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XVII. Revelation 17 The Harlot. *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 harlot who is seated upon many waters, {2} with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and with the wine of whose fornication the dwellers on earth have become drunk." {3} And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns. {4} The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and bedecked with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her fornication; {5} and on her forehead was written a name of mystery: "Babylon the great, mother of harlots and of earth's abominations." {6} And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. When I saw her I marveled greatly. {7} But the angel said to me, "Why marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman, and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns that carries her. {8} The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is to ascend from the bottomless pit and go to perdition; and the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will marvel to behold the beast, because it was and is not and is to come. {9} This calls for a mind with wisdom: the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated; {10} they are also seven kings, five of whom have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he comes he must remain only a little while. {11} As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to perdition. {12} And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received royal power, but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast. {13} These are of one mind and give over their power and authority to the beast; {14} 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." {15} And he said to me, "The waters that you saw, where the harlot is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues. {16} And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will hate the harlot; they will make her desolate and naked, and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire, {17} for God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by being of one mind and giving over their royal power to the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. {18} And the woman that you saw is the great city which has dominion over the kings of the earth."*

- A. Now the bowls of wrath are over and we are given more explanations as to why this punishment is come and on whom they have come. Those who favor a Roman identity for the Harlot are in the majority today and the Roman identity is practically taken for granted by most. And this despite a very problematic result. The problem become that the Beast is Rome and the harlot upon the beast is

Rome. Thus both images are the same thing. This is maintained even despite the fact that in this chapter we are told that they are so distinct that in the end the beast turns against the Harlot.¹ Our approach here will be what it has been: that there is described in Revelation a Satanic union between Rome and the Jerusalem hierarchy and temple leaders. Thus the beast can and probably does represent Rome but the Harlot is Jerusalem (understood as unbelieving Jews and especially the Temple leadership). There are details in this chapter however which defy an explanation at a purely historical level. These verses serve as a humble reminder that we should not try to see Revelation as merely having a historical fulfillment. Some of the images given here need to be spiritualized and understood as spiritual truths. Perhaps that is all we can do in some the perplexing lines before us in this chapter.

B. Here is a basic outline of The Chapter²:

1. "Beauty"
 - a. Her prostitution vv. 1-2
 - b. Her Place - v. 3
 - c. Her prosperity - v. 4
 - d. Her perversions - vv. 4-5
 - e. Her persecutions - v. 6
 - f. Her personification - v. 18.
2. And The Beast -
 - a. The Portrait of the beast - vv. 3, 9
 - b. The Place from which he comes v. 8
 - c. The Product³ which he produces v. 8b
 - d. The Period in which he comes vv. 10-13.
 - e. The Passion of beast - v. 14
 - f. The Prominence of the Beast v. 15
 - g. The Purpose he carries out - vv. 16-17

C. ***Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot*** - We have discussed before in these notes the prophetic tradition of the use of the term "Harlot" With only two exceptions⁴, the prophets always use the term to refer to Jerusalem. There are nearly one hundred references to the harlotry of Jerusalem/Israel in the Old Testament. Thus John is tapping into a rich tradition here. We cannot possibly look at all the references but it is important to list some:

1. (Exo 34:14-16) *(for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God), {15} lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and when they play the **HARLOT** after their gods and sacrifice to their gods and one invites you, you eat of his sacrifice, {16} and you take of their daughters for your sons, and their daughters play the **HARLOT** after their gods and make your sons play the **HARLOT***

¹Such scholars default to a description of internecine struggles in Rome that would eventually emerge. Perhaps but this is a stretch and does not take seriously that the text before us surely treat the Harlot and the beast as quite distinct.

²Adapted by me from Adrian Rogers

³To delude, deceive and mislead - cf 2 Thess 2:9-12

⁴Isaiah 23 Calls the city of Tyre a harlot and Nahum 1-3 refers to Ninevah as a harlot.

- after their gods.*
2. (Deu 31:15-22) *And the LORD appeared in the tent in a pillar of cloud; and the pillar of cloud stood by the door of the tent. {16} And the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, you are about to sleep with your fathers; then this people will rise and play the **HARLOT** after the strange gods of the land, where they go to be among them, and they will forsake me and break my covenant which I have made with them. {17} Then my anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and hide my face from them, and they will be devoured; and many evils and troubles will come upon them, so that they will say in that day, 'Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?' {18} And I will surely hide my face in that day on account of all the evil which they have done, because they have turned to other gods. {19} Now therefore write this song, and teach it to the people of Israel; put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the people of Israel. {20} For when I have brought them into the land flowing with milk and honey, which I swore to give to their fathers, and they have eaten and are full and grown fat, they will turn to other gods and serve them, and despise me and break my covenant. {21} And when many evils and troubles have come upon them, this song shall confront them as a witness (for it will live unforgotten in the mouths of their descendants); for I know the purposes which they are already forming, before I have brought them into the land that I swore to give." {22} So Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught it to the people of Israel.*
 3. (Isa 1:19-28) *If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; {20} But if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." {21} How the faithful city has become a **HARLOT**, she that was full of justice! Righteousness lodged in her, but now murderers. {22} Your silver has become dross, your wine mixed with water. {23} Your princes are rebels and companions of thieves. Every one loves a bribe and runs after gifts. They do not defend the fatherless, and the widow's cause does not come to them. {24} Therefore the Lord says, the LORD of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel: "Ah, I will vent my wrath on my enemies, and avenge myself on my foes. {25} I will turn my hand against you and will smelt away your dross as with lye and remove all your alloy. {26} And I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counselors as at the beginning. Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city." {27} Zion shall be redeemed by justice, and those in her who repent, by righteousness. {28} But rebels and sinners shall be destroyed together, and those who forsake the LORD shall be consumed.*
 4. (Ezek 16) *Again the word of the LORD came to me: {2} "Son of man, make known to Jerusalem her abominations, {3} and say, Thus says the Lord GOD to Jerusalem: Your origin and your birth are of the land of the Canaanites; your father was an Amorite, and your mother a Hittite. {4} And as for your birth, on the day you were born your navel string was not*

cut, nor were you washed with water to cleanse you, nor rubbed with salt, nor swathed with bands. {5} No eye pitied you, to do any of these things to you out of compassion for you; but you were cast out on the open field, for you were abhorred, on the day that you were born. {6} "And when I passed by you, and saw you weltering in your blood, I said to you in your blood, 'Live, {7} and grow up like a plant of the field.' And you grew up and became tall and arrived at full maidenhood; your breasts were formed, and your hair had grown; yet you were naked and bare. {8} "When I passed by you again and looked upon you, behold, you were at the age for love; and I spread my skirt over you, and covered your nakedness: yea, I plighted my troth to you and entered into a covenant with you, says the Lord GOD, and you became mine. {9} Then I bathed you with water and washed off your blood from you, and anointed you with oil. {10} I clothed you also with embroidered cloth and shod you with leather; I swathed you in fine linen and covered you with silk. {11} And I decked you with ornaments, and put bracelets on your arms, and a chain on your neck. {12} And I put a ring on your nose, and earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown upon your head. {13} Thus you were decked with gold and silver; and your raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and embroidered cloth; you ate fine flour and honey and oil. You grew exceedingly beautiful, and came to regal estate. {14} And your renown went forth among the nations because of your beauty, for it was perfect through the splendor which I had bestowed upon you, says the Lord GOD. {15} "But you trusted in your beauty, and played the **HARLOT** because of your renown, and lavished your **HARLOTRIES** on any passer-by. {16} You took some of your garments, and made for yourself gaily decked shrines, and on them played the **HARLOT**; the like has never been, nor ever shall be. {17} You also took your fair jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given you, and made for yourself images of men, and with them played the **HARLOT**; {18} and you took your embroidered garments to cover them, and set my oil and my incense before them. {19} Also my bread which I gave you -- I fed you with fine flour and oil and honey -- you set before them for a pleasing odor, says the Lord GOD. {20} And you took your sons and your daughters, whom you had borne to me, and these you sacrificed to them to be devoured. Were your **HARLOTRIES** so small a matter {21} that you slaughtered my children and delivered them up as an offering by fire to them? {22} And in all your abominations and your **HARLOTRIES** you did not remember the days of your youth, when you were naked and bare, weltering in your blood. {23} "And after all your wickedness (woe, woe to you! says the Lord GOD), {24} you built yourself a vaulted chamber, and made yourself a lofty place in every square; {25} at the head of every street you built your lofty place and prostituted your beauty, offering yourself to any passer-by, and multiplying your **HARLOTRY**. {26} You also played the **HARLOT** with the Egyptians, your lustful neighbors, multiplying your **HARLOTRY**, to provoke me to anger. {27} Behold, therefore, I stretched out my hand

