

I Intro. (Oct. 16, 2005)

The kings and their kingdoms of the previous paragraph now begin to engage in war with the Lamb (Rev. 17:14). Then the angel began to explain to John further symbolism (17:15). Then we learn that God has arranged for a rebellion against the harlot by the beast and his subordinates (17:16-17). Finally, we are told what the woman symbolizes (17:18).

II The Great Harlot is Overthrown and Destroyed (Rev. 17:14-18).

A. Here the world forces of the beast, and the ten kings war against the Lamb (17:14).

1. (vs. 14) The Lamb prevails over them: “These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful” (οὗτοι μετὰ [“with genitive: *with*...denoting the company within which someth. takes place...The fact that the activity or experience took place in the company of others can also be made clear by the influence which two opposite parties exert upon each other or together, or, on the other hand, by which one party brings the other to adopt a corresponding, and therefore common attitude...in hostile fashion; after verbs of fighting, quarreling, etc. to denote the pers. w. whom the strife is being carried on...*carry on war with=against* someone”¹; “This proposition with πολεμεω...rather than κατα...{against} is common in the LXX, but in the N.T. only in Rev. 2:16; 12:7; 13:4; 17:14”²) τοῦ ἀρνίου [“It is sometimes argued that ‘ram’ is here the correct translation in view of the references to the seven horns {5:6} and his wrath {6:16-17} and warfare {17:14}. Indeed, a connection is even made with the zodiac. But Dan. 8:3 suggests the seven horns, while there is little philological justification for ‘ram,’ and the fact that the *arnion* is ‘slain’ offers a link to the idea of Jesus as the sacrificial lamb {*amnós*}. As Redeemer and Ruler, the lamb of Revelation a. vicariously shed his blood {5:9} and bears the marks of his slaughter {5:6}; b. has defeated death {5:5-6} and is omnipotent and

omniscient {5:6}; c. takes over divine rule, opening the book {5:8ff.}, receiving adoration {5:8ff.}, establishing a reign of peace {7:9}, overcoming demonic powers {17:14}, and judging {6:16-17; 13:8}; and d. is Lord of lords and King of kings”³] πολεμήσουσιν [“lit...act. *make war, fight* μετὰ τινος *on or with* {*against*} *someone*”⁴; “{Eng., polemics}, to fight, to make war, is used...literally”⁵] καὶ τὸ ἀρνίον [“{dim. of ἀρῆν, but no longer felt to be a dim. in NT times...} *sheep, lamb*; in Rv a designation of Christ”⁶; “It is used only by the Apostle John...in the singular, in the Apocalypse...the Conqueror of the foes of God and His people”⁷] νικήσει [“trans. *conquer, overcome, vanquish*...act. w. the obj. in the acc. τινά *overcome someone*”⁸] αὐτούς ὅτι κύριος [“Jesus by his resurrection won lordship over the kings of earth {...19:16; cf. 1:5 ed.}”⁹; “in religious usage...κύριος is also used in ref. to Jesus...Even in the passages already mentioned the use of the word κ. raises Jesus above the human level...W. other genitives”¹⁰; “properly an adjective, signifying having power {*kuros*} or authority, is used as a noun, variously translated in the N.T., ‘Lord,’ ‘master,’ ‘Master,’ ‘owner,’ ‘Sir,’ a title of wide significance, occurring in each book of the N.T. save Tit. and the Epp. of John. It is used...of an Emperor or King”¹¹] κυρίων ἐστὶν καὶ βασιλεὺς [“Fig. of the possessor of the highest power...esp...of the Messianic king”¹²; “a king...of Christ...as King of kings”¹³] βασιλέων [“A further subset of the gen. of subordination category might be ‘the genitive in relation to a *par excellence* noun’ {though, at times, the nuances depart some from the subordination notion}. That is, rarely a gen. indicates the class of which the head noun is the

1Bauer, Walter, Gingrich, F. Wilbur, and Danker, Frederick W., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) 1979.

2Robertson, Archibald Thomas, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, (Nashville, Tennessee, USA: Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention) 1998, c1933.

