

Revelation 17 - The Judgement of the Great Prostitute

Rev 17:1-18 ESV Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, **I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute** who is seated on many waters, 2 with whom **the kings of the earth** have committed sexual immorality, and with the wine of whose sexual immorality the dwellers on earth have become drunk."

- He wanted to be certain John saw the judgement given to **the great prostitute**

The Kings of the Earth

- **Her reach was worldwide** - Rev 16:13-14 ESV And I saw, coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs. 14 For they are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to **the kings of the whole world**, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty.
- **We saw in chapter 14 that the LORD was doing things on a worldwide basis**
 - Rev 14:6 Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, **to every nation and tribe and language and people.**
 - Rev 14:8 Another angel, a second, followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she **who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality.**"
 - Rev 14:15 And another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud, "Put in your sickle, and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for **the harvest of the earth is fully ripe**

Description of the great prostitute

3 And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman **sitting on a scarlet beast** that was **full of blasphemous names**, and it had **seven heads and ten horns**. 4 The woman was **arrayed in purple and scarlet**, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden **cup full of abominations** and the **impurities of her sexual immorality**. 5 And on her forehead was written a name of mystery: "**Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations.**" 6 And I saw the woman, **drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.**

Description of her

- She was sitting on a **scarlet beast** (scarlet - sin)
 - Isa 1:18 ESV "Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: **though your sins are like scarlet**, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.

- The beast was full of blasphemous names (evil speaking primarily against God)
- The beast had seven heads and ten horns (authority)
- The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet (“royalty”)
- The woman was adorned with gold, jewels and pearls (wealth)

A description of her sins

- The woman was holding a cup full of abominations and the impurities of her sexual immorality
- She had a name on her forehead, “Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth’s abominations”
- She was drunk with the blood of the saints and the martyrs of Jesus

Babylon - I think we can see in the judgement of the Great Prostitute that the LORD’s judgement is coming against every system of mankind.

- **It is a religious system** - Rev 14:8 ESV Another angel, a second, followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality."
- **It is a governmental system - here described as a city that has dominion over the kings of the earth** - Rev 17:15-18 ESV And the angel said to me, "The waters that you saw, where the prostitute is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages. 16 And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will hate the prostitute. They will make her desolate and naked, and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire, 17 **for God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose** by being of one mind and handing over their royal power to the beast, **until the words of God are fulfilled**. 18 And the woman that you saw is the great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth."
- **It is described of having economic relationships** - Rev 18:2-3 ESV And he called out with a mighty voice, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast. 3 For all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living."

The mystery of the woman

When I saw her, I marveled greatly. 7 But the angel said to me, "Why do you marvel? **I will tell you the mystery of the woman**, and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns that carries her. 8 The beast that you saw **was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction**. And the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in **the book of life** from the foundation of the world will marvel to see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come.

- Why do you marvel?
- He was, is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction
 - Rev 11:7-9 ESV And when they **[the two prophets]** have finished their testimony, **the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them**

and kill them, 8 and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that symbolically is called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified. 9 For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb

The book of life

- Those whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will marvel to see the beast because it was and is not and is to come
- Php 4:3 ESV Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, **whose names are in the book of life.**
- Rev 3:5 ESV The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and **I will never blot his name out of the book of life.** I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.
- Rev 13:7-8 ESV Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, 8 and all who dwell on earth will worship it, **everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.**
- Rev 20:12-15 ESV And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. 13 And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. 14 Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. **15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.**
- Rev 21:24-27 ESV By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, 25 and its gates will never be shut by day--and there will be no night there. 26 They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. 27 But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but **only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.**

The Foundation of the world

- Mat 25:34 Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit **the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.**
- Joh 17:24 Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because **you loved me before the foundation of the world.**
- Eph 1:4 even as he **chose us in him before the foundation of the world,** that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love
- Heb 4:3 For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said, "As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest,'" **although his works were finished from the foundation of the world.**
- 1Pe 1:20 He was **foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times** for the sake of you

- Rev 13:8 and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone **whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb** who was slain.
- Rev 17:8 The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction. And the dwellers on earth **whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world** will marvel to see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come.

Further description

9 This calls for a mind with wisdom: the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated; 10 they are also seven kings, five of whom have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he does come he must remain only a little while. 11 As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to destruction. 12 And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received royal power, but **they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast.** 13 **These are of one mind, and they hand over their power and authority to the beast.**

The seven heads are seven mountains and seven kings

Five have fallen

- Egypt
- Babylon
- Assyria
- Medio-Persia
- Greece

One is

- Rome

The other has not yet come

- When he does come he must remain only a little while

As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to destruction

- The beast is **not** one of the seven, he is the **eighth**; yet clearly he is of the seven. That is, he is given his authority by Satan (Rev. 13:4), just as the seven heads were.

War with the Lamb

14 **They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, *and those with him* are called and chosen and faithful."**

No doubt who will win this battle

Called

- **Called to an eternal glory** - 2Pe 1:3 ESV His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who **called us to his own glory and excellence**,
- 1Pe 5:10 ESV And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has **called you to his eternal glory in Christ**, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.
- **Called to a holy life** - 1Pe 1:15 ESV but **as he who called you is holy, you also be holy** in all your conduct,
- 2Ti 1:9 ESV who saved us and **called us to a holy calling**, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began,
- **Fight for it** - 1Ti 6:12 ESV Fight the good fight of the faith. **Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called** and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

Chosen

Mat 22:2-14 ESV "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, 3 and sent his servants to **call those who were invited** to the wedding feast, but **they would not come**. 4 Again he sent other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.' 5 But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, 6 while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. 7 The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. 8 Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. 9 Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.' 10 And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests. 11 "But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. 12 And he said to him, 'Friend, **how did you get in here without a wedding garment?**' And he was speechless. 13 Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' 14 **For many are called, but few are chosen.**"

- He calls - but in a sense we determine if we are chosen
- Do we have the wedding garment on?

