

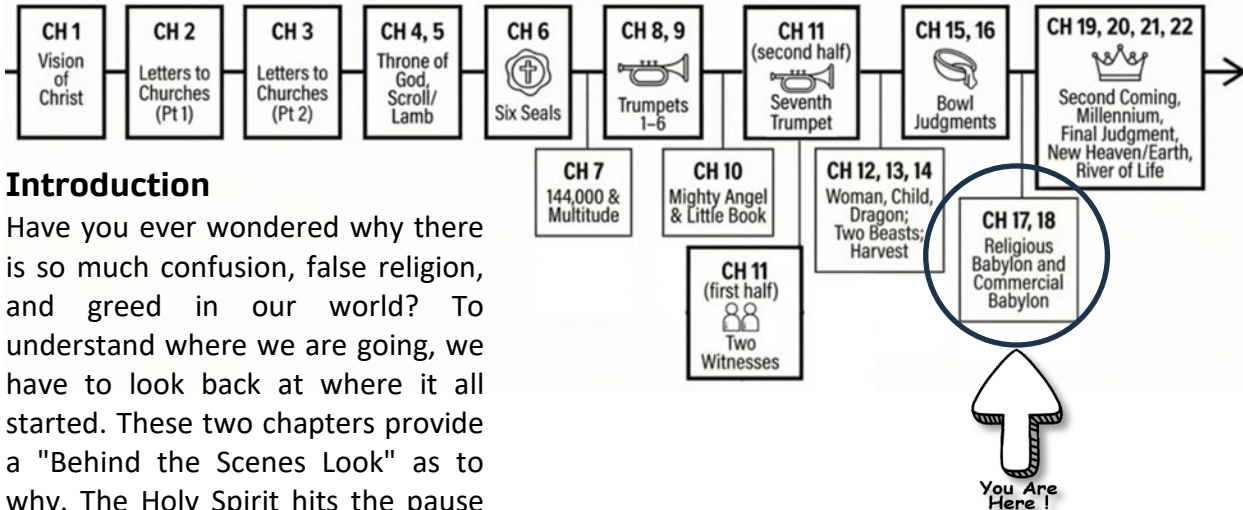


“Religious Babylon”

Lesson 15: Revelation 17

THE BOOK OF REVELATION – CHRONOLOGICAL TIMELINE

Parenthetical sections provide detail without advancing the timeline.



Introduction

Have you ever wondered why there is so much confusion, false religion, and greed in our world? To understand where we are going, we have to look back at where it all started. These two chapters provide a "Behind the Scenes Look" as to why. The Holy Spirit hits the pause button on the timeline to explain a system called **Babylon**.

Babylon isn't just a city; it's so much more. It's a global web of false worship and corrupt power that began all the way back at the Tower of Babel. In these two chapters, God shows us that He hasn't forgotten the "**city of man**" that has worked to defy Him for thousands of years. He is about to untangle the world from this system once and for all so that the "**city of God**," Jerusalem, can finally take center stage.

In Gen 10, we see the origin of Nimrod. Nimrod was the first world dictator who founded the city of Babylon. In Hebrew, the name Nimrod means "**to rebel**," or the future tense meaning, "**we will rebel**."



*And Cush begat **Nimrod**: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter **before the LORD**: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter **before the LORD**. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. **Genesis 10:8-10***

As we discussed before, a well-documented mistranslation in the KJV is the word 'before' in Gen. 10:9. The words "...before the Lord" should be translated "**...in defiance of the Lord.**" Although Babylon, as a system and a location, is now the central focus of these Chapters in Revelation, it is not introduced here as something new. **It has been there all along**— started and fueled by Satan, it has been working behind the scenes, shaping nations, influencing rulers, deceiving populations, and operating **in defiance of the Lord** from the very beginning. What we are about to see in this lesson is the final unmasking and total collapse of that system. Revelation Chapters 17 and 18 give us a two-part look at "Babylon."