3Kittel, Gerhard, and Friedrich, Gerhard, Editors, *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company) 1985.

4Bauer, Walter, Gingrich, F. Wilbur, and Danker, Frederick W., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) 1979.

5Vine, W. E., *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell) 1981.

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13Vine, W. E., *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell) 1981.

supreme member. When this occurs, both head noun and gen. noun have the *same lexeme*. For example, note
 βασιλεὺς βασιλέων”¹⁴] καὶ οἱ μετ’ αὐτοῦ κλητοὶ
 ἰ [“called, invited...Subst...οἱ κλητοὶ *those who are called*”¹⁵; “called, invited, is used...of the call of the Gospel”¹⁶] καὶ ἐκλεκτοὶ [“chosen, select...esp. of those whom God has chosen fr. the generality of mankind and drawn to himself...*chosen*...W. κλητοὶ and πιστοὶ”¹⁷; “lit. signifies picked out, chosen {*ek*, from, *legō*, to gather, pick out}, and is used of...believers {Jews or Gentiles}”¹⁸; “signifies chosen out, select”¹⁹; “These are the three notes of those who share in the victory...The elect are called and prove faithful.”²⁰] καὶ πιστοὶ [“pass. *trustworthy, faithful, dependable, inspiring trust or faith*...of pers...of human beings {and Christ}”²¹; “a verbal adjective...Passive, faithful, to be trusted, reliable, said of...servants of the Lord”²²]).

“These (οἱ τοῦτοι)” is an apparently reference to the immediately preceding group of the ten “kings” along “with the beast” in vs. 12. Because it says in vs. 12 that the ten kings “receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour,” a relatively short period of time, it seems likely that the event discussed in this verse will occur near the end of the tribulation period. It is then that they “will wage war (πολεμήσουσιν) against the Lamb (ἀρνίου),” an event that is recorded as occurring in Rev. 19 at the second advent of our Lord. Of course the term “Lamb” is Christ depicted in His sacrificial role as we have seen before in Rev. (5:6, 8, 12, 13; 6:1, 16; 7:9, 10, 14, 17; 12:11; 13:8, 11; 14:1, 4, 10; 15:3). However, the Lamb is not weak and helpless, but powerful and overwhelming. He will prevail; “the Lamb will overcome (νικῆσει) them” or “conquer”²³ or

“vanquish”²⁴ His opponents. The reason for this is “He is Lord of lords and King of kings,” that is, He is Lord or absolute authority (the ref. in “Lord” is to an “Emperor or King”²⁵) over all other lords, be they human or angelic, and He is “King of kings,” that is, He is “the possessor of the highest power”²⁶ over all others who reign supreme over a given domain, be they human or angelic. There is another reason for the Lamb’s victory. It is in connection with His army; (because) “those who are with Him *are the called and chosen and faithful*,” three ways of describing the same group, all of whom are believers. “The Saints will share the victory of the Lamb, as they have shared His conflict.”²⁷

“Chosen” is ἐκλεκτοὶ in the original and is transliterated into English as “elect,” or as here, “chosen.” In reality, this is the proper sequence; first God elects, that is, He chooses us in eternity past, then He calls (the Gk. adj. here is κλητοὶ), which occurs when we hear the gospel under the convicting ministry of the Spirit, then we have the opportunity to be faithful (πιστοὶ), which is simply to live by faith in a manner that is pleasing in the sight of God. One might as well not be surprised to learn that Swete uses this passage as a formula for fear: “on God’s side no failure is to be feared (Rom. 8:29 f. οὓς προέγνω, καὶ προώρισεν ... οὓς δὲ προώρισεν, τούτους καὶ ἐκάλεσεν, καὶ οὓς ἐκάλεσεν, τούτους καὶ ἐδικαίωσεν ... καὶ ἐδόξασεν), on man’s part there is no such security (2 Pet. 1:10 σπουδάσατε βεβαίαν ὑμῶν τὴν κλήσιν καὶ ἐκλογὴν ποιεῖσθαι); the climax is only reached when the called and chosen are found faithful. For πιστός cf. 2:10, 2:13.”²⁸ In reality, nothing could be further from the truth. For Swete has typically butchered the interpretation of 2Pt. 1:10, which has nothing to do with the believer’s assurance as Calvin so brilliantly articulated it centuries before even Swete came on the scene. It still does not. The believer’s ground of assurance is the promise of God alone now, and it will continue to be so throughout the tribulation period as well, not to

14Wallace, Daniel B., *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics - Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, (Garland, TX: Galaxie Software) 1999, c1996.

