

A Red Beast and a Woman Sitting on It

The woman described in Revelation 17 sits astride a red beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. She is described as a great whore. Again, note the underlined parts in the passage that refer to war or acts of war.

The Woman on the Beast

1 And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying to me, Come here; I will show to you the judgment of the great whore that sits on many waters: 2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. 3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit on a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. 4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: 5 And on her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. 6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

The Mystery Explained

7 And the angel said to me, Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and ten horns.

8 The beast that you saw was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth

shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. 9 And here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sits. 10 And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he comes, he must continue a short space. 11 And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goes into perdition. 12 And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. 13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength to the beast.

The Victory of the Lamb

14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

15 And he said to me, The waters which you saw, where the whore sits, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. 16 And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. 17 For God has put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. 18 And the woman which you saw is that great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth. (Revelation 17:1-18, AKJV) [underline added]

These two chapters, Revelation 12 and 17, provide a vivid description of the climax of the ancient conflict between the devil and woman. They put the significance of this war where it belongs: front and center at the end of time. These two chapters plainly call the conflict *war*. They name and describe many of those involved (such as

the devil, his angels, the Lord, the remnant of the seed of the woman, the woman clothed with the sun, and the woman on the beast). They also tell us the final outcome of the war, which is the victory of the Lamb.

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About the Revelation 17 Woman

The woman in Revelation 17 is not standing. She is sitting. Her posture is passive. She is fully submitted to and dependent upon the devil, the great red dragon upon whom she sits, and on the kings and kingdoms of the earth that he rules over in darkness. She is a woman filled with darkness who is in bondage to the devil and has brought forth the seed of the serpent. She is not clothed in light, a symbol of purity, but clothed in earthly seductive clothing; and she is filthy. She is decorated with gold and precious stones and pearls, which according to Old Testament imagery (see Ezek. 16) may refer to her being decked with God's people. She may appear beautiful to the kings of the earth, but in God's eyes she is abominable. She has a golden cup in her hand that is filled with filth and abominations from which she drinks and gives others to drink. She has committed fornication with the kings of the earth and has intoxicated the inhabitants of the earth with her fornication. Her seed is just like her: harlots and abominations. Demons, foul spirits, and unclean and hateful birds dwell in her. She has drunk the blood of God's holy people. She is filled with delicacies that make merchants rich. She has glorified herself and boasted in her position. She is fully deceived and believes she will see no sorrow, even though her judgment is imminent.

At first blush, one might be inclined to think that the Revelation 12 woman refers to the people of God and the Revelation 17 woman refers to those who are not the people of God. However, the underlined part of the following verse makes it crystal clear that some of God's people are found in the Revelation 17 woman. Otherwise, God would not call *His people* to come out of her:

1 And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and

the earth was lightened with his glory. 2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. 3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues. 5 For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. 6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double to her double according to her works: in the cup which she has filled fill to her double. 7 How much she has glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she said in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. 8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judges her. (Rev. 18:1-8, AKJV) [underline added]

What does it mean that God has to call His people out of this filthy woman, whom Revelation 17 also refers to as a great city? First of all, it means that some of His own people have been deceived to such an extent that they have become part of this great city. If they were not deceived, as God's people, they would not be a part of her. This tells us that Satan's war against the seed of woman using filth and sexual perversions was so effective that even God's people became filthy and intoxicated with her fornications and other such abominations. If you doubt that God's people could be in this condition, open your Bibles to Ezekiel 16 and read God's description of unfaithful Jerusalem. You will think at times that you are reading chapter 17 of Revelation.

When God judges the Revelation 17 woman, He will also judge all of His people that are part of her, unless they heed His warning and come out of her. Her main characteristic is defilement. This is how she is identifiable. So, whenever Christians find themselves in Christian settings where sexual sin is tolerated among believers, even their own sexual sin, they should realize they are in “her.” If they are in Christian settings where there is darkness, not light, due to infighting and division among brethren—where conflict is not resolved biblically, but is tolerated and glossed over with talk about love and forgiveness, they are in “her.” If they are in Christian settings where any other name is exalted, where men, not God, are served and followed, they are in “her.” This last condition is the hardest to recognize because the pattern which most people living in the world naturally identify with, and easily accept, is to follow other people and their agendas. It is a situation where prestige, control over others, and greed are at work in some form. Christians that find themselves among Christians who practice or tolerate such things need to respond to God’s call to come out of her fully, and to follow the Lamb of God only, or they will share in her judgment.

Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judges her. (Rev. 18:8, AKJV)

These verses are reminiscent of Paul’s words to the Corinthians believers who had become defiled:

13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. (1 Cor. 3:13–15, KJV)

There are others who are part of the Revelation 17 woman—those who are not God’s people. They are like the Old Testament wife of Ahab whose name was Jezebel. Jezebel’s character represents women who have been

totally taken over by Satan and used for his evil purposes. Instead of helping men return to God, they have been used to enable men's evil ways and to ensnare them, usually sexually, and hold them captive to the devil.

After he is cast down to the earth, the devil is filled with rage, knowing that his time is short. Like a self-absorbed child, he lashes out against everything and everyone. God uses his rage to judge wicked people and even to discipline His own people who are defiled. Do not forget that God used the enemies of Israel to cruelly discipline her in Old Testament times. In the New Testament, many like to talk about God's love as if it has replaced God's discipline. These should not forget that it was in New Testament times that Paul prayed for God to deliver the sexually sinful Christian in Corinth to Satan for the destruction of his flesh so that his spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord. Also, the writer of Hebrews warns several times that the New Testament God of love is still one who disciplines, even scourges, His children to help them come to repentance.



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