

Revelation Chapter Seventeen

The Roman Catholic Church and the Beast

(vv. 1-18)

Vision of the Great Whore (vv. 1-6)

John's Guide (v.1)

VERSE 1 **Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying** (Καὶ ἦλθεν εἷς ἐκ τῶν ἑπτὰ ἀγγέλων τῶν ἐχόντων τὰς ἑπτὰ φιάλας καὶ ἐλάλησεν μετ' ἐμοῦ λέγων [*conj kai + aor.act.ind.3s. erchomai come + adj.nom.m.s. eis one + prep ek from + art.w/adj.abl.m.p. hepta seven + noun abl.m.p. angelos angel + art.w/pres.act.part.abl.m.p. echo have + art.w/adj.acc.f.p. hepta seven + noun acc.f.p. phiale bowl, chalice + conj kai + aor.act.ind.3s. laleo speak + prep meta with + pro.gen.m.s. ego "me" + pres.act.part.nom.m.s. lego say*], **"Come here, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters** [Δεῦρο, δείξω σοι τὸ κρίμα τῆς πόρνῃς τῆς μεγάλης τῆς καθημένης ἐπὶ ὑδάτων πολλῶν [*adv. Or aor.act.imper.2s. deuro here; used as an imperative "come here" + fut.act.ind.1s. deiknumi point out, show + pro.dat.m.s. su you + art.w/noun acc.nt.s. krima judgment + art.w/noun gen.f.s. porne prostitute, whore + art.w/adj.gen.f.s. megas great + art.w/pres.dep.part.gen.f.s. kathemai sit + prep epi upon + noun gen.nt.p. hudor water + adj.gen.nt.p. polus much, many*]),

ANALYSIS: VERSE 1

1. This is the first appearance of an interpretative angel in Revelation.
2. In 7:13 we have one of the 24 elders supplying interpretative information to John regarding the identity of the great multitude in heaven.
3. The function of this angel in the vision is to make known to John the mystery of the two principal entities that comprise this chapter: the woman and the beast on which she sits.
4. This chapter and the next forms an excursus in the chronological flow of the prophecy.
5. In these two chapters we are informed with respects to two Babylons which come under divine wrath in the tribulation.
6. Essential interpretive clues come to John via one of the seven angels who administer the seven bowls of wrath.
7. The text does not say the *last* of the seven angels.
8. The angel initiates his conversation with John by his invitation to witness a judgment.
9. His words "come, and I will show you," are the very words this angel uses in 21:9 when introducing another woman of opposite character (e.g., "the bride, the wife of the Lamb").
10. The term "harlot" is indicative of her spiritual harlotry and representative of an ecclesiastical facet that is a counterfeit of the reality (e.g. body and bride of Jesus Christ).
11. Even Jerusalem acted the part of a harlot in her involvement with pagan idolatry (Isa. 1:21; Jer. 3:8-9).

12. She is a leader in the world of religious apostasy.
13. She is the final manifestation of a system that goes all the way back to the tower of Babel, where idolatry got its start in the post-deluvian world (Gen. 10:9-10; 11:1-9).
14. This woman represents a particular false religion, the one that has its headquarters in Rome, Italy.
15. The Roman Catholic system represents the apogee of apostate Christianity.
16. This harlot will be the object of a future judgment spelled out in verse 16.
17. Her very existence is a travesty to the true worship of God.
18. The system represented by this woman represents the ultimate corruption of the true worship of God.
19. Her fornication is her illegitimate involvement with the rulers of the nations as the Catholic system manipulates the politics of the nations to her own quest for world dominion.
20. Her position in the vision is that of a woman "who sits on many waters."
21. The "many waters" is representative of "peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues," according to verse 15.
22. These classifications represent the extent of her influence during the course of her history.
23. Since it is the beast system that brings to an end this system the two must of necessity be rivals.
24. Both systems are evil and satanic but the one ends the career of the other.
25. We know that the Beast will tolerate no religious rivals and seek to suppress and eliminate all other faiths (cf. 2Thess. 2:4; Dan. 11:38).
26. Hard core Satanism will destroy the RCC something in the first half of the tribulation.
27. Everything in this chapter dealing with the mystery of the woman dressed in scarlet fits the RCC like a glove!

Her Effect on Humanity (v.2)

VERSE 2 with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality (μεθ' ἧς ἐπόρνευσαν οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς [*prep meta with + pro.gen.f.s. hos who, what + aor.act.ind.3p. porneuo fornicate + art.w/noun nom.m.p. basileus king + art.w/noun gen.f.s. ge earth*]), **and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality** [καὶ ἐμεθύσθησαν οἱ κατοικοῦντες τὴν γῆν ἐκ τοῦ οἴνου τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς [*conj kai + aor.pass.ind.3p. katoikeo dwell; "inhabitants" + art.w/noun acc.f.s. ge earth + prep ek + art.w/noun abl.m.s. oinos wine + art.w/noun gen.f.s. porneia fornication + pro.gen.f.s. aute "her"]*)]."