against you, and diminished your allotted portion, and delivered you to the greed of your enemies, the daughters of the Philistines, who were ashamed of your lewd behavior. {28} You played the **HARLOT** also with the Assyrians, because you were insatiable; yea, you played the **HARLOT** with them, and still you were not satisfied. {29} You multiplied your **HARLOTRY** also with the trading land of Chaldea; and even with this you were not satisfied. {30} "How lovesick is your heart, says the Lord GOD, seeing you did all these things, the deeds of a brazen **HARLOT**; {31} building your vaulted chamber at the head of every street, and making your lofty place in every square. Yet you were not like a **HARLOT**, because you scorned hire. {32} Adulterous wife, who receives strangers instead of her husband! {33} Men give gifts to all **HARLOTS**; but you gave your gifts to all your lovers, bribing them to come to you from every side for your **HARLOTRIES**. {34} So you were different from other women in your **HARLOTRIES**: none solicited you to play the **HARLOT**; and you gave hire, while no hire was given to you; therefore you were different. {35} "Wherefore, O **HARLOT**, hear the word of the LORD: {36} Thus says the Lord GOD, Because your shame was laid bare and your nakedness uncovered in your **HARLOTRIES** with your lovers, and because of all your idols, and because of the blood of your children that you gave to them, {37} therefore, behold, I will gather all your lovers, with whom you took pleasure, all those you loved and all those you loathed; I will gather them against you from every side, and will uncover your nakedness to them, that they may see all your nakedness. {38} And I will judge you as women who break wedlock and shed blood are judged, and bring upon you the blood of wrath and jealousy. {39} And I will give you into the hand of your lovers, and they shall throw down your vaulted chamber and break down your lofty places; they shall strip you of your clothes and take your fair jewels, and leave you naked and bare. {40} They shall bring up a host against you, and they shall stone you and cut you to pieces with their swords. {41} And they shall burn your houses and execute judgments upon you in the sight of many women; I will make you stop playing the **HARLOT**, and you shall also give hire no more. {42} So will I satisfy my fury on you, and my jealousy shall depart from you; I will be calm, and will no more be angry. {43} Because you have not remembered the days of your youth, but have enraged me with all these things; therefore, behold, I will requite your deeds upon your head, says the Lord GOD. "Have you not committed lewdness in addition to all your abominations? {44} Behold, every one who uses proverbs will use this proverb about you, 'Like mother, like daughter.' {45} You are the daughter of your mother, who loathed her husband and her children; and you are the sister of your sisters, who loathed their husbands and their children. Your mother was a Hittite and your father an Amorite. {46} And your elder sister is Samaria, who lived with her daughters to the north of you; and your younger sister, who lived to the south of you, is Sodom with her daughters. {47} Yet you were not content to walk in their ways, or do

according to their abominations; within a very little time you were more corrupt than they in all your ways. {48} As I live, says the Lord GOD, your sister Sodom and her daughters have not done as you and your daughters have done. {49} Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, surfeit of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy. {50} They were haughty, and did abominable things before me; therefore I removed them, when I saw it. {51} Samaria has not committed half your sins; you have committed more abominations than they, and have made your sisters appear righteous by all the abominations which you have committed. {52} Bear your disgrace, you also, for you have made judgment favorable to your sisters; because of your sins in which you acted more abominably than they, they are more in the right than you. So be ashamed, you also, and bear your disgrace, for you have made your sisters appear righteous. {53} "I will restore their fortunes, both the fortunes of Sodom and her daughters, and the fortunes of Samaria and her daughters, and I will restore your own fortunes in the midst of them, {54} that you may bear your disgrace and be ashamed of all that you have done, becoming a consolation to them. {55} As for your sisters, Sodom and her daughters shall return to their former estate, and Samaria and her daughters shall return to their former estate; and you and your daughters shall return to your former estate. {56} Was not your sister Sodom a byword in your mouth in the day of your pride, {57} before your wickedness was uncovered? Now you have become like her an object of reproach for the daughters of Edom and all her neighbors, and for the daughters of the Philistines, those round about who despise you. {58} You bear the penalty of your lewdness and your abominations, says the LORD. {59} "Yea, thus says the Lord GOD: I will deal with you as you have done, who have despised the oath in breaking the covenant, {60} yet I will remember my covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish with you an everlasting covenant. {61} Then you will remember your ways, and be ashamed when I take your sisters, both your elder and your younger, and give them to you as daughters, but not on account of the covenant with you. {62} I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall know that I am the LORD, {63} that you may remember and be confounded, and never open your mouth again because of your shame, when I forgive you all that you have done, says the Lord GOD."

5. (Hosea 1) The word of the LORD that came to Hosea the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel. {2} When the LORD first spoke through Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea, "Go, take to yourself a wife of **HARLOTRY** and have children of **HARLOTRY**, for the land commits great **HARLOTRY** by forsaking the LORD." {3} So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. {4} And the LORD said to him, "Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. {5} And on that day,

*I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel." {6} She conceived again and bore a daughter. And the LORD said to him, "Call her name Not pitied, for I will no more have pity on the house of Israel, to forgive them at all. {7} But I will have pity on the house of Judah, and I will deliver them by the LORD their God; I will not deliver them by bow, nor by sword, nor by war, nor by horses, nor by horsemen." {8} When she had weaned Not pitied, she conceived and bore a son. {9} And the LORD said, "Call his name Not my people, for you are not my people and I am not your God." {10} Yet the number of the people of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which can be neither measured nor numbered; and in the place where it was said to them, "You are not my people," it shall be said to them, "Sons of the living God." {11} And the people of Judah and the people of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint for themselves one head; and they shall go up from the land, for great shall be the day of Jezreel.(Hosea 2) Say to your brother, "My people," and to your sister, "She has obtained pity." {2} "Plead with your mother, plead -- for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband -- that she put away her **HARLOTRY** from her face, and her adultery from between her breasts; {3} lest I strip her naked and make her as in the day she was born, and make her like a wilderness, and set her like a parched land, and slay her with thirst. {4} Upon her children also I will have no pity, because they are children of **HARLOTRY**. {5} For their mother has played the **HARLOT**; she that conceived them has acted shamefully. For she said, 'I will go after my lovers, who give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, my oil and my drink.' {6} Therefore I will hedge up her way with thorns; and I will build a wall against her, so that she cannot find her paths. {7} She shall pursue her lovers, but not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them. Then she shall say, 'I will go and return to my first husband, for it was better with me then than now.' {8} And she did not know that it was I who gave her the grain, the wine, and the oil, and who lavished upon her silver and gold which they used for Baal. {9} Therefore I will take back my grain in its time, and my wine in its season; and I will take away my wool and my flax, which were to cover her nakedness. {10} Now I will uncover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and no one shall rescue her out of my hand. {11} And I will put an end to all her mirth, her feasts, her new moons, her Sabbaths, and all her appointed feasts. {12} And I will lay waste her vines and her fig trees, of which she said, 'These are my hire, which my lovers have given me.' I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall devour them. {13} And I will punish her for the feast days of the Baals when she burned incense to them and decked herself with her ring and jewelry, and went after her lovers, and forgot me, says the LORD. {14} "Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her. {15} And there I will give her her vineyards, and make the Valley of Achor a door of hope. And there she shall answer as in the days of her youth, as at the time when she came out of the land of Egypt. {16} "And in that day,*

says the LORD, you will call me, 'My husband,' and no longer will you call me, 'My Baal.' {17} For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, and they shall be mentioned by name no more. {18} And I will make for you a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the creeping things of the ground; and I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land; and I will make you lie down in safety. {19} And I will betroth you to me for ever; I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy. {20} I will betroth you to me in faithfulness; and you shall know the LORD. {21} "And in that day, says the LORD, I will answer the heavens and they shall answer the earth; {22} and the earth shall answer the grain, the wine, and the oil, and they shall answer Jezreel; {23} and I will sow him for myself in the land. And I will have pity on Not pitied, and I will say to Not my people, 'You are my people'; and he shall say 'Thou art my God.'" (Hosea 3) And the LORD said to me, "Go again, love a woman who is beloved of a paramour and is an adulteress; even as the LORD loves the people of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins." {2} So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and a lethech of barley. {3} And I said to her, "You must dwell as mine for many days; you shall not play the **HARLOT**, or belong to another man; so will I also be to you." {4} For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or teraphim. {5} Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and they shall come in fear to the LORD and to his goodness in the latter days.

6. Hence there is a prophetic theme at work here in revelation. And, as we shall see, it is not just the theme of Harlotry but also the theme of a love, a marriage vow renewed. We shall see in the chapters ahead, harlotry set aside and the new Jerusalem, beautiful as a bride coming down from heaven. Likewise, we can see again how the prophetic background to this term almost demands that we understand the harlot city here to be Jerusalem not Rome.

D. **with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication** - Those who claim the harlot city is Rome see this verse a reference to all the nations who have courted and bought favor from Rome. But again, this overlooks the traditional use of the phrase, "(all) the kings of the earth." The traditional use of this phrase was to refer to Jerusalem/Israel. Interestingly enough, the phrase "the kings of the earth" often occurs in reference to King Solomon who we discussed two chapters ago in reference to the number 666. Here too, in terms of this phrase, there is a rich tradition at work. It might be good to list some of the occurrences of the phrase in the Old Testament and see how we might understand its use here:

1. (1 Ki 4:34) *And men came from all peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and from all **the kings of the earth**, who had heard of his wisdom.*
2. (2 Chr 9:22-23) *Thus King Solomon excelled all **the kings of the earth** in riches and in wisdom. {23} And all the kings of the earth sought the*

presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put into his mind.

3. (Psa 89:20-52) *I have found David, my servant; with my holy oil I have anointed him; {21} so that my hand shall ever abide with him, my arm also shall strengthen him. {22} The enemy shall not outwit him, the wicked shall not humble him. {23} I will crush his foes before him and strike down those who hate him. {24} My faithfulness and my steadfast love shall be with him, and in my name shall his horn be exalted. {25} I will set his hand on the sea and his right hand on the rivers. {26} He shall cry to me, 'Thou art my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation.' {27} And I will make him the first-born, the highest of **the kings of the earth**. {28} My steadfast love I will keep for him for ever, and my covenant will stand firm for him. {29} I will establish his line for ever and his throne as the days of the heavens. {30} If his children forsake my law and do not walk according to my ordinances, {31} if they violate my statutes and do not keep my commandments, {32} then I will punish their transgression with the rod and their iniquity with scourges; {33} but I will not remove from him my steadfast love, or be false to my faithfulness. {34} I will not violate my covenant, or alter the word that went forth from my lips. {35} Once for all I have sworn by my holiness; I will not lie to David. {36} His line shall endure for ever; his throne as long as the sun before me. {37} Like the moon it shall be established for ever; it shall stand firm while the skies endure." Selah {38} But now thou hast cast off and rejected, thou art full of wrath against thy anointed. {39} Thou hast renounced the covenant with thy servant; thou hast defiled his crown in the dust. {40} Thou hast breached all his walls; thou hast laid his strongholds in ruins. {41} All that pass by despoil him; he has become the scorn of his neighbors. {42} Thou hast exalted the right hand of his foes; thou hast made all his enemies rejoice. {43} Yea, thou hast turned back the edge of his sword, and thou hast not made him stand in battle. {44} Thou hast removed the scepter from his hand, and cast his throne to the ground. {45} Thou hast cut short the days of his youth; thou hast covered him with shame. Selah {46} How long, O LORD? Wilt thou hide thyself for ever? How long will thy wrath burn like fire? {47} Remember, O Lord, what the measure of life is, for what vanity thou hast created all the sons of men! {48} What man can live and never see death? Who can deliver his soul from the power of Sheol? Selah {49} Lord, where is thy steadfast love of old, which by thy faithfulness thou didst swear to David? {50} Remember, O Lord, how thy servant is scorned; how I bear in my bosom the insults of the peoples, {51} with which thy enemies taunt, O LORD, with which they mock the footsteps of thy anointed. {52} Blessed be the LORD for ever! Amen and Amen.*
4. (Psa 102:12-16) *But thou, O LORD, art enthroned for ever; thy name endures to all generations. {13} Thou wilt arise and have pity on Zion; it is the time to favor her; the appointed time has come. {14} For thy servants hold her stones dear, and have pity on her dust. {15} The nations*

will fear the name of the LORD, and all **the kings of the earth** thy glory.
{16} For the LORD will build up Zion, he will appear in his glory;

