

## Chapter 17: The Woman of Babylon the Great

Chapters 17 and 18 are another inset describing the great Roman system that is destroyed at the end of chapter 16. These chapters give a somewhat more detailed picture of the large *universal* church. The picture includes her *harlot* “daughters” (17:5), which have helped to deceive all nations (17:1-2; 18:3).

- Many end-time prophecies use terms like *heads, horns, toes, kings*, etc. Several whole chapters must be studied to make their meaning clear. They clarify the different revivals of the same Roman system.

Again, by comparing [Daniel 7](#) with [Revelation 13](#) and [17](#), it becomes clear that there are seven revivals of the Holy Roman Empire. Six have come and gone—and the last is now forming! This revival will last at least three and a half years, coinciding with the Tribulation ([Matt. 24:21-22](#)) and God’s Wrath.

Understand another important connection to these resurrections of the Roman system. [Revelation 17](#) describes each as having “a *woman* sitting upon [the] scarlet colored BEAST, full of names of blasphemy, having *seven heads* and *ten horns*” ([vs. 3](#)). The seven heads are seven separate revivals, with a *ten-horn* (composed of ten kings) *final revival*.

It is *this* woman who spreads the “mystery of iniquity” spoken of by Paul in [II Thessalonians 2:7](#).

Of this woman, [verses 5-6](#) state, “And upon her forehead was a name written, **MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH**. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the *saints*, and with the blood of the *martyrs* of Jesus.” [Verse 1](#) calls her a “great whore that sits upon *many waters*...”

Let’s pause and ask: **What are the “many waters”?**

This is a classic example of allowing the Bible to interpret itself. Fourteen verses later, the term is explained: “And he said unto me, The *waters* which you saw, where the whore sits, are *peoples*, and *multitudes*, and *nations*, and *tongues*” ([vs. 15](#)). This shows that the whore’s influence encompasses the earth. In this case, the term was not *immediately* explained, but simply continuing to read on revealed what it means. The Bible interpreted itself!

- [Verses 5-6](#) are a graphic description of a great *Gentile church* that is a modern-day descendant of Babylon. She is a “mother” of many “harlot” daughters, who came out of her in protest because they disagreed with a few of her abominations. This is not a small church, but rather a “great” church ruling *many* peoples. [Verse 2](#) speaks of her “fornication” with the “kings of the earth.” And [verse 18](#) speaks of the woman as “that *great city*, which reigns over the kings of the earth.” This is a huge church that has sought to influence nations and world events. Only one city fits this description.

**A very different woman, as we saw described in Revelation 12 as God's Church,** has been persecuted by this great *false church* for almost 2,000 years (17:6). It is *her* ministers that have "crept into" God's Church (Jude 3-4) as "wolves" speaking "perverse things" (Acts 20:29-30) and seeking to pull people back into the "mystery" of false Christianity.

Daniel 7:19-20 sheds more light on what happens when the saints return with Christ...

- Their first responsibility is to replace what Daniel calls the "fourth beast" (the final world-ruling empire), which rules with the assistance of a "little horn."
- This *little horn* is a *religious* kingdom and is the same as the woman who rides the beast of Revelation 17.
- This religious kingdom has ruled over all of the previous resurrections, or revivals, of the Holy Roman Empire.

The saints will have endured tremendous persecution at the hands of this "little horn"—the *woman*. But eventually the faithful saints will be rewarded in an incredible way: "I beheld, and *the same horn* [the Babylonish system of Rev. 17:5-6] *made war with the saints*, and prevailed against them; Until the Ancient of Days came, and *judgment was given to the saints* of the Most High; and the time came that *the saints possessed the kingdom*" (vs. 21-22).

**Chapters 17 and 18 reveal that God will destroy this whore and her harlot daughters, once and for all,** by turning the beast she rides against her (Rev. 17:16). But first she must "ride" the final resurrection of the Babylonian Holy Roman Empire!

Little time remains before this last revival appears, with the wonderful kingdom of God to appear soon after (Rev. 19:11-16).

## Chapter 18: Babylon's Judgment

This chapter describes the final judgment and actual destruction of Babylon.

- Verse 17 shows that her collapse comes quickly.
- The merchants of the world are aghast at how this powerful economic system could so suddenly come to such complete ruin.