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26Bauer, Walter, Gingrich, F. Wilbur, and Danker, Frederick W., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) 1979.

27The Apocalypse of St. John. Ed. H. B. Swete. 2d. ed. New York: The Macmillan company, 1907. Page 220.
 28The Apocalypse of St. John. Ed. H. B. Swete. 2d. ed. New York: The Macmillan company, 1907. Page 221.

mention the millennial reign. That being the case, it follows that whether a believer will be faithful or not remains to be seen. These called, elect, and faithful believers who return with our Lord at the end of the tribulation period are referred to as such as a group with no mention being made as to whether or not there were differences in the extent to which they were faithful while on earth or whether or not some were essentially unfaithful. As a *group* they were faithful.

B. The further symbolism of the waters is explained (17:15).

1. (vs. 15) Simply stated, the waters are the people of the earth: “And he said to me, ‘The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues’” (Καὶ λέγει μοι τὰ ὕδατα [“Babylon got its wealth by means of the Euphrates and the numerous canals for irrigation. Rome does not have such a system of canals, but this item is taken and applied to the New Babylon in 17:15.”²⁹; “The O.T. uses ‘waters’ as symbol for ‘peoples’ {Is. 8:7; Jer. 47:2; Ps. 29:10, etc.}. ‘Rome’s greatest danger lay in the multitudes which were under her sway’ {Swete}.³⁰ ἃ εἶδες οὗ ἡ πόρνη [“prostitute, harlot...fig...as the designation of a government that is hostile to God and his people”³¹; “a prostitute, harlot {from *pernēmi*, to sell}, is used...metaphorically, of mystic Babylon”³² κάθηται [“sit...lit...w. the place indicated by an adv. of place”³³ λαοὶ [“The plural means ‘hosts of peoples’”³⁴; “people as nation”³⁵ καὶ ὄχλοι [“the pl. ὄχλοι as a synonym beside λαοὶ and ἔθνη”³⁶ εἰσὶν καὶ ἔθνη καὶ γλῶσσαι [“language e...As a distinctive feature of nations γ. can be used as a synonym of φυλή, λαός, ἔθνος”³⁷; “a language, coupled with *phulē*, a tribe, *laos*, a

people, *ethnos*, a nation, seven times in the Apocalypse”³⁸]).

We saw the “waters” in vs. 1 where the angel said to John, “Come here, I shall show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters.” About that verse we said that perhaps she was somehow beside the waters because in fact she was riding *on* the beast. Be that as it may, here we learn that the “waters which” which John “saw where the harlot (πόρνη)” of vs. 1 “sits (κάθηται)” are not primarily literal waters at all, but as we have seen, they are figurative for “peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues,” an expression similar to others which appear seven times in the book of Rev. (5:9; 7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6). The term “peoples (λαοὶ)” means “hosts of peoples”³⁹; “multitudes (ὄχλοι)” is “a synonym”⁴⁰; “nations (ἔθνη)” is, “the largest unit into which the people of the world are divided on the basis of their constituting a socio-political community”⁴¹; “tongues (γλῶσσαι),” meaning essentially, “languages,” is “a distinctive feature of nations (and) can be used as a synonym”⁴² as well for the others terms here. Obviously then the harlot enjoys being supported by all the major people groups of the world while directing them in various forms of worship ultimately ecumenical, as the false church of that future time must be, yet very much directed toward the beast and the dragon.

