

Revelation exposes the conflict between the two cities of Babylon and Jerusalem. Babylon holds a prominent place in the symbolism of Revelation for it portrays Satan's attacks upon Jesus Christ, His City and His people. The symbols related to Babylon in Revelation come from the literal city, of the same name, in Old Testament times. The people of literal Babylon, or Babel, decided to ignore the promises of God by building a tower to save themselves. (See Genesis 9-11.) It was the centre of growing rebellion and sin, and became synonymous with Satan and attacks upon God's people and truth. (See Isaiah 13 and 14.)



Q1 **What does the second angel say concerning the Babylon of Revelation?**
Revelation 14:8

A



Q2 **What symbols represent Babylon?**
Revelation 17:1,5,18

A 1. **Revelation 17:1,5**

2. **Revelation 17:18**

The *WOMAN* Babylon stands in contrast to the pure woman of Revelation 12. The true church is symbolized by the pure woman clothed with the sun, whereas this impure woman represents apostate religion or a false church system. When the Old Testament people of Israel failed God, they were referred to as an adulterous woman. When the church has illicit relationships with the sinful world it is spoken of as the prostitute Babylon. It is also referred to as the *CITY* Babylon.

THE WOMAN—BABYLON



Q3 **What was John told that he would be shown?** Revelation 17:1

A

Q4 **Of what evil is the woman Babylon guilty?** Revelation 17:1,2,5

A

People are guilty of *ADULTERY* with false religions when they take their attentions and affections from God and place their confidence in religious or church systems, beliefs and teachings that are not based on the Bible. People will become drunk with false doctrines. They will be deceived by the false teachings of this false church system. Counterfeit miracles will aid in this deception and worldwide intoxication. Those who stand out against evil, and "obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus," (Revelation 12:17) will be hated. Evildoers will see believers as a dark spot in a lively party.



Q5 **Where does the woman Babylon sit?** Revelation 17:1

A

The *WATERS* represent the multitudes controlled by Babylon. (Revelation 17:15.) This false church system has influence over many nations. It is very popular with kings and political leaders, and controls multitudes. (See Revelation 17:2.)



Q6 **Where was John shown the woman Babylon?** Revelation 17:3

A

Because of Satan's attacks, the pure woman of Revelation 12 was forced to flee to the *DESERT* to receive help. (See Revelation 12:5,6,13,14,16.) Tragically, not all of God's people remained faithful to Him. Those who rebelled became the impure woman or the false church of Babylon. All of the characteristics of the woman Babylon are those of the Church that turned from God in the early and middle centuries.



Q7 **What creature is the woman also sitting upon and controlling?** Revelation 17:3

A

This false church power controls a *SCARLET BEAST*. A beast in Bible prophecy represents a kingdom or political power. (See Daniel 7:17,23.) This is the same beast as that described in Revelation 13:1-8. It has seven heads and ten horns, and is covered with blasphemous names. We should also note the parallels between the beast and the dragon Satan who gives power and authority to the beast. (See Revelation 12:3.) In Revelation 13 it is portrayed as an amalgamation of political and religious power. In Revelation 17 and 18 the distinction between the religious and political is clearly defined. Punishment is first

directed upon those who have had the greatest opportunities. (See 2 Peter 2:17-19,21,22.)



Q8 **What apparel and colours are associated with the woman Babylon?** Revelation 17:4

A

The *FALSE CHURCH* Babylon is portrayed as wearing purple and scarlet and glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls. This is a counterfeit of the description of the New Jerusalem. (See Revelation 21:18-21.) Babylon has the appearance of Christianity, but inwardly is full of abominable false teachings and practices. Purple and scarlet are colours sometimes associated with pagan rulership and sin.



Q9 **Of whom is the woman Babylon the mother?** Revelation 17:5

A

Babylon is the *MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES* or churches that have compromised the truth and turned from God. She is the *MOTHER OF ABOMINATIONS* or false worship. (Compare Ezekiel 8:12-16; 9:4.) Mystery Babylon has promoted the sacrifice of truth on the altar of tradition. We are reminded of the warning to the church at Thyatira concerning "Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess." Revelation 2:20. Jesus Christ said, "By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols." Revelation 2:20. Babylon, although it claims to be the true church, is the fallen church.