5. (Lam 4:1-13) *How the gold has grown dim, how the pure gold is changed! The holy stones lie scattered at the head of every street. {2} The precious sons of Zion...{6} For the chastisement of the daughter of my people has been greater than the punishment of Sodom, which was overthrown in a moment, no hand being laid on it..{9} Happier were the victims of the sword than the victims of hunger, who pined away, stricken by want of the fruits of the field. {10} The hands of compassionate women have boiled their own children; they became their food in the destruction of the daughter of my people. {11} The LORD gave full vent to his wrath, he poured out his hot anger; and he kindled a fire in Zion, which consumed its foundations. {12} **The kings of the earth** did not believe, or any of the inhabitants of the world, that foe or enemy could enter the gates of Jerusalem. {13} This was for the sins of her prophets and the iniquities of her priests, who shed in the midst of her the blood of the righteous.*
6. Yet again we see how this phrase refers to Israel in relation to the rest of the world. Though there is a context is blessing more often it is the absence of blessing due to sin and infidelity. Due to this there is punishment and the experience of wrath. So again, using our interpretation of the harlot city as Jerusalem provides for a richer context biblically speaking.

- E. **fornication** - the sexual imagery is strong but fitting for God relates to his people like a groom or husband to his bride or wife.
- F. ***I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns.*** - Here the image recalls some work we have already done. We have seen the horrible red dragon before. He is Satan himself yet manifest in a way that describes the Herodian dynasty in collusion with the Roman Empire. The color red evokes Herod who was an Edomite (Red). The seven heads represent the seven Herods and the Ten horns represent the ten Roman emperors with whom the Herodian dynasty interacted (See Rev 12). The Harlot, Jerusalem rides this beast. The woman here is obviously the antithesis of the Woman in Chapter 12. Another way of understanding this image is to hold that the beast referred to here is the First Beast of Chapter 13 (namely, Rome) for that beast looked a lot like the dragon. Thus the woman (harlot) riding the beast is Jerusalem but she rides atop Rome. Scholars who favor the Roman identity of the harlot obviously have a very different interpretation. Here is a quote from one such scholar: "The beast is the one of Chapter 13 (now arrayed in scarlet) reflecting the fiery red dragon of chapter 12 and wearing blasphemous names all over, not just on its heads. It is the empire, the woman being the goddess Rome sustained by the great empire. She is in fact riding a tiger." (Wilfred Harrington, O.P. Revelation p. 171).
- G. ***The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and bedecked with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her fornication... And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.***

1. In terms of the purple and scarlet robes, some scholars have noted that they are imperial colors. This may be true but only in a rather general way. They are also costly and thus represent worldly wealth and power. Thus she is also bedecked with pearls and other jewels.
2. As regards the golden cup full of abominations, recall what Jesus had said to the Scribes and Pharisees: *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you cleanse the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of extortion and rapacity. {26} You blind Pharisee! first cleanse the inside of the cup and of the plate, that the outside also may be clean. {27} "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. {28} So you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but within you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. {29} "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, {30} saying, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' {31} Thus you witness against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. {32} Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers. {33} You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell? {34} Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, {35} that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of innocent Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. {36} Truly, I say to you, all this will come upon this generation. {37} "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! {38} Behold, your house is forsaken and desolate. {39} For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'" Matt 23:25-39)*

H. ***"Babylon the great, mother of harlots and of earth's abominations."*** Again when this verse is seen many scholars simply say, "Aha, Rome." They do this because of a first Century custom of calling Rome, Babylon. Though this was likely a true custom among some it is not clear how widespread it is. Another explanation is that John is evoking the pattern he has already established in calling Jerusalem, Sodom, Egypt, and Jericho and now Babylon

I. ***The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is to ascend from the bottomless pit and go to perdition*** - The language here is ambiguous but it seems to suggest the passing quality of evil. Satan arises, and troubles the human race but he is already destroyed and will be fully restrained again. Hence there is reason to have hope and there is the absolute need for sober vision here. Evil seems to triumph but it's days are already numbered. Hence, we must get with the winning team, run the race and not grow weary. Perhaps too there is a parody here on the divine name

J. "He who is who was and who is to come." Clearly Satan's name is far less lofty!
the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated; {10} they are also seven kings, five of whom have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he comes he must remain only a little while. - This verse gives us very important clues as to the date of this work and the identity of both the harlot and the beast. The identity of the beast (the beast from the sea) is almost universally accepted as Rome. This beast has seven heads and we are told that this represents seven hills. Rome was well known as the city of seven hills⁵ This was a very universal and well known way of referring to Rome in the ancient world. Hence the beast on which the harlot rides is Rome. We are also told that these heads represent seven kings five of whom are already fallen, one who is and one who is yet to come but will reign for only a short while. Here too, the puzzle is not too difficult to solve if we apply historical fact to the data: Recall some earlier date from chapter 12 wherein we discussed the reigns of Roman emperors. If we apply that list we will note that there were five emperors before Nero, Nero was the sixth, and the emperor following Nero reigned only a few months. That fits the data given us in this verse. It is true there were other emperors to follow but this verse does not presume to give us the full data of Roman emperors into the future, only the data that identifies the beast for us here, imperial Rome, and specifically Emperor Nero who was reigning at the time.⁶ Here is the list of emperors that fit the data of this verse:

1. Julius Ceasar (49-44 BC)
2. Augustus (31 BC - 14 AD)
3. Tiberius (14-37 AD)
4. Gaius (Caligula) (37-41 AD)
5. Claudius (41-54 AD)
6. Nero (54-68)
7. Galba (68-69)⁷
8. Otho (69 AD)
9. Vitellius (69 AD)
10. Vespasian (69-79 AD)

K. ***As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to perdition. And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received royal power, but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast. These are of one mind and give over 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 harlot is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.
- There are a bewildering series of details here and as may be understood, there

⁵The seven hills of Rome are: the Palatine, Aventine, Caelian, Esquiline, Viminal, Quirinal, and Capitoline.)

⁶It is ultimately emperor Vespasian who will deal the death blow. We shall in a few verses how the beast (Rome) turns on the harlot (Jerusalem) and destroys her with fire. This is exactly what happened in 70 AD

⁷Galba reigned only 6 months from June 68 until January 69

are many interpretations that have been attempted. Perhaps a look at some of the details point by point is in order:

1. ***As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven*** - Some scholars see in this detail vestiges of an apparent legend regarding the Emperor Nero. The legend was reportedly that Nero would come to life again. Hence, this eighth leader (Otho was the eighth emperor) is one of the seven emperors who is also an eighth. The text does not have to mean that Nero was reincarnate in Otho (For that would be contrary to Christian teaching) but merely that it is alluding to the common myth about Nero. This would fit in to our earlier discussion of the first beast as Rome However, some scholars reject this theory since it makes use of extra-biblical traditions of questionable influence in the ancient world. These scholars seek an inner biblical argument if this is possible. There is a possible reference to a parable by Christ here which, if we use it also has us spiritualize the meaning more. Recall the following parable from Christ: *I tell you, on the day of judgment men will render account for every careless word they utter; for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to him, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you." But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign; but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will arise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. The queen of the South will arise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. "When the unclean spirit has gone out of a man, he passes through waterless places seeking rest, but he finds none. Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes he finds it empty, swept, and put in order.⁸ Then he goes and brings with him seven other spirits more evil than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. So shall it be also with this evil generation."* (Mat 12:36-45) Again these words of Christ were in the context of the coming judgement on Jerusalem and it is possible that the Holy Spirit is tapping into this tradition when giving the image to John here in Revelation.
2. ***And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received royal power, but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour*** - Ultimately the prophecy reminds us that ten kings are involved. Remember there were ten kings that interacted with the seven Herods and each king or emperor had his hour. It was the tenth king who ultimately

⁸The emphasis here is on the emptiness of the man's soul. It is possible for us to cast a certain sin from our lives. But, if we do not put some virtue in its place there is left in us an emptiness or a vacuum and evil can return with a vengeance.

brought an end to the harlot. Why the text says they have not received power yet is mysterious. Perhaps it means that their full power over the harlot is not yet fulfilled since Jerusalem is not yet destroyed. But it is about to be and when it is their power shall have reached its zenith.

3. **kings for one hour** - Hour in Johanne literature is synonymous for "The decisive or appointed time." This is probably its meaning here.