Notice the arrangement of things here. The harlot in on the beast, both are thereby over the waters. So the woman is guiding the direction of the religion of the world as its *centuries old false system* dictates. Whatever else one may say about this system of beliefs, *fundamental* to it is justification by works. The beast, the antichrist and his one world government, support her in this and benefit greatly from it. All the nations of the world under the authority of both the harlot and the beast happily comply in this great complex, false religious system, partly in sheer amazement at the supernatural things connected with beast,

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40Bauer, Walter, Gingrich, F. Wilbur, and Danker, Frederick W., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) 1979.

41Louw, J. P., & E. A. Nida. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*. electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. New York: United Bible societies, 1996, c1989. Vol. 1, Page 129.

42Bauer, Walter, Gingrich, F. Wilbur, and Danker, Frederick W., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) 1979.

and partly simply to survive by taking the mark and thus being able to buy and sell (Rev. 13:17).

C. God has arranged for a rebellion against the harlot by the beast and his subordinates (17:16-17).

1. (vs. 16) It turns out that the ten kings and the beast hate the harlot and succeed in destroying her: “And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire” (καὶ τὰ δέκα κέρατα [“horn...lit., in the description of the apocal. beasts”⁴³] ἃ εἶδες καὶ τὸ θηρίον [“{wild} animal, beast...lit...of animal-like beings of a supernatural kind...The ‘beasts’ or ‘animals’ of Rv”⁴⁴] οὗτοι μισήσουσιν [“hate, persecute in hatred, detest, abhor...w. acc. of the pers.”⁴⁵; “hatred means political enmity”⁴⁶] τὴν πόρνην [“a prostitute, harlot {from *pernēmi*, to sell}, is used...metaphorically, of mystic Babylon, Rev. 17:1, 5 {A.V., ‘harlots’}”⁴⁷] καὶ ἡρημωμένην [“signifies to make desolate, lay waste. From the primary sense of making quiet comes that of making lonely. It is used only in the Passive Voice in the N.T.”⁴⁸] ποιήσουσιν αὐτήν [“The almost exclusive use of the personal pronouns in the oblique cases {i.e., gen., dat., acc.} is simply to stand in the place of a noun or other nominal. This use of the pronoun can be called *anaphoric* in that it refers back to its antecedent.”⁴⁹] καὶ γυμνήν [“naked, stripped, bare”⁵⁰; “signifies...of the desolation of religious Babylon”⁵¹] καὶ τὰς σάρκας [“The plural is used for the fleshy parts of the body like pieces of flesh”⁵²; “portions of flesh”⁵³; “flesh...lit., of the material that covers the bones of a human or

animal body...The pl. {which denotes flesh in the mass...while the sing. rather denotes the substance...}...symbolically”⁵⁴] αὐτῆς [“The genitive of the personal pronoun frequently, if not usually, indicates possession...as a subclass of the normal use of the personal pronoun because it, too, refers back to the antecedent”⁵⁵] φάγονται [“eat...lit...w. acc. of the thing”⁵⁶] καὶ αὐτήν κατακαύσουσιν [“burn down, burn up, consume by fire τὶ someth...Pass...W. the addition of πυρί *burn, consume someth. w. fire...W. ἐν πυρί added*”⁵⁷; “from *kata*, down {intensive}...signifies to burn up, burn utterly”⁵⁸] ἐν [“causal or instrumental...introducing the means or instrument, a construction that begins w. Homer...but whose wide currency in our lit. is partly caused by the infl. of the LXX, and its similarity to the Hebr. constr. w. B]...w. things: κατακαίειν ἐν πυρί”⁵⁹] πυρί [“fire...lit...of earthly fire...*burn someth. {up} with fire pass.*”⁶⁰; “used {besides its ordinary natural significance}...of the future overthrow of the Babylonish religious system at the hands of the Beast and the nations under him”⁶¹; “as a weapon of war”⁶²; “The impersonal means by which the verbal action is carried out is expressed by ἐν + dative...”⁶³]).