Q10 **With what is the woman Babylon intoxicated?** Revelation 17:6

A

The mother of false churches controls multitudes with its false teachings manipulates millions with political pressure and dazzles the world with its outward splendour and materialism. It uses persecution and the threat of death to achieve its purposes. People have been burnt at the stake, left to rot in dungeons and terribly slandered by the servants and leaders of the fallen church.

THE PUNISHMENT OF BABYLON

John "was greatly astonished" (Revelation 17:6) when he saw the woman Babylon. The angel said to him, "Why are you astonished? I will explain to you the mystery of the woman and of the beast she rides, which has the seven heads and ten horns." Revelation 17:7. John was then shown the ultimate fate of the beast and the woman.

I The SCARLET BEAST



Q11 **How is the beast described?** Revelation 17:3,8

A

This beast or political power is revived, after being brought to an end, and comes up out of the Abyss. Even though it received a potentially "fatal wound," this beast is active again in the last days. (Compare Revelation 11:7; 13:3,12,14.)

Q12 **What is the reaction of unbelievers to the revival of this power?** Revelation 17:8

A

The world will stand in awe as the beast returns to power. "The whole world was astonished and followed the beast... 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." Revelation 13:3,8. This political power enforces laws and demands conformity to the wishes of the fallen church.



Q13 **What do the seven heads of the beast represent?** Revelation 17:9,10

A 1.

2.

The *SEVEN HILLS* draw our attention to the contrast between the people of God and the system of Babylon. Literal Babylon was called the "destroying mountain." Jeremiah 51:25. (Compare Revelation 8:8.) God's people, the New Jerusalem, stand on heavenly Mount Zion, (Revelation 14:1; Hebrews 12:22) while unbelievers, Babylon, stand on the seven hills. Some have seen the seven hills as symbolic of the seven hills of Rome.

The *SEVEN KINGS* are the political agencies that Satan has used to attack God's people. It would appear that five had already passed into history at the time John recorded these words. John lived in the time of the sixth, and the seventh was yet to come. The revived beast is described as the eighth king who is really part of the seven.

The SEVEN KINGS...

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| 1. Egypt | Exodus 7:5; Ezekiel 29:3,9. |
| 2. Assyria | Isaiah 14:24-27; Nahum 3:1,4,5,18,19. |
| 3. Babylon | Jeremiah 51:24-26,45; Isaiah 14:4,11-17. |
| 4. Medo-Persia | Daniel 8:7,20. |
| 5. Greece | Daniel 8:8,21,22. |
| 6. Rome | John's day. Revelation 17:10; Daniel 2:33,41 |
| 7. The political arm of the FALLEN CHURCH. | In its revived form, this is also the eighth king. |



Q14 **Although he rises to attack God's truth and people, what will ultimately happen to this beast?** Revelation 17:8,11
(Compare Daniel 7:26; 8:25; 11:45; 2 Thessalonians 2:3.)

A

Q15 **What do the ten horns represent?**
Revelation 17:12

A

These TEN KINGS represent the final summit of the political power of the FALLEN CHURCH just before its destruction and the end of the world. This union only exists for a short time.



Q16 **What are these kings intent on doing?**
Revelation 17:13,14

A 1.

2.

The attack upon the Lamb is made by the ten kings fiercely attacking the gospel of Jesus Christ, His followers, His Word and His ten commandments. (Compare Revelation 13:11-17.)



Q17 **What will the beast and the ten horns do when the conflict reaches its peak?**
Revelation 17:15-18

A

Just as literal Babylon was destroyed with the drying up of the literal river, so Babylon, the fallen church, will come to an end with the destruction of the "waters" or multitudes of subjects and supporters. (Compare Revelation 16:12.) Here is the destruction of the sixth plague. The political power of the fallen church will devastate its multitudes of people.

2 The WOMAN-CITY BABYLON

God's people are referred to as both a woman (Revelation 12) and a city (Revelation 21). And, in the last verse of Revelation 17, and in Revelation 18, Babylon is referred to as both a WOMAN and a CITY. Here is a solemn warning against the corruption and destruction that comes from the union of fallen church and political.



Q18 **Why has Babylon the Great fallen?**
Revelation 18:1-3

A **Spiritual:**

Doctrinal:

Political:

Material:



Q19 **What does a voice from heaven say?**
Revelation 18:4

A

God's call is clear, "*COME OUT OF (BABYLON), MY PEOPLE.*" Revelation 18:4. These words remind us of the words of Jesus Christ to His people who would need to flee from their corrupt city when the Romans attacked. (See Matthew

24:15-20; Mark 13:14-19; Luke 21:20-24.) Only those who responded then were safe, and only those who now leave fallen churches will be safe.

