

## Revelation 17-18: sections, key words and phrases

### The vision

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, **I will show you the judgment of the great whore who is seated on many waters**, with whom the **kings of the earth** have committed **fornication**, and with the wine of whose **fornication** the inhabitants of the earth have become drunk." So he carried me away in the spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on **a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns**. **The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls**, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her **fornication**; and on her forehead was written a name, a mystery: "**Babylon the great**, mother of whores and of earth's abominations." And I saw that the woman was **drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the witnesses to Jesus**.

### The angelic explanation

When I saw her, I was greatly amazed. But the angel said to me, "Why are you so amazed? I will tell you the mystery of the woman, and of the **beast with seven heads and ten horns** that carries her. The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to ascend from the bottomless pit and go to destruction. And the inhabitants of the earth, whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will be amazed when they see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come. "This calls for a mind that has wisdom: **the seven heads are seven mountains** on which the woman is seated; **also, they are seven kings**, of whom five have fallen, one is living, and the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain only a little while. As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to destruction. **And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings** who have not yet received a kingdom, but they are to receive authority as kings for **one hour**, together with the beast. These are united in yielding their power and authority to the beast; they will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful." And he said to me, "The waters that you saw, where the whore is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages. And **the ten horns that you saw**, they and the beast will hate the whore; they will make her **desolate** and naked; they will devour her flesh and **burn her up with fire**. For God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by agreeing to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God will be fulfilled. The woman you saw is **the great city** that rules over the **kings of the earth**."

### The angelic pronouncement of judgment and call to "come out"

After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority; and the earth was made bright with his splendor. He called out with a mighty voice, "Fallen, fallen is **Babylon the great!** It has become a dwelling place of demons, a haunt of every foul and hateful bird, a haunt of every foul and hateful beast. For **all the 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 have grown rich from the power of her **luxury**." Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, so that you do not take part in her sins, and so that you do not share in her plagues; for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. Render to her as she herself has rendered, and repay her double for her deeds; mix a double draught for her in the cup she mixed. As she glorified herself and lived **luxuriously**, so give her a like measure of **torment** and grief. Since

in her heart she says, 'I rule as a queen; I am no widow, and I will never see grief,' therefore her plagues will come in a single day-- pestilence and mourning and famine-- and **she will be burned with fire**; for mighty is the Lord God who judges her."

#### The mourning response

And the **kings of the earth**, who committed **fornication** and lived in **luxury** with her, will weep and wail over her when they see **the smoke of her burning**; they will stand far off, **in fear of her torment**, and say, "**Alas, alas, the great city, Babylon, the mighty city!** For in **one hour** your judgment has come." And the **merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her**, since no one buys their cargo anymore, cargo of **gold, silver, jewels and pearls**, fine linen, purple, silk and scarlet, all kinds of scented wood, all articles of ivory, all articles of costly wood, bronze, iron, and marble, cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, olive oil, choice flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, slaves--and human lives. "The fruit for which your soul longed has gone from you, and all your dainties and your splendor are lost to you, never to be found again!" The **merchants** of these wares, who gained wealth from her, will stand far off, **in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning** aloud, "**Alas, alas, the great city, clothed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, with jewels, and with pearls!** For in **one hour** all this wealth **has been laid waste!**" And all shipmasters and seafarers, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off and cried out as they saw **the smoke of her burning**, "**What city was like the great city?**" And they threw dust on their heads, as they wept and mourned, crying out, "**Alas, alas, the great city**, where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth! For in **one hour she has been laid waste.**"

#### The celebratory response

Rejoice over her, O heaven, you saints and apostles and prophets! **For God has given judgment for you against her.**" Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "With such violence **Babylon the great city** will be thrown down, and will be found no more; and the sound of harpists and minstrels and of flutists and trumpeters will be heard in you no more; and an artisan of any trade will be found in you no more; and the sound of the millstone will be heard in you no more; and the light of a lamp will shine in you no more; and the voice of bridegroom and bride will be heard in you no more; for your merchants were the magnates of the earth, and **all nations were deceived by your sorcery.** And **in you was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slaughtered on earth.**"