



- We are also told that this woman sits on seven hills (Rev. 17:9). Rome is actually famous for being a city that sits on seven hills. The coin on the far right was used during John's time. It is the goddess Roma, who



represented the city of Rome. It is interesting because she is pictured as sitting on the seven hills of Rome, just like the woman John saw. On the other side of the coin it had a picture of the emperor.

- We learn several other facts about this woman:
  - We are told that this woman sits on many waters (Rev. 17:1). It is explained that “the waters” are “peoples, multitudes, nations, and languages” (Rev. 17:15). The city of Rome had great power over much of the world.
  - Rome was a wealthy city (Rev. 18:3). People could have the very best there. Like the woman, Rome had many fancy things. The rich people living there had enough wealth to buy a lot of expensive things.
  - Rome was a very wicked city. God said its sins had piled up all the way to heaven (Rev. 18:5). John sees that the woman had a golden cup in her hand and it was filled with things that are filthy and disgusting to God (Rev. 17:4). The Roman rulers tried to get people to worship idols and even wanted them to worship their emperors. Its emperors were often very sinful people who did terrible things, sometimes murdering their own families. The city of Rome was also filled with lots of violence.
  - This woman is described as a harlot. Other cities (Ninevah, Nahum 3:4, Tyre, Isa. 23:15-17, Babylon, Isa. 47:5-15, and Jerusalem, Isaiah 1:21) that God had to judge were called the same thing. A harlot was a very sinful woman who misused her body to tempt men to sin. Rome is called a harlot because she had caused so many people of the world to sin. It says that the “kings of the earth got drunk from her wine” (Rev. 17:2). When you someone gets drunk, they can't think clearly. People had let all the beauty of the city and all the things you could buy there keep them from seeing the evil things that were going on.
  - Rome persecuted God's people. John said that he could see that the woman was drunken, not on wine, but on the blood of those who had witnessed of Jesus (Rev. 17:6). Like we said, when someone is drunk they aren't thinking clearly. In city of Rome there had been a severe persecution of Christians a few years before John wrote. Soon it would start happening again.
  - Rome was like “Babylon the Great”. In the Old Testament Babylon the city was the capital of the Babylonian empire, just like Rome was the capital of the Roman empire. Like Rome was now, Babylon was the most powerful empire of its time. It was a very wicked and idolatrous place. Remember that in our last lesson, we said that Babylon was an enemy of God's people that had conquered them and took them away into captivity. But God conquered Babylon and rescued His people. Now in Revelation John is being shown that the Lord would also conquer Rome.

### **An Angel Announces Babylon's Fall**

- An angel came down from heaven to say, "Babylon the great has fallen." Again, we understand that he is talking about Rome.
- From the way God sees it Babylon / Rome had already fallen. The city and empire of Rome had not really fallen at this point. Later in Revelation they are still making war with the saints, but it was going to happen. This was God's judgment for the woman who was really the 'great city' (Rev. 17:1).
- Rome did not think she could ever fall (Rev. 18:7), but their day of destruction was coming. The Roman empire would fall and not ever come back. It would never again be able to persecute God's people.
- The day would come when all the merchants (the business people) would mourn. The great city would not have the wealth it once had and would not be able to buy all the things the merchants were selling.
- While the merchants and kings of the world mourned over Rome's fall, God's people could rejoice because God had brought His judgment on them for their persecution of many of the saints and for cruelly putting other Christians to death.

### **God's People Must Stay Away From Rome's Sins**

- A voice from heaven said, "Come out of her, My people. Don't take part in her sins..." (Rev. 18:4). God did not want His people living the way the sinful people of Rome did. When God says for them to "Come out of her", He is not necessarily saying to leave the city, but to leave their sinful ways. In 2 Corinthians 6:17 Paul said to Christians, "Therefore come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you."
- We live in a very sinful world, but there is no way for us to leave it. We have to live God's way while we are in the world. Jesus prayed to God about His disciples, "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world" (John 17:15,16).
- God would judge Rome for all her terrible sins, but if Christians were joining in with her sins, they would face the same judgment.

### **Simplified Explanation of the Text**

#### **The Woman Who Rides the Beast**

17:1-2 After the seven bowls of wrath had been poured out, one of the seven angels who had a bowl told me, "Come here and I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters. With her the kings of the earth have committed fornication and those who live on the earth have gotten drunk from the wine of her fornication."

3 So he took me in the spirit into the wilderness and I saw this woman. She was sitting on a scarlet colored beast that had 7 heads and 10 horns and was filled with blasphemous names.

4 And this woman had purple and scarlet colored clothing. She was adorned in gold and very expensive jewels and pearls. She had a golden cup in her hand and it was filled with things that are filthy and disgusting to God, things related to her fornication.

5 A name was written on her forehead: "Mystery: Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and All the Disgusting Things of the Earth".

6 And I could see that the woman was drunken, not on wine, but on the blood of those who had witnessed of Jesus. The sight of her totally shocked me.

7 And the angel asked me, "Why are you so puzzled by her? Let me tell you the secret of who she is, and who the beast is she is riding."

8 "The beast you saw was around for a while, then was not, but now he is about to come up out of the bottomless pit, then he will go away into destruction. Now when all the people of the earth see how this beast had gone away, but comes back, they will be amazed. But remember these are the people whose names are not in the Book of Life (the Book written since the beginning of the world)."