Nimrod

- ✓ **Chapter 17** shows us *religious Babylon*—John sees a woman riding a scarlet beast. She is described as a harlot. In the Bible, "**harlotry**" is often a word for being unfaithful to God by worshipping idols. This woman represents a global, "**fake**" **church system**. The Scripture tells us she is drunk on the blood of the saints and is guilty of more carnage among believers than any other entity visible in the Scripture.
- ✓ **Chapter 18** shows us *commercial and political Babylon*—Chapter 18 shows us Babylon as a global political and economic powerhouse. It is both a great city and a metaphor for a worldwide system run out of that city. This is the world system that makes people rich through greed and even "the souls of men".

Spiritual or Religious Babylon

All occultic (paganistic) practices originated in ancient Babylon (Isa. 47). The religious system Nimrod started involved his wife, Semiramis, and son, Tammuz. As empires rose and fell, these same pagan ideas just changed names—like Zeus in Greece or RA in Egypt—spreading like a virus across the globe. The core of this Babylonian religious system migrated to Pergamos (Rev 2:12-17) and then ultimately to Rome. Many of our holiday traditions, such as Christmas and Easter, incorporate these pagan festivals.



When Rome became Christianized, Pagan practices were repackaged in Christian trappings, and ecumenical worship emerged. Many Roman Catholic traditions and ceremonies are directly derived from Babylonian pagan practices, and many of these have subsequently been passed down, in one form or another, to various denominations.

Commercial Babylon

While we don't yet know the exact "**home base**" of the commercial system, scholars note that only a few locations fit the clues. While the Vatican seems to have many of the spiritual clues, the commercial Babylon has been the subject of much speculation. Locations such as New York, Rome, or a literally rebuilt city in the Iraqi desert. Regardless of the "where," the message is the same: God is calling His people to be spiritually alert and to "*come out of her*" and not get tangled up in a world system that is destined to sink like a stone (Rev 18:4, 21; Isa 48:20; 52:11; Jer 50:8-9; 51:6, 8; Zech 2:6-7; 2 Cor 6:17-18).



Think of "Babylon" like a global "operating system" that has been running in the background of human history since Genesis, telling mankind that says, "We don't need God to be happy, wealthy, or safe."

A Tale of Two Women... and Two Cities


One of the key contrasts in Revelation is between **two women**:


The woman in Revelation 12 → <i>Israel</i>	The woman in Revelation 17 → <i>Mystery Babylon</i>
Faithful to God	Unfaithful and corrupt
Brings forth the Messiah	Spreads spiritual deception across the earth


At the same time, Scripture presents a **tale of two literal/metaphoric cities**:

Jerusalem → the city of God	Babylon → the city of man
Built with God	Everything mankind builds apart from God

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**:*

 **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.*

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

John is taken aside by one of the bowl angels and shown something shocking—a powerful, seductive religious system that influences the entire world. It is depicted as a woman, a harlot, riding on the beast's back. This is not a love story—it is a **temporary alliance**. It is a “false religious system” that uses political power for influence, and the commercial/political system tolerates religion for control. But **this relationship will not last**.

The term “whore” or “harlot” is not about physical immorality—it is a biblical idiom for **spiritual unfaithfulness**, meaning false worship and idolatry. **This system claims devotion to God but is unfaithful at its core**. This same language is used throughout Scripture when God describes idol worship. (Jer 3:6, 8–9; Ezek 16:32; Hos 1:2; Rev 2:22; Rev 17:1)

She sits upon “**many waters**,” indicating a **worldwide influence**. The “**many waters**” will later be defined as peoples, nations, and languages. Her religious influence is over the entire world’s population. The rulers of the world are deeply entangled with this system. They have “**committed fornication**” with her—meaning they have aligned themselves with false religion for power, unity, and control. This is a merging of **religion and government** on a global scale. The inhabitants of the earth are “drunk” with her influence. This is deception at its highest level—people are not thinking clearly (delusion), they are consumed by a false belief system that feels right and looks right on the surface, but is completely opposed to God.