All goes along smoothly at least on the surface for a while, but within the hearts of “the ten horns which” John had seen, which were “ten kings” (vs. 12) as you recall, and within the heart of “the beast,” the antichrist, there was no love for the harlot at all, but rather animosity. For they “hate (μισήσουσιν)” or “detest, (or) abhor”⁶⁴ the harlot (πόρνην)” and join together, since they are of “one purpose” (vs. 13), to express that hatred as is so often the case with prostitutes and their

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paramours or “lovers.” Consequently they move to “make her desolate (ἡρημωμένην),” not merely to make quiet, as when a battle is over, but to make “lonely,”⁶⁵ and thus, “dreary; dismal...bereft of friends or hope; sad and forlorn,”⁶⁶ like a city that has been laid “waste.”⁶⁷ In addition, she was made “naked (γυμνήν)” or “*stripped, bare*.”⁶⁸ Contrast this to the opulence formerly enjoyed by the harlot in vs. 4 when she was “clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup.” Worse still these evil authorities “will eat her flesh,” and when nothing is left to consume of her, they “will burn her up with fire,” so that no a trace of her or her will and purpose for earth-dwellers will be detectable.

Because there is no literal woman in view, but rather the religious system that has controlled the world since the tower of Babel, what does all this mean? It is important to remember the original coalition formed by the antichrist in which he clearly tolerated all the various religious systems of the world, including finally that of the Jews themselves, an agreement in fact that we studied in Dan. 9, which marked the official beginning of the tribulation period. Doubtless, all the major religious systems of the world, with which you and I are currently familiar, will have already signed on the dotted line prior to Israel’s “firm covenant” of Dan. 9:27. You will recall that the agreement was ostensibly for seven years, “but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering,” an event which is followed by the abomination of desolation (Mt. 24:15) when the antichrist, the beast of our section, “who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship,” goes into the temple in Jerusalem and “takes his seat” there “displaying himself as being God” (2Th. 2:4). This is consistent with his true character as revealed in Dan. 11:37, where we are told that “he will show no regard for the gods of his fathers...nor will he show regard for any *other* god; for he will magnify himself above *them* all.” So at this point, the

antichrist along with the kings onboard with him will show his true colors. All the ancient religious systems of the world, which are really one in essence, as typified by the woman will be cancelled, their wealth pillaged and their worship redirected toward the beast himself and Satan, and nothing else. So evidently, the overthrow of the harlot happens at the midpoint of the tribulation period when the “god of fortresses” will become preeminent, “a god whom his,” the antichrist’s, “fathers did not know; he will honor *him* with gold, silver, costly stones, and treasures” (Dan. 11:38).

Incidentally, it might be at this crisis where three of the ten kings who might not approve of the plan to overthrow the woman are themselves overthrown by the antichrist (Dan. 7:24).

2. (vs. 17) The uprising against the woman by the wicked of the earth itself arises from the decree, plan, and purpose of God: “For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God should be fulfilled” (ὁ γὰρ θεὸς ἔδωκεν [“give in the sense grant, bestow, impart...in many expr. in which the transl. is determined by the noun object...put into the hearts”⁶⁹; “to give...of putting into the heart by God”⁷⁰] εἰς [“denotes the intrusion of good or bad influences into the center of personality, e.g., demons in Mt. 9:25, evil from Satan in Jn. 13:2, Satan in Lk. 22:3, a wicked purpose from God himself in judgment in Rev. 17:17”⁷¹] τὰς καρδίας [“heart as the seat of physical, spiritual and mental life...as center and source of the whole inner life, w. its thinking, feeling, and volition...of the will and its decisions...w. inf. foll.”⁷²] αὐτῶν ποιῆσαι τὴν γνώμην [“primarily a means of knowing {akin to *ginōskō*, to know}, came to denote a mind, understanding; hence...a royal purpose, a decree”⁷³; “*decision*,

65Vine, W. E., *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell) 1981.

66The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition copyright © 1992 by Houghton Mifflin Company. Electronic version licensed from InfoSoft International, Inc. All rights reserved.

67Vine, W. E., *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell) 1981.