L. ***And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will hate the harlot; they will make her desolate and naked, and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire, for God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose -***

1. This passage recalls words from Ezekiel that we have already seen: *And I will judge you as women who break wedlock and shed blood are judged, and bring upon you the blood of wrath and jealousy. {39} And I will give you into the hand of your lovers, and they shall throw down your vaulted chamber and break down your lofty places; they shall strip you of your clothes and take your fair jewels, and leave you naked and bare. {40} They shall bring up a host against you, and they shall stone you and cut you to pieces with their swords. {41} And they shall burn your houses and execute judgments upon you in the sight of many women; I will make you stop playing the harlot, and you shall also give hire no more.* (Ezek 16:38-41) Recall again that the historical context of the prophecy of Ezekiel's prophecy was the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. Now it is as though the Lord warns through John that the whole Babylonian conquest is about to be repeated by a new Babylon: Rome. Historically Rome did just this to Jerusalem. Jerusalem was destroyed by a horrible fire in the aftermath of the final breach of the walls. Thus the Beast (Rome) turned on the harlot in hatred and stripped the land of trees etc. This, after a period of a type of partnership especially through the Herodian dynasty but finally after the rise of Jewish zealotry Rome turned ruthlessly and mercilessly on Jerusalem (Israel) and destroyed her.
2. Remember too the words of Daniel that we have already studied:
 - a. Dan 7:1 *In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters. 2 Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. 3 And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. 4 The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. 5 And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. 6 After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. 7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong*

exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.

- b. *Dan 12:1 And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. 2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. 4 But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. 5 Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river. 6 And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? 7 And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.*

3. The fourth Beast of Daniel has accomplished its work The power of the holy people has now been scattered. The Temple is gone and the Kingdom of Jesus is now fully inaugurated.

M. ***And the woman that you saw is the great city which has dominion over the kings of the earth.*** We have dealt with these clues before.

1. Recall Rev 11 wherein the "great city" was described as "the great city which is allegorically Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified." This is Jerusalem.
2. As regards the city which has dominion over the kings of the earth, some immediately conclude this means Rome. However, this was traditional talk for the Davidic king and the city of Jerusalem. Recall a couple of passages in this regard:
 - a. *I have found David, my servant; with my holy oil I have anointed him; {21} so that my hand shall ever abide with him, my arm also shall strengthen him. {22} The enemy shall not outwit him, the wicked shall not humble him. {23} I will crush his foes before him and strike down those who hate him. {24} My faithfulness and my steadfast love shall be with him, and in my name shall his horn be*

exalted. {25} I will set his hand on the sea and his right hand on the rivers. {26} He shall cry to me, 'Thou art my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation.' {27} And I will make him the first-born, the highest of the kings of the earth. (Psa 89:20-27)

b. *Why do the nations conspire, and the peoples plot in vain? {2} The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and his anointed, saying, {3} "Let us burst their bonds asunder, and cast their cords from us." {4} He who sits in the heavens laughs; the LORD has them in derision. {5} Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, {6} "I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill." {7} I will tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my son, today I have begotten you. {8} Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. {9} You shall break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." {10} Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. {11} Serve the LORD with fear, with trembling {12} kiss his feet, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way; for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him. (Psalm 2)*

c. *A Psalm of Solomon. Give the king thy justice, O God, and thy righteousness to the royal son! {2} May he judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with justice! {3} Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness! {4} May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the needy, and crush the oppressor! {5} May he live while the sun endures, and as long as the moon, throughout all generations! {6} May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth! {7} In his days may righteousness flourish, and peace abound, till the moon be no more! {8} May he have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth! {9} May his foes bow down before him, and his enemies lick the dust! {10} May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles render him tribute, may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts! {11} May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him! (Psa 72:1-11)*

N. Jerusalem is now destroyed! A dirge will be sung over her in the next chapter.

XVIII. Chapter 18 The Destruction of the Harlot City *After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority; and the earth was made bright with his splendor. {2} And 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 spirit, a haunt of every foul and hateful bird; {3} for all nations have drunk the wine of her impure passion, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich with the wealth of her wantonness." {4} Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues; {5} for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. {6} 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. {7} As she glorified herself and played the wanton, so give her a like measure of torment and mourning. Since in her heart she says, 'A queen I sit, I am no widow, mourning I shall never see,' {8} so shall her plagues come in a single day, pestilence and mourning and famine, and she shall be burned with fire; for mighty is the Lord God who judges her." {9} And the kings of the earth, who committed fornication and were wanton with her, will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning; {10} they will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say, "Alas! alas! thou great city, thou mighty city, Babylon! In one hour has thy judgment come." {11} And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo any more, {12} 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, {13} cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and slaves, that is, human souls. {14} "The fruit for which thy soul longed has gone from thee, and all thy dainties and thy splendor are lost to thee, never to be found again!" {15} The merchants of these wares, who gained wealth from her, will stand far off, in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud, {16} "Alas, alas, for the great city that was clothed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, bedecked with gold, with jewels, and with pearls! {17} In one hour all this wealth has been laid waste." And all shipmasters and seafaring men, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off {18} and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning, "What city was like the great city?" {19} And they threw dust on their heads, as they wept and mourned, crying out, "Alas, alas, for the great city where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth! In one hour she has been laid waste. {20} Rejoice over her, O heaven, O saints and apostles and prophets, for God has given judgment for you against her!" {21} Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "So shall Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and shall be found no more; {22} and the sound of harpers and minstrels, of flute players and trumpeters, shall be heard in thee no more; and a craftsman of any craft shall be found in thee no more; and the sound of the millstone shall be heard in thee no more; {23} and the light of a lamp shall shine in thee no more; and the voice of bridegroom and bride shall be heard in thee no more; for thy merchants were the great men of the earth, and all nations were deceived by thy sorcery. {24} And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on earth."*

- A. Now the destruction of the city is formally announced. We do not actually witness its destruction, nor does John say he explicitly saw it happen. Here it is announced as a fact. The actual destruction probably took place at the end of Chapter 16:17-19 when the great earthquake took place: *The seventh angel poured his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" And there were flashes of lightning, voices, peals of thunder, and a great earthquake such as had never been since men were on the earth, so great was that earthquake. The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and God remembered great Babylon, to make her drain the cup of the fury of his wrath.* . Also announced is the reaction of kings and merchants of the world.
- B. Here is the general outline of the Chapter
1. The Depravity of Babylon
 - a. The godlessness of her sin - v. 2
 - b. The grossness of her sin - vv. 3-4
 - c. The greatness of her sin - vv. 5-6
 - d. The gleefulness of her sin - v. 7
 - e. The guiltiness of her sin - v. 8
 2. The Disappointment over Babylon
 - a. Monarchs - vv. 9-10
 - b. Merchants - vv. 11-13
 - c. Mariners - vv. 17-19
 3. The Destruction of Babylon
 - a. The Violence of God's judgement - v. 21
 - b. The Vastness of God's judgement - vv. 22-23
 - (1) no more music
 - (2) no more manufacturing
 - (3) no more marrying
 4. The Damnable Deed of Babylon - v. 24.

- C. ***Babylon the great!*** The city is called Babylon the great, and the great city. Many modern scholars simply assume that “Babylon” is a code word for “Rome.” There *are* historical bases for such an approach. Yet we must ask the following questions here: Is this what John means when he says “Babylon?” Would John’s initial audience have understood the term that way and would they have the tradition of using the code word “Babylon” for “Rome?” Even if they did, is John perhaps using it against Jerusalem in a polemical fashion?⁹ At any rate recall that the contention in these notes is that the city is Jerusalem not Rome. Although we shall see many things said of the city which might imply Rome, we shall also see repeated the phrase “the great city.” The key indication of what the “great city” was given back in Rev. 11:8¹⁰ We shall also see how many of the lofty descriptions of “Great Babylon” are not entirely foreign to descriptions of Jerusalem from the Old Testament.
- D. ***“Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! It has become a dwelling place of demons, a haunt of every foul spirit, a haunt of every foul and hateful bird; {3} for all nations have drunk the wine of her impure passion, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich with the wealth of her wantonness.”*** This dirge that is sung over ancient Jerusalem is similar to other dirges we find in the Scriptures. Some of these are dirges and warnings to ancient Jerusalem, others are warnings to other ancient cities (Such as literal Babylon) that God will defend his people.
1. (Isa 21:6-10) *For thus the Lord said to me: “Go, set a watchman, let him announce what he sees. {7} When he sees riders, horsemen in pairs, riders on asses, riders on camels, let him listen diligently, very diligently.” {8} Then he who saw cried: “Upon a watchtower I stand, O Lord, continually by day, and at my post I am stationed whole nights. {9} And, behold, here come riders, horsemen in pairs!” And he answered, “**Fallen, fallen is Babylon;** and all the images of her gods he has shattered to the ground.” {10} O my threshed and winnowed one, what I have heard from the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, I announce to you.*
 2. (Isa 34:10-11,14) *Night and day it [the fire in ancient Babylon] shall not be quenched; its smoke shall go up for ever. From generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever. {11} But **the hawk and the porcupine shall possess it, the owl and the raven shall dwell in it.** He shall stretch the line of confusion over it, and the plummet of chaos over its nobles. And wild beasts shall meet with hyenas, the satyr shall cry to his fellow; yea, there shall the night hag alight, and find for herself a resting place.*
 3. (Jer 51:6-10) *“Flee from the midst of Babylon, let every man save his life! Be not cut off in her punishment, for this is the time of the Lord’s vengeance, the requital he is rendering her. **Babylon was a golden cup in the Lord’s hand, making all the earth drunken; the nations drank of her***

⁹In other words, his point might be, “Who needs Roman enemies when we have our fellow Jews around?!” Or, “Jerusalem has become like Rome for us.”

¹⁰(Rev 11:8) ...the great city which is allegorically called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified.

wine, therefore the nations went mad. {8} Suddenly Babylon has fallen and been broken; wail for her! Take balm for her pain; perhaps she may be healed. {9} We would have healed Babylon, but she was not healed. Forsake her; and let us go each to his own country; for her judgment has reached up to heaven and has been lifted up even to the skies. {10} The LORD has brought forth our vindication; come, let us declare in Zion the work of the LORD our God.

