

Revelation 17:5-18—The history, future and fall of mystery Babylon, the false religious system that started with Nimrod and the Tower of Babel—Part 2

What we have in Revelation chapter 17 is a broad or extensive panorama of Satan's system of false religion throughout the ages, what form it will take during the tribulation, and how it comes to be a truly one-world religion. This week we continue our journey through this exciting chapter and see the final end of this false religious system.

Q Do you remember what or who the two main symbols in Revelation chapter 17 are? *First, we have the woman who represents the Mystery Babylon false religious system. Second, we have the beast which represents the Mystery Babylon economic system and government.*

So first, the woman in Revelation chapter 17 is scarlet O'Harlot, the ultimate spiritual whore or harlot that has been, is, and will continue to seduce the world to turn away from God and worship idols and demons—until her demise at the midpoint of the 7 year tribulation. As we learnt last week, this false religion will have counterfeit faith, counterfeit spirituality, counterfeit teachers, counterfeit miracles, counterfeit godliness and its leaders will have counterfeit authority. All in all it will be a counterfeit christianity. As we learned last week, it will be empty or godless religion at its very best, or worst, depending on whose side you are on—satan's or God's.

We'll start by reading through the whole chapter so we can get the big picture.

The history, future and fall of religious mystery Babylon

Revelation 17:1-18 NKJV

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls [golden censers] came and talked with me, saying to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, ² with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication [spiritual adultery], and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication."

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 10 horns are on the last of the 7 heads and represent the last days one-world kingdom or government that will be ruled by the antichrist). ⁴ The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication [immorality].

⁵ And on her forehead a name was written:

MYSTERY,

BABYLON THE GREAT,

THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH

⁶ I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs (witnesses) of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marvelled (wondered) with great amazement.

The Meaning of the Woman and the Beast

⁷ But the angel said to me, “Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. ⁸ The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is (will come).

⁹ “Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. ¹⁰ There are also seven kings (kingdoms). Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time. ¹¹ The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition (lit. leads to destruction).

¹² “The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast (they reign with the antichrist during the 7 year tribulation). ¹³ These are of one mind (or purpose), and they will give their power and authority to the beast. ¹⁴ These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him (the raptured church) are called, chosen, and faithful.”

¹⁵ Then he said to me, “The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. ¹⁶ And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. ¹⁷ For God has put it into their hearts to fulfil (execute) His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. ¹⁸ And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns (is reigning) over the kings of the earth.”

John sees the woman, Mystery Babylon religion (Revelation 17:5-6)

Revelation 17:5 NKJV

⁵ And on her forehead a name was written:

MYSTERY,

BABYLON THE GREAT,

THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH

You can't get a more degrading name or description than this one. From God's perspective this false religion is absolutely revolting and disgusting. So much so that He wants to throw up because of how evil and vile this empty religion is in His eyes. This is similar to how God also feels in Revelation 3 towards the Laodicean church, the last days empty religion church.

Revelation 3:15-16 NKJV

“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. ¹⁶ So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, **I will vomit you out of My mouth.**

Let's have a look at what it means:

v 5 **On her forehead a name was written:** The name on her forehead identifies her in more ways than one. Roman prostitutes frequently wore a headband with their name engraved upon it. Therefore in the context of the culture that this was written in, the Roman Empire, this is yet another way of saying that this woman, Mystery Babylon religion, is nothing more than a prostitute.

v 5 **MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT:** This title does not mean literal Babylon, the city in modern Iraq; but its spiritual (**mystery**) representation. She is described as the source (**mother**) of all idolatry (**abominations**) and spiritual adultery (**harlots**). We talked about this spiritual adultery last week. Spiritual adultery is God's way of describing anything else but genuine worship of the true God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God sees all false religion as an abomination.