There are many sincere Christians in Babylon. Although Babylon appears to be Christian and outwardly manifests the charisma of faith, God calls His people to come out. God cares for His people. He calls upon His people to separate themselves from fallen church systems that disregard either the scriptures, the Saviour, the standard of the ten commandments, the seventh day Sabbath or the teachings of the Bible concerning the second coming of Jesus Christ. Some feel that they should try to reform the fallen church, or that a change is coming and a revival is being witnessed. However, God's call is, "come out of her, my people."



Q20 **Why are God's people called out of Babylon?** Revelation 18:4-8

- A 1.
- 2.

The attacks upon the scripture, Saviour, standard, Sabbath and second coming of Jesus Christ within the fallen church are such that if we stay we will be involved in her sins and, as a consequence, receive her plagues.



Q21 **Who will mourn the demise of Babylon?**

- A 1. **Revelation 18:9,10**
2. **Revelation 18:11-19**

The *KINGS* will be amazed at the suddenness, and the finality, of the destruction of the fallen church. The voice from heaven declared, "In one day her plagues will overtake her." Revelation 18:8. The kings cry out, "In one hour your doom has come." Revelation 18:10.

The *MERCHANTS* also make reference to the suddenness, and the effects, of the punishment that befalls the fallen church. (See Revelation 18:17,19.) Although grieved by their loss of trade and income, the merchants are disgusted by the actions of the fallen church that has also traded in the "bodies and souls of men." Revelation 18:13.

"Rejoice over her, O heavens! Rejoice, saints and apostles and prophets! God has judged her for the way she treated you." Revelation 18:20.



Q22 **What will be the extent of Babylon's final destruction?** Revelation 18:21-24

A

Evil contains within itself the seeds of its own destruction and brings disaster upon itself. Unrestrained evil bears its natural fruit. It is that fruit of oppression and exploitation that demands divine intervention and eradication. The fallen church will be completely destroyed. Destruction in an inferno of fire and smoke reminds us of the devastation of Sodom. (Revelation 18:4-10,18; Genesis 18:20,21; 19:12-17, 24-29.) The picture of the sea captains standing off shore watching the destruction of her wealth reminds us of the fate of wealthy Tyre when thrown into the sea. (Revelation 18:3, 11-20; Ezekiel 26 and 27.) Just as the city of Nineveh was destroyed because she shed the blood of God's people, so the fallen church will be punished for the same crime. (Revelation 17:5; 18:4,24; Nahum 3:1,4; Jonah 3:4.) The language of Revelation 17 and 18 draws heavily upon Jeremiah 50 and 51 where we read of the fall and destruction of literal Babylon. Just as the end of the reign of literal Babylon signalled the release of God's Old Testament people, so the fall and destruction of the prostitute Babylon signals the release of believers in Jesus Christ.

THE TWO SUPPERS



Q23 **"Salvation and glory and power belong to God." Revelation 19:1. What special time comes at the same time as the destruction of Babylon?** Revelation 19:7,9 (Read Revelation 19:1-10)

A

Revelation 18 concludes with a funeral dirge over the fall of Babylon. Revelation 19 begins with a hymn of praise, for the death of Babylon

signals deliverance for God's people. The true church of faithful and obedient believers is presented as the bride to Jesus Christ at His visible, glorious and audible second coming. (Compare Ephesians 5:22-33.)



Q24 **In contrast to the wedding supper of the Lamb to which believers are invited, to what supper are rebellious unbelievers condemned?** Revelation 19:17,18 (Read Revelation 19:11-21)

A

my

response...

God calls His people to *COME OUT OF BABYLON*. He calls us to the marriage supper of the Lamb. The choice is between Jesus Christ and Satan, between the seal of God and the mark of the beast, between the pure woman clothed with Jesus Christ's righteousness and the impure woman Babylon clothed in sin. The choice is between the marriage supper of the Lamb and the gruesome supper of the birds of Armageddon. We are preparing for one supper or the other.



What will it mean for you to choose to separate from Babylon and join those who remain faithful to Jesus Christ, His Word and His ten commandments?