4. (Jer 25:12-31) *Thus the LORD, the God of Israel, said to me: "Take from my hand this cup of the wine of wrath, and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it. {16} They shall drink and stagger and be crazed because of the sword which I am sending among them." {17} So I took the cup from the Lord's hand, and made all the nations to whom the Lord sent me drink it: {18} Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, its kings and princes, to make them a desolation and a waste, a hissing and a curse, as at this day; {19} Pharaoh king of Egypt, his servants, his princes, all his people, {20} and all the foreign folk among them; all the kings of the land of Uz and all the kings of the land of the Philistines (Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod); {21} Edom, Moab, and the sons of Ammon; {22} all the kings of Tyre, all the kings of Sidon, and the kings of the coastland across the sea; {23} Dedan, Tema, Buz, and all who cut the corners of their hair; {24} all the kings of Arabia and all the kings of the mixed tribes that dwell in the desert; {25} all the kings of Zimri, all the kings of Elam, and all the kings of Media; {26} all the kings of the north, far and near, one after another, and all the kingdoms of the world which are on the face of the earth. And after them the king of Babylon shall drink. {27} "Then you shall say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Drink, be drunk and vomit, fall and rise no more, because of the sword which I am sending among you.' {28} "And if they refuse to accept the cup from your hand to drink, then you shall say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: You must drink! {29} For behold, I begin to work evil at the city which is called by my name, and shall you go unpunished? You shall not go unpunished, for I am summoning a sword against all the inhabitants of the earth, says the LORD of hosts.' {30} "You, therefore, shall prophesy against them all these words, and say to them: 'The LORD will roar from on high, and from his holy habitation utter his voice; he will roar mightily against his fold, and shout, like those who tread grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth. {31} The clamor will resound to the ends of the earth, for the LORD has an indictment against the nations; he is entering into judgment with all flesh, and the wicked he will put to the sword, says the LORD.'*
5. (Luke 17:37) *And they said to him, "Where, Lord?" He said to them, "Where the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together."*

E. ***Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues;*** - This echoes the words of our Lord. We have already discussed how Eusebius, and early Church historian indicated that no Christians lost their lives during the siege of Jerusalem

but rather they had received the words of a prophecy and fled to the city of Pella.

1. (Luke 21:20-22) *"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. {21} Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it; {22} for these are days of vengeance, to fulfil all that is written.*
2. (Mat 24:15-18) *"So when you see the desolating sacrilege spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), {16} then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; {17} let him who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house; {18} and let him who is in the field not turn back to take his mantle.*

F. ***Render to her as she herself has rendered, and repay her double for her deeds*** - We have examined previously the seven-fold punishment that God warned would descend on Israel for covenant violations. There is also an old Testament tradition of receiving double for all her iniquity. It is this tradition that is tapped into here. Here are a few examples

1. (Isa 40:1-2) *Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. {2} Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.*
2. (Jer 17:18) *Let those be put to shame who persecute me, but let me not be put to shame; let them be dismayed, but let me not be dismayed; bring upon them the day of evil; destroy them with double destruction!*
3. (Hosea 10:9-10) *From the days of Gibeah, you have sinned, O Israel; there they have continued. Shall not war overtake them in Gibeah? {10} I will come against the wayward people to chastise them; and nations shall be gathered against them when they are chastised for their double iniquity.*
4. (Ezek 16:23) *"And after all your wickedness (woe, woe to you! says the Lord GOD)*

G. ***Since in her heart she says, 'A queen I sit, I am no widow, mourning I shall never see,' {8} so shall her plagues come in a single day, pestilence and mourning and famine, and she shall be burned with fire; for mighty is the Lord God who judges her.***" - This theme too is common in the Old Testament. Once again, it is an image applied to Israel who becomes a widow due to her sin. Here are some examples,

1. (Isa 47:8-9) *Now therefore hear this, you lover of pleasures, who sit securely, who say in your heart, "I am, and there is no one besides me; I shall not sit as a widow or know the loss of children": {9} These two things shall come to you in a moment, in one day; the loss of children and widowhood shall come upon you in full measure, in spite of your many sorceries and the great power of your enchantments.*
2. (Isa 47:10-11- 48:4) *You felt secure in your wickedness, you said, "No one sees me"; your wisdom and your knowledge led you astray, and you said in your heart, "I am, and there is no one besides me." {11} But evil shall come upon you, for which you cannot atone; disaster shall fall upon you, which you will not be able to expiate; and ruin shall come on you*

suddenly, of which you know nothing. Hear this, O house of Jacob, who are called by the name of Israel, and who came forth from the loins of Judah; who swear by the name of the LORD, and confess the God of Israel, but not in truth or right. {2} For they call themselves after the holy city, and stay themselves on the God of Israel; the LORD of hosts is his name. {3} "The former things I declared of old, they went forth from my mouth and I made them known; then suddenly I did them and they came to pass. {4} Because I know that you are obstinate, and your neck is an iron sinew and your forehead brass...

3. (Lam 1:1-6) *How lonely sits the city that was full of people! How like a widow has she become, she that was great among the nations! She that was a princess among the cities has become a vassal. {2} She weeps bitterly in the night, tears on her cheeks; among all her lovers she has none to comfort her; all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they have become her enemies...all her gates are desolate, her priests groan; her maidens have been dragged away, and she herself suffers bitterly. {5} Her foes have become the head, her enemies prosper, because the LORD has made her suffer for the multitude of her transgressions; her children have gone away, captives before the foe. {6} From the daughter of Zion has departed all her majesty...Jerusalem sinned grievously, therefore she became filthy; all who honored her despise her, for they have seen her nakedness; yea, she herself groans, and turns her face away. {9} Her uncleanness was in her skirts; she took no thought of her doom; therefore her fall is terrible, she has no comforter. "O LORD, behold my affliction, for the enemy has triumphed!" {10} The enemy has stretched out his hands over all her precious things; yea, she has seen the nations invade her sanctuary, those whom thou didst forbid to enter thy congregation.*

- H. *And the kings of the earth, who committed fornication and were wanton with her, will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning; {10} they will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say, "Alas! alas! thou great city, thou mighty city, Babylon! In one hour has thy judgment come." {11} And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo any more, {12} 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, {13} cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and slaves, that is, human souls. {14} "The fruit for which thy soul longed has gone from thee, and all thy dainties and thy splendor are lost to thee, never to be found again!" {15} The merchants of these wares, who gained wealth from her, will stand far off, in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud, {16} "Alas, alas, for the great city that was clothed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, bedecked with gold, with jewels, and with pearls! {17} In one hour all this wealth has been laid waste." And all shipmasters and seafaring men, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off {18} and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning, "What city was like the great*

city?" {19} And they threw dust on their heads, as they wept and mourned, crying out, "Alas, alas, for the great city where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth!" - The dirge that continues of a city that is a major trading center where all kinds of goods can be found and wherein merchants found eager customers. Jerusalem was such a city. It was a crossroads of sorts to the East and thus there was great commercial traffic through and around Jerusalem. Clearly these merchants are not concerned about her destruction as such but the loss of a market. Many scholars of course think of Rome as a more likely candidate in terms of this description. True Rome also had great importance to commerce and trade. Yet the problem is that Rome was never completely destroyed as is the city described here. True there was a fire in Rome at the time of Nero and in the 5th century, Alaric did take the city. But Rome was never totally destroyed. A further indication that this is Jerusalem not Rome is that this passage regarding the opulence of ancient Jerusalem is echoed in Ezekiel 16 which we have already examined in some detail. Here are a few quotes from that passage

1. *I clothed you also with embroidered cloth and shod you with leather; I swathed you in fine linen and covered you with silk. {11} And I decked you with ornaments, and put bracelets on your arms, and a chain on your neck...and earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown upon your head. {13} Thus you were decked with gold and silver; and your raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and embroidered cloth; you ate fine flour and honey and oil. You grew exceedingly beautiful, and came to regal estate. {14} And your renown went forth among the nations because of your beauty, for it was perfect through the splendor which I had bestowed upon you, says the Lord GOD. {15} "But you trusted in your beauty, and played the harlot because of your renown, and lavished your harlotries on any passer-by....Thus says the Lord GOD, Because your shame was laid bare and your nakedness uncovered in your harlotries with your lovers, and because of all your idols, and because of the blood of your children that you gave to them, {37} therefore, behold, I will gather all your lovers, with whom you took pleasure, all those you loved and all those you loathed; I will gather them against you from every side, and will uncover your nakedness to them, that they may see all your nakedness...And I will give you into the hand of your lovers, and they shall throw down your vaulted chamber and break down your lofty places; they shall strip you of your clothes and take your fair jewels, and leave you naked and bare. (Ezek 16:10-15ff)*

I. ***In one hour she has been laid waste.*** - Here again, the term hour is not likely meant in a literal sense. An hour is a decisive moment of time. Consider some other examples of the use of the word hour in Johannean usage:

1. (John 2:4) *And Jesus said to her, "O woman, what have you to do with me? My **hour** has not yet come."*
2. (John 4:21) *Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the **hour** is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.*
3. (John 4:23) *But the **hour** is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers*

will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him.

4. (John 5:25) *"Truly, truly, I say to you, the **hour** is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.*
5. (John 7:30) *So they sought to arrest him; but no one laid hands on him, because his **hour** had not yet come.*
6. (John 8:20) *These words he spoke in the treasury, as he taught in the temple; but no one arrested him, because his **hour** had not yet come.*
7. (John 12:23) *And Jesus answered them, "The **hour** has come for the Son of man to be glorified.*
8. (John 12:27) *"Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this **hour**'? No, for this purpose I have come to this **hour**.*
9. (John 13:1) *Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his **hour** had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.*
10. (John 16:4) *But I have said these things to you, that when their **hour** comes you may remember that I told you of them. "I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you.*
11. (John 17:1) *When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the **hour** has come; glorify thy Son that the Son may glorify thee*

J. ***Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and shall be found no more*** - If the city described is Rome then a problem emerges. This never happened to Rome. It did however happen to Jerusalem. In 70 AD the city was completely leveled. Not one building was left standing.¹¹ Any of the survivors were either led into slavery, crucified or carried off to the Roman Coliseum. Absolute desolation was thus the fate of Jerusalem. A few decades later the Romans who had kept a military outpost in the area began to build a whole new city called Aelia Capitolina. Jews however were not allowed to enter the city. Even Centuries later, the Temple has never been rebuilt. There have been a few attempts but none were successful.¹² Thus, even though the city, in later years came to be called again by the name Jerusalem, it's central religious character, the Temple, has never been rebuilt. Today, two Moslem buildings occupy the Temple Mount.