Notice that she is **riding the beast**, meaning she is *directing or influencing* it—**for now**. This religion is steering the political power. But this also shows dependency—she cannot exist without the beast. Also, notice that the beast is described as scarlet and covered in names of blasphemy. This is open, defiant rebellion against God—not subtle or hidden. The system she rides openly rejects God while being empowered by Satan. The identifiers of this beast connect directly back to Daniel and Revelation 13. This is the same end-times political system—the revived global empire under the Antichrist, made up of multiple kingdoms unified under one authority (Dan 7:7–8; Rev 13:1).



Watch for increasing alignment between **global religion and global governance**—not truth, but unity at any cost. When belief systems start merging under a broad, inclusive ecumenical umbrella that ignores sound biblical truth, you are seeing the early framework of this system.



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

In this verse, the Holy Spirit gives us a detailed description of the woman’s appearance. It is a picture of extreme wealth, status, and deep, hidden corruption, designed to appear legitimate and attractive to the world.

Her clothing is **Purple and Scarlet**, which stands for **power and prestige**. Purple in Scripture is tied to royalty and authority. Scarlet is associated with wealth, luxury, and often sin. This system presents itself as something regal, authoritative, and worthy of honor. It looks legitimate (Esth 8:15; Dan 5:7; Prov 31:21; Isa 1:18; 2 Sam 1:24; Jer 4:30). In addition, it is decked with gold, precious stones, and pearls, which signify **immense wealth**. This is not a poor or fringe religious system. It is extraordinarily wealthy and influential. This is designed to impress and legitimize—to attract kings, leaders, and the masses (Jer 51:7).



Purple was the primary color of Roman imperialism—every senator and consul wore a purple stripe—and the Emperor’s robes were purple. Today, scarlet and purple remain the official colors adopted by the Vatican for its high-ranking officials.

The woman has a **“golden cup in her hand”** that appears pure, valuable, and sacred. But what matters is not the outside of the cup... it is what is inside. Inside it is **“filled with abominations and filthiness,”** which signifies spiritual corruption—idolatry, false worship, and everything that stands against God. What appears holy is actually polluted. This is the essence of false religion: outward beauty masking inward rebellion (Isa 44:19; 2 Kings 23:13).

The **“fornication”** mentioned here is not physical—it is spiritual. This religious system leads people into counterfeit worship while presenting itself as legitimate (Jer 3:6; Ezek 16:32; Hos 1:2). At its heart, this system diminishes God’s glory. Whether through works-based systems, false mediators, or added traditions, it replaces what Christ has already accomplished. That is the essence of **blasphemy**—*adding to or replacing the finished work of God* (Gal 1:6–9).





An Attempt to Rule Before the Time. The imagery shows a system trying to exercise authority now. But Scripture is clear—the **true Church does not rule the world system until Christ returns**. Any religious system attempting to dominate global power before that point is operating outside of God’s design. (Rev 20:4–6)



Rev. 17:5] *And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon The Great, The Mother Of Harlots And Abominations Of The Earth.*

In this verse, the woman's "secret identity" is revealed, and there is a lot to unpack here. First, in ancient times, it was sometimes customary for harlots to wear their names on their foreheads; here, God makes sure we know exactly who she is by branding her on the forehead. In the original manuscripts, this title, **“MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH,”** was written in all capital letters. It was important, and God wanted us to know it. This "Mystery Babylon" is the dark twin or contrast to the "Mystery of the True Church" that Paul wrote about (Eph 3:1-9).



This religious system is the headquarters of all false religions. She is not just corrupt herself—she is the culmination of the *source*. This ties directly back to the original rebellion at Babel under Nimrod. The source of every counterfeit belief system, every distorted religion, every form of spiritual deception from the days of old can be found in her. The Greek ‘musterion’ or “mystery” means a "secret revealed"—once the secret is out, it is no longer a mystery.

She is **“The Mother of Harlots.”** She is not just one false system—she is the *origin* of many others. Like a mother with offspring, she has produced countless religions, belief systems, and spiritual counterfeits. Some look religious, some look philosophical, some even look “Christian.” But they all share one thing in common: they hold onto her pagan-influenced traditions rather than sticking purely to the Bible; thus, they replace or distort the truth of God. (2 Cor 11:13–15).