Faithful

- Rev 2:10 ESV Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. **Be faithful unto death**, and I will give you the crown of life.
- Rev 2:13 ESV "'I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. Yet you hold fast my name, and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas my **faithful witness**, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

- 2Ti 2:2 ESV and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to **faithful men** who will be able to teach others also.
- Luk 19:17 ESV And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant! Because you have been **faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.**'
- Luk 12:35-42 ESV "Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning, 36 and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks. 37 Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them. 38 If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them awake, blessed are those servants! 39 But know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have left his house to be broken into. 40 You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." 41 Peter said, "Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for all?" 42 And the Lord said, "**Who then is the faithful and wise manager**, whom his master will set over his household, to give them their portion of food at the proper time?"

Explanation

15 And the angel said to me, "The waters that you saw, where the prostitute is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages. 16 And the ten horns that you saw, they and **the beast will hate the prostitute**. They will make her desolate and naked, and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire, 17 for **God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose** by being of one mind and handing over their royal power to the beast, **until the words of God are fulfilled**. 18 And the woman that you saw is **the great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth.**"

- The waters that you saw, where the prostitute is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages
- The woman that you saw is the great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth
- God's Sovereignty

Interaction Between the Sovereign God and the Will of Man

Comment: *The two subjects are often set in opposition to each other, as though they were mutually contradictory, rather than complementary. This contradiction highlights two extremes - One where the sovereignty of God is so pervasive that any act of man is only the Lord's doing. The other describes life as totally man-centered and the Lord is nothing more than a spectator who created the world and leaves its progression to the wiles of man. However we see in scripture that both the sovereignty of God and the will of man are true, and they are found side by side in the Word of God. In scripture we see an intermingling of the sovereignty of God working in conjunction with the heart/actions of man to bring about God's purposes. Simply stated, if God created man with a free will, then for man to exercise that free will is not a denial of the sovereignty of God.*

At times, the Sovereign Lord fulfills his purpose by using the will of man

Comment: *God is Lord, Master, Owner and Controller, His purpose will be accomplished regardless of the acts of men. In fact, sometimes the very anger and rebellion of man is used by the Lord to accomplish his plan. In this way the sovereignty of God and the free-will of man are not mutually exclusive, but work together in harmony to fulfill the Lord's plans.*

Acts 2:23 This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

Acts 4:27-28 Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. 28 They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.

Acts 13:26-33 "Brothers, children of Abraham, and you God-fearing Gentiles, it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent. 27 The people of Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize Jesus, yet in condemning him they fulfilled the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath. 28 Though they found no proper ground for a death sentence, they asked Pilate to have him executed. 29 When they had carried out all that was written about him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. 30 But God raised him from the dead, 31 and for many days he was seen by those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to our people. 32 "We tell you the good news: What God promised our fathers 33 he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm: "You are my Son; today I have become your Father.

Proverbs 16:4 The LORD works out everything for his own ends-- even the wicked for a day of disaster.

Prov 21:1 The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He will.

Psalms 76:10 Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.

Romans 9:17-18 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth."¹⁸ Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.

At times the Sovereign Lord responds to man's heart

Amos 7:1-7 This is what the Sovereign LORD showed me: He was preparing swarms of locusts after the king's share had been harvested and just as the second crop was coming up. 2 When they had stripped the land clean, I cried out, "Sovereign LORD, forgive! How can Jacob survive? He is so small!" 3 So the LORD relented. "This will not happen," the LORD said. 4 This is what the Sovereign LORD showed me: The Sovereign LORD was calling for judgment by fire; it dried up the great deep and devoured the land. 5 Then I cried out,

“Sovereign LORD, I beg you, stop! How can Jacob survive? He is so small!” 6 So the LORD relented. “This will not happen either,” the Sovereign LORD said. 7 This is what he showed me: The Lord was standing by a wall that had been built true to plumb, with a plumb line in his hand.

God responded to Ahab’s repentance

1 Kings 21:27-29 When Ahab heard these words, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and fasted. He lay in sackcloth and went around meekly. 28 Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite: 29 “Have you noticed how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Because he has humbled himself, I will not bring this disaster in his day, but I will bring it on his house in the days of his son.”

The Sovereign Lord, the accountability of man, and God’s desire to spare them

Ezekiel 22:30-31 “I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and **stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none.** 31 **So I will pour out my wrath on them and consume them with my fiery anger, bringing down on their own heads all they have done,** declares the Sovereign LORD.”

Comment: Even though at times God responds to man and acts on the basis of man’s actions, He is not held hostage to the will of man...He is still able to accomplish his purposes regardless of how man reacts or responds

God used the jealousy of Joseph’s brothers to accomplish his purpose

Gen. 50: 20 You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.

Whether or not a specific person steps up to the plate His purpose will be done

Esther 4:12-14 When Esther’s words were reported to Mordecai, 13 he sent back this answer: “Do not think that because you are in the king’s house you alone of all the Jews will escape. 14 For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?”

Adam and Eve exercised their free will to disobey, yet the Lord, knowing their decision ahead of time purposed to send his Son as a Lamb slain from the creation of the world

Genesis 2:15-17 The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”

Revelation 13:8 All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.

