

Symbols, Imagery, etc., chapters 18-17

- 17:1 ...the "great whore" signifies a religious system that has apostatized. Religions (spiritual) infidelity is always compared to this sort of human sin.
- 17:2 ...have committed fornication with the kings of the earth...the figure is that of the church apparent that should have been for the Lord but has become hopelessly involved in earthly things. The fornication is the giving of herself to the secular rather than being kept for the Lord. This is amplified in 18:3, 9. The nations of the earth prospered to some degree due to her infidelity.
- 17:3...the scarlet colored beast is identified in vs. 8...he is the Anti-Christ and his seven heads show the administrative supremacy while the ten horns demonstrate the full nature of power. That the beast is full of blasphemy will remind us of 2 Thess 2 and the claim of this person to be God.
- 17:4...The woman arrayed in purple, etc has every mark of royalty but has a cup filled with wickedness. It is again the presentation of a beautiful exterior while the heart is rotten.
- 17:5...The symbols of her name indicate the eastern or mystery religions and in this sense she is the mother of all false worship.
- 17:6...drunken with the blood is a figure that shows the true nature of the woman...one who persecuted the true church.
- 17:9...the seven heads are the seven mountains may be figurative of Rome as the administrative power of the beast...
- 17:10...the seven kings...well, frankly...I am not sure what the symbolism is. We will probably talk about it a little bit but I am really not sure. I can discuss several ideas others offer and it may be that this is why vs. 9 is prefaced with "here is the mind which hath wisdom." In the light of vs. 11, the beast (the Anti-Christ) is the 8th king and he carries with him all the force and strength of the former.
- 17:12...the ten horns (noted in my note on 17:3) are now seen to be ten kings of power sources for the beast. This is consistent with the images of Daniel and the earlier picture of the beast in Revelation. These are ten heads of states (or ten states pictured as heads) but they are not formally identified for us otherwise. Their combined strength enables the beast to be what he is.
- 17:15...the waters are now identified as the nations of peoples (v. 1).
- 17:18...that the woman is further called the "great city" would seem to be even more proof of the identity of Rome as a system.
- 18:1-3...the terms are used to describe the woman and the compromise of her position with the kings of the earth. She enriched them (literally) and they strengthened her. Organized religion has long done this very thing and this is simply the capstone of a lot of aggressive activities against the truth.
- 18:6...double does not mean "twice as much" but reward her to the fullest... it might be ten times as much. The figure is of a debt paid and cancelled.