ANALYSIS: VERSE 2

1. In this verse the interpreting angel describes the effect of the whore, namely the RCC, upon humanity over the course of her history.
2. With the kings/leaders of the nations she has committed fornication.
3. The sexual sin of fornication is used to illustrate the woman's evil actions in respect to divine institution number four.
4. The political maneuvering of the Roman Catholic Church relative to the nations of Europe and beyond is well documented.

5. Pretending to be the one and only true church of Jesus Christ she has used ecclesiastical and political clout to leverage the national rulers to bring other nations into the catholic fold.
6. This has been accomplished by a variety of means, including warfare, intrigue, assassination, and religious bullying.
7. In return the kings of the earth have been granted special favors buy embracing the catholic religion.
8. The relationship is akin to the act of fornication as the true church of Christ is to remain aloof from politics.
9. Christians living in the nations are to be law-abiding while avoiding a relationship with government that results in a favored status over other citizens.
10. No sect within Christendom should strive to be the favored by the central government.
11. The Catholic system, among others, has worked hard at seeing to it that non-Catholics are suppressed within those nations that entered into this illicit alliance with the Holy See in Rome.
12. The effect of apostate Christendom's alliance with the politics of the nations has led to the intoxication of the masses living under the influence of the Vatican.
13. The sin of drunkenness, like the sin of fornication, is employed by the angel to describe the effect of catholic doctrine upon the citizens of the earth.
14. Those who embrace Catholic dogma are like someone who is under the influence of alcohol.
15. One the RCC gains a foothold in a nation the citizens are indoctrinated with her doctrines and made drunk, that is, they are unable to discern spiritual reality.
16. European history is the best example of this process of subversion, deception and bloodshed.
17. But other nations and places have been subjugated and indoctrinated by Catholic conquerors, such as Latin America.
18. In those places where the leaders have embraced the teachings and practices of the RCC, the effects of this fornication is the intoxication of the masses living under such rulers.
19. Only in America has the RCC failed to gain the control that she has elsewhere, but not through lack of effort.
20. Our constitutional provision of the right to religious freedom, freedom of association, assembly and speech has blunted the forces of oppression.

Her Career Symbolically Seen (v.3)

VERSE 3 And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness (καὶ ἀπήνεγκέν με εἰς ἔρημον ἐν πνεύματι [*conj kai + aor.act.ind.3s. apophero carry off, transport + pro.acc.s. ego "me" + prep eis into + noun acc.f.s. eremos desolate place, wilderness + prep en + noun loc.nt.s. pneuma spirit*]); **and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast** [καὶ εἶδον γυναῖκα καθημένην ἐπὶ θηρίον κόκκινον [*conj kai + aor.act.ind.1s. eidon see + noun acc.f.s. gune woman + pres.act.part.acc.f.s. kathemai sit + prep epi upon + noun acc.nt.s. therion beast + adj.acc.nt.s. kokkinos scarlet, crimson; kokkos is a scarlet "berry" actually the female of a scale insect with clings to oak leaves, dried and crushed to make red dye*], **full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns** [γέμον[τα] ὀνόματα

βλασφηημίας, ἔχων κεφαλὰς ἑπτὰ καὶ κέρατα δέκα [*pres.act.part.acc.nt.s. gemo be full of + noun acc.nt.p. onoma name + noun gen.f.s. blasphemia blasphemy + pres.act.part.nom.m.s. echo have + noun acc.f.p. kephale head + adj.acc.f.p. hepta seven + conj kai + noun acc.nt.p. keras horn + adj.acc.nt.p. deka ten*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 3

