

THE REVELATION

LESSON 26: THE GREAT PROSTITUTE (17)

Intro:

BIG IDEA: Satan's remaining _____ against the church is _____.

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." 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.

- The Greek root "*porn*" (found in _____ immorality and _____) is found _____ times in these _____ verses, almost like he's _____.
- The great prostitute is seated "*on many waters*" and "*on the scarlet beast*". The beast arose from the nations, the ocean.
- "*In the Spirit*" is a formula of _____.
- The Prostitute works in conjunction with the _____, _____ people into its service.
- She depends on the Beast. _____ (and prosperity) depended on the Pax Romana which was kept by the _____.
- She offers _____, full of abominations. _____ adultery is likened to _____ immorality.
- The cup contains all the God _____ the world offers: fame, power, sex, sports, art etc. (Hendriksen). ¹⁰¹
- Prostitutes in that day are believed to have worn _____ on their heads.
- Hers is a mystery to unfold- _____. That spirit of confusion and arrogance lives on!
- She _____!
- She gets _____ on the blood of _____ produced by the Beast she's in bed with.

¹⁰¹ See Scholssberg, Herb. *Idols for Destruction: the Conflict of Christian Faith and American Culture*.

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“The two protagonists in this mother of all battles are two women. One is an obscene prostitute, although very attractive and alluring; the other is a pure, beautiful, spotless bride: the bride of Christ, the church of God.” **Doug Kelly**¹⁰²

The Great Prostitute	The Bride of the Lamb
“Come, I will show you...” 17:1	“Come, I will show you ...” 21:9
“arrayed in purple and scarlet”	“fine linen, bright and pure” 19:8
“adorned with gold and jewels and pearls”	Adorned with gold and numerous jewels (21)

She is the counterfeit _____ for the counterfeit _____.

“Babylon is a counterfeit church, seducing the world to give its allegiance to the counterfeit Trinity.” **Vern Poythress**¹⁰³

“The three-fold combination of the drunken stupor, the spiritual compromise and the idolatrous alliances ensures the maximum effect in the description of Babylon’s degeneracy.” **Derek Thomas**¹⁰⁴

“Full economic and social participation in city life involved attendance at idolatrous feasts and pagan religious celebrations.” **Vern Poythress**¹⁰⁵

Application: How are we tempted to compromise to engage in “full economic and social participation”?

“Little babylons also operate in the recesses of our hearts. The Beast controls his subjects through fear; the Prostitute seduces people by playing on their lusts with the enticements of illicit pleasures. However subtle the remaining sinful tendencies in the Christian’s heart may be, they also involve fear and lust. We capitulate and compromise with sin because of either fear or lust. We are afraid of suffering and shame. Or we lust after the desires of our heart. Sex, wealth, fame, power, health, and beauty can all be objects of our lust. ... The objects of our lust are only tawdry counterfeits of what God has created out of his own bounty and what he will bestow in unfathomable fullness.” **Vern Poythress**¹⁰⁶

Historicist	Preterist	Futurist	Idealist
This begins the judgment on the unfaithful church, the Church of Rome. Her cup is filled with relics, indulgences and other extra-biblical practices as	Some (Stuart, Adams and others) see her as the City of Rome. Others (Russell, Chilton) see her as Jerusalem.	Typically viewed as a symbol of Rome (in the future), often connected with apostate churches esp. the Church of Rome (Ryrie). Some see it as representing anti-	It represents the seductive power of anti-God systems in the world, trying to lure us into apostasy.

¹⁰² Kelly, pp. 319.

¹⁰³ Poythress, pp. 159.

¹⁰⁴ Thomas, pp. 137.

¹⁰⁵ Poythress, pp. 160.

¹⁰⁶ Poythress, pp. 161-2.

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well as the sexual immorality found in monasteries and among Popes.		God systems in any age (Ladd)	
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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. 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.

- Though profane, John _____ . She is _____ , though corrupt.
- The beast “*was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit*” while Christ “*was and is and is to come*”.
- “*rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction*” sounds a lot like Revelation _____ .
- The non-elect will _____ at the _____ .
- The 7 mountains could point to a geographic location or refer to her _____ .
- The 7 kings could refer to _____ emperors or 7 _____ (Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persian, Greek, Roman and ?). Or all the nations of the world.

“False worship is as tawdry and cheap as prostitution.” **Derek Thomas**¹⁰⁷

“The beast can veil himself as a kingdom, a tribe, an empire, or even a democracy. His shape changes over the ages, but what matters is not so much the outward shape of a government, but the heart of the beast. ... Here is the way we know that a religious or political system is demonic: it seeks to replace God with itself and to create its own values instead of getting them from the Word of God. That is the spirit of the beast.” **Doug Kelly**¹⁰⁸

What about the Prostitute causes you to marvel? How does the world system appeal to you?

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. ¹⁴ They will make war

¹⁰⁷ Thomas, pp. 142.

¹⁰⁸ Kelly, pp. 330-1.

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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.”

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 Beast itself is the 8th king. It symbolizes a power _____ to that of the other seven. They are all _____ to the Beast! They all have their own version of Babylon.
- The kings have but a short time, and use it to make _____ on the _____ who conquers them
- The beast _____ on the prostitute, and is the means of _____ upon her. She will be _____ and _____ by the beast (see Ezekiel 16).
- God puts it in their hearts to accomplish his purpose though their motives are _____ and His _____.

“Jesus challenges his people to look past appearances and perceive the horrendous spiritual reality at the rotten core of Rome’s impressive culture.” **Dennis Johnson**¹⁰⁹

“God takes his time. He lets evil grow and come to a point when all its corruption has been gathered together into a head.” **Doug Kelly**¹¹⁰

“God judges idols (15:1). Idols destroy idolaters (17:16-17).” **Vern Poythress**¹¹¹ God destroys the Beast after the Beast has destroyed the Prostitute.

Historicist	Preterist	Futurist	Idealist
Her destruction is often viewed as the spoiling of Rome by the Gothic powers in the 5 th & 6 th centuries.	The kings are those subjected to Rome who throw off Rome’s mantle. Some see these kings or provinces as executing Rome’s wrath on Jerusalem.	These kings are in confederation with Rome, who turns them on the apostate church.	Most take the number symbolically to represent the anti-Christian political powers.

Conclusion:

¹⁰⁹ Johnson, pp. 242.

¹¹⁰ Kelly, pp. 329

¹¹¹ Poythress, pp. 162