is to wild orgies of persecution, such as those instigated by Nero and described by the Roman historian Tacitus. According to that non-Christian writer, in the 60s of the first century, “a vast multitude of Christians were not only put to death, but put to death with insult. They were either clothed in the skins of wild beasts and then exposed in the arena to the attacks of half-famished dogs or else dipped in tar and put on crosses to be set on fire, and, when the daylight failed, to be burned as lights by night” Tacitus comments that Nero’s persecution of Christians was so terrible that even non-Christian citizens were horrified and began to intercede in their behalf.

- c) **Third:** *She is very influential. All the important people and every “wannabe,” craves the chance to date her; to be among her consorts.*

- (1) *For all nations have drunk
the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality,
and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her,
and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her
luxurious living.” (Rev. 18:3)*
- (2) Like a Hollywood Actress, a Super Model or a Beautiful Heiress, she is the center of every stage.
- (3) She’s in a long-term relationship with lots of men: The Dragon, the Beast, the False Prophet ...
- (4) ... and any other man (woman) who’ll have her ...
- (5) through none ever possess her; quite the opposite
- (6) **She owns everyone who embraces her! She sets the styles, determines the agenda, creates the values of the world.**
- (7) *And now, O sons, listen to me,
and be attentive to the words of my mouth.
Let not your heart turn aside to her ways; do not stray into her paths, for many
a victim has she laid low,
and all her slain are a mighty throng.
Her house is the way to Sheol,
going down to the chambers of death. (Prov. 7:24-27)*

7. John says, “When I saw her, I marveled (wondered) greatly.” (17:6)

- a) NIV – “greatly astonished”
 - b) Astounded at how incredibly lovely she is
 - c) Amazed that so many people are in love with her
 - d) Uncomfortably surprised by his own attraction to this Beauty
 - e) Marveling at the influence she has over all mankind.
8. But, mostly, shocked to finally see the true nature of the City of Man.
- a) The world ... Rome ... Babylon!

- b) **Leon Morris:** *Revelation: TNTC; p. 199*

It is all very perplexing. It is also possible that some of his astonishment comes because he now sees for the first time the true nature of the Roman Empire, the contemporary representative of the great city.

- c) He was told he'd see the destruction of a City of Evil, but instead he sees the power, popularity and pleasures of a beautiful but deadly whore!
- d) **Grant R. Osborne:** *Revelation: ECNT; p. 614*

Here it is both wonder at the incredible vision and at the same time confusion at the imagery. He had been told by the angel (17:1) that he would see Babylon's judgment, but instead he saw her luxury, glory, and seeming triumph. He is both perplexed and horrified. This is the third time John is overwhelmed, so an angle explains the significance of the scene to John.

B. The Angel's Interpretation of Babylon the Great (17:7-18)

1. Here is the only place in Revelation where a vision is interpreted for us, by an Angel.

But the angel said to me, "Why do you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman, and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns that carries her. (Rev. 17:7)

2. **First:** This Great Prostitute rides on the back of **the Beast**:

- a) The Antichrist we met in Rev. 13:1-10
- b) The Power of the State: *Rome and Its Empire*
- c) The Government which supports the world system
- d) Notice: Three times this Beast rises from the abyss ...

(1) *And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them, (Rev. 11:7)*

(2) *And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. (Rev. 13:1)*

(3) *The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction. (Rev. 17:8)*

3. And she also rides on "many waters."

- a) *Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters, (Rev. 17:1)*
- b) waters = The Beast
- c) one in the same

4. **Second:** The Beast has 7 heads and 10 horns ...

- a) *And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns. (Rev. 17:3)*

b) 7 heads = 7 hills (mountains) and 7 Kings (Emperors)

(1) *This calls for a mind with wisdom: the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated; they are also seven kings, five of whom have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he does come he must remain only a little while. As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to destruction. (Rev. 17:9-11)*

(2) *And the angel said to me, “The waters that you saw, where the prostitute is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages. (Rev. 17:15)*

(3) Rome sits on 7 hills (mountains): Aventine, Caelian, Capitoline, Esquiline, Palatine, Quirinal and Viminal.

