

“Mother of Harlots”

As with many of the texts in The Revelation, this one attracts its fair share of speculation. Is it that simple? Or, is the interpretation more complex? Thus far in this Book the texts have been open to variable interpretations, though not as many as are claimed by certain factions within the churches. Themes and general aims are fairly easy to discern, but details are elusive, because there appears to be no fixed meaning at times.

The important crux in this particular text is that of the identity of the ‘harlot’. Is it, as so many claim, the fake ‘church’ of the Roman Catholics? Or, is it something else? After all, as has been suggested previously, ‘Babylon’ represents not so much the original city of that name, but, rather, everything that Babylon enacted against God. So, ‘Babylon’ can be applied to any godless group or movement, whether it is Rome or any other heretical godless system (which is anti-Christ). In this text we find a complicated prophecy, so the interpretation is broad.

Verses 1&2

1.

“And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgement of the great whore that sitteth upon 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.”

John’s attention is now brought to bear on another issue, by one of the angels used of God to bring plagues to the earth. He said, ‘Come with me – I want to show you how God has judged the ‘great whore’.’

The ‘judgement’ is the condemnation and punishment God will give to this ‘whore’. It will be a legal judgement, because all that God does is based on His laws. The ‘whore’ is ‘great’, meaning that her defilements are extensive and wide-ranging. What is meant by ‘whore’ in this

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context? It means a prostitute – one who defiles her own body for gain. In an individual sense this can apply to any woman who is not married but who consents to sexual activity with another, whether this is for money or not. This is because even pleasure alone is a gain. Therefore, a woman who lives with a man for the purposes of sexual union, is, properly, a 'whore' or prostitute. The gains may be pleasure, or a house, or children, or any number of non-cash things, but they are 'gains' nonetheless. Note that the entire world is captivated by this wholesale, wicked promiscuity.

'Whore' also applies to a person or group who is an idolater, which is why many see this text as meaning 'Rome' ('Babylon'). The word 'whore' in the Greek is **porne**, the basis of our modern word 'pornography'. It refers to females. But there is also a word for male whores,

pornos

. For the purposes of the text there is no gender, but only a reference to the *actions* of the whore.

There appears to be a close connection between this word and **piprasko**, which bears the meaning of selling into slavery, or, being under the control of sin, and the love of sinning, being given-over into the power of another.

This whore 'sitteth upon many waters'. That is, the whore's abode is fixed and permanent, showing how comfortably she dwells amongst the people. To be able to thus sit comfortably needs the consensus of the people, and so those people are cohorts and co-sinners with her, sharing the same fate. 'Many waters' does not refer to water, but to its figurative meaning, 'peoples'. Thus, the whore has power amongst and over many peoples in the countries of the world. The 'whore' then' is a godless system or religion covering the world.

The angel tells John that this 'whore' has influenced kings (and, through them, the people they head: 'kings' can mean any who rule, from actual kings to leaders in the churches), who performed fornication with her, or because of her. Some say the 'kings' refer to Roman emperors; such a meaning is not necessary, though may be possible. 'Fornication', **porneuo**, can refer to both sexual sins and idolatry.

The influence of the whore is so overwhelming that the people of earth are 'drunk with the wine of her fornication'. When a movement or idea is prevalent, it drags many people into its web, influencing them to give themselves over to its power. In this case, they are beyond proper

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thought and logic and are intoxicated. The word can mean one whose state leads to mass murder and violence. Again, this is probably why many say this fits the picture of Rome and its murderous past and present. Those who are 'drunk' will receive God's fiery wrath, as 'wine' in the Greek signifies, metaphorically.

Sadly, people of this earth do not care if their beliefs and actions lead to God's wrath. This either means they are incapable of rational thought, or, they reject God and His existence. No man or woman in their right mind will reject a Judge Whose warning has been given!

Verses 3-6

1.

"So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

2.

And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:

3.

And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

4.

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."

John was carried away 'in the spirit'. This seems very similar to the way Phillip was taken from one place to another, instantly, for to be carried away implies great speed. Was it physically or inwardly (as the term can also suggest)? In this case it would mean physically (yet not obviously, as it was a vision), performed by spiritual laws, from God.