1. Following his introductory comments, the angelic interpreter transports John to a different environment where he gives him further insight into the harlot.
2. Very similar language describes John's prophetic trance in 21:10.
3. This is the third of four instances in the Apocalypse of "in the spirit."
4. In the other three John finds himself on earth (1:10), in heaven (4:1), and on a mountain (21:10).
5. On this occasion the angel transports him to a region of barrenness and isolation.
6. The wilderness motif alludes to Isaiah's "oracle concerning the wilderness" in the prophecy "fallen, fallen is Babylon."
7. It was in such a place that John the Baptist was schooled and from where he suddenly appeared to Israel (Mk. 1:3,4; Lk. 3:2,4; 7:24) and in the same place where Jesus faced temptation at the outset of His ministry (Mk. 1:12,13).
8. It was in such an environment that Israel wandered for forty years (Jn. 6:31).
9. Such places on the earth are largely empty of people and the land is not conducive to cultivation.
10. Wildernesses are places of peril to those who pass through.
11. Here the wilderness motif speaks to the spiritual desert the woman operates in.
12. She does not provide spiritual plenty to those who live under her rules.
13. From this new vantage point John sees a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, having seven heads and ten horns.
14. Her position astride the beast is quite apropos signifying the influence of the religious over the secular.
15. The scarlet beast the same one that appeared out of the sea in 13:1.
16. This citation does not mention the color but does mention the seven heads and ten horns and names of blasphemy.
17. The beast motif in prophetic literature denotes that which is wild, unpredictable and dangerous.
18. Certainly it does not suggest righteous rule but establishment rule that thrives on aggression and conquest.
19. This is true of the animal no matter who is in power (seven kings of antiquity beginning with Egypt and ending with the RRE or the four kingdoms of the day of the Lord specified in Daniel 7).
20. The scarlet red color is akin to the color of the "great red dragon" of 12:3 who likewise is pictured with seven heads and ten horns.
21. The color speaks to Satan's murderous ways.
22. Regimes under his influences often, rather than not, resort to wars of aggression to further the policies of unprincipled men.
23. And the rider on the beast, in this case a woman, is a major contributor to the predations of the beast she more or less controls.

24. Military conquest of ancient regimes secured the blessing of the religious authority, the two being intertwined.
25. The beast is the empire and the head is the particular ruler (King, Pharaoh, Caesar, etc.) who embodies the spirit of the empire.
26. He controls the system, but the woman, namely the cult of the state, gives spiritual cohesion and justification to the political system.
27. The beast's color (scarlet) matches part of the woman's clothing (17:4).
28. This luxurious color symbolizes royalty.
29. Men mockingly placed a scarlet robe on Jesus before His crucifixion (Matt. 27:28-29).
30. The royal red and the royal purple is seen throughout history in connection with monarchy and royalty.
31. In chapter 19 a rider on a white horse will come with all his armies dressed in pure white.
32. The crimson on the beast's body as noted above denotes bloodshed and murder as it does on the dragon in 12:3.
33. The crimson of the woman primarily denotes luxury and splendor.
34. The graffiti of blasphemy were on the seven heads in 13:1, but here they cover the beast's body.
35. The masculine participle "full" has as its antecedent the neuter noun "beast" to represent the body politic within the various empires represented by the seven heads.
36. The body politic has no problem with the evil sponsored by the ruling classes and their leader, and the religious authority conditions the masses to accept this evil as the will of the gods or God as in the case of the RCC.
37. Rather than condemning and instructing the leader and the ruling classes in righteous behavior the corrupt pagan or apostate Christian system accommodates the secular power.
38. The graffiti on the heads denotes the doctrines that contradict God and His kingdom as it is espoused by the ruler, when the graffiti is seen on the body of the beast the idea is that these evil concepts are absorbed by the masses.
39. For instances, self-deification of the ruler is not questioned and the masses are inclined to regard the ruler as above the masses while he is living and after he dies he is regarded as a god.
40. Many other names signify things which are unworthy of God and sound doctrine (armies marched on crusades in the name of Christ and Mary, etc.).
41. The list of corrupt and blasphemous ideas is almost innumerable.
42. As noted before the ten horns are not distributed over the seven heads but for purposes of teaching Bible prophecy they reside on the seventh head.
43. They represent the ten leaders who constitute the ten nations of the Antichrist's original cadre (cf. 17:12).
44. The relationship between this woman and the seven heads and the beast has existed throughout human history since the time of the origination of the mother-son cult way back to the tower of Babel.
45. Every nation and most certainly each of the seven empires signified by the seven heads (Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, Greece and Rome) had this woman on its back.
46. She got her start in Nimrod's day and her cult continues to the present time in the form of the Roman Catholic Church.
47. Satan has operated through evil individuals to hijack the promise to Eve that the seed of the woman would result in a savior.

48. She is referred to by the prophet Jeremiah as “the queen of heaven” (Jer. 7:18; 44:17,18,25), the very same designation that the RCC bestows upon Mary the mother of Jesus.
49. All of the abominations of the nations pretty much is connected to this cult, each having its own variations.

Her Identity Revealed (vv. 4-5)