(4) These 7 hills are also **7 kings**

(i) 5 have fallen = are dead and no longer in office

(ii) 1 is = presently ruling (6th)

(iii) the other has not yet come: i.e. to power (7th)

(iv) when he does come he remains in power for only a little while

(v) The Beast is an 8th Ruler = *he belongs to the Seven* (i.e., is just like them in spirit and actions)

(vi) This Beast = 8th Ruler = *was and is not ... goes to destruction*

(5) **Talk about confusing!** The Angel's interpretation doesn't help much!

c) There is **no way** to match these 7 rulers to Seven Roman Emperors, and have the historical record match John's description and the Angel's interpretation.

d) **The more we attempt a reconciliation the more contrived it becomes.**

e) **G.K. Beale** (*Revelation: NIGTC*; pp. 870-871) offers a plausible interpretation.

Nero serves as a good illustration of the text's idea. Nero lived and died and then reappeared in Domitian in a way similar to that in which the spirit of Elijah reappeared in John the Baptist. That is, Domitian had traits like Nero, as is apparent from Roman writers who compared Domitian to Nero, though Asian provincials probably did not do so. This apparent ceasing and reemergence of evil is a cycle occurring throughout history. One like Nero will also arise at the end of history which from John's perspective could have occurred in his own generation.

f) **Remember:** the numbers in Revelation are all symbolical –

(1) 7 symbolizes perfection: here a perfection of evil, despotic and violent rulers (Perfect Persecution)

(2) 10 symbolizes completion in time or cycle: all of the rulers and emperors over time.

(3) *And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received royal power, but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast. These are of one mind, and they hand over their power and authority*

to the beast. They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.” (Rev. 17:12-14)

- g) A picture of past, present, and future persecution and opposition of Government against the church – from Rome to all the Empires, over all time.

- h) **G.K. Beale:** *Revelation: NIGTC; p. 871*

If to whatever degree John had in mind the particular reigning emperor standing behind the sixth head, he did not need to make this explicit to his readers, since they obviously knew who that was. Therefore, they also did not need to know where to start counting emperors; neither would John have been interested in counting them, since the reason he said there were seven was that seven was the number of totality. Or if John did begin a count, we cannot be sure with what emperor he began. He tells them that only one more short reign will elapse until the end of the oppressive dominance of Rome, which represents all ungodly oppressive powers.

- i) But even after Rome fell, the State would make war on the Church until the end of history!

5. **Third:** The Beast (Antichrist = World Governments) is the 8th ruler.

- a) *The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction. And the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will marvel to see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come... As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to destruction. (Rev. 17:8-11)*
- b) i.e., World governments resemble Rome: they persecute the Church
- c) The Beast is a False Christ = Another Christ = Anti-Christ
- d) “*was, and is not, and is about to rise ...*”
- e) “*it was, and is not, and is to come*”
- f) Christ died on the 6th day of the week, lay in the grave on the 7th day of the week, and rose on the 8th Day!
- g) In Hebrew literature, the 8th Day is the Day of the New Creation.
- h) The Beast *mimics* the risen Christ, and many worship and follow It.

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

6. **Fourth:** The good news is this: The Real Christ destroys the Beast, plunders Babylon, and puts an end the Antichrist!

- a) *They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful. (Rev. 17:14)*

- b) *Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.” (Rev. 11:15)*

7. **Fifth:** The Angel tells us that those who once loved the whore will one day gather together to destroy her.

- a) *And the angel said to me, “The waters that you saw, where the prostitute is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages. And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will hate the prostitute. They will make her desolate and naked, and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire, for God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by being of one mind and handing over their royal power to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. (Rev. 17:15-17)*
- b) The Beast (Antichrist), peoples and nations, and world rulers (10 kings) join together to destroy *The World = The Whore*
- c) Why? Two reasons ...
 - (1) **First:** Men always end up hating the prostitute they once loved. She makes them feel guilty, used, ashamed.
 - (2) *Now Absalom, David’s son, had a beautiful sister, whose name was Tamar. And after a time Amnon, David’s son, loved her... But he would not listen to her, and being stronger than she, he violated her and lay with her. Then Amnon hated her with very great hatred, so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said to her, “Get up! Go!” (2 Samuel 13:1,14,15)*
 - (3) **Lust, Licentiousness and lasciviousness can NEVER turn into love.**
 - (4) **Second:** Jesus uses Babylon’s lovers to become her executioners ...
 - And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will hate the prostitute. They will make her desolate and naked, and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire, for God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by being of one mind and handing over their royal power to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. (Rev. 17:16-17)*
 - (5) God’s justice is **always Lex talionis** (the law of retribution): Babylon killed the saints; Now the sinners kill her.