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John, then, suddenly found himself standing in a desert. He saw a scarlet covered beast, and a woman sitting on its back. The beast was 'full of names of blasphemy' and had seven heads and ten horns. The 'beast' represents brutal man, savage and lusting for blood and violence. The beast was the colour of scarlet, which probably symbolised its violent nature.

The beast was full of the names of blasphemy. The 'names' symbolised everything the beast and the woman stood for and show us that by their very nature the woman and beast were fully evil. The 'names' were of blasphemy... anything that slanders or injures God's good name. So 'names of blasphemy' means everything sinful and bad, whether by thought or by deed, done in God's name. It is a truism that just one sin never stands alone, but spreads out to encompass many other sins, thus leading to destruction, being abusive toward God and toward self.

(When applied to ordinary people, it is necessary to get rid of the sin, as well as the inward compliance and lust that engendered it in the first place. Being sorry for one's sin is not enough to be rid of its influence. One also has to root out the very core of the sin, which resides deep in one's soul. No sin is simply added onto the soul; it arises from its very depths as a cancer ruling its life. I think that few Christians realise just how vile a sin is. Most think it is merely something that is stuck to their mind or heart. But, it is far more than that – it is part of their minds and heart, organically included and organically controlling it, finally arising as a publicly-conducted action.

Unless it is finally rooted out by prayer and the seeking of forgiveness from those who have been affected by it, the sin will always return to rule the person, whose first reaction is to 'be sorry'. Each time it returns it will be stronger and more virulent. To be sorry is usually the sign of being found out, rather than of being truly and inwardly convinced of one's own dreadful, sinful state. It usually means that the person has not really dealt with the sin, because he or she does not fully acknowledge that a problem exists.

To be fully conversant with one's own sin and to acknowledge it, leads to an inner fear of God's judgement and a vital sense of shame, which results in repentance and a desire to lead a new life, with the sin eradicated. This will soften the character and life of the person to the extent that others will notice the difference. Without this change from the very root of one's soul, there can be no evidence of godly change, and the person will experience confusion and lack of grace and blessing in his or her life).

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The beast had seven heads and ten horns. The heads signify lords or masters, that which rules after having seized power. The horns symbolise great power and strength. (*The meaning of courage does not apply in this case, because there is only defiance and not courage in those who defy God*).

Is there any connection with any other part of scripture? Maybe, and maybe not. The text itself does not specify if this is a fulfilment of such other texts. Suffice to say that the vision is to do with antichrist and expands on previous teaching on the topic.

There are many ideas as to who the woman is... Rome, a revived Babylon, the whole godless peoples of the earth. The addition of 'seven hills' usually leads Christian writers to think it means Rome under the popes, for Rome was originally built upon seven hills. I have no problem in viewing the 'whore' or Babylon as Rome, with the proviso that it also includes any system that rejects and opposes God. In their days, reformed theologians only had Roman Catholicism itself to consider. Today, we see with our own eyes how Catholic popes now lead Christian churches and cults toward a new multi-religion Romanism, thus enabling us to see Rome as symbolically meaning everything that is anti-God, and anti-Christ.

The description of the whore's finery certainly looks like that of popes and the hierarchical Catholic lifestyle... purple, scarlet, gold, precious stones and pearls, with a golden cup in her hand. These are the trappings of kingship and might. They are the booty gleaned from centuries of violent overthrow, thievery and spiritual fraud. Note how Roman emissaries, whether from the Vatican or from its allies, such as Spanish conquistadors or knight crusaders, killed and stole vast amounts of money, gold and other treasures, to pay for the 'cause' of Romanism.

The gold is to such a degree that the woman herself appears to be gilded or precious. The stones represent honour being given to her, but it can also refer to stumbling stones. The pearls represent something of great value. Thus, Rome has been held to be 'precious'. The golden cup represents all of Romanism's life experiences, including its prosperity, its blood-lust, and its penchant for disobedience and spiritual treachery, abominations and filthiness of her fornication. Abominations are those things that are foul and detested by God.

How so many Christians can treat with Rome as a brother, or as the Church, escapes logic and Biblical truth! God sees Rome as a stench, as anathema, as ***bdelusso***... a stinking mess. Rome is full of 'filthiness',

akathartes

. That is, Rome is impure and unclean in thought and action, and thus incapable of being presented to God. She has deceived her own self by aligning with its own idolatry and disobedience. Just like king Saul, she cannot comprehend what she has done wrong, she is so

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fouled by her own sins. Whether this is Rome or Rome and all other evil movements, is inconsequential, for all share the same guilt and same punishments.