Watch for belief systems that **multiply and diversify, but all move away from biblical truth in subtle ways**. When many different paths all claim legitimacy while quietly rejecting God’s authority, you are seeing the offspring of Babylon at work.



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.*

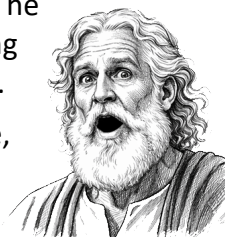


Rev. 17:7] *And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.*

The image turns darker. What looked beautiful and powerful is now exposed as violent and murderous. The woman is not just deceptive—she is **drunk on the blood of God’s people**. This is graphic language. To be “drunk” means she is saturated with it—she has consumed it. This system has a long history of killing believers. It is not an isolated event; it is a pattern across time.

When John sees her, he "wondered with great admiration". A better translation for this is that he was filled with "great awe or astonishment". **Why was John Surprised?**

If John had been shown pagan Rome (the "known enemy") killing Christians, he wouldn't have been shocked. However, he is "**astonished**" because he is seeing a "**Christian**" church system guilty of murdering those who truly follow Jesus.



Most people are unaware of the dark side of religious history. For example, one pope in a single afternoon was responsible for the deaths of more Christians than all the pagan Roman Emperors combined. When you see how the medieval Roman Catholic Church treated true believers, it becomes very clear who this woman is. Some historical examples are:

Waldensians (12th–17th c.) 10,000+ killed, Albigensians / Cathars ~200,000 to 1,000,000 killed (wide scholarly range), Hussites (15th c.) ~100,000–200,000 killed, Lollards (14th–15th c.) hundreds to low thousands killed, Anabaptists (16th c.) estimated deaths: ~5,000–25,000, Huguenots (16th–17th c.) estimated deaths 20,000+, Spanish Inquisition victims (1478–1834) estimated killed 5,000.

The angel points back to the same identifiers we've already seen. This confirms that the beast here is the same end-times system described earlier—connected to Daniel's prophecy and the Antichrist's global empire. (Dan 7:7–8; Rev 13:1). Now we are going to get into some strange-sounding verses.



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.*

Now we shift focus from the woman to the beast. What John sees is something that almost sounds like a riddle: the beast "**was, and is not, and yet is.**" This describes a system that existed in the past, disappeared (Rome), and then returned (Rome II – Ten Horns)—*but not naturally*. This is a demonic revival of a past world empire, empowered directly from the abyss. Remember, the abyss (bottomless pit) is the holding place for demonic powers (Rev 9:1–2, 11; Rev 11:7).

This revived empire "**Goes into Perdition**" (**Doomed to Destruction**). No matter how powerful it appears, its end is already determined. "Perdition" means complete destruction—this system is headed straight toward judgment. (Rev 19:20; 2 Thess 2:3).

The fact that Rome "**is not**" (meaning it isn't currently a unified world-ruling empire) but "**yet is**" (the pieces of its law, culture, and religion are still all over the West) fits perfectly with what John is describing here.



The earth dwellers (**those not written in the Book of Life**) will be amazed by this system. They will see its rise as something extraordinary, even miraculous, and will follow it and its leader (Rev 13:3–4).



Think of this like a "Ghost Empire." For centuries, leaders like Charlemagne, Napoleon, and even those in modern Europe have tried to pull the old pieces of the Roman Empire back together to rule the world. The Bible says one day it will finally work—but it will be powered by something from the pit. **| Now things get dense, but also very precise. ↓**



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



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.*

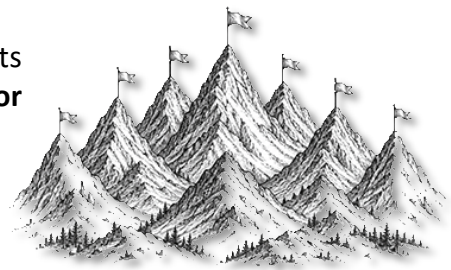


Rev. 17:11] *And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.*

The angel essentially says, *“This calls for a mind with wisdom”* (ESV), which flags it as complex rather than confusing. In other words, *pay attention*. What follows is a breakdown of the **kingdom structure behind the beast system**—past, present (from John’s perspective), and future. The information is clear, but it requires careful thinking. God is not hiding the truth—He is revealing it in a way that must be understood properly.