V 5 **MYSTERY:** Now, whenever you hear in the Bible that something is a mystery, it means this it is something very important to listen to and understand. The word for "mystery" is the Greek word *mysterion*. It means secret, a divine secret, something above human intelligence, a secret doctrine. It came from the ancient Greek secret fraternities (fraternity: a group of people sharing a common profession or interests), and there were always *mysterions* for every one of these Greek fraternities. Therefore, *mysterion* means "something that can only be known by the initiated members, but not understood by those who are not. And it's used in the bible in the sense that a mystery is something that a believer in Christ could understand, but the world cannot. They can hear the words, but they can't understand the real and deep meaning—it must be taught by the Holy Spirit.

So, it's interesting that John starts off by introducing this woman as a "mystery". It's something that needs to be explained later by the angel.

Babylon—following it's thread throughout the bible

It all started in the plains of Shinar. That is the place where organised false religion first started. So when John says "Mystery Babylon", it's talking about man's false religion, as an organised system, which started in Babylon in the plains of Shinar. This mystery religion permeated and followed through all the following world powers, and will reach its worst in our near future.

So it says that she is "the Mother of All Harlots (harlots: false religious systems) and the abominations of the earth (abominations: the worst kinds of sins). It all come from there.

Application:

As we mentioned last week, we must remember that this harlot or false religious system must be larger than any one branch of a religious institution. She is the embodiment of Satan's own ecumenical movement—the religion of the world system, which incorporates all the false religions and beliefs of the world. For this to happen, there must be great compromise. One essential characteristic of any false or empty religious system is compromise.

Quote from David Guzik:

Our world, strong with the philosophy that it doesn't matter what you believe as long as you believe, is prepared for the harlot's seduction. We see the casual disregard for the truth crippling the church today.

The faulty thinking described here goes like this: as long as I am sincere, then I am okay. But think of it this way. If I sincerely believe that if I jump out of a plane at 20,000 feet without a parachute and land safely, I will still sincerely die. I was sincerely wrong. Truth sincerely matters. True or correct doctrine is essential, especially the doctrines that concern salvation and the gospel. There can be no compromise on these vital truths. Any deviation from the gospel essentials, no matter how sincere or well-meaning the person may be, means eternal death. There is only one way to be saved—Jesus is *the way, the truth, and the life*. We need to be like Paul in Galatians 2:11 where he withstood Peter the Apostle to his face. *No way Jose*, no compromise allowed here.

Another thing that I need to point out here is the contrast between the two women of Revelation. There is a stark contrast between the woman of Revelation 12 (representing Israel, God's people), and this woman in chapter 17 (representing Mystery Babylon—idolatrous, false religion).

Israel was created by God to bring people to relationship with God through the Saviour who came through her. God's purpose for Israel was to be light, life, and truth to a dark, dead and deceived world. In contrast, Mystery Babylon religion was created by Satan to keep people from knowing God, to keep them dead in their sins.

Revelation 17:6 NKJV

I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marvelled with great amazement.

v 6 **Drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus:** The woman or harlot not only persecutes, she also *revels or delights* in her persecution of the godly as a drunk revels and delights in wine. This is what she enjoys the most. Why? Because this Mystery Babylon religion is inspired by Satan, and Satan's goal has always been to persecute both Israel and the church, meaning the true believers.

v 6 **I marvelled with great amazement:** it means to be dazzled or astonished—almost overwhelmed, with the context determining whether it is in a good sense or a bad sense.

It's worth asking the question, "why was John so amazed by this persecution?" After all, there was a huge amount of persecution against Christians by the Roman Empire. These next two quotes give us the answer:

Quote from David Guzik:

"John was amazed because this wasn't pagan persecution (such as he knew in his day), but *religious* error and persecution. This is a *psuedochurch*, thirsty for the blood of the saints."

Quote from Walvoord:

“False religion is always the worst enemy of true religion.”

