

Revelation 17:1-6

Revelation 17-19 makes up the sixth cycle.

In the previous chapters, we have seen five enemies of the Christ:

- *the dragon,*
- *the sea-born beast/false prophet,*
- *the beast out of the earth,*
- *the harlot Babylon,*
- *And those who have the mark of the beast.*

Chapters 15-16 showed us the judgment against those who receive the mark of the beast.

In chapter 17-19, the apostle shows the fate of Babylon, the sea-born beast, and the false prophet. The dragon's defeat occurs in the final cycle (Rev 20-22)

Revelation 17-19 can be subdivided in the following way:

Rev 17 describes the nature and tells the history of the great harlot, Babylon.

Rev 18 shows us the inevitable, complete, and irrevocable character of Babylon's fall.

Chapter 19 introduces us to the rejoicing in heaven because of the complete overthrow of Babylon and because of the wedding of the Lamb. It also shows us the Rider on the white horse who executes final judgment on all His enemies.

[1] 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 harlot who is seated upon many waters,

One of the seven angels (Rev 15-16) indicates that the message will be one of judgment as was with the seven bowls of wrath poured out by the seven angels.

[2] with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and with the wine of whose fornication the dwellers on earth have become drunk."

VV1-2, The harlot has tremendous influence. She is seated on many waters. The kings of the earth have committed fornication with her (v.2) and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk by her. The historic Babylon was indeed situated on many streams.

The fornication (Greek/porneia) of which these kings were guilty consisted in purchasing the favor of Rome and with it her vices and idolatries.

[3] And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns.

The beast is the sea-born beast representing persecuting, godless government. This spirit of persecution finds expression in the governments and peoples of this world.

The woman riding the beast cannot be confused with the radiant woman of Rev 12. The two are enemies. For the vision of the New Babylon, John is carried into a desert; for the vision of the New Jerusalem he ascends a mountain (Rev 21:10)

[4] The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and bedecked with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her fornication;

The harlot is arrayed in gorgeous attire. She is excessively adorned. She is gilded with gold.

The scarlet or crimson beast represents the ostentatious magnificence of the Empire.

The golden cup is appealing to the eye and is full of filth! It is a sign of luxury.

[5] and on her forehead was written a name of mystery: "Babylon the great, mother of harlots and of earth's abominations."

The woman's name is written on her forehead. She is "Babylon the Great" This, of course, speaks of Rome. This city is a cesspool of evil and a woman of shame.

The two symbols are brought together. The harlot seduces, and the city seduces. All of this is used to lure people away from God. This city is the symbol for all such cities of all ages.

*The harlot symbol indicates that which allures, tempts, seduces, and draws people away from God. It symbolizes the concentration of the luxury, vice, and glamour of this world. It embodies "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." **1 John 2:16** For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world.*

[6] And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. When I saw her I marveled greatly.

"This harlot named Babylon is to be identified, therefore, as the world with all its charms and all that it offers to seduce the people of God and to draw them away from following Him. She also stands for those of the world who have been so seduced that they have hated all Christians and put many of them to death. The harlot who seduced them is giddy with their blood." - Roger Ellsworth