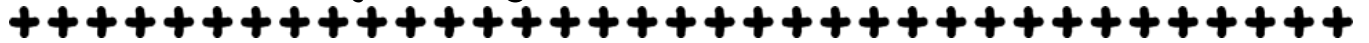


# The Allure of Babylon (17:1-6)



\*Derek Thomas describes Babylon as “the pleasure-mad, arrogant world with all its seductive luxuries and pleasures, with its antichristian philosophy and culture.”

\*Augustine, in his book *The City of God*, argues that all of history can be symbolically identified as a battle between two rival nations: Babylon, which represents the nation allied with the god of this world, and Jerusalem, which represents the nation allied with the one true God, the King of kings.

\*Babylon here is depicted as a prostitute, but she’s not just luring people into illicit affairs. She’s luring them away from their commitment to God, causing them to love the world more than they love God.

\*She makes sin look good and inviting. People want what she has to offer. It’s only after people get involved with her that they realize the truth...her cup is full of abominations and she gives birth to those who would destroy the church. Her worst offense is that she is drunk on the blood of the saints.

# The Truth behind the Allure (17:6b-14)



\*She is riding on a beast with seven heads and ten horns.

Seven heads (allusion to Daniel 7:4-7):

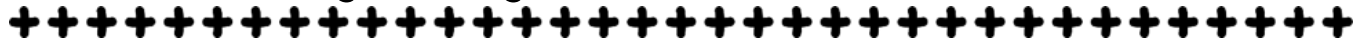
The five heads that have fallen could refer to empires of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Greece. The head that is would be Rome. The one that has not yet come would be all empires between Rome and the coming of Christ. The beast as the eighth king represents the totality of power and evil possessed by the seven kings combined.

It could also refer to pagan empires at large rather than specific nations. The fact that the sixth head is the on that is could mean the end is near but not yet here.

Ten horns (allusion to Daniel 7:7-8, 20, 24):

The ten horns represent agents that the beast uses to further his agenda, such as art, education, industry, and government; or could refer to human agents through whom the forces of evil work.

# The Alluring Babylon Falls (17:15-18:3)



\*The woman is seated upon waters, which are identified as “peoples and multitudes and nations and languages.” This represents the people that have fallen under her spell. It also alludes to Jeremiah 51:13, which connects waters to riches and prosperity. The Euphrates rivers and surrounding canals helped the city flourish due to trade. They provided protection from attack and security.

\*She thinks she has it made. She is wealthy, powerful, seductive. She has the beast on her side and the nations under her feet. That is all about to come cashing down, however. The kings and the beast turn against her and destroy her. This shows the self-destructive nature of sin and idolatry.

\*Although she is destroyed by the kings and the beast, God is the one who put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose. He uses one evil power to destroy another.

## Avoid Falling with Babylon (18:4-8)



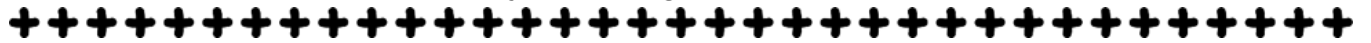
\*This is a warning for God’s people to come out of Babylon, lest they take part in her sins and share in her judgment. As we’ve said, Babylon represents the materialistic, pleasure-seeking societies of our world that oppose the things of God. We’re surrounded by this, but we must maintain a distance, if we’re to remain pure.

### HOW DO WE COME OUT OF BABYLON?

*It will require a radical change of heart, a change in our affections and interests and desires. It means we have to figure out how to live in Babylon as citizens of the new Jerusalem, as aliens and strangers. We’re going to have to figure out what it will mean for us to refuse to make ourselves at home here. What we’re being called to here is not separatism but distinctiveness.*

*~Nancy Guthrie~*

# Great is the Fall of Babylon (18:5-24)



**\*Babylon's destruction will be catastrophic, although it will be well-deserved. Her sins are heaped as high as heaven, and God will repay her justly for her deeds. Her punishment will fit her crimes.**

**\*She will be stripped of everything in this great reversal. Whereas, she had been living off of others in luxury, now she will be living in torment. In her pride, she boasted of her high status, as a queen above everyone else. She thinks that she's invincible, and that her reign will never end. However, we see the swift nature of God's judgment against her.**

**\*Her lovers, those involved with her, will weep and wail in despair over her destruction. They will stand in fear, not wanting to take part in the judgment. They will also mourn the loss to themselves. Their fear and mourning are not over the sin that led to this destruction. It is fear for their lives and their livelihoods.**

**\*The destruction of Babylon is swift, complete, and permanent, as she is thrown like a millstone into the sea. Never again will people enjoy the pleasures of Babylon.**

**\*We see here the temporary nature of this world versus the eternal nature of God's kingdom. We see the limited power of Babylon compared to the unlimited power of God. We see God's judgment on evil being executed with complete justice. We see the old sinful world system destroyed to make room for the new heaven and the new earth. Unlike the people who dwell in the earth, we don't have to stand in fear of Babylon's torment. Rather, we can rejoice for God had given judgment against her!**

*Rejoice over her, O heaven,  
and you saints and apostles and prophets,  
for God has given judgment for you against her!*

*Revelation 18:20*