

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

Chapter 17

The Judgment of Great Babylon

Adrian Roach

Chapter 17 — Great Babylon Revealed and Judged

The judgment of Great Babylon had been announced in chap. 14:8 and had been set forth under the seventh vial of God's wrath (16:19). Now her guilt is clearly seen, thus showing the righteous judgment of God. Babylon of the Old Testament, the ancient city, was seen as the fountain head of idolatry (Jer. 51:7; 50:2; Zech. 5). See also Acts 7:41-43. That city has been destroyed and will never be rebuilt (Isa. 13:19-22; Jer. 51:29,37). Babylon of the New Testament is 'the great licentious and idolatrous corruptress of religion; western civilization in its final state — apostate Christendom and Judaism.'

Chap. 17:1-4

Her guilt and worldly splendor.

Chap. 17:5

She is the devil's mystery in contrast to the blessed mystery of Christ and the church (Eph. 3:3-11 and 5:32).

Chap. 17:6

John wonders with great wonder (not admiration) when he sees that system with such high religious pretensions guilty of the blood of the Lord's people (Matt. 23:35).

Chap. 17:7-8

The Roman Empire which then existed was to disappear from the earth and after a period of non-existence (as at present) it is to reappear by Satanic power in such a way as to cause wonderment among the Christ-rejectors.

Chap. 17:9-10

Two marks are given to signify Rome as the city in view. First, there is a geographical mark, 'seven mountains on which the woman sitteth'; Rome is the celebrated city of the seven hills. Next a historical mark, 'seven kings'. This does not mean seven persons, but seven forms of rule under which Rome would pass. When John wrote, the sixth form was in force, the Imperial. This had been preceded by (1) Kings; (2) Dictators; (3) Military Tribunals; (4) Consuls; (5) Decemvirs. Note that a seventh was yet to come and continue but for a short time.

Chap. 17:11

The future ruler of the revived empire would be one of the seven but in such a new form that he would really be an eighth. And that is how verse 11 should read: 'he also is an eighth, and is of the seven'. It will be the Imperial head revived (chap. 13:3). Originally the Roman Empire was one solid entity under one head (vs. 12-13). There will be ten kings under the Beast.

Chap. 17:14

Their power is directed against our precious Lord, but it will be the day of His power, not that of His humiliation. 'Lord of lords and King of kings.' Who will be in His train? We shall — all the redeemed up to the rapture! Wondrous, precious thought; we are His now and shall appear in glory with Him then (2 Thess 1:10)! We are called, chosen, and seen in grace as faithful (see Luke 22:24, 28, 29). Angels are never said to be called or faithful, but they are 'elect' (1 Tim. 5:21).

Chap. 17:15

The wicked religious system is seen dominating many peoples, but as soon as she has served the purpose of the Beast, he and the ten kings turn upon her and destroy her (v.16). Verse 16 should read 'and the ten horns which thou sawest, and the beast'.

Chap. 17:17

This proves that God is behind the scenes moving all the scenes that He is behind. These kings think to do their own will and are responsible for it, but God makes them carry out His will in spite of themselves and Satan their master (see Lam. 3:37).

Chap. 17:18

Confirms the identity of Rome.