We should never forget that some of the most vicious persecution conducted against true Christians has been done in the name of the church. Here is an example: in the days when the Roman Catholic Queen Mary ruled England (known as *Bloody Mary*), some 288 Christians were burnt at the stake for their stand for Christian truth between 1555 and 1558. The first of these martyrs was a man named John Rogers, who, as he stood chained to a stake, and the fire rose around him, up to his legs and shoulders, he rubbed his hands in the flames as if he were washing his hands in cold water. Then he lifted his hands to the heavens and held them high until he was completely consumed by fire. Rogers went to the stake with such calm and dignity that the French Ambassador wrote that he went to his death “as if he was walking to his wedding.” His courage was so evident that the huge crowd burst into applause when they saw him walking to the stake.

So to summarise, John sees a counterfeit church persecuting the true believers. This has been true since the days of the Roman Catholic church, and will find its climax during the tribulation.

The great harlot is interpreted/explained by the Angel [17:7–15]

Revelation 17:7-11 NKJV

But the angel said to me, “Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. ⁸ The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

⁹ “Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. ¹⁰ There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time. ¹¹ The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.

v 7 **I will tell you the mystery**... the angel is saying that he will tell John all about this false religious system and the beast that carries her. He starts with the beast.

v 7 of the woman and of the beast that carries her:

As we spoke about last week, it appeared that the harlot ruled, rode or directed the Antichrist’s one world government, but, as it turns out, he is the one who is in control. As usual, like all tyrants, he uses religion as a mere tool to accomplish his purposes.

In verses 7-11 we have an excellent example of scripture interpreting scripture. Let’s look at the seven heads first.

v 7b, 9-10a **and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. ... ⁹ “Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. ¹⁰ There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come.**

So what are these seven heads, what do they represent?

The seven heads are explained in two ways. The first interpretation is that the seven heads are **seven mountains**. Anyone living in John's day would know that this referred to Rome. The city of Rome in that day was situated on seven hills. In John's day, and for a long while after, Rome was the economic and religious capital of the world. During the 7 year tribulation, it will again be the economic and religious capital of the world. Verse 18 confirms this. "And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth." *Rome was the city that was reigning over the earth when John was given Revelation.*

Verse 10 tells us more about the **seven heads**, that they are **seven kings**, which can also be translated **seven kingdoms** (for example see Daniel 7:17 and 23—The king represents his kingdom).

Daniel 7:17, 23 NKJV

¹⁷ **Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings** which arise out of the earth. ... ²³ "Thus he said:

**'The fourth beast shall be
A fourth kingdom on earth,
Which shall be different from all other kingdoms,
And shall devour the whole earth,
Trample it and break it in pieces.**

So the seven heads are seven kingdoms or world empires. We will see that this also agrees similar passages in Daniel and other parts of the book of Revelation.

Basically, the beast with the seven heads in verse 9 represents the governments or world dominating empires from the time of Egypt—the world empires that have affected Israel.

What does Israel have to do with this? We need to remember that, overall, Israel is the central focus of the book of Revelation. The tribulation describes the final seven year period that is decreed for Israel in Daniel 9:24-27. Therefore, the dominant empires prior to Egypt are not mentioned, not because they didn't promote or embrace the Mystery Babylon religion, but because they never persecuted Israel, because Israel didn't exist before Egypt. Revelation chapter 12 vividly describes Satan's plan of using the final seven world powers or empires to achieve his goal of destroying Israel.

Revelation 12:1-4 NKJV

Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars [Israel—see Genesis 37:9-10]. ² Then being with child [the Messiah—Jesus], she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.

³ And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, **fiery red dragon** having **seven heads and ten horns**, and seven diadems on his heads. ⁴ His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. **And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.**

As you can see, Satan (the fiery red dragon, see Rev 12:9), is described as having seven heads and ten horns. *This means that he is in control of these world empires, and he specifically uses the last seven world empires (Egypt through to the Roman empire) to persecute Israel.* He is the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2). He has been given temporary authority in this world, and as such, he is able to manipulate governments and religions to achieve his own goals—the deception of mankind and the destruction and persecution of Israel, the church, and later on, the tribulation saints.