68Bauer, Walter, Gingrich, F. Wilbur, and Danker, Frederick W., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) 1979.

69Bauer, Walter, Gingrich, F. Wilbur, and Danker, Frederick W., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) 1979.

70Vine, W. E., *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell) 1981.

71Kittel, Gerhard, and Friedrich, Gerhard, Editors, *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company) 1985.

72Bauer, Walter, Gingrich, F. Wilbur, and Danker, Frederick W., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) 1979.

73Vine, W. E., *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell) 1981.

declaration”⁷⁴] αὐτοῦ καὶ ποιῆσαι μίαν γνώμην [“mind, will, is used with *poieō*, to make, in the sense of to agree”⁷⁵; “A first meaning is ‘disposition,’ ‘will,’ ‘mind,’ as in 1 Cor. 1:10; Phil. 2:2; Rev. 17:13... ‘Resolve,’ ‘decision’ is a second meaning; this is perhaps the point in Rev. 17:17.”⁷⁶] καὶ δοῦναι τὴν βασιλείαν [“*kingship, royal power, royal rule, kingdom*”⁷⁷] αὐτῶν τῷ θηρίῳ ἄχρι [“Elsewhere it means ‘until’ and with...the future.”⁷⁸; “conjunction...without rel., used w. aor. subj. until”⁷⁹] τελεσθήσονται [“bring to an end, finish, complete τὶ *some*...The passives in Rv 10:7; 15:1, 8; 17:17 belong under 2 as well as under 1...carry out, accomplish, perform, fulfill, keep”⁸⁰; “Divine sayings about the future are ‘put into effect’”⁸¹] οἱ λόγοι τοῦ θεοῦ).

The utter vanquishing of the harlot comes about because (γὰρ) “God” has willed it so. He “put (ἔδωκεν),” literally, “gave,” “it in their hearts.” Prov. 21:1 says, “The king’s heart is *like* channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes.” This is not less true with the hearts of the ten and/or seven kings and the antichrist. So ironically God had His “purpose” executed, which was literally, “one and the same purpose” with the antichrist’s; and to have the ten kings give “their kingdom to the beast” and/or the antichrist, “until the words of God” about all the “rebellion against Him in the Tribulation”⁸² “should be fulfilled (τελεσθήσονται),” or “completed,”⁸³ in keeping with Dan. 11:36, which says that, “he will prosper until the indignation is finished, for that which is decreed will be done.” While the antichrist meant this for evil, God meant it for good. Similarly in Jer. 25:9-11, God warned Israel that He would send His servant Nebuchadnezzar against them in judgment. We know that Nebuchadnezzar’s motive for doing so

was not the glory of God. Yet as God used Him for judgment, so also He will employ the antichrist and his subordinate kings. What the antichrist substitutes for the corrupt religious system of the world is not an improvement over it. However, his system will soon be judged as well. *God* is in control; His purposes will be realized in their totality. Even the antichrist will fully comply, though in complete ignorance of these realities and with full culpability for his every evil action for which he will be judged and finally so.

D. Finally, John learned what the woman symbolizes (17:18).

1. (vs. 18) She is the great city: “And the woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth” (καὶ ἡ γυνή [“Apart from references to the captivity in Mt. 1:11, 12, 17 and Acts 7:43, and the single mention in 1 Pet. 5:13, the term *Babylōn* occurs only in Revelation, where it denotes the ungodly power of the end-time...The author, however, weaves the various elements into a totality, perhaps with reference to a city already present {17:18}, namely, Rome as the city on seven hills which was often called Babel {as representing ungodly power} in later Judaism.”⁸⁴] ἦν εἶδες ἔστιν ἡ πόλις [“city, city-state...lit...In Rv ἡ πόλις ἡ μεγάλη is almost always ‘Babylon’ {s. Βαβυλών}”⁸⁵; “Babylon {Rome} is meant”⁸⁶; “this verse demonstrates that the woman is the city of Rome ‘which reigneth {ἡ ἔχουσα βασιλειαν...the one having a kingdom} over the kings of the earth {ἐπι τῶν βασιλευν τῆς γῆς}.’ Rome followed Babylon, and other cities may follow in their train.”⁸⁷] ἡ μεγάλη ἡ ἔχουσα [“*echō*, to have, with *basileia*, a kingdom, is translated ‘reigneth,’ lit., ‘hath a kingdom,’ suggestive of a distinction between the sovereignty of mystic Babylon and that of ordinary sovereigns.”⁸⁸] βασιλείαν [“is primarily an abstract noun, denoting sovereignty, royal power, dominion”⁸⁹] ἐπὶ [“with the

