

“Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, ‘Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.’” – Revelation 17:1-2

Overview:

Revelation 17 begins by one of the seven angels who had one of the seven bowls coming to John and telling him to “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot”. In Revelation 16, we saw that John had just witnessed the battle of Armageddon that will take place at the end of time and now we advance to the next scene, to a new vision. This chapter deals with the coming of God's judgment on the one called the “great harlot” who sits on many waters (v1) and a scarlet beast (v3)

Idolatry has been a very flexible tool used by Satan throughout time to deceive and destroy man. Satan cleverly blends belief systems, mixing and matching different things to try to lure us away from the one true God. To get us to worship created things and not the Creator. We end up with a worship system that looks very attractive, that purports to be Godly and genuine but has nothing to do with God and doesn't bring God the worship and glory that only He deserves. Anything I put before God in my life is idolatry.

Here we have a picture of a woman who seems to be in control. She is sitting on the beast and all the kings and the inhabitants of the earth are running to her but in the end there is only destruction. Idolatry has that intoxicating effect on us. We believe we are in control and can stop at any time, but in the end we discover that we were not in control and apart from God's grace and mercy is destruction.

References:

Rev 17:1 – Battle of Armageddon:

- Heaven's view (Rev 14:18-20)
- Gathering man's armies (Rev 16:12-16)
- Coming King of Kings and the battle (Rev 19:11-21)

Rev 17:1 – Idolatry – Danger for Israel (Deuteronomy 32:19-21), Propensity for more and newer (Acts 17:16,21), Dangerous progression (Romans 1:18-31), Propped up by demonic forces (1 Corinthians 8:4-6, 10:19-22)

Rev 17:1 – Religion in the last days (2 Timothy 3:1,5), Man's sense that he's still okay (Numbers 14:39-45)

Rev 17:2 – Even godly kings have stumbled over fornication (2 Chronicles 26:16-21)

Rev 17:2 – Readily adopted by men who are deceived (Isaiah 44:9-20)

Rev 17:3 – 3 women pictured in Revelation:

- 1st Jezebel in the church of Thyatira (Rev 2:20)
- 2nd is Israel (Rev 12:1-2, 5-6)
- 3rd is the great harlot (Rev 17), Jezebel is a reflection of this women (1 Kings 16:31, 1 Kings 21:25, 2 Kings 9)

Rev 17:3 – Sitting on a scarlet beast – Antichrist seen in (Rev 13:1), Operates in the power of Satan (Rev 12:3)

Rev 17:4 – Adorned with gold, precious stones, & pearls. Contrast with (2 Timothy 2:9-10)

Rev 17:5 – Babylon the great – refers to the government system dealt with in (Rev 18)

Rev 17:5 – Why Babylon?

- Beginning of Satan's use to destroy man (Genesis 10:8-10, 11:1-4) God's command to man (Genesis 9:7)
- Enticement to idolatry with Israel (Ezekiel 8:14; Jeremiah 17:8; 44:17-19, 25)

Rev 17:5 – Doesn't represent a group or a denomination. (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43; 13:47-50)

Rev 17:5 – Idolatry used 5 times (1 Samuel 15:23, 1 Corinthians 10:14, Galatians 5:20, Colossians 3:5, 1 Peter 4:3)

Questions:

- * In your own words write out a definition of idolatry.
- * Are there things in your life that are an idol?
- * Take a few minutes and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal anything that is an idol and then repent of that sin. 1 John 1:9

Additional Study:

Rev 17:2

* Fornication (*porneuo*) – to commit immorality

Rev 17:4

* Full of abominations (*bdelugma*) – something horrible or loathsome that defiles

Rev 17:4

* Filthiness (*akathartes*) of her fornication (*porneia*) – taking part in the godless rebellion

Rev 17:6

* Marveled (*thaumazo*) – with great amazement (*thauma mega*) – astonishment, wondering, confusion