I would say that it is fairly obvious that various forms of Mystery Babylon religion or false religion has been promoted and used by all world empires and most other governments throughout history to achieve their goals—power and wealth. Think about it, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, the Medes and Persians, the Grecian empire, the Roman empire and the soon-coming Revived Roman empire—they all used and will use religion and economic means to control their subjects. As an example, in John the apostle's day, all people in the Roman empire were forced to, once a year, offer incense to a statue of the Emperor and confess that "Cesar is Lord." The emperor was worshipped as a god—a good way of preventing his subjects from rebelling against him. Again, in the days of the Egyptian empire, Pharaoh was also considered to be a god and was worshipped. Overall, every world empire had their gods and idols, with most of it including the worship of Semiramis and Tammuz, just using different names.

You say, "well that's interesting, but what else is there to say that the seven heads are seven world empires or kingdoms?" Let's go back to Daniel where we have a similar picture, where the last four world kingdoms are pictured as beasts. In addition, the last beast or kingdom or world empire has the 10 horns or 10 kings, and there is another horn with a big mouth. Who is Mr big mouth? You guessed it, it's the antichrist who rises up and takes over (Daniel 7). Again, scripture interprets scripture. Look at the similarities and how the specific details concerning the interpretation of the beast, the 10 horns, and the antichrist in Revelation 17 match with Daniel 7. Keep in mind that by Daniel's time, when the book of Daniel was written, only five of the seven world empires remained. Egypt and Assyria were already defeated and would never again become world powers. The remaining five world empires described and identified in Daniel (see Daniel chapters 2, 7, 8 and 11,) are: Babylon (head of gold), then the Medes Persians (chest and arms of silver), then the Greeks (belly and thighs of bronze), then the Roman empire part 1 (legs of iron), then the Roman empire part 2 (feet of iron mixed with clay—comes to power during the tribulation).

Daniel 7:15-28 NLT paraphrase

The Vision Is Explained

¹⁵ I, Daniel, was troubled by all I had seen, and my visions terrified me. ¹⁶ So I approached one of those standing beside the throne and asked him what it all meant. He explained it to me like this: ¹⁷ **“These four huge beasts represent four kingdoms that will arise from the earth. ¹⁸ But in the end, the holy people of the Most High will be given the kingdom, and they will rule forever and ever.”**

¹⁹ Then I wanted to know the true meaning of the fourth beast, the one so different from the others and so terrifying. It had devoured and crushed its victims with iron teeth and bronze claws, trampling their remains beneath its feet. ²⁰ **I also asked**

about the ten horns on the fourth [last] beast's head and the little horn that came up afterward and destroyed three of the other horns. This horn had seemed greater than the others, and it had human eyes and a mouth that was boasting arrogantly.

²¹ As I watched, this horn was waging war against God's holy people and was defeating them [See *Revelation 13:7*— *It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation*], ²² until the Ancient One—the Most High—came and judged in favour of his holy people (second coming). Then the time arrived for the holy people to take over the kingdom.

²³ Then he said to me, **“This fourth beast is the fourth world power that will rule the earth.** It will be different from all the others. It will devour the whole world, trampling and crushing everything in its path. ²⁴ **Its ten horns are ten kings who will rule that empire. Then another king will arise, different from the other ten,** who will subdue three of them [See *Revelation 12:3*—*seven diadems or crowns, meaning only 7 of the 10 original kings or rulers will reign with the antichrist*]. ²⁵ He will defy the Most High and oppress the holy people of the Most High. He will try to change their sacred festivals and laws, and they will be placed under his control for **a time, times, and half a time** [*The land of Israel and the temple will be under the control of the antichrist for the last 3 1/2 years after he breaks his treaty with Israel*].

²⁶ “But then the court [God's] will pass judgment, and all his power will be taken away and completely destroyed. ²⁷ Then the sovereignty, power, and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be given to the holy people of the Most High. His kingdom will last forever, and all rulers will serve and obey him.”

²⁸ That was the end of the vision. I, Daniel, was terrified by my thoughts and my face was pale with fear, but I kept these things to myself.