A name is written on the forehead of the whore: 'Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.' Like Sodom, Babylon was the epitome of evil and all that was sinful. So, God used its name to symbolise all that ever was/will be evil. As such that great city was the 'mother' of all other harlots (whores) and contained the seeds of all evils to come. This was, and is, a 'mystery' to evil men, but plain to godly men. This begs the question as to why 'godly' men cannot discern what is evil today? There can be only two answers; either they are deceived (but will come out from the deception in a while), or they were never saved to begin with, and so have no spiritual discernment.

Another possible link with Rome is that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints and the martyrs of Jesus. Rome claims its own martyrs, but they are martyrs for Rome, not for Christ. It is sadly true, historically, that some 'Protestant' leaders occasionally put Catholics to death. But, Rome led a centuries-old systematic extermination of all who rejected its claims and teachings, in all the countries it attacked and took over. This continues even today in places such as Mexico and parts of Africa.

Rome believes it has the right to kill others for its own cause and so has become 'drunk' with its own perceived power. As John looked upon this wild beastly woman, he was amazed and looked at her with 'great admiration'. The meaning for this is not our modern one. It means that John looked on with great wonder and contemplation. It does not mean he admired her! His thoughts were 'Who on earth is this character?'

Verses 7-9

1.

"And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

2.

The beast that thou sawest 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.

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3.

And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.”

The angel saw John’s reaction and he asked him why he looked upon the woman with wonder. ‘Let me tell you the truth about her and the beast’, said the angel... (Note the reference to election and the impossibility of a person to choose salvation of his own volition).

The beast ‘was, and is not’. This is a very difficult term to explain, and is almost philosophical. It is like saying ‘it exists, yet it does not’, or ‘you see it, yet it is not there’. One way to put it is that the beast John saw was also existing in another form. It is rather like seeing the colour black and yet it was also white. This describes Satan, who, though black and foul in sin appears as an angel of light. Thus, the beast will appear in many guises throughout its earthly rampage, changing its form as contemporary life demands.

The beast will come out of the bottomless pit, the abyss where unimaginable evil lives, to spread its evil like a vile disease. It will lead itself (go) into perdition – damnation or destruction, without eternal life. When the beast publicly enters into ruin and destruction, everyone who followed it will look on in amazement, for their own end is tied in with the end of the beast. They are the unsaved who thought they were safe in God, but who followed ungodliness. They knew not the predestination of God to eternal life. Their names were not written in the book of life ‘from the foundation of the world’.

They will look on in amazement and horror, as the object of their faith and hope is seen to be both evil and an angel of light (hence, ‘as there but not there’). The angel then said to John – ‘Now, you will need spiritual discernment to understand that the seven heads of the beast are actually seven mountains. Upon these seven mountains will sit the great whore.’ This almost clinches the idea that the angel is referring to Rome. Though not made clear before, it seems almost a certainty in this verse.

Verses 10-13

1.

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“And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

2.

And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

3.

And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdoms as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

4.

These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.”

The seven heads also symbolise seven kings, or leaders. Five of them have already gone, one is present and the last one is yet to come in the future. He will last only a short while. Are these ‘kings’ leaders of countries, or of alliances such as the European Union? Are they religious leaders, such as popes?

Five leaders had already gone by the time of John. Perhaps, as some say, the one existing at the time was the pagan emperor. The same writers believed that the coming Christian emperors were the seventh ‘king’. But, how ‘Christian’ were they? Were they genuine or not? Or, does the seventh king appear much later in another guise altogether – such as the reign of the popes, which still continues to this day?

Then, along comes an eighth ruler, from the same stock as the seventh. Some believe the eighth ‘king’ means the truly ‘Christian’ emperors. But, could it not equally be the popes, who were not of the line of emperors, but were of the same national kind and took governmental control from the state? I cannot accept that the eighth king means the Christian emperors, because they would not have gone into perdition...but the popes have, and will, to a man.

