

Handout Revelation Lesson 20: Chapter 17

*Nevertheless, I have a complaint to make: you tolerate the woman Jezebel who claims to be a prophetess, and by her teaching, she is luring my servants away to commit adultery (Rev 2:20).*

Adultery/prostitution is a symbolic image of the covenant people’s rebellion/apostasy from their covenant with Yahweh in the Old and New Testaments; see Part II in the chart:

<b>Image Groups</b>	<b>Part I Covenant relationship</b>	<b>Part II Rebellion</b>	<b>Part III Redemptive Judgment</b>	<b>Part IV Restoration Fulfilled</b>
<b>Covenant Marriage</b>  <b>Examples in Scripture</b>	The Church as the Bride of Yahweh/Christ Isaiah 61:10-11; Jeremiah 2:2; Ezekiel 16:4-14; Rev 19:6-9	Unfaithful adulteress/prostitute Isaiah; 1:21; Jeremiah 3:6-8; 13:22-23, 26; 23:10; Ezekiel 16:15-34; 23:1-12; Hosea 4:10-14; Mt 12:39; 16:4; Mk 8:38; Rev 2:20-22; 17:1-2, 5	Humiliated, abused & abandoned by lovers Jeremiah 3:1b-2; 4:30-31; Ezekiel 16:23-61; 23:35-49; Amos 4:7-8; Hosea 2:4-15	The Bride restored to her Bridegroom in the New Covenant in Christ Matthew 9:15; John 3:28-29; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:25-27; Revelation 19:7-9; 21:2, 9; 22:17

Verses 17:2 and 8 are the eleventh and twelfth time the phrase “those who dwell on the land” appears in Revelation, a phrase symbolic for apostate Israel that appears once for each of the twelve tribes of Israel (Rev 3:10; 6:10; 8:13; 11:10 [twice]; 13:8, 12, 14 [twice]; 14:6; 17:2, 8). *Kathemai* means “to sit down,” #2521 in Strong’s Concordance and appears in Rev 17:1, 3, 7, and 15; the same word also appears in Rev 4:4; 5:13; 6:16; 7:10, 15; 18:7; 19:18 and the related word *kathizo* (to seat/sit) in 3:21. The word *kokkinon* (scarlet) appears in verses 3 and 4.

The Biblical use of the phrase “many waters” or “abundant waters” (*polus hydra*) is significant in Scripture and is set within God’s covenant relationships reflected in His “abundant” blessings and in His liturgical interaction with His people. In all the Biblical passages, it is the same phrase: *polus hydra* (Greek translation of Old Testament and Greek New Testament); for example:

1. Jeremiah 51:13 ~ Babylon’s abundance granted by God: *Enthroned beside abundant waters [polus hydra], rich in treasures, you now meet your end, the finish of your pillaging.*
2. Ezekiel 1:24 ~ the voice from the Glory-Cloud sounds like many or abundant waters, produced by the innumerable angels in the heavenly council: *I also heard the noise of their wings; when they moved, it was like the noise of flood-waters [polus hydra], like the voice of Shaddai, like the noise of a storm, like the noise of an armed camp...*
3. Revelation 1:15 ~ God’s voice from heaven “as the sound of many waters” as His voice is similarly described in Ezekiel 43:2 ~ *like the sound of the ocean [polus hydra]* and Revelation 14:2 ~ *like the sound of the ocean [polus hydra]*.
4. Revelation 17:1 ~ *the great prostitute who is enthroned beside [sitting on] abundant waters*” [polus hydra]; the “city” to whom God has given many blessings.

5. Revelation 19:5-6 ~ *Then a voice came from the throne; it said, "Praise our God, you servants of his and those who fear him, small and great alike." And I heard what seemed to be the voices of a huge crowd, like the sound of the ocean [polus hydra] or the great roar of thunder, answering, "Alleluia! The reign of the Lord our God Almighty has begun" = Liturgical praise.*

The colors of the Great Prostitute's clothing are significant. Some commentators suggest the colors of scarlet and purple are an indication of ungodly conduct (for example Isaiah 1:18, *sin like scarlet*) and a color that stands in sharp contrast to the white garments of the elect (Rev 3:5, 18; 4:4; 6:11; 7:9, 13-14; 15:6; 19:8, 14). But other commentators suggest that she is not dressed like a prostitute, and the description of her clothing is in keeping with the Biblical descriptions of the glorious "city of God" in Isaiah and Revelation. There is also a connection to the colors in the textiles of the Sanctuary and later the Temple's curtains (Ex 26:1, 31, 36), the outer garment of the High Priest (Ex 28:4-8), the jewels that covered the high priest's breastplate (Ex 28:15-21), and the Throne of God in Revelation 4:3-4. Exodus, Ezekiel, and Proverbs all describe the dress of a Bride with finery like the woman/Great Prostitute in Revelation 17. In other words, it is possible that to first-century readers this woman is dressed as a "righteous" high-status woman, as a Bride. She is adorned in the beautiful garments of the Church like those of the textiles of the Sanctuary and the garments of the high priest (Ex 26-28). If this interpretation is correct, the adulterous Bride is still carrying the **outward** adornments of the chaste Old Covenant Bride of Yahweh!

*she was holding a gold winecup*

The wine of her fornication is the blood of the Saints (17:6), and the blood of the witnesses (martyrs) of Jesus is in contrast to the holy and pure cup/chalice of Christ's blood that He offers baptized members of the covenant who are in a state of grace.

Marcus Otho, who is both the 7<sup>th</sup> and the 8<sup>th</sup> on the two lists of Roman emperors, lasted only 95 days on Rome's Imperial throne before being replaced, violently, by Aulus Vitellius who was slain by Vespasian's soldiers in December of AD 69. Vitellius was probably *the one who would stay for a short time*. He was followed by Vespasian, *the one to come*, declared Emperor in December AD 69.

It is critical to understand that the Beast/Satan destroyed Jerusalem as part of his war against Christ. Satan was mistaken in thinking that he could destroy the Great Prostitute and the Bride (of Christ) at the same time. A statement by the Roman Christian historian, Sulpitius Severus, testifies that Rome's goal was to crush both Judaism and Christianity: "Titus himself thought, that the Temple ought specially to be overthrown, in order that the religion of the Jews and of the Christians might more thoroughly be subverted; for that these religions, although contrary to each other, had nevertheless proceeded from the same authors; that the Christians had sprung up from among the Jews; and that, if the root were extirpated, the offshoot would speedily perish" (*The Sacred History of Sulpitius Severus, vol 2, p 111*, quoted from *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*). Also supported in reports by Tacitus.

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