

**“Destruction of the Great Prostitute”**  
The Revelation of Jesus Christ—Part 24  
*Revelation 17*

**1. Identifying the “great prostitute” of Revelation**

*One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute, who sits on many waters. With her the kings of the earth committed adultery and the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries." Then the angel carried me away in the Spirit into a desert. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns. The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and was glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls. She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries. This title was written on her forehead:*

MYSTERY  
BABYLON THE GREAT  
THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES  
AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

*I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus. When I saw her I was greatly astonished.*

*Revelation 17:1-6*

**Points to consider:**

- The Bible gives us a clear picture of man-made religion.
- The birthplace of worldwide religion began at Babel.

*They said to each other, "Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth."                      Genesis 11:3-4*

- The foundation of man-made religion is: (1) rejection of God's promises (2) rebellion against God's commands (3) refusal of God's grace.
- The place where Babel was built eventually becomes the center of one of the world's earliest empires—Babylon.
- Even after its collapse, it remains a metaphor for godless, humanistic religion.
- Revelation mentions Babylon six times and uses Babylon to refer to the Antichrist's end-time religious, political and economic empire.

**From the text:**

- “*the great prostitute*” The prostitute points to some entity that claims to worship God but is actually unfaithful to Him.
- “*sits on many waters*” All people and people groups around the world under the influence of false religion.
- “*sitting on a scarlet beast*” The prostitute seems to dominate and steers the beast for a

time.

- “She held a golden cup in her hand” This cup appears to be a counterfeit communion cup.
- “THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES” She is responsible for the numerous religions that follow her example.
- “the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus” Under the influence of the world-wide religion, true believers in Jesus will be martyred.
- “When I saw her I was greatly astonished” John is shocked by what he sees. Could it be that something that started out being persecuted is now the persecutor?

## 2. Unraveling the mystery of the woman and the beast

Then the angel said to me: "Why are you astonished? I will explain to you the mystery of the woman and of the beast she rides, which has the seven heads and ten horns. The beast, which you saw, once was, now is not, and will come up out of the Abyss and go to his destruction. The inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast, because he once was, now is not, and yet will come. This calls for a mind with wisdom. The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits. They are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; but when he does come, he must remain for a little while. The beast who once was, and now is not, is an eighth king. He belongs to the seven and is going to his destruction. The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but who for one hour will receive authority as kings along with the beast. They have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the beast. They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings—and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers."

Revelation 17:7-14

### Points to consider:

- The global empire and the worldwide religion are obviously linked together.
- The world will suffer under the merger of the totalitarian state and an antichristian “church.”
- The “Beast’s” empire will be an alliance of nations.
- What was the original “Tower of Babel” dream, will become a reality—one language, one religion, one economy.
- We already see this desire for religious, political and economic unity in our world today.

### From the text:

- “seven heads and ten horns” Seven world empires (Five have fallen: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece.) (One is Rome at the time John wrote. The other is not yet come: Empire of the Antichrist.) The ten horns are ten political powers that unite to empower the Antichrist. Some have called it the United States of Europe; others call it the 10-Nation Confederation.
- “once was, now is not, and will come up out of the Abyss” The Antichrist will imitate Christ’s death and resurrection in order to amaze the world.
- “They will make war against the Lamb.” This will all climax at the Battle of Armageddon.

### 3. The destruction of the “great prostitute”

Then the angel said to me, "The waters you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations and languages. The beast and the ten horns you saw will hate the prostitute. They will bring her to ruin and leave her naked; they will eat her flesh and burn her with fire. For God has put it into their hearts to accomplish his purpose by agreeing to give the beast their power to rule, until God's words are fulfilled. The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth."  
Revelation 17:15-18

#### Points to consider:

- The very worldwide religion that helped bring the Antichrist's kingdom together will be brought to ruin.
- Throughout history, political systems have used religious bodies to further their political purposes.
- God's purposes will be accomplished!

#### From the text:

- "The woman you saw is the great city that rules." It seems that Rome, the city that ruled the kings of the earth in John's day, is identified as the woman; "rules" is in the present tense.

**Application:** Satan's counterfeit religion is subtle, requiring spiritual discernment to recognize. In every age there is tremendous pressure to conform to popular religion and abandon the fundamentals of the faith.

And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.

2 Corinthians 11:14-15