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The ten horns are then described as being ten kings yet to come into being. But, when they arise they will be allied to the beast and will last for a short while only. Will these 'kings' be governments or leaders linked with Rome, enjoying its sinful power and might? Note how even recently world leaders have joined with the pope to seek solutions to world problems? And how world religious leaders have similarly joined with Rome, allowing the pope to be their spokesman?

We have been told in this same Book that there will come a day when men will be unable to live their lives unless they have the mark of the beast. At that time, it is possible that governments will link with the papacy in the venture for 'good' reasons, and so all of them will be attracted to the sheer power of being part of such a huge conglomerate of rulers (One World rule?).

All of them will 'have one mind' acting with one accord because they are based on the same idea and ruling power. Because of their closeness to the beast they will offer their combined power back to him, and so they will act as one, being Romanist/satanic to the core.

Verses 14-18

1.

"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.

2.

And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

3.

And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

4.

For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

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5.

And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.”

The combined leaders will then turn on Christians (2013 Note: as has happened with swift ferocity recently), the church, but Christ will win, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings. He will share His victory with those who are His, ‘called... chosen... faithful’. Again, this is a direct reference to election, predestination and the complete trust placed in God by those who are truly saved.

Earlier, I suggested that the waters the whore sat on were peoples. The interpretation is now confirmed in this verse. The ten kings (horns) hate the whore (Rome?) and will one day ruin her, making her ‘desolate and naked’. The whore will be stripped of her power and treasures, making her without authority, showing her shame. In that state she will be prey for her enemies, who will burn her with fire. Thus, Rome (?) will one day be devastated and will fall, its power and structure a pile of dust. So, one day the allies of Rome will turn on her in hatred.

This is because God will fill their hearts with bitterness: He is in full control of the world, even when Satan rules by allowance. They will remain faithful to the woman and the beast until God decides they must rise up to destroy them. Does this coincide with a time when governments will tire of Catholic deviance and interference and wish only for slaughter and the riddance of even the appearance of godliness? (2013 note: Again, this is happening in our lifetime).

To finish this chapter God reminds John that the ‘woman’ is a city/organisation, not a person, and the city would rule all the others in the world. To my knowledge, only Rome complies with the idea of a worldwide centre of control, as it rules religious communities and is central to many other rulerships, such as the EU.

Notes

‘Whore’. In this context the ‘whore’ is a prostitute: a woman who sells’ her body for gain. It also applies to ANY girl/woman who enters into sexual intercourse, for lust or gain. Therefore, in a sexual sense, the modern idea of ‘living together’ makes the female a whore. The same can be said of any female who ‘sleeps’ with a male, as girlfriend, or as a casual acquaintance.

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However, in the strictest sense, a male must be given the same judgment, for the male equivalent is *pornos* . He, too, can be a male prostitute, for money or for lust. Or, he can simply be a fornicator (which includes adultery). Thus, both male and female come under God's judgment, for the same sin... the root of pornē is *pornos* .

Rome/Babylon. Interpreting the 'whore' as Rome depends on the time the subject of this vision exists. For example, the verb "that sitteth", *kathēmai* , is immediate, a present reality. It can refer to someone already seated or to be seated. If it is a present reality (already seated), then the whore cannot be Rome, for at the time of writing, Rome was merely another provincial local church with no influence over others. If it is a future action (to be seated), then it certainly can refer to Rome, whose influence is now worldwide and pernicious.

Scarlet coloured. Was the scarlet colour a satanic use of the same colour of the robe that covered Christ before His crucifixion? (This is a query, not an interpretation).

Summary

One of the angels said he would show the just end of the "great whore", whose presence was illustrated as a woman sitting on the beast from the pit. This immediately tells us the whore is a product of Satan. To the world she appears to be glorious and wonderful, but her role is sinister and foul, full of wickedness. Generally, this whore is held to be Roman Catholicism, and I have no real reason to oppose the idea (though we can also include ANY anti-Christ movement). The whore will murder many Christians and others, under the guise of true worship, and prodded by the wicked beast, whose real purposes are often hidden and yet openly evil. He is a conundrum to many, but not to those who are saved. Countless men and women have no idea just how precarious their present life is, as they allow the beast easy access to their souls, and remain apart from God. Towards the final end of time (which is soon) rulers of the world will side with the beast and the whore, and so persecute believers (as is already happening). They will do this until "the words of God shall be fulfilled", when they will be utterly destroyed.

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