K. ***all nations were deceived by thy sorcery.*** - We are not exactly sure what was going on in the Temple that could be called literal idolatry or sorcery but evidently that is exactly what was going on for the Lord Jesus himself spoke of an abomination in the Temple that would precede its destruction: *So when you see the desolating sacrilege spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy*

¹¹Though a few accounts imply a few homes were left standing on Mt. Zion.

¹²A notable attempt described by Eusebius involves a group of Jewish builders who, encouraged by the Apostate Emperor Julian, began to rebuild the temple. As they made attempts to move some of the large foundation stones a flame welled up from beneath the stones and burned the rebuilders to death. Julian insisted that more attempts be made but no one could be found who dared try.

place (let the reader understand), {16} then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; Further, when Jerusalem was destroyed the First time by the Babylonians, there were also abominations going on:

1. (Ezek 8:6-18- 9:1) *And he said to me, "Son of man, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations that the house of Israel are committing here, to drive me far from my sanctuary? But you will see still greater abominations." {7} And he brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, behold, there was a hole in the wall. {8} Then said he to me, "Son of man, dig in the wall"; and when I dug in the wall, lo, there was a door. {9} And he said to me, "Go in, and see the vile abominations that they are committing here." {10} So I went in and saw; and there, portrayed upon the wall round about, were all kinds of creeping things, and loathsome beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel. {11} And before them stood seventy men of the elders of the house of Israel, with Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan standing among them. Each had his censer in his hand, and the smoke of the cloud of incense went up. {12} Then he said to me, "Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel are doing in the dark, every man in his room of pictures? For they say, 'The LORD does not see us, the LORD has forsaken the land.'" {13} He said also to me, "You will see still greater abominations which they commit." {14} Then he brought me to the entrance of the north gate of the house of the LORD; and behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz. {15} Then he said to me, "Have you seen this, O son of man? You will see still greater abominations than these." {16} And he brought me into the inner court of the house of the LORD; and behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men, with their backs to the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east, worshiping the sun toward the east. {17} Then he said to me, "Have you seen this, O son of man? Is it too slight a thing for the house of Judah to commit the abominations which they commit here, that they should fill the land with violence, and provoke me further to anger? Lo, they put the branch to their nose. {18} Therefore I will deal in wrath; my eye will not spare, nor will I have pity; and though they cry in my ears with a loud voice, I will not hear them." Then he cried in my ears with a loud voice, saying, "Draw near, you executioners of the city, each with his destroying weapon in his hand."*

L. ***And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on earth.*** - Here too we recall some ominous words of our Lord: (Mat 23:33-38) *You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell? {34} Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, {35} that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of innocent Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. {36} Truly, I say to you, all this will come upon this generation. {37} "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you!*

How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! {38} Behold, your house is forsaken and desolate. Yet more evidence that Babylon is Jerusalem for the words here in Revelation almost exactly mirror what Jesus said of Jerusalem.

IX. (Rev 19) The Wedding Feast of the Lamb *After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, {2} for his judgments are true and just; he has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication, and he has avenged on her the blood of his servants." {3} Once more they cried, "Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever." {4} And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who is seated on the throne, saying, "Amen. Hallelujah!" {5} And from the throne came a voice crying, "Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great." {6} Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunder peals, crying, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. {7} Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; {8} it was granted her to be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure" -- for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. {9} And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are true words of God." {10} Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus. Worship God." For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. {11} Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. {12} His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems; and he has a name inscribed which no one knows but himself. {13} He is clad in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. {14} And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, followed him on white horses. {15} From his mouth issues a sharp sword with which to smite the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron; he will tread the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. {16} On his robe and on his thigh he has a name inscribed, King of kings and Lord of lords. {17} Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly in midheaven, "Come, gather for the great supper of God, {18} to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great." {19} And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who sits upon the horse and against his army. {20} And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had worked the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulphur. {21} And the rest were slain by the sword of him who sits upon the horse, the sword that issues from his mouth; and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.*

- A. Here is the outline of the Chapter
1. Anticipation of the Bride - vv. 1-10
 - a. The Redemption and Retribution over which she rejoices - vv. 1-3
 - b. The Ranks of those who rejoice - vv. 4-5
 - c. The Reign over which she rejoices - v. 6
 - d. The Righteousness in which she rejoices - vv. 7-8
 - e. The Reward of those who rejoice - v. 9
 - f. The Real Reason for Rejoicing - v. 10
 2. Arrival of the Groom - vv. 11-21
 - a. His Appearance - vv. 11-13
 - (1) Nature
 - (2) Names
 - (a) Faithful and True - v. 11
 - (b) A name that no one knows - v. 12
 - (c) The Word of God - v. 13
 - (d) King of Kings - v. 16
 - (e) Lord of Lords v. 16
 - b. His Accompaniment - v. 14
 - c. His Announcement - vv. 15-17
 - d. His Avenging - vv. 18-21
- B. Now in contrast to the dirges sung over the harlot city we have the praises of God sung by the saints in heaven. We must not fail to see the contrasting vantage points. Revelation is not just a story of destruction. It is a story of the glory of God and his faithfulness. The differences between the two vantage points is sin. Likewise a lack of faithfulness brings inevitable destruction. Thus the saints can rejoice not so much that the city is destroyed as that the truth of God's word is once again demonstrated. The truth of the gospel brings life and joy, the lie of sin brings destruction and sorrow.
- C. **voice of a great multitude**- the vision here recalls the vision of chapter 7. Recall there that the 144,000 sang a song of praise and in verse 10 of chapter 7 there was described a great multitude which no one could number and they cried out in a loud voice, "Salvation is from our God and from the Lamb!" It is perhaps significant that there the 144,000 are not mentioned. It will be recalled that the 144,000 most likely represented Israel and the great multitude represent the Gentiles. Is it possible that they find it difficult to sing as Jerusalem burns? Although they surely understand the necessity of it, perhaps it is difficult to sing, perhaps a solemn silence is more appropriate? At any rate, they are not mentioned.
- D. **Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, {2} for his judgments are true and just; he has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication, and he has avenged on her the blood of his servants..."Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever...Amen. Hallelujah!** The hymn that is sung echoes the words of Moses long ago. We do well to note this echo since Moses spoke it as a clear warning to Israel of her peril if she did not stay faithful to the Lord. Here then is another clue as to the harlot

city's identity. John has picked a text that deliberately evokes the warning of Moses. Here is the passage and then note an important point made after the quote.

1. (Deu 31:28-32:48) *Assemble to me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their ears and call heaven and earth to witness against them. {29} For I know that after my death you will surely act corruptly, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and in the days to come evil will befall you, because you will do what is evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger through the work of your hands."Then Moses spoke the words of this song until they were finished, in the ears of all the assembly of Israel: "Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak; and let the earth hear the words of my mouth. {2} May my teaching drop as the rain, my speech distil as the dew, as the gentle rain upon the tender grass, and as the showers upon the herb. {3} **For I will proclaim the name of the LORD. Ascribe greatness to our God! {4} "The Rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and right is he. {5} They have dealt corruptly with him, they are no longer his children because of their blemish; they are a perverse and crooked generation. {6} Do you thus requite the LORD, you foolish and senseless people? Is not he your father, who created you, who made you and established you? {7} Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations; ask your father, and he will show you; your elders, and they will tell you. {8} When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of men, he fixed the bounds of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God. {9} For the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted heritage. {10} "He found him in a desert land, and in the howling waste of the wilderness; he encircled him, he cared for him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. {11} Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that flutters over its young, spreading out its wings, catching them, bearing them on its pinions, {12} the LORD alone did lead him, and there was no foreign god with him. {13} He made him ride on the high places of the earth, and he ate the produce of the field; and he made him suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock. {14} Curds from the herd, and milk from the flock, with fat of lambs and rams, herds of Bashan and goats, with the finest of the wheat -- and of the blood of the grape you drank wine. {15} "But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked; you waxed fat, you grew thick, you became sleek; then he forsook God who made him, and scoffed at the Rock of his salvation. {16} They stirred him to jealousy with strange gods; with abominable practices they provoked him to anger. {17} They sacrificed to demons which were no gods, to gods they had never known, to new gods that had come in of late, whom your fathers had never dreaded. {18} You were unmindful of the Rock that begot you, and you forgot the God who gave you birth. {19} "The LORD saw it, and spurned them, because of the provocation of his sons and his daughters. {20} And he said, 'I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end will be, for they are a perverse generation, children in whom is no faithfulness.***

{21} *They have stirred me to jealousy with what is no god; they have provoked me with their idols. So I will stir them to jealousy with those who are no people; I will provoke them with a foolish nation. {22} For a fire is kindled by my anger, and it burns to the depths of Sheol, devours the earth and its increase, and sets on fire the foundations of the mountains. {23} "And I will heap evils upon them; I will spend my arrows upon them; {24} they shall be wasted with hunger, and devoured with burning heat and poisonous pestilence; and I will send the teeth of beasts against them, with venom of crawling things of the dust. {25} In the open the sword shall bereave, and in the chambers shall be terror, destroying both young man and virgin, the sucking child with the man of gray hairs..."Praise his people, O you nations; for he avenges the blood of his servants, and takes vengeance on his adversaries, and makes expiation for the land of his people." {44} Moses came and recited all the words of this song in the hearing of the people, he and Joshua the son of Nun. {45} And when Moses had finished speaking all these words to all Israel, {46} he said to them, "Lay to heart all the words which I enjoin upon you this day, that you may command them to your children, that they may be careful to do all the words of this law. {47} For it is no trifle for you, but it is your life, and thereby you shall live long in the land which you are going over the Jordan to possess."*

2. Now these words of Moses in warning to Israel may be the background to an important declaration of our Lord in John's Gospel: (John 5:45-47) Jesus said to the Jews: *Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; it is Moses who accuses you, on whom you set your hope. {46} If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me. {47} But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?"* Here again the whole context is Israel, not Rome.