8. **Sixth:** Finally, the Angel says: *Babylon is Rome!*

- a) *And the woman that you saw is the great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth. (Rev. 17:18)*
- b) No other city in John’s day could fit such a description.
- c) **Beware:** *Today that City with “dominion” over the kings of the earth” may well be our own, beloved Washington, D.C.*
- d) And Antichrist, one of the 10 kings, part of the Beast, a doomed ruler from old Rome!

II. APPLYING THE VISION OF BABYLON

A. **First:** Admit this to yourselves: *Everybody lusts after Babylon, because she is so beautiful to us all. We have much in common with her!*

- a) The “*love of the world*” is hard to resist because we are all, innately, “worldly”
- b) i.e., our sin nature bends us to love the things of this world more than the things of Christ’s kingdom
- c) Until we respond to the *Gospel of the Kingdom* and become born-again, regenerate, New Creatures of the New World

He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we

have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Col. 1:13-14)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. (2 Cor. 5:17)

B. **Second:** We need to be wise about how we each love “Ole’ Babs”

- a) “*This calls for a mind of wisdom...*” (17:9)
- b) **Women** love Babylon in that they want to be like her – sexy, flippant, rebellious, independent, insubmissive, “strong”, able to manipulate and control men, desirable, pretty, in control. Women are convinced this is what men want – a little Babylon. But Beware: men always end up hating the woman they use, abuse, throw away.
- c) **Men** love Babylon for her sensual pleasures: sex, porn, sports, drink, parties, violent competition, success, power and influence. They love the idea of having Babylon on their arm. But they must beware: *No man ever owns Babylon; she always owns you!*
- d) **Children and youth** love Babylon because of her wonderful toys! Gaudy, sparkling, flamboyant, luxurious – she never runs out of “nice things” to give us: But Beware - Babylon only gives you things at the cost of your soul.
- e) *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. (1 John 2:15-16)*
- f) You can’t love God and Mammon, Christ and the World, the Church and Babylon
- g) One, and only one, will cost you your very life!

C. **Third:** We need to realize this truth: *The love of the world (Babylon) is a real religion ... Humanism!*

- a) In the end we all worship what we love!

And they worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?” (Rev. 13:4)

- b) Babylon is a *false church* who leads us to a false God: The Satanic Trinity
- c) The Bride is the *True Church* who always leads us to Christ and the Triune God

Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out,

“Hallelujah!

*For the Lord our God
the Almighty reigns.*

*Let us rejoice and exult
and give him the glory,
for the marriage of the Lamb has come,
and his Bride has made herself ready;
it was granted her to clothe herself
with fine linen, bright and pure”—
for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.*

And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.” (Rev. 19:6-9)

- d) **We must be wise to know the difference between these two Churches and two religions –**
- e) No writer I am aware of describes these two religions as poignantly as **Eugene Peterson:**
Reversed Thunder; pp. 147-148

The great danger that the world poses for us is not in its gross evils, but its easy religion. The promise of success, ecstasy, and meaning that we can get for a price is Whore-worship. It is the diabolical inversion of “you are bought with a price” to “I can get it for you wholesale.” The Great Whore is presented in implicit contrast to the Virgin Bride. After the judgment of the Whore is complete, the contrast will become explicit at the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19). The Bride is as sexual a metaphor as the Whore, but it forms an absolute contrast. For the Whore, sex is in the service of commerce; with the Bride, sex is devoted to love. For the whore, sex is a contract; for the Bride, sex is a life commitment. For the whore, sex is a calculation; for the Bride, sex is an offering.

Whore-worship is a matter of moments and occasion. Bride-worship gathers every part of life into union. Whore-worship is practiced on the principle of attraction and pleasure; Bride-worship is for better and for worse, in sickness and in health, till death do us part. Bride-worship is always at an immediate disadvantage in competition with Whore-worship, for Whore-worship is indulgent and lusty getting, while Bride-worship is sacrificed and a faithful giving.