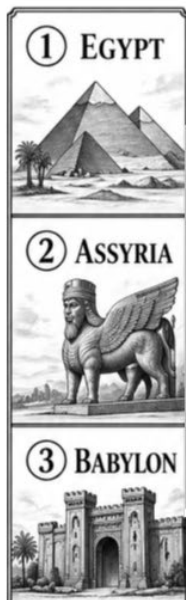
We are looking at the full sweep of Satan’s empire-building across history, culminating in the final Antichrist kingdom.

First, the word **“Mountains”** in prophecy often represents kingdoms or governments. These are not hills—they are **major world empires** that Satan has used to oppose God’s plan.(Dan 2:44 et al.).



The **Seven Kings** are **Seven Kingdoms** Across History. In Hebrew, the idiom “Kings” idiomatically refers to Kingdoms, and you have to look at the context to determine the meaning. The key to this is to look at the timeline from John’s viewpoint:

- ✓ **“Five are fallen”** → Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece
- ✓ **“One is”** → Rome (in power during John’s time)
- ✓ **“One is yet to come”** → the future revived empire (Rome II)



Rev. 17:10

*And there are **seven Kings**:
 ← **Five are fallen,**
 and **one is,**
 and the other
one is not yet come; →
 And when he cometh,
 He must continue a short
 space.*



The final empire (Rome 2) “must continue a short space.” The Antichrist’s rule, though intense, is short-lived—limited by God’s timeline.

“And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.” This tells us that the **Beast is the Eighth leader or ruler** who emerges **from the seven**.

- The **seven** = historical empires
- The **eighth** = the final ruler (Antichrist)

The Beast (Antichrist) rises from the previous system (specifically the revived Roman structure) yet becomes something distinct—a singular global dictator (Dan 7:8; Rev 13:1).

This eighth king aligns with the “little horn” in Daniel—a leader who rises among ten kings, takes control, and dominates the system (Dan 7:8, 24).

The eighth ruler (Beast aka Antichrist) “Goes into Perdition,” meaning his final judgment is certain. Just like the system, the ruler himself is destined for destruction. No matter how powerful he becomes, his end is already sealed (2 Thess 2:8; Rev 19:20).

Satan is behind the whole structure. These kingdoms are not random—they are part of a continuous line of Satanically influenced empires opposing God’s people and purposes. The dragon (Satan) is the power behind them (Rev 12:3; Rev 13:2).



Think of this as the ultimate "Global Super-Alliance." While there have been many attempts at this throughout history (like the League of Nations or the UN), those groups usually struggle to agree on anything. The Bible says that in the end, ten specific leaders will finally agree to put all their "eggs in one basket" and let the Antichrist run the show.



Watch for the consolidation of **global power structures that mirror past empires but move toward unified control**. Many scholars believe we can see these "ten kings" developing even now through regional economic pacts or common markets between governments. While we don't know the final list of countries just yet, we can see the world moving toward the kind of global cooperation that makes this prophecy possible.



Rev. 17:12,13] *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. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.***

The structure tightens. What was once a broad, multi-empire picture now narrows to a **final coalition of ten rulers**. These are real leaders who rise at the same time, align, and then do something unprecedented: they willingly surrender their power to a single ruler.



The horns are clearly identified as ten literal kings (leaders or nations) that will exist simultaneously in the last days. This connects directly to Daniel’s prophecy of the ten-kingdom phase of the final empire (Dan 7:7, 24; Rev 13:1). At the time John was writing, these kings had "**received no kingdom as yet**," meaning this was a prophecy about an end-times coalition of nations that didn't exist in the first century.

Their rule is brief. “**One hour**” is not a literal sixty minutes but a metaphor for a short, intense period of authority. These kings do not rise and fall independently—they rule *with* the beast at the same time, described as having "one mind". They are totally unified in their mission.