The modern nations of Israel are deceived and part of this babylonish system! (Jeremiah 50:4-8, 13-15; 51:6-9 and Isaiah 47:1, 5, 7-9, 11; 48:1, 12, 17-20 describe it.) Ancient Israel was in Egypt when God poured out His plagues. Like Israel, God calls us *out* of this world's "Egypt."

- Understand this basic instruction about the Christian calling. God's people are not of this world or its systems (John 17:14-16).
- Regarding the religious and political systems of this Babylon, God instructs, "*Come out of her, MY PEOPLE, that you be not partakers of her sins*" (Rev. 18:4).

- Babylon means *confusion*. The true servants of God have come out of this world, its governments and its confusion (1 Cor. 14:33). Because they are separate from it, they shall also be separated and spared from its plagues.

## Chapter 19: The Wedding Supper and Another Supper

The setting of chapter 19 is in heaven. Many angels surround God's throne (vs. 1-2), describing His "righteous...judgments" on the great whore.

Now that she is gone, and Christ has returned, what happens next?

"I heard...the voice of a great multitude...saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigns. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: **for the MARRIAGE of the Lamb is come, and His WIFE has made herself ready**. And to her was granted that she should be *arrayed in fine linen*, clean and white: for the fine linen is the *righteousness of saints*. And He said...Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the *MARRIAGE SUPPER* of the Lamb..." (vs. 6-9)

- The New Testament identifies the Church as Christ's BRIDE.
- Several passages reveal this (Matt. 25:1-10; Eph. 5:23).
- At His Return, in one of the most awesome events in all history, Christ will marry His Church!

Revelation 19:11-13 describes Christ, and verse 14 describes "armies" of angels joining Him from heaven. Verses 17-18 show that a vast flock of birds of prey eat the flesh of the dead armies, slain in chapter 16. This other "supper" is referred to as the "supper of the great God."

The chapter concludes with a description of the execution of the beast and false prophet in a localized lake of fire.

## (Supplement)

### The Harlot Lady and Mystery Babylon (Revelation 17)

#### Introduction:

One of the frequent questions asked about the end times is: "Will the church go through the great tribulation?" I am not going to deal at length with that question now, but we have seen in many passages of Scripture, and especially in the seven letters to the churches of Revelation, several reasons to say, "No, the true church of Jesus Christ will not go through the great tribulation."

Those who truly know the Lord and who are alive when this period comes, will be caught up to be with him before the tribulation begins. Yet all the church today is not necessarily included in that promise. All of Christendom is not the true church, in other words. There is a church that goes through the great tribulation, and we come to that matter in our studies in Revelation now.

We had a hint of this in the letter to Thyatira in the 2nd chapter of this book, where the Lord describes a woman there named Jezebel who taught the people to commit immorality, and of whom the Lord said, "I will cast her and her children into great tribulation," (Revelation 2:22 KJV).

We get the full account of that here in Chapters 17 and 18. It is introduced in the first six verses of Chapter 17: 1-5

We have already learned that ***the beast represents a western coalition of nations***, headed by a great political leader who will dominate world economics in the last days. (We will see more of this beast later in this chapter). But now the apostle is called to focus on this woman who sat upon the beast. There are several clues, in fact ten of them, which are given to help us identify the woman. What does this symbol mean?

Two full chapters are devoted to this. No symbol in the book of Revelation is given more identifying marks than this woman, therefore she must represent a very important factor. Here are the clues:

1. First, we are told that **this woman is a "prostitute."** She is a harlot, or, to put it bluntly, a whore. The use of a sexual symbol indicates that physical wrongdoing, which is bad in itself in the sight of God, is a picture of an even greater evil, that is, worship of God gone wrong! It pictures unfaithfulness to God by someone who claims to honor him. A harlot is one who offers sexual satisfaction, as a wife would, but does not otherwise fulfill that role. This clue points to some organization or group that claims to worship God but is actually unfaithful to him.
2. The second clue given is that **this woman has universal influence.** She is described as "the great prostitute, who sits on many waters." We do not have to guess what that means for in Verse 15 of this same chapter John says, **Then the angel said to me, "The waters you**

**saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations and languages." (Revelation 17:15 NIV)**

- a. Many peoples all over the earth are affected by the teachings of this harlot organization. In Verses 1 and 2 we read, "With her the kings of the earth committed adultery."
  - b. She will have **power over the leaders of nations** -- "the kings of the earth" -- and she makes the common people "intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries." **In other words, they are misled by the heady wine of religious illusion which results from the teaching of the woman.**
3. The third clue is that she is seated upon the beast. That pictures a relationship between them. It is clear that the woman dominates the beast for a period of time. She exercises tremendous power over the political leader of these last days, but eventually – Vs. 16-17.
4. The fourth clue is that **the woman is obviously very wealthy and expensively adorned.**
- a. She was "dressed in purple and scarlet, and was glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls."
  - b. These are symbols, figures of divine and spiritual truths, but which are only outwardly held. They are not actually possessed, but outwardly adorn, thus making the woman very attractive to many people.
5. The fifth clue, **"a golden cup in her hand."**
- a. Outwardly it is of gold, which is a symbol of divine activity -- it looks to be divinely given -- but it is filled with false religious concepts, "with abominable things," with spiritual adulteries, filthiness of teaching.
  - b. As many commentators point out, this is intended to be a contrast with the communion cup of the New Testament, "the cup of the Lord," which is associated with the truth of God.
6. Then the sixth clue is given: **she is called "Mystery, Babylon the Great."**
- a. The word "Mystery" indicates there is something deeper here than appears on the surface. Babylon, of course, was the great city on the Euphrates River, the empire which dominated the ancient world. We see the founding of this city in the book of Genesis.
    - i. It was begun as the city of Babel, founded by Nimrod, the great hunter of human souls.
    - ii. It became a source of idolatry for all of the ancient world. But this is not a reference to Babylon by the Euphrates because the title **"Mystery" indicates something deeper.**
  - b. It is that which is spiritually identified with Babylon, i.e., with idolatry or spiritual adultery.
7. The seventh clue is **that she is called "The mother of prostitutes."**
- a. Other religious organizations and groups follow the same errors and fall into the same idolatries and false religious teachings. She spreads wide the seeds of false doctrine throughout the world, and many groups will follow her.
8. Then, the eighth clue is that **she is a persecutor of the true believers in Christ:** "I saw the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus."

- a. She cannot tolerate any opposition that reveals the falsehood she is perpetrating.
  - b. She opposes with violence and death all those who preach the truth contrary to the lie she promulgates.
9. The ninth clue: Verse 9 - : **"This calls for a mind with wisdom** [i.e. it is not something easily identifiable. One must think about it.].
- a. **The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits." (Revelation 17:9 NIV)**  
More than dozen ancient writers describe Rome as the city built on seven hills.
  - b. This was familiar terminology in the 1st century. And that identification is further confirmed by what John is told in verse 18...
10. The tenth clue: (18) - **The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth." (Revelation 17:18 NIV)**
- a. In John's day that could only be one city -- Rome. "The great city," which was the capital of the Roman Empire that dominated the whole known world of that day, literally ruled over the kings of the earth.
  - b. But at that time the church in Rome was not a counterfeit church; it was a genuine Christian assembly. At the end of the 1st century when John is writing this, it was the church of the catacombs. It was persecuted and hounded and had to hide in the caves of the earth underneath the city.
    - i. ***That probably explains the last part of Verse 6*** where John tells us that when he saw the woman seated upon the beast, "I was greatly astonished." Why? Doubtless it is a great surprise to him to see that the church he knew in Rome would become a great harlot church, dominating the kings of the earth.

When we put all these clues together it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that this pictures the Roman Catholic Church. It is a church that arises during the present church age, but comes to its greatest power in the last seven years of this age, after the true church has been raptured.

When we say that, we must remember that we are not talking about Roman Catholic people. We think of the church as people, but the Roman church itself teaches that the church is the clergy - the papacy and the hierarchy -- not the people. **It is interesting that Catholic scholars themselves admit as they study this section of Revelation that it is Rome which is described here, but they say it is pagan Rome.**

What we need to understand is that it is the teaching of the Roman church that is described here -- the extra-biblical teachings from pagan sources that have been brought in under the name of Christendom. They involve a seeking of earthly power or status gained by religious authority. **That is Babylonianism.** That is what first arose in the city by the Euphrates -- a search for earthly power and glory by religious means. The Tower of Babel was built unto heaven, and the people said, "We will make a name for ourselves." That is Babylonianism.