74Bauer, Walter, Gingrich, F. Wilbur, and Danker, Frederick W., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) 1979.

75Vine, W. E., *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell) 1981.

76Kittel, Gerhard, and Friedrich, Gerhard, Editors, *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company) 1985.

77Bauer, Walter, Gingrich, F. Wilbur, and Danker, Frederick W., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) 1979.

78Robertson, Archibald Thomas, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, (Nashville, Tennessee, USA: Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention) 1998, c1933.

79Bauer, Walter, Gingrich, F. Wilbur, and Danker, Frederick W., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) 1979.

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81Kittel, Gerhard, and Friedrich, Gerhard, Editors, *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company) 1985.

82Tom Constable, *Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible*, Galaxie Software, 2003; 2003. Re 17:17.

83Bauer, Walter, Gingrich, F. Wilbur, and Danker, Frederick W., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) 1979.

84Kittel, Gerhard, and Friedrich, Gerhard, Editors, *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company) 1985.

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89Vine, W. E., *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell) 1981.

genitive...of place...fig...over of power, authority, control of or over someone or someth”⁹⁰] τῶν βασιλέων [“kingship, royal power, royal rule, kingdom”⁹¹] τῆς γῆς).

One final explanation of the symbolism of the chapter follows. The angel said, “And the woman whom you saw is the great city.” “In the context this undoubtedly refers to Babylon. It is the only city referred to specifically in this chapter (v. 5; cf. 16:18; 14:8).”⁹² The system of religion which originated there is the one that prevailed throughout world history including the first half of the tribulation period. However, Babylon represented not merely a false religious system, but one which was thoroughly in league with all the various political systems of the world as well. For example, in the “Middle Ages in Europe...the popes wielded great influence over the political leaders of the Holy Roman Empire.”⁹³ Indeed as we have just seen, “During the first half of the Tribulation it will be an ecumenical, worldwide body that will stand above government and will be aggressively hostile to true believers in God. At the end of the Great Tribulation, Antichrist will terminate it and demand universal worship of himself.”⁹⁴ “Verse 18, however, introduces the next chapter which seems to refer to Babylon more as a literal city than as a religious entity.”⁹⁵ It therefore sets the stage for the overthrow of commercial Babylon in chap. 18.

III Conc.

With the collapse of “religious Babylon,”⁹⁶ the stage is set for a tyranny by antichrist unprecedented for its iron-fisted domination of all things in the last half of the tribulation period, much of which we have already examined. Moreover, the stage has also been set for the collapse of commercial Babylon with its control of world markets via the mark of the beast, etc. The one lesson that is above all else for us here is that

of the extent to which God remains in absolute control of everything during that span of time.

⁹⁰Bauer, Walter, Gingrich, F. Wilbur, and Danker, Frederick W., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) 1979.

⁹¹Bauer, Walter, Gingrich, F. Wilbur, and Danker, Frederick W., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) 1979.

⁹²Tom Constable. Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible. Galaxie Software, 2003; 2003. Re 17:18.

⁹³Tom Constable. Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible. Galaxie Software, 2003; 2003. Re 17:18.

⁹⁴Tom Constable. Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible. Galaxie Software, 2003; 2003. Re 17:18.

⁹⁵Walvoord, John F., and Zuck, Roy B., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Scripture Press Publications, Inc.) 1983, 1985.

⁹⁶William MacDonald; edited with introductions by Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible commentary: Old and New Testaments [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1995 by William MacDonald.