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.*



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.*

These ten kings, led by the Beast, will actually "**make war with the Lamb**". These leaders are not just rejecting God—they believe they can **defeat Him**. This is the final expression of **pride and delusion** (Ps. 2:1-3).

This is, again, the battle of Armageddon, and as we know, the battle isn't even close—"**the Lamb shall overcome them**". He wins because He is the "**Lord of lords, and King of kings**". Those who return with Jesus who watch this victory are described as "called, and chosen, and faithful".

The angel also clarifies a major symbol we encountered earlier in Revelation: the "**waters**" where the harlot sits are actually "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues". In the Bible, "**waters**" are often used as an idiom for the world's massive, restless populations and the social instability that accompanies them.

It's easy to look at the news and see "multitudes" of people in constant unrest, protesting or shifting their loyalties. The Bible says that the Babylonian system sits atop that human chaos, using the "waters" of the nations to stay afloat until the very end.



Watch for increasing hostility toward Christ and biblical truth globally, not just in isolated regions. The fact that these kings think they can "war with the Lamb" suggests the world will be under a heavy "**delusion**" at this point. Lawlessness is **already active**, even before its final expression is seen here. They do not see Christ for who He is, but rather as a threat to their global system (2 Thess. 2:3-4, 8, 9; 1 John 4:3).



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.*

We now see the *turning point*: the alliance between the beast and the religious system collapses, and the woman who rides the beast is violently destroyed. Early in the Tribulation, the false religious system helps unify the world. But once the beast secures control, he eliminates all competing belief systems (Rev 13:15; 2 Thess 2:4).

The same rulers who cooperated with her now turn against her at the behest of the beast. This is a complete break in the alliance. What was once useful is now viewed as a threat.



We see graphic language used for the woman's complete demise. The phrase "**eat her flesh**" means total destruction with nothing left (Micah 3:3). The phrase "**burn her with fire**" means a **final judgment by violence**. Fire in Scripture often represents decisive judgment. This is not a gradual decline—it is a sudden, violent end to the religious system (Jer 51:30; Rev 18:8).

Echoes of Jezebel—There is a pattern here—like Jezebel, who manipulated power and was later violently destroyed, this system uses authority and is then judged in dramatic fashion. (2 Kings 9:30–37; Rev 2:20–23). Though it looks like political betrayal, the next verse makes clear—this is God’s plan being carried out. Even the rebellion of the beast serves His purpose.



Rev. 17:17, 18] *For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.*

What looked like a political strategy or betrayal is now explained plainly—**God is behind it**. The beast and the kings are not operating independently; they are unknowingly carrying out God’s will. And then the final piece falls into place: the woman is identified as a **great city**— meaning she will have a real, ruling center of global power. The system is spiritual, but it is also **tangible and visible on earth**.

“God hath put in their hearts” is one of the most important statements in the chapter. The kings think they are acting on their own—but God is directing the outcome. Even rebellious rulers are instruments in His plan (Prov 21:1), and there is a limit to which He will allow them and the Antichrist to go. The beast’s authority is temporary and bounded. He rules only as long as God allows it—and not one moment longer (Dan 7:25–26).

Throughout the Bible, **God uses evil to judge evil**. The same system that rises in rebellion is used to destroy another corrupt system. God allows one part of the fallen world to judge another, all under His sovereign control (Hab 1:6–12).

The Great City Identified: The angel gives one final, plain-English clue: the woman is "that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth". John uses the present tense here. In John’s day, there was only one "great city" that ruled over the kings of the earth: **Rome**. The entire history of Medieval Europe was a tug-of-war for power, with the Papacy trying to control kings and territory.