There are many religious groups and churches today that are afflicted by this taint. Not only the Roman Catholic Church, but also Orthodox churches, Anglican churches, Eastern churches,

Western churches, Protestant churches, Independent churches, Charismatic churches, and Evangelical churches -- many of them reflect this same error.

The Message describes it best: **Whoredom is sex connected with money.** Worship under the aspect of the Great Whore is the commercialization of our great need and deep desire for meaning, love and salvation. The promise of success, ecstasy and meaning that we can get for a price is Whore-worship. It is the diabolical inversion of "You are bought with a price," to, "I can get it for you wholesale."

### **Interpretation of the Beast:**

It describes a revived form of the Roman Empire: ten European nations who give their power to one man to rule. The startling fact that I promised you when we came to this section is that the Imperial form, the emperors or Caesars of Rome, did not pass away until 1917 (the year of my birth) when the German Kaiser and the Russian Czar were both overthrown in one year. Each of these titles are ways of spelling Caesar: Kaiser is the German form; Czar is the Russian. So the imperial form, which is described in this section as the sixth form of the beast, passed away only as late as 1917. A seventh would appear for only a short time, John is told, and then the eighth, which is the beast, will come into being. The end of that eighth form is described in verses 13-14:

**"They have one purpose [i.e., the ten kingdoms, the ten nations] and will give their power and authority to the beast. They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings -- and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers." (Revelation 17:13-14 NIV)**

Chapter 18 now adds further details of the judgment of the great whore. It is self-explanatory, needing little interpretation. I shall merely read it and make a few comments as we go along: First, a great angel announces the fall of Babylon and gives reasons for it: **(Revelation 18:1-3 NIV)**

Three reasons are given for the overthrow of the great harlot.

1. She is demonic: "She has become the haunt of every evil spirit and every unclean and detestable bird." That is doubtless a reference to our Lord's parable of the mustard seed, found in **Matthew 13**.
  - a. There he speaks of this tiny seed, which is the church planted in the world, which grows to be a great tree and becomes a nesting place for evil birds. It pictures demonic ideas and teachings finding a place in the church.
  - b. Mystery Babylon is said to be spiritually unfaithful (kings commit adultery with her) and materially seductive (merchants grow rich from her excessive luxuries), and for these reasons she is overthrown.
  - c. Then, in chapter 18 Verses 4-5, an appeal is made to the true saints that are still within this false church in the last days to come out of her.
    - i. This great religious system still retains much saving truth.

- ii. One can become a true believer in the church though much error is found as well. There is enough truth there that, by the Spirit of God, someone can become saved, and some do even in that day.
  - iii. But now the appeal is made to come out of her, and further reasons are given for judgment: **"Give back to her as she has given; pay her back double for what she has done. Mix her a double portion from her own cup." (Revelation 18:6 NIV)**
- 2. The second reason for judgment is her arrogant, self-indulgent pride.
  - a. She lavishes luxuries upon herself and takes pride in the fact that she is a queen; she does not need help from anyone.
  - b. There is something we must notice carefully here. We saw in Chapter 17 that the beast and the false prophet will turn against her and destroy her with fire. But beyond that hatred and destruction of the beast there seems to be a further judgment from God which is described in **Verses 9-24**.
    - i. Their business is ruined by the destruction of this city. False religion has been good for business, but now it is all gone.
  - c. The merchants and seamen seem terrified and amazed at this sudden judgment that comes upon this great city. Notice how many times "one hour" is mentioned. This destruction is very rapid. It seems to be a judgment by fire from God.
    - i. It suggests enormous volcanic activity.
    - ii. If this is referring to Rome (most scholars believe) Geologists have long known that almost all of southern Italy, from Rome down through the city of Naples, is volcanic in nature.
    - iii. Vesuvius, the great volcano behind Naples, has destroyed parts of that city in times past. So there may well be a tremendous volcanic destruction of Rome in the final days of Daniel's 70th week.
- 3. The quarrel God has with Babylonianism wherever it may be found, not only in the Roman church but in many churches which fall prey to this error, is that "she glorifies herself" in the name of God.
  - a. She teaches in the name of Christ, mingling truth with error.
  - b. Saints are called to separate themselves from that root error: the hunger for earthly glory and position obtained by religious devotion.
    - i. Whenever a church seeks influence by impressing people with outward splendor you have the seeds of Babylonianism present.
    - ii. Whenever individual Christians try to appear pious and devout while the heart runs after material gain or status, there is the silken allurements of Babylon.
  - c. We must ask ourselves, **"Why does God show us all this?"**
    - i. We are shown this because, ***if we see how things will end we can turn away from them now.***
    - ii. That is the reason this book is sent to the seven churches of Asia -- that they might learn from the judgments God will bring on Babylon what is wrong with the practices they see around them throughout the church age.

