

# THE HARLOT

## IDENTIFYING THE FALSE CHURCH

### REVELATION 18 – WHO IS THE BABYLON THAT WILL FALL?

**The book of Revelation illustrates two different women to describe two different systems of religion – one that follows Jesus and one that has separated itself from Jesus.**

In Revelation 12, there is a striking symbol of a woman dressed in white. In prophecy, a pure woman symbolizes the bride of Jesus; the true church (see Jeremiah 6:2 and Ephesians 5).

God compares His church to a beautiful, pure woman who is faithful to her true lover, Jesus. She is undefiled with the corruption of false doctrine. The New Testament church – God's true church – radiates purity and holiness, because Jesus is predominant in her life. Her affections and heart are fixed on Him. Her love can be given to no other. She will never betray Him as He is her everything. She is the **faithful** bride of Christ.

In Revelation 17, another woman arises. This woman rides upon a scarlet colored beast and the Bible calls her a harlot woman. She has left her true lover, Jesus.

**The harlot is the apostate system of religion.** This Bible study will focus on the harlot.

### THE HARLOT SITS ON MANY WATERS

Revelation 17:1: *"Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, 'Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.'"*

What does it mean that "she sits on many waters" (Revelation 17:1)?

The Bible interprets itself in Revelation 17:15: *"... 'The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.'"*

*"With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication . . ."* (Revelation 17:2).

What is fornication? It is an illicit, adulterous union.

*In the fallen church system, the church is united with the state.  
In the true church system, the church is united with Jesus.*

# THE HARLOT IS FULL OF NAMES OF BLASPHEMY

**Revelation 17:3:** *"So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns."*

The Bible defines blasphemy as claiming to have the power to forgive sins and also claiming to stand in the place of God (see John 10:33, Matthew 9:2-3). Thus, we see that the harlot claims to stand in the place of God and forms a union with the kings of the earth through that supposed authority.

These authorities fall into the harlot's traps from which she then derives her power to influence kings and govern laws for her own agenda and corruption. The harlot binds an illicit union between church and state.

# THE HARLOT IS ARRAYED IN PURPLE AND SCARLET

**Revelation 17:4:** *"The woman, (fallen church) was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls..."*

Let's think about this. Do you know of a religious system whose priests wear purple and scarlet? Yes! Frequently cardinals wear scarlet. These priests wear red on Good Friday, Palm Sunday, Pentecost, and purple on Advent, Lent, and at funerals.

# THE HARLOT HAS A GOLDEN CUP FULL OF ABOMINATIONS

Continuing in verse 4: *". . . having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication."*

In other words, this fallen system of religion has a drink of false doctrine and all the world drinks this wine and becomes confused and intoxicated by these false doctrines.

# THE HARLOT = A MOTHER OF HARLOTS

**Revelation 17:5:** *"And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."*

The Bible says Babylon is a harlot as well as a mother, which means she must have children.

Protestant denominations came out of Catholicism but have retained some of her false doctrines. These are the daughters of the Mother church.





# MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT

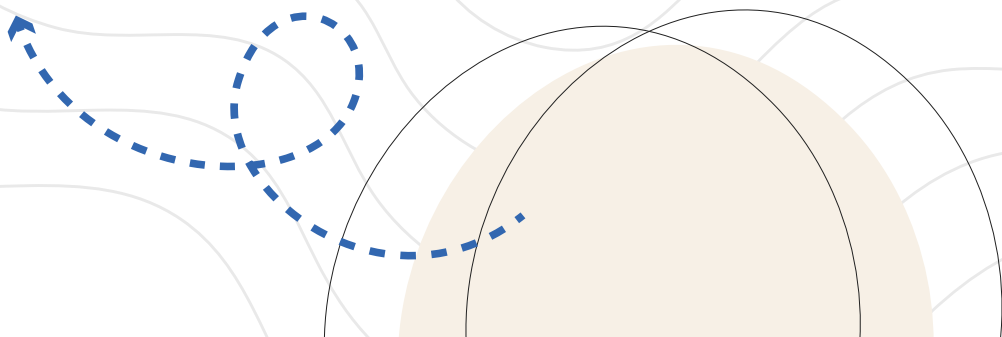
What does the Bible mean when it says Mystery, Babylon the Great? By the first century, literal Babylon – a city that existed in the Old Testament – had already perished. This quote is not talking about literal, (physical) Babylon. This is referring to spiritual Babylon.

The Bible says in **Daniel 4:30**: *“The king spoke, saying, ‘Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?’”*

**“Spiritual Babylon” represents a man-made religion established by men, based on human teachings, established on human ideas. There is a form of man-made religion built by human religious leaders that stands in opposition to the power of the gospel and the true church that Jesus built.**

The true church of Jesus is not a man-made institution because it was built by Jesus himself. **Colossians 1:18** says: *“And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning . . . that in all things He may have the preeminence.”*

## IDENTIFYING MARKS OF SPIRITUAL BABYLON BASED ON LITERAL BABYLON

- *Babylon has an **earthly head** who speaks for God and in place of God [See 2 Thessalonians 2:4 and Isaiah 37:16].*
  - *Babylon was the center of **image worship** through all of the Old Testament.*
  - *It was the center of **false teachings about death**, teaching the immortality of the soul.*
  - *Babylon was also the center of **sun worship**. All sun worship came through varying pagan channels [see Ezekiel 8:16].*
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God abhors these false systems of worship, as they are doctrines of devils. However, God dearly loves His people even though they may be currently deceived. He warns them to leave Babylon and all its counterfeit teachings!

**"This is what the LORD says:  
'Stand at the crossroads and look;  
ask for the ancient paths, ask  
where the good way is, and walk  
in it, and you will find rest for your  
souls'" (Jeremiah 6:16 NIV).**



## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

You may be standing in the crossroads today. Will you come out of Babylon and choose God's way?

## NEED PRAYER?

## HAVE QUESTIONS?

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