Whore-worship brings us great gain: we get what we want when we want it. Bride-worship is an offering: we give ourselves and don’t know how long we will wait for fulfillment.

Throughout the Revelation, the great scenes of worship show God being served – the people come to him, giving themselves in praise.

In Whore-worship they got everything they wanted, their lives overflowed with things, and now it is gone, wasted, up in smoke. They are bereft of everything they were promised and invested in and enjoyed. It is not their businesses that have collapsed, but their religion, a religion of self-indulgence, of getting. Now it is gone: salvation-by-checkbook is gone, god-on-demand is gone, meaning-by-money is gone, religion-as-feeling is gone, self-as-

(temporary)-god is gone. They are left with nothing but themselves, of whom after a lifetime in the whorehouse, they know nothing.

D. Fourth: Learn to distrust what everyone is in love with!

- a) I mean this: *Whenever I hear, “Well, everyone is doing this,” or “going there,” or “into that,” I think to myself, “This it must be not worth my time, life or soul!”*
- b) Think of that: **If the majority of people are not truly converted, and all of them are invested in Babylon, whatever she gets them “turned on to” should make you wary!**
- c) **I tell you this:** Hell will be chock full of cool people, in the latest fashions, drinking the latest brew, caught up in the wrong party!
- d) *You can brush that off with a shrug, a dismissive laugh, or a flippant toss of the head – but not for long! Be wise!*

E. Fifth: Don’t get caught at the orgy when Jesus comes back!

- a) Right now ... this moment ... I am issuing you a second invitation.

- b) The first one telegraphed to you came from “Beautiful Babs” –

*I had to offer sacrifices,
and today I have paid my vows;
so now I have come out to meet you,
to seek you eagerly, and I have found you.
I have spread my couch with coverings,
colored linens from Egyptian linen;
I have perfumed my bed with myrrh,
aloes, and cinnamon.*

*Come, let us take our fill of love till morning;
let us delight ourselves with love.
For my husband is not at home;
he has gone on a long journey;*

*he took a bag of money with him;
at full moon he will come home.” (Prov. 7:14-20)*

- c) The second invitation comes to you from Jesus Christ, and I and His courier –

*Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters
and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out,*

*“Hallelujah!
For the Lord our God
the Almighty reigns.
Let us rejoice and exult
and give him the glory,
for the marriage of the Lamb has come,
and his Bride has made herself ready;
it was granted her to clothe herself
with fine linen, bright and pure” —*

for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.” (Rev. 19:6-9)

- d) An orgy ... A wedding feast ... the choice is yours!
- e) **I strongly advise** you to accept Christ's invitation.
 - (1) Turn away from Beautiful Babylon
 - (2) Turn in faith to the Lovely Christ
 - (3) Repent ... Believe ... Be Baptized ... Join the Bride
- f) I did so, 40 years ago, and began to fall in love with Jesus and *The Church*.
- g) So I can tell you from 4 decades of experience: *The Bride Glorious is so much more beautiful than Babylon the Great, that I marvel at this church, more and more each day.*
- h) **John Newton: Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken**

Savior, if of Zion’s city I, through grace, a member am, let the world deride or pity, I will glory in thy name: fading is the worldling’s pleasure, all his boasted pomp and show; solid joys and lasting treasure none but Zion’s children know.
- i) It's always the good, the godly, the gracious girls who make the most faithful lovers, the more delightful life-partners, and the most endearing and enduring Brides.
- j) This is never so with *Lady Babylon*!

Conclusion: Back in 1976, I was driving home from work one evening and I had to pass though a rough end of town, where Prostitutes worked.

1. I was also attending the *Central Church*, where **Jimmy Latimer** was preaching through the book of Revelation.
2. At a stop-light I watched a young man, about my age, get coaxed out of his Bell South Service truck, by a prostitute –
 - a) He was crying, sobbing, pleading, “No! Please!”
 - b) She had him by the hand, leading him into the brothel and was laughing outrageously
 - c) I couldn't take it so I rolled down the window and shouted to him, “Just walk away. Get back in the truck and drive away!”
 - d) He gave me the most pitiful look, and sobbed, “I can’t”
 - e) Then disappeared with her into the House of Death!
3. I thought about **Pastor Latimer's** sermon on Revelation 17. Then I teared up.
4. A few weeks later I gave my life to Christ!