## **The Destruction of the Political and Economic (physical) Babylon:**

In chapter 18, the context seems to indicate that Babylon here is viewed in its political and economic character rather than in its religious aspect. The term "Babylon" in Scripture is more than a reference to the false religious system which stemmed from the false religion of ancient Babylon. Out of ancient Babylon also came the political power represented in Nebuchadnezzar and fulfilled in the first world empire. In some sense this is continued in the commercial system which came from both the religious and the political Babylons. **It seems that chapter 17 deals with the religious aspect and chapter 18 with the political and economic aspects of Babylon.**

According to verse 9 the kings of the earth as well as the merchants will mourn the passing of the Babylon of chapter 18. ***There is apparently no mourning connected with the destruction of the woman in chapter 17.*** The destruction of Babylon in chapter 18 should be compared with the preceding announcement in 16:19 where the great city is divided and the cities of the Gentiles fall. This event comes late in the great tribulation, just prior to the second coming of Christ, in contrast to the destruction of the harlot of chapter 17 which seems to precede the great tribulation and paves the way for the worship of the beast (13:8).

1. THE DOWNFALL OF THE CITY OF BABYLON in 18:2 is followed by its becoming the habitation of demons, the "hold" or "prison" of every evil spirit, and the "cage," the same word in the Greek as "hold" (*phylake*), of every unclean and hateful bird.
  - a. The threefold description of the inhabitants of fallen Babylon is a reference to fallen angels in their various characteristics as demons and evil spirits, symbolized by the bird (cf. "birds," Isa. 34:11-15; Matt. 13:32).
  - b. This abandonment of destroyed Babylon to demons is a divine judgment stemming from the utter wickedness of its inhabitants described in verse 3. Babylon in her political character has had evil relationships with "all nations" described as "fornication: In this, they have been led by the rulers, "the kings of the earth: The resulting evil association has made the merchants of the earth rich.
  - c. Just as the church had grown rich in proportion as it had been wicked.
2. A CALL TO SEPARATION FROM BABYLON (18:4-5) As John contemplates the announcement of the fall of Babylon, he hears another voice from heaven addressed to the people of God instructing them to come out of Babylon.
  - a. In a similar way the people of God were urged to leave Babylon in ancient days (Jer. 51:45). Seiss explains the phrase "come out of her," citing Jeremiah 50:4-9 where the children of Israel are urged to "remove out of the midst of Babylon" (Jer. 50:8), and the command "Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul" (Jer. 51:6).
  - b. Alford compares the command to come out of Babylon to the warning to Lot to leave Sodom (Gen. 19:15-22).