9 "Now here is where you'll need to think and understand: On that beast the woman is riding on, there were seven heads. Those 7 heads are really 7 hills where the woman sits."

10 "The 7 heads also represent 7 kings. Five of those kings have fallen. There is one right now. And then there will be another one coming who will only be here a little while."

11 "The beast the woman rides on who was around for a while, then was not, will be the 8<sup>th</sup>, and he will go into destruction."

12 The 10 horns you saw on the beast are 10 kings. These have not become kings yet, but each will receive their authority for one period of time with the beast.

13 Each of these kings has one purpose – to give their power and authority to the beast.

14 They will all make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, because He is the Lord of lords and the King of kings. Those who are on His side are the called, the chosen and the faithful.

15-18 <sup>15</sup> Then the angel explained to me, "The waters where the harlot sits are all the people, crowds, nations and languages. <sup>16</sup> Even though the 10 horns, the 10 kings, gave their power to the beast, they really will show a hatred for the harlot because they will ruin her, tearing off her clothing. They will eat her flesh and burn her with fire. <sup>17</sup> They will do all this because this is God's will. He has put it in their hearts to fulfill what He wants. They will continue to rule for the beast until God's words have been fulfilled. <sup>18</sup> "The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth."

### **Babylon's Judgment is Announced**

18:1 After these things, I saw another angel come down from heaven. This angel had great power and the whole earth was lit up with his glory.

2-3 And with great strength, he called out, "Babylon the great has fallen. It has become the place where demons dwell, the prison of every unclean spirit, and the cage of every unclean and detestable bird. For all the nations have drunk the wine of wrath of her immoral lusts. The kings of the earth have committed fornication with her. The merchants of the world who travel about buying and selling have gotten rich from all her desire for luxury."

### **Don't Take Part in Her Sins**

4-8 <sup>4</sup> Then I heard another Voice coming from heaven that said, "Come out of her, My people. Don't take part in her sins and you won't have to share in her plagues. <sup>5</sup> For her

sins kept piling up until they reached heaven, and God has remembered her lawless ways.  
<sup>6</sup> I will give back to her what she gave to you, My people. In view of the works she had done, I will give her back twice as much. That cup of wrath she has shown to you, I will give a double portion of back to her. <sup>7</sup> She glorifies herself so much and lives in such luxury, so that's how much torment and sorrow I'll give back to her. She says about herself, "I sit like a queen. I'll never be a widow. There'll never be a reason for me to be sad." <sup>8</sup> Because she thinks like this, I will send the plagues on her in one day – death, sorrow, famine – and she will be burnt up with fire, for the Lord who judges her is strong.

### **The Kings Mourn Over the Babylon's Fall**

9-14 The Voice continued speaking, "All the kings of the earth who have committed lustful immorality with her and have lived so luxuriously with her will weep and cry for her when they see her smoke as she burns. <sup>10</sup> Because they are afraid of what is happening to her, they will stand at a distance and say, "What a tragedy! The great city, Babylon, the mighty city. Her judgment came in one hour!"

### **The Merchants Mourn Over Babylon's Fall**

11-16 And the Voice spoke again, <sup>11</sup> The merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, because no one was buying their merchandise anymore. <sup>12</sup> All that they sold – the gold, silver, expensive jewels, pearls, fine linen, purple fabric, silk, scarlet fabric, fragrant citrus wood, and all kind of vessels made of ivory, expensive wood, brass, iron and marble, <sup>13</sup> cinnamon, incense, ointment, frankincense, wine, oil, the finest flour and wheat, beasts, sheep, horses, chariots, as well as the bodies and lives of human beings. <sup>14</sup> All the fruit you craved is gone. All those luxurious and shiny things have gone away from you and you won't ever find them again. <sup>15</sup> "Yes" said the merchants that got rich off of selling all these things and stand at a distance from her torment weeping and mourning, <sup>16</sup> "What a tragedy! The great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, scarlet, and dressed up in gold, precious jewels and pearls, in just one hour her great riches have been laid waste."

### **Those in Ships Mourn Over Babylon's Fall**

17-19 <sup>17</sup> And the Voice also said, "And every ship's captain, and all those who traveled in ships, the sailors and all who made their living from the sea stood at a distance. <sup>18</sup> And as they saw the smoke as the city was burning, they cried out, "What city is like the great city?" <sup>19</sup> And they threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and mourning, "What a tragedy! That great city made us all rich. Everyone who had a ship at sea got rich because of all the costly things she wanted. And now in just one hour she has been ruined."

### **But Those in Heaven Can Rejoice**

20 Then the Voice finished by saying, "But you who are in heaven, and all the apostles and prophets can rejoice because God has rendered His judgment against her on your behalf."

21-23 Then a mighty angel picked up a stone like a large millstone and threw it into the sea, and said, "In the same way the great city of Babylon will be thrown down with violence and will not be found any more. The voice of harpers, musicians, pipers, and

trumpeters will never be heard in you again. No more craftsmen of any kind will be heard working there. No sound of the millstone will be heard there again. No lamp lights will shine there. No voices of a bride and bridegroom will be heard.”

“Babylon, your merchants were once the important people of the earth, but you used your magic to fool all the people of the earth.”

24 “Babylon, the prophets, the saints, and all kinds of people have been killed and their blood has been found there.”