Clues to the Identity of the Harlot: Before we move on, let's summarize what we've learned about this woman:

1. **A Prostitute:** She is spiritually unfaithful to God.
2. **Universal Influence:** Her reach is all over the world.
3. **Partners With the Beast:** For a time, she pairs with the Beast’s political system.
4. **She is Very Wealthy:** She is adorned in purple, scarlet, gold, and jewels.
5. **A Counterfeit Cup:** She holds a golden cup that looks "godly" but is filled with abominations.
6. **Ancient Roots:** She is religiously linked to Babylon, founded by Nimrod.
7. **Spiritual Offspring:** She is the "**Mother**" or fountain of many false religious systems.
8. **Persecutor:** She revels in the blood of true believers.
9. **Seven Hills:** She is linked to a location built on seven hills.

Sovereign Status: Today, the Vatican has the status of a separate, sovereign nation within the City of Rome. It maintains its own diplomatic embassies in the world's major capitals and has amassed untold wealth. Its history of religious overreach and atrocities upon believers is unparalleled in history, and is currently spreading its ecumenical wings over other religions.

Recap and Synopsis

1. The Woman and the Beast are distinct: Revelation 17, the woman (religious system) and the beast (political power) are clearly **not the same entity**:

- The woman **rides** the beast → she is **supported by it**
- The beast later **turns on the woman and destroys her** (Rev 17:16)

That alone argues **against** a permanent shared center. You don't destroy yourself—you destroy something **separate from you**. In other words. The Harlot is centered in Rome, but Rome is not Babylon the Great.

2. Religion uses political power—until it doesn't. The picture is one of **mutual utility**:

- The religious system gives the beast **legitimacy and influence**
- The political system gives the Harlot **power, protection, and reach**

But this is temporary. When the beast consolidates power:

- He no longer needs the religious system
- He demands **direct worship** (Rev 13)

At that point, centralized religion becomes competition

3. Babylon = system AND location. The Bible uses “Babylon” in two overlapping ways:

A. System (Religious / Cultural) — Rev 17

- The woman = **spiritual corruption, false religion**
- Global influence (“many waters”)

B. City (Economic / Political center) — Rev 18

- Trade, commerce, wealth, global markets
- Kings and merchants were tied to it

These can overlap—but they don't have to be identical geographically

4. The destruction sequence implies that Rome is not Babylon the Great

1. Woman rides the beast (Rev 17:3)
2. Beast destroys the woman (Rev 17:16)
3. Later, **Babylon the Great (city/system)** is destroyed (Rev 18)

This suggests **layers**, not a single fixed location:

- ✓ Religious system rises
- ✓ Political power absorbs and eliminates it
- ✓ Then God judges the final global system

End-times structure looks more like:

- **Globalized system**
- Multiple centers of influence
- Temporary alliances, then consolidation



5. Most likely structure.

- Early Tribulation:
 - **Global established religious system**
 - Supported by political powers
- Mid-Tribulation:
 - Beast consolidates power
 - **Destroys the religious system**
- Late Tribulation:
 - **Direct worship of the beast only**
 - Political + religious authority fully merged **in him**, not in a system

Bottom line - The Bible presents:

- **A shared system early**
- **A violent split later**
- **A final consolidation under one ruler**

The Bible does not require that the religious and political centers be in the same city. If anything, the Biblical text argues toward **cooperation of two centers without permanence**, followed by **absorption and destruction**.

David's Model = Two Babylons (distinct but related systems)

- Rev 17 = **Religious Babylon (the woman) – Roman Catholicism**
- Rev 18 = **Commercial/political Babylon (the city/system)**

Sequence:

1. Established Religious Babylon rises (global, pluralistic, influential)
2. Rides the Antichrist's (Beast) political power
3. Beast consolidates control
4. Religious Babylon destroyed (Rev 17:16)
5. The False Prophet Subordinates to the Beast
6. Beast-only worship enforced (Rev 13)
7. Economic/political Babylon dominates
8. God destroys Babylon the Great (Daughter of Babylon) (Rev 18)
9. Christ destroys the remaining Beast system (Rev 19)

Next Lesson: Read over Revelation 18. We will discuss the destruction of Babylon the Great in our next lesson. After that, we will have a two-lesson addendum on the future Babylon the Great/Daughter of Babylon.

Lesson materials available at: www.TrustingInGrace.com