- c. The purpose of leaving Babylon is twofold:
    - i. By separation from her they will not partake of her sin.
    - ii. They will not have her plagues inflicted on them.
    - iii. The reference to plagues refers to the vials of chapter 16, especially the seventh vial which falls upon Babylon itself (16:17-21).
  - d. In verse 5 the sins of Babylon are declared to reach to the heavens with the result that God remembers, that is, judges her iniquities (cf. Jer. 51:9). ***The fact that her sins have reached (Gr., kollao, literally "glued" or "welded together" i.e., piled one on another as bricks in a building) unto heaven is an allusion to the tower of Babel which began the wicked career of ancient Babylon (Gen. 11:5-9).***
3. THE INDICTMENT AGAINST BABYLON (18:6-8) In keeping with the enormity of her sin, the voice from heaven now calls on God to reward Babylon even as she rewarded the people of God. The verb (Gr., *apodidomi*) means literally "to pay a debt" or "to give back that which is due." It is the law of retribution sometimes called *lex talionis*. Divine justice exacts the "eye for an eye" and the "tooth for a tooth."
- a. The normal law of retribution, however, is here doubled in recognition of the enormity of the sin of Babylon - "Double unto her double according to her works"
  - b. In keeping with this principle, the cup of iniquity which Babylon filled is now to be filled twice with the measure of her judgment. There is no mercy for the utter apostasy found in Babylon in all her phases of operation. The verb (Gr., *kerannymi*) translated "fill" is literally "mix" or "mingle" as in the preparation of a drink. The same verb is used in 14:10 in connection with the wine of the wrath of God.
  - c. Like the church at Laodicea, her wealth has brought a sense of false security (3:17). Her claim to not being a widow has only the faulty foundation of her illicit love affairs with the kings of the earth (17:2). The fact that her judgment comes in one day, emphasized in the Greek by being placed first in the sentence, is reminiscent of the fall of Babylon in Daniel 5, which fell in the same hour that the finger traced its condemning words upon the wall. Before morning, the ancient power of Babylon has been destroyed. In a similar way, the rich fool of Luke 12:16-20 lost his barns and his soul in one night. When it is time for God's judgment, it descends with unwavering directness.
4. THE LAMENT OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH (18:9-10)
- a. These kings are a wider designation than the ten kings of 17:12,16, who participated in the destruction of the harlot.
  - b. **Some believe that ancient Babylon is to be rebuilt as the capital of the world empire in the great tribulation period and that Babylon in this chapter refers to ancient Babylon rather than to Rome.**
    - i. According to Isaiah 13:19-22, Babylon was to be completely destroyed and not inhabited.

- ii. This seems also the teaching of Jeremiah 51:24-26, 61-64.
  - iii. It is argued that ancient Babylon as a city was not destroyed for hundreds of years after the fall of the empire and therefore these prophecies have not been literally fulfilled.
  - iv. The destruction of Babylon according to Jeremiah 51:8 was to be sudden. This is confirmed by Revelation 18:17-19.
  - v. As far as the physical city of Babylon was concerned, this was not true of ancient Babylon as it continued for many years after its political downfall.
  - vi. Further, it is pointed out that the prophecy of Isaiah 13:6, 9-11, which formed the context of Isaiah 13:19-22, indicates that the destruction of Babylon would be in the day of the Lord.
- c. **Others identify Babylon as Rome, the seat of the apostate church as described by the seven mountains of 17:9 and also the political city as elsewhere described.**
- i. It is possible that Rome might be the ecclesiastical capital and rebuilt Babylon the political and commercial capital.
  - ii. It is also conceivable that Rome might be the capital in the first half of the last seven years and Babylon in the second half--in the world empire phase.
  - iii. Haldeman holds that Babylon will be rebuilt. He states, "Rome will be the political, Babylon the commercial, capital of Antichrist's kingdom."
  - iv. On the other hand Hoste observes, "I do not think there is any necessity that Babylon should be rebuilt, for another city has, as we see in this chapter, taken her place."
- d. Those who deny that Babylon will be rebuilt do so on the principle that the prophecy of destruction refers to ecclesiastical and political power symbolized in Babylon but not embodied in an actual city.
5. THE LAMENT OF THE MERCHANTS OF THE EARTH (18:11-19)
- a. In contrast to the transitory wealth and glory of this world, which are here consumed by a great judgment from God, are the true riches of faith, devotion, and service for God laid up in heaven beyond the destructive hands of man and protected by the righteous power of God. The destruction of Babylon also ends the nefarious control of the souls of men mentioned last in the list of commodities in verse 13. No longer can ancient Babylon control the world religiously, politically, or economically.
6. THE UTTER DESTRUCTION OF BABYLON (18:21-24) John in his vision now sees a "mighty angel" (cf. 5:2; 10:1) **throw a stone like a great millstone into the sea**, portraying the violent downfall of the great city.
- a. Jeremiah 51:61-64 - In this passage in Jeremiah, Seraiah, a prince who accompanied Zedekiah into Babylon, is instructed after reading the book of Jeremiah to bind a stone to it and cast it into the midst of the Euphrates with the words, "Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring

upon her: and they shall be weary."

- b. In the similar instance portrayed in Revelation, the millstone is cast into the sea instead of the Euphrates. The symbolism is the same. It represents the destruction of the great city, which like a stone cast into the sea will be found no more. The ultimate end of Babylon in all its forms will be accomplished by God's judgment at the end of the great tribulation. Babylon will be found "no more at all" (cf. vv. 14, 22-23). The expression occurs seven times - with minor variations.