I went back to Daniel for several reasons:

- it's good to remind us of what we have already learned,
- to definitively show that the seven heads are seven world empires,
- to remind us that these end times events that occur during the tribulation are referred to multiple times in the scriptures,
- that Revelation and Daniel fit together like a hand in a glove, and
- to help explain the remaining verses in Revelation 17 that talk about the these 7 kingdoms, the 10 kings associated with the last kingdom, and the antichrist.

So now we should have no doubt as to what the seven heads represent—the last seven world empires starting with Egypt and finishing with the revived Roman Empire during the Tribulation. This is important. This is the big picture. False religion and government have been working together against God for a long time—ever since the tower of Babel in Genesis 11.

This is one of the main points here in Revelation 17, that the Mystery Babylon religious system and the Mystery Babylon Economic system work together both to control and deceive the people of the world and persecute Israel and those who trust in God. Look around and you can easily see this happening in most countries today. *Now you know why! This is Satan's plan. This is Satan's way.* The bible says that we should not be ignorant of Satan's schemes (2 Corinthians 2:9, and that we should put on the whole armour of God so that we can stand against the wiles or schemes or strategies of the devil (Ephesians 6:10). We will come back to this at the end.

The beast that was, and is not, and will ascend...

Let's come back to Revelation 17 and read verse 8:

Revelation 17:8 NKJV

The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

This speaks of a resurrection—was, is not, and will ascend. This applies to the antichrist who will be assassinated and apparently brought back to life. We will look more at this when we get to verse 11. However, this also applies to the last beast or world empire, the Roman empire. From our perspective, the Roman empire was, and is not, and will ascend again. The political system will suddenly be raised from the death of history, just like the man who runs it will be brought back from the dead caused by a mortal head wound. This is a dual fulfilment.

Revelation 17:9 NKJV

“Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits.

v 9 **“Here is the mind which has wisdom:** It's talking about a human mind that has been taught by the Holy Spirit. The greatest wisdom comes when the Holy Spirit teaches you from God's word. He teaches you the meaning of things. It's like Jesus saying to people, “he who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

Revelation 17:10 NKJV

There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time.

Again, hopefully you understand that the seven heads are seven kingdoms. Now we get more detail which confirms our original interpretation.

5 have fallen—Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Mede and Persian, and the Grecian empires

One is—Rome (legs of iron)

The other has not yet come—Revived Roman empire (feet and toes of iron and clay)

v 10 **Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come:** Because we understand these as world empires, they are easy to explain. **Five** world empires (**Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Mede and Persian, and the Grecian empires**) have all come and gone, or **fallen** by the time John wrote Revelation.

v 10 **One is:** In context, this is the Roman empire, the legs of Iron as described in Daniel chapter 2. This was the world empire in existence when John was writing the book of Revelation.

v 10 **And the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time:** This refers to a future world empire, the feet of iron and clay with 10 toes in Daniel chapter 2, the revived Roman empire. The original Roman empire was never defeated as such, it just disintegrated or faded away over time. But in the last days, it will make a comeback. **“And when he comes, he must continue a short time.”** A short time we know to be during the 7 years, the time of the 7 year tribulation (the prophetic timeline concerning Israel given in Daniel 9:24-27).

The form this future Roman empire will take is a ten nation federation. It will appear just before the Tribulation.

The rise of the antichrist

Revelation 17:11 NKJV

The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.

This sounds strange, but again, when comparing scripture with scripture it's not too hard to figure it out. To understand verse 11, we need to go back to verse 8 and Revelation 13:2-4. What we find here is that there is a successful assassination attempt on the antichrist at the halfway point of the tribulation (3 1/2 years). However, the antichrist comes back to life. It's a counterfeit resurrection that the false prophet uses to convince those who dwell on the earth, the unbelievers, to worship the image of the beast or antichrist and take his mark. *As we will soon learn, it's also at the midpoint of the tribulation that the harlot or Mystery Babylon religion is destroyed by those who supported her, namely the antichrist and the 10 kings. So in place of worshipping the one world religion, people will see this miracle and be led or persuaded to worship their counterfeit messiah, the one who will apparently die and rise again from the dead, the antichrist.*