E. ***for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready*** - who is this bride? We have seen the Old Testament context of Israel as the spouse or bride of God. Now the bride as we shall see is described in terms of the Church. Yet we must be careful not to adopt a radical split between the Church and Israel. This is not a case of divorce and remarriage. The whole theme of Israel as the Bride of God is a very significant one in the Scriptures. Let us look at some of the insights and theme's drawn from this powerful and tender yet troubled image.

1. **Theme 1 Israel was chosen by God as His bride:**
 - a. (Isa 54:5-10) *For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called.*
 - b. (Ezek 16:8-14) *"Later I passed by, and when I looked at you and saw that you were old enough for love, I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your nakedness. I gave you my solemn oath and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Sovereign LORD, and you became mine..*
 - c. (Isa 62:3-5) *You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land*

shall no more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called My delight is in her, and your land Married; for the LORD delights in you, and your land shall be married. {5} For as a young man marries a virgin, so shall your builder marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.

2. **Theme 2 Israel the bride is unfaithful. God allows her to experience the awful reality that infidelity brings, she suffers punishment but God never forsakes (divorces) her. In the end he calls her home.**

- a. (Jer 2:1-4:1) *The word of the LORD came to me, saying, {2} "Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem, Thus says the LORD, I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride, how you followed me in the wilderness, in a land not sown. {3} Israel was holy to the LORD, the first fruits of his harvest. All who ate of it became guilty; evil came upon them, says the LORD." {4} Hear the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel. {5} Thus says the LORD: "What wrong did your fathers find in me that they went far from me, and went after worthlessness, and became worthless? {6} They did not say, 'Where is the LORD who brought us up from the land of Egypt, who led us in the wilderness, in a land of deserts and pits, in a land of drought and deep darkness, in a land that none passes through, where no man dwells?' {7} And I brought you into a plentiful land to enjoy its fruits and its good things. But when you came in you defiled my land, and made my heritage an abomination. {8} The priests did not say, 'Where is the LORD?' Those who handle the law did not know me; the rulers transgressed against me; the prophets prophesied by Baal, and went after things that do not profit. {9} "Therefore I still contend with you, says the LORD, and with your children's children I will contend...{19} Your wickedness will chasten you, and your apostasy will reprove you. Know and see that it is evil and bitter for you to forsake the LORD your God; the fear of me is not in you, says the Lord GOD of hosts. {20} "For long ago you broke your yoke and burst your bonds; and you said, 'I will not serve.' Yea, upon every high hill and under every green tree you bowed down as a harlot. {21} Yet I planted you a choice vine, wholly of pure seed. How then have you turned degenerate and become a wild vine? {22} Though you wash yourself with lye and use much soap, the stain of your guilt is still before me, says the Lord GOD. {23} How can you say, 'I am not defiled, I have not gone after the Baals'?...{26} "As a thief is shamed when caught, so the house of Israel shall be shamed: they, their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets, {27} who say to a tree, 'You are my father,' and to a stone, 'You gave me birth.' For they have turned their back to me, and not their face. But in the time of their trouble*

they say, 'Arise and save us!' {28} But where are your gods that you made for yourself? Let them arise, if they can save you, in your time of trouble...Yet my people have forgotten me days without number. {33} "How well you direct your course to seek lovers! So that even to wicked women you have taught your ways. {34} Also on your skirts is found the lifeblood of guiltless poor..."If a man divorces his wife and she goes from him and becomes another man's wife, will he return to her? Would not that land be greatly polluted? You have played the harlot with many lovers; and would you return to me? says the LORD. {2} Lift up your eyes to the bare heights, and see! Where have you not been lain with? You have polluted the land with your vile harlotry. {3} Therefore the showers have been withheld, and the spring rain has not come; yet you have a harlot's brow, you refuse to be ashamed....{7} And I thought, 'After she has done all this she will return to me'; but she did not return...{12} Go, and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, 'Return, faithless Israel, says the LORD. I will not look on you in anger, for I am merciful, says the LORD; I will not be angry for ever. {13} Only acknowledge your guilt, that you rebelled against the LORD your God and scattered your favors among strangers under every green tree, and that you have not obeyed my voice, says the LORD...And when you have multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, says the LORD, they shall no more say, "The ark of the covenant of the LORD." It shall not come to mind, or be remembered, or missed; it shall not be made again. {17} At that time Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the LORD, and all nations shall gather to it, to the presence of the LORD in Jerusalem, and they shall no more stubbornly follow their own evil heart. {18} In those days the house of Judah shall join the house of Israel, and together they shall come from the land of the north to the land that I gave your fathers for a heritage....Surely, as a faithless wife leaves her husband, so have you been faithless to me, O house of Israel, says the LORD.'"...return, O Israel, says the LORD, to me you should return...remove your abominations from my presence, and do not waver...

- b. (Hosea 2:14-23) "Therefore, behold, I will allure Israel, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her. {15} And there I will give her her vineyards, and make the Valley of Achor a door of hope. And there she shall answer as in the days of her youth, as at the time when she came out of the land of Egypt. {16} "And in that day, says the LORD, you will call me, 'My husband,' and no longer will you call me, 'My Baal.' {17} For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, and they shall be mentioned by name no more. {18} And I will make for you a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the creeping things of

the ground; and I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land; and I will make you lie down in safety. {19} And I will betroth you to me for ever; I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy. {20} I will betroth you to me in faithfulness; and you shall know the LORD...and I will say to Not my people, 'You are my people.'

c. *(Isa 54:5-10) For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called. {6} For the LORD has called you like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit, like a wife of youth when she is cast off, says your God. {7} For a brief moment I forsook you, but with great compassion I will gather you. {8} In overflowing wrath for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you, says the LORD, your Redeemer. {9} "For this is like the days of Noah to me: as I swore that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you and will not rebuke you. {10} For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the LORD, who has compassion on you.*

d. *(Isa 62:1-5) For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her vindication goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a burning torch. {2} The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name which the mouth of the LORD will give. {3} You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. {4} You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called My delight is in her, and your land Married; for the LORD delights in you, and your land shall be married. {5} For as a young man marries a virgin, so shall your builder marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.*

3. **Theme 3: Just as the Bride Israel was in need of purification in ancient days, so too at the time of Christ. Thus punishment would befall Israel but but in the end there comes forth New Jerusalem, the Bride, the Church.**

a. *(Mat 22:1-14) And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, {2} "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a marriage feast for his son, {3} and sent his servants to call those who were invited to. {8} Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. {9} Go therefore to the thoroughfares, and invite to the marriage feast as many as you find.' {10} And those servants went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good; so the wedding*

hall was filled with guests. {11} "But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment; {12} and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding. {8} Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. {9} Go therefore to the thoroughfares, and invite to the marriage feast as many as you find.' {10} And those servants went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good; so the wedding hall was filled with guests. {11} "But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment; {12} and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. {13} Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.' {14} For many are called, but few are chosen."

4. **Theme 4: The identity of the Church as the bride. Jesus is likened to the Groom and the Church is called his bride. Thus is the divinity of Christ and the identity of the Church as "true Israel" implicitly set forth.**

- a. (John 3:28-30) *You yourselves bear me witness, that I [John the Baptist] said, I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him. {29} He who has the bride is the bridegroom; the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice; therefore this joy of mine is now full. {30} He must increase, but I must decrease."*
- b. (Mark 2:19-20) *And Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. {20} The days will come, when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day.*
- c. (2 Cor 11:2-3) *I [Paul] feel a divine jealousy for you, for I betrothed you to Christ to present you as a pure bride to her one husband. {3} But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.*
- d. (Eph 5:23-33) *For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. {24} As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands. {25} Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, {26} that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, {27} that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. {28} Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. {29} For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes*

and cherishes it, as Christ does the church, {30} because we are members of his body. {31} "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." {32} This mystery is a profound one, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

5. **Theme 5: The identity of the Bride should not be understood as a new bride *per se*. Rather, the Bride is still Israel. But now she has been pruned, purified, and is now inclusive of Gentiles who are grafted on to the vine by faith. She is called "New Jerusalem" in so far as she is now dramatically renewed, the old order of the Temple and ancient Jerusalem have passed away.**

- a. (Rev 21:2) *And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband;*
- b. (Rev 21:9-10) *Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues, and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." {10} And in the Spirit he carried me away to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God,*
- c. (Rev 22:17) *The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let him who hears say, "Come." And let him who is thirsty come, let him who desires take the water of life without price.*
- d. (Rom 2:28-29) *For he is not a real Jew who is one outwardly, nor is true circumcision something external and physical. {29} He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart, spiritual and not literal. His praise is not from men but from God.*
- e. (Rom 10:1-3,12-13, 19-21; Rom 11) *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them [the Jews] is that they may be saved. {2} I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but it is not enlightened. {3} For, being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness... For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and bestows his riches upon all who call upon him. {13} For, "every one who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved." Again I ask, did Israel not understand? First Moses says, "I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation; with a foolish nation I will make you angry." {20} Then Isaiah is so bold as to say, "I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me." {21} But of Israel he says, "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people." I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. {2} God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew.*