VERSE 4 The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold

and precious stones and pearls (καὶ ἡ γυνὴ ἦν περιβεβλημένη πορφυροῦν καὶ κόκκινον καὶ κεχρυσωμένη χρυσίῳ καὶ λίθῳ τιμίῳ καὶ μαργαρίταις [*conj kai + art.w/noun nom.f.s. gune woman + imperf.act.ind.3s. eimi “was” + perf.mid.part.nom.f.s. periballo clothe onself + adj.acc.nt.s. porphurous purple + conj kai + adj.acc.nt.s. kokkinos scarlet, red + conj kai + perf.pass.part.nom.f.s. chrusoo made of gold, be gilded or adorned + noun dat.nt.s. chrusion gold jewelry + conj kai + noun dat.m.s. lithos stone + adj.dat.m.s. timios valuable, precious + conj kai + noun dat.m.p. margarites pearl*], **having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality** [ἔχουσα ποτήριον χρυσοῦν ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτῆς γέμον βδελυγμάτων καὶ τὰ ἀκάθαρτα τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς [*pres.act.part.nom.f.s. echo have + noun acc.nt.s. poterion cup + adj.acc.nt.s. chrusous golden + prep en + art.w/noun dat.f.s. cheir hand + pro.gen.f.s. aute her + pres.act.part.acc.nt.s. gemo be full + noun gen.nt.p. bdelugma abomination, detestable thing + conj kai + art.w/adj.acc.nt.p. akathartos unclean + art.w/noun gen.f.s. porneia fornication + pro.gen.f.s. aute her*]),

ANALYSIS: VERSE 4

1. The extravagant and luxurious attire of the woman speaks to the wealth of the RCC and its clergy.
2. This extreme completely stands in contrast to the humble status of Jesus and His apostles.
3. Purple is the color of royalty and crimson is the color of splendor and luxury.
4. The Tyrian purple was gotten from shellfish harvested off the Phoenician coast.
5. The red or scarlet color was produced from the larvae of an insect (*coccus*).
6. One is reminded of the scarlet attire of the College of Cardinals.
7. The woman’s adornment with gold stands out because of ;the expression combining two cognates with the same idea (cf. Ex. 26:37, LXX).
8. She was “decked out with gold.”
9. Precious stones and pearls enhance her attire even more.
10. Her appearance was like the greatest queen in order to impress and allure her lovers.
11. This extreme attention to her person may have reminded John of the temple prostitutes in Asia Minor, though prostitutes of all times tend to draw attention to their appearance (cf. Jer. 4:30).
12. This description is in contrast to the appearance of the bride of the Lamb whose apparel consists of “fine linen, bright and clean” speaking of the ultimate sanctification of the Royal Family at Christ’s coming (Rev. 19:8).

13. All of this point to the extreme wealth associated with the RCC and is on display in the formal attire of the Pope and his attendants, not to mention the wealth encrusted in the Vatican and the cathedrals around the world.
14. The priesthood associated with the mother-son cult was known in the nations for its display of luxury and wealth.
15. This display is beautifully rationalized by this corrupt system and feeds the approbation of the worshipers.
16. Regarding the robe of mockery placed upon Christ one NT writer describes it as scarlet (Matt. 27:28) and others says it was purple (Mk. 15:17,20; Jn. 19:2,5).
17. The final item mentioned is the golden cup in her hand.
18. This cup is pictured in the hand of a woman representing the RCC on a medal struck by Pope Leo XII (pg 6 “The Two Babylons” by Hislop).
19. The woman is portrayed with a cross in her left hand and a cup in her right hand with the inscription in Latin “The world is her seat.”
20. She also wears a crown like the one on the woman on our Statue of Liberty.
21. The golden cup signifies her bogus claim to true spirituality while the contents suggest the very opposite.
22. The cup is said to be “full of abominations and of the unclean things of her fornication.”
23. This refers to her corrupt and obnoxious doctrines/teachings.
24. In the ancient pagan incarnation the woman sponsored sacred prostitution among many other abominations.
25. The Catholic version sponsors celibacy of the clergy and salvation through marriage (one of the sacraments).
26. This woman entices the leaders of the nations to fornicate with her intoxicating both princes and commoners with her unclean doctrines.
27. All of the evil emanating from the head of this pseudo-church is in God’s eyes an abomination and those who buy into it are rendered unclean due to spiritual fornication.
28. Idolatry is spiritual fornication.
29. The worship of Mary and the crucifix is but a couple of examples.
30. All of the objects of adoration and there are many constitute idolatry in the name of Christ.
31. The Babylon of Rev. 18 is also portrayed as a golden cup in the hand of the Lord according to Jer. 51:7 intoxicating the nations who have elected to enter into various entanglements with this woman (USA).
32. Both of these women are known for their immense wealth.
33. God sees through the grandeur and labels the contents as “abominations” a term characteristic of idol worship in the OT (cf. Deut. 18:9; 29:17; 32:16; 1Kgs. 14:24; 2Kgs. 16:3; 21:2; 23:24; Ezek. 8:6,9,13,15,17; 11:18; 14:6; 16:2; 20:7,8).
34. “The unclean thins of her fornication” further defines those abominations.
35. The adjective “unclean” demonstrates the effect her doctrines have upon the masses that drink from the cup.
36. Her gross doctrines include transubstantiation, articular confession, salvation through the seven sacraments, papal infallibility, Mariolatry, prayers to the dead, adoration of the saints, purgatory, celibacy of the clergy, monasticism, penance, indulgences, et al.