Revelation 17:8 NKJV

The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, **when they see the beast [antichrist] that was, and is not, and yet is.**

Revelation 13:2-4, 14 NKJV

The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. **³ And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. ⁴ So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast,**

14 And he (the false prophet) deceives those who dwell on the earth [unbelievers]—by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast (antichrist), telling those who dwell on the earth (unbelievers) to make an image **to the beast [antichrist] who was [mortally] wounded by the sword and lived.**

Revelation 17:11 NKJV

The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.

v 11 **The beast that was, and is not, is himself:** refers to the counterfeit resurrection of the antichrist that we just read about.

v 11 **Is himself also the eighth:** The seven year tribulation starts with 10 kings reigning over the whole earth. But sometime during the 7 years, most likely at the halfway point or 3 1/2 years in, these 10 leaders give their authority to the antichrist, and thus begins the world completely ruled by the antichrist, **the eighth** kingdom so to speak. Again, **the eighth** is referring to the antichrist, who is going to come, who is going to take over those ten nations, and he will use it as his political platform to gain control over the world. But more than the political, he's going to use the great whore to really get control. So you see it's both a political system, and a religious system (the harlot)—the antichrist uses both of them to ascend to power, to gain control of the people.

v 11 **And is of the seven:** It simply means that the characteristics of his kingdom will be like the previous kingdoms.

v 11 **And is going to perdition:** **Perdition** means “destruction,” and the **beast** or antichrist will be destroyed when Jesus comes back at His second coming. This event is described in:

Revelation 19:20 NKJV

Then the beast [antichrist] was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. **These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.**

This is the ultimate destruction. As we have mentioned before, these two, the false prophet and the antichrist, will be the first guests in hotel fire and brimstone where the lights and air-conditioning don't work and the plumbing is broken (so to speak). They are so evil and have done so much to deceive people that they bypass the Great White throne judgement. As far as we know, these two guys are the only unbelievers to not have to face judgement at the Great White Throne judgement. Apparently they are judged immediately after Jesus comes back to earth to claim what is rightfully his.

The Ten kings to come, allies of the Antichrist (Revelation 17:12–14)

Revelation 17:12-14 NKJV

“The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. ¹³ These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast. ¹⁴ These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.”

v 12 **Ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet:** the ten kings who will rule a ten-nation confederation (as in the toes of the Daniel 2:24–45 image). Many see the European Union as being a precursor to this world kingdom made up of, or ruled by, a confederation of 10 nations based in western Europe.

v 13 **These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast:** these 10 kings will all initially submit to the Roman antichrist and give him their power and authority.

This submission to the antichrist will result in these kings joining with the Antichrist in the war against Christ, in the battle alluded to in the sixth and seventh bowls (Revelation 16:12–21)—the battle of Armageddon.

v 14 **These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings:** Again, the battle of Armageddon. Jesus returns and wipes them all out. It will be the greatest slaughter of all time. Most likely hundreds of millions will die just by the words of Jesus when He returns. The blood will be up to the horses bridles. We read about this in Revelation 19. Well just read part of it:

Revelation 19:11-16 NKJV

Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. ¹³ He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴ **And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.** ¹⁵ **Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations.** And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. ¹⁶ And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written:

KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS

v 14 **And those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.”** Like we just read in Revelation 19, we come back with Jesus, clothed in His righteousness. Our sins have been washed away by His blood. We are described as:
called—invited or welcomed.
chosen—the chosen or elect ones.
faithful—trustworthy, dependable, reliable, believing, and trusting.

Isn't it great how God sees us. Am I walking worthy of my calling? (See Ephesians 4:1, Colossians 1:10, 1 Thessalonians 2:12)

The End of the Mystery Babylon One-world Religious System (Revelation 17:15-18)

Revelation 17:15 NKJV

Then he said to me, "The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.

v 15 **The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits:** The harlot presides or rules over or controls **peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues**. This tells us that the harlot's influence is worldwide. Through her connection to the political and economic system, this will be a truly one-world religion during the tribulation, but, it is also telling us that this system has been deceiving all the world since the tower of Babel.

Revelation 17:16-18 NKJV

And the ten horns [ten kings] which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot [Mystery Babylon religion], make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. ¹⁷ For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. ¹⁸ And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth."

In verse 16 the Antichrist and his allies turn on the great harlot. **"These will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire:** This violence probably takes place at the mid-point of the tribulation period because this is when the antichrist starts demanding that people worship him as god.

Ultimately, the Antichrist will not tolerate any worship except of himself:

2 Thessalonians 2:3b-4 NKJV

The son of perdition [*destruction*], who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

Therefore, once his power has been consolidated, the Antichrist no longer needs the help of religious Mystery Babylon. He will then work to dismantle and destroy her and her one-world religion. Again, this has always been the goal of tyrants—and most politicians—to use religion for their purposes, then discard it.

v 17 **God has put it into their hearts, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast:** God directed the judgment against religious Babylon. God will sometimes use a wicked group (here, the ten kings and antichrist) to be an instrument of His judgment against another wicked group (here, religious Mystery Babylon).

The great harlot, religious Mystery Babylon, is identified with Rome (v 18)

Revelation 17:18 NKJV

And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.”

v 18 **That great city:** In John’s day, there was no doubt which city **reigns over the kings of the earth**. Rome was the political, economic, and religious centre of the world at that time. At the time it was the representation of Mystery Babylon, and in the future it will be again, both the religious and economic Mystery Babylons.

Personal Application:

Babylon—in the sense of the world system—has always been **that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth**. Today it is not really localised in one particular location or city. In today’s world, it’s more spread out or decentralised. We can’t point to a city and say, “that’s the centre of all false religion and economic power.”

The question for Christians is, “Does this Mystery Babylon, this world system, reign over me? Or am I the citizen of a better city, the Jerusalem above?” (Galatians 4:26).

Don’t miss the main point here. We are now more aware of Satan’s wiles or schemes. Today we have learned that Satan rules over the whole world, and the whole world lies under the sway of the evil one (1 John 5:18-21). How? Through his control of religion, economics and politics. Remember, if I don’t belong to God, I belong to Satan. Remember that Satan’s goal is to distract, deceive, discourage, and deviate us from knowing God.

However, when we are born again, we are delivered out of the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of light.

Colossians 1:13-14 NKJV

He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed *[transferred]* us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

But we must decide to walk as children of light. This world system is powerful. Even as Christians we can fall prey to its deceptive charms. Let’s read 1 John 5:18-21. As you read, consider the things that we know or should know and do as believers:

1 John 5:18-21 NLT paraphrase

We know that God's children do not make a practice of sinning, for God's Son holds them securely, and the evil one cannot touch them. [*Victory over the penalty and power of sin*]

¹⁹ **We know that** we are children of God and that the world around us is under the control of the evil one. [*Watch out, danger, we are in enemy territory—Satan is always walking about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour — 1 Peter 5:8*]

²⁰ And **we know that** the Son of God has come, and he has given us understanding so that we can know the true God. And now we live in fellowship with the true God because we live in fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ. He is the only true God, and he is eternal life. [*As a christian, my only purpose in life is to love God, to be in fellowship with Him, and so bear the fruit that brings glory to His name*]

²¹ **Dear children, keep away from anything that might take God's place in your hearts.**

This Mystery Babylon is evil, it's real, it's powerful, and it's at a computer, TV, movie, school, pub, workplace, university, sporting event, billboard, or even a church near you! *Satan wants to replace your affections for God, your love for God, with a love for the things of the world.*

Guard your hearts people. Choose to love God more than you love the world and you will be safe from its desires and idols. We'll finish with:

Ephesians 5:8-11 NLT paraphrase

For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light! ⁹ **For this light within you [God] produces only what is good and right and true.**

¹⁰ Carefully determine what pleases the Lord. ¹¹ Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, expose them.