*Do you not know what the scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? {3} "Lord, they have killed thy prophets, they have demolished thy altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life." {4} But what is God's reply to him? "I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." {5} So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. {6} But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace. {7} What then? Israel failed to obtain what it sought. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened, {8} as it is written, "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that should not see and ears that should not hear, down to this very day." {9} And David says, "Let their table become a snare and a trap, a pitfall and a retribution for them; {10} let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see, and bend their backs for ever." {11} So I ask, have they stumbled so as to fall? By no means! But through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous. {12} Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean!...If the root is holy, so are the branches. {17} But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted in their place to share the richness of the olive tree, {18} do not boast over the branches. If you do boast, remember it is not you that support the root, but the root that supports you. {19} You will say, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." {20} That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast only through faith. So do not become proud, but stand in awe. {21} For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. {22} Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness; otherwise you too will be cut off. {23} And even the others, if they do not persist in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again. {24} For if you have been cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these natural branches be grafted back into their own olive tree. {25} Lest you be wise in your own conceits, I want you to understand this mystery, brethren: a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles come in, {26} and so all Israel will be saved; as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob"; {27} "and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins." {28} As regards the gospel they are enemies of God, for your sake; but as regards election they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. {29} **For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable. ...***

6. Conclusion: The Church is not a new bride. The Church is Israel, an Israel renewed, and now inclusive of all nations by grace through faith

- F. *his Bride has made herself ready; {8} it was granted her to be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure" -- for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.* Recall that we have seen these white garments before. Here too we are reminded that this is a symbol of righteousness and good deeds. This line also helps us to understand a parable of our Lord that was quoted above. Recall that the man who was called into the wedding banquet was not properly clothed and was thence thrown out of the banquet. We might think this unfair since after all he had been summoned unexpectedly from the street. How could he have been properly dressed. But here we are reminded that the proper clothing is in fact a symbol of righteous deeds. Further this clothing is granted, or given. Hence the man had no excuse. Good deeds, the long white robe, this is God's gift to us. Salvation is received, not achieved. There is an old spiritual worth quoting here: O fix me Lord, fix me Lord, fix me. Fix me for my long white robe, fix me for my journey home, Fix me Lord, Fix me. Here for reference is the parable by Jesus once again..
1. (Mat 22:1-14) *And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, {2} "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a marriage feast for his son, {3} and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the marriage feast; but they would not come. {4} Again he sent other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, Behold, I have made ready my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves are killed, and everything is ready; come to the marriage feast.' {5} But they made light of it and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, {6} while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. {7} The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. {8} Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. {9} Go therefore to the thoroughfares, and invite to the marriage feast as many as you find.' {10} And those servants went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good; so the wedding hall was filled with guests. {11} "But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment; {12} and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. {13} Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.' {14} For many are called, but few are chosen."*
- G. *Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunder peals* - we have seen these descriptions before. They are standard accompaniment of theophanies heavenly visions.
- H. *"Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb."* - This is the scriptural background to the declaration of the priest at each mass: "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, happy are

those who are called to his supper.” Note too the banquet imagery of the heavenly liturgy. The weekly celebration of the Lord’s Supper (Mass) is an essential blessing of the new covenant. It is another sadness that Catholics and Protestants differ in their insight. Protestants have largely relegated the celebration of Holy Communion to a minor status. Some denominations celebrate it rarely if ever. What they have returned to is the ancient synagogue service alone (a basic Bible Study format). This is a departure from the experience of the early Church which gathered each Sunday for the “breaking of the Bread” (Another name for the celebration of the Eucharist. Likewise, the blessing given in this verse seems largely under appreciated by them as well as to many Catholics who have stopped attending Mass or who do so without appreciation of it.

- I. ***Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus. Worship God."*** - John falls down before the angel, our text says to worship him. But the Greek verb *proskuneson* can also be translated more generally to mean “to prostrate oneself in homage to a superior.” Especially in the ancient world this was a common gesture of reverence for lawful superiors, not a sign of worship. If that is the actual intention here then the passage is understood more as an elevation of the state of man to the level of the angels. Thus, the text may be saying that now that we have access to the Father through Jesus, now that our nature has been elevated by the incarnation of Jesus, it is no longer appropriate to bow before the angel as a superior. Now we are fellow servants with them and we stand together. The angel then goes on to give a reason, ***For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*** The word angel means messenger, one who speaks for God which is the root also of the word prophet. Through baptism we are made priests prophets and kings. Thus we now share to some extent in the office of the angels and can be God’s prophets, God’s messengers
- J. ***Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.*** - This description and many of the phrases that follow tap richly into scripture. This particular passage taps into some of the following scriptural traditions
1. (Isa 11:3-5) *And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; {4} but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked. {5} Righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins.*
 2. (Psalm 97) *The LORD reigns; let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad! {2} Clouds and thick darkness are round about him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne. {3} Fire goes before him, and burns up his adversaries round about. {4} His lightnings lighten the world; the earth sees and trembles. {5} The mountains melt like wax before the LORD, before the Lord of all the earth. {6} The heavens proclaim his righteousness; and all the peoples behold his glory. {7} All worshipers of images are put to shame, who make their boast in worthless idols; all gods bow down before him. {8} Zion hears and is*

glad, and the daughters of Judah rejoice, because of thy judgments, O God. {9} For thou, O LORD, art most high over all the earth; thou art exalted far above all gods. {10} The LORD loves those who hate evil; he preserves the lives of his saints; he delivers them from the hand of the wicked. {11} Light dawns for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart. {12} Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous, and give thanks to his holy name!

3. Here too is another which describes the righteousness of the King, and also taps into the wedding imagery: (Psalm 45) *For the director of music. To the tune of "Lilies." Of the Sons of Korah. A maskil. A wedding song. My heart is stirred by a noble theme as I recite my verses for the king; my tongue is the pen of a skillful writer. {2} You are the most excellent of men and your lips have been anointed with grace, since God has blessed you forever. {3} Gird your sword upon your side, O mighty one; clothe yourself with splendor and majesty. {4} In your majesty ride forth victoriously in behalf of truth, humility and righteousness; let your right hand display awesome deeds. {5} Let your sharp arrows pierce the hearts of the king's enemies; let the nations fall beneath your feet. {6} Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom. {7} You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy. {8} All your robes are fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia; from palaces adorned with ivory the music of the strings makes you glad. {9} Daughters of kings are among your honored women; at your right hand is the royal bride in gold of Ophir. {10} Listen, O daughter, consider and give ear: Forget your people and your father's house. {11} The king is enthralled by your beauty; honor him, for he is your lord. {12} The Daughter of Tyre will come with a gift, men of wealth will seek your favor. {13} All glorious is the princess within her chamber; her gown is interwoven with gold. {14} In embroidered garments she is led to the king; her virgin companions follow her and are brought to you. {15} They are led in with joy and gladness; they enter the palace of the king. {16} Your sons will take the place of your fathers; you will make them princes throughout the land. {17} I will perpetuate your memory through all generations; therefore the nations will praise you for ever and ever.*

4. (Rev 3:7) "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: 'The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one shall shut, who shuts and no one opens

K. ***His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems; and he has a name inscribed which no one knows but himself.*** - The description of his eyes recalls the description of Jesus at the beginning Revelation *I saw seven golden lampstands, {13} and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden girdle round his breast; {14} his head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow; his eyes were like a flame of fire* (Rev 1:13-14) The many diadems are another way of declaring him king of

all the nations. In Hebrew tradition the knowledge of a person's name was similar to knowing something of the essence of the person. That no one knows his name is another way of saying we cannot know the essence of Jesus, we cannot have intimate knowledge of his inner life. Surely he has revealed much to us of himself, but we cannot pretend to have complete knowledge of his essence. For who can know the mind of God. We are told in the next verse that the name by which he is called is the Word of God. This does not negate the verse that is before us which refers to his personal name rather than his public name.

L. **{13} He is clad in a robe dipped in blood** - here too the reference taps into a prophecy from Isaiah which we have already reviewed. It is presented here by way of review and also to help show that the image called to mind is of a strong testimony against an unfaithful Jerusalem. Here then is more evidence as to the true identity of the harlot city as Jerusalem

1. (Isa 63) *Who is this that comes from Edom, in crimsoned garments from Bozrah, he that is glorious in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength? "It is I, announcing vindication, mighty to save." {2} Why is thy apparel red, and thy garments like his that treads in the wine press? {3} "I have trodden the wine press alone, and from the peoples no one was with me; I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath; their lifeblood is sprinkled upon my garments, and I have stained all my raiment. {4} For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and my year of redemption has come. {5} I looked, but there was no one to help; I was appalled, but there was no one to uphold; so my own arm brought me victory, and my wrath upheld me. {6} I trod down the peoples in my anger, I made them drunk in my wrath, and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth."...For he said, Surely they are my people, sons who will not deal falsely; and he became their Savior. {9} In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old. {10} But they rebelled and grieved his holy Spirit; therefore he turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them...Look down from heaven and see, from thy holy and glorious habitation. Where are thy zeal and thy might?...Thy holy people possessed thy sanctuary a little while; our adversaries have trodden it down. {19} We have become like those over whom thou hast never ruled, like those who are not called by thy name. O that thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at thy presence...Thou meetest him that joyfully works righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways. Behold, thou wast angry, and we sinned; in our sins we have been a long time, and shall we be saved? {6} We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. {7} There is no one that calls upon thy name, that bestirs himself to take hold of thee; for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast delivered us into the hand of our iniquities...Be not exceedingly angry, O LORD, and remember not iniquity for ever. Behold, consider, we are all thy people. {10} Thy holy cities have*

become a wilderness, Zion has become a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. {11} Our holy and beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, has been burned by fire, and all our pleasant places have become ruins. {12} Wilt thou restrain thyself at these things, O LORD? Wilt thou keep silent, and afflict us sorely?...But you who forsake the LORD, who forget my holy mountain, who set a table for Fortune and fill cups of mixed wine for Destiny; {12} I will destine you to the sword, and all of you shall bow down to the slaughter; because, when I called, you did not answer, when I spoke, you did not listen, but you did what was evil in my eyes, and chose what I did not delight in." {13} Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, my servants shall eat, but you shall be hungry; behold, my servants shall drink, but you shall be thirsty; behold, my servants shall rejoice, but you shall be put to shame; {14} behold, my servants shall sing for gladness of heart, but you shall cry out for pain of heart, and shall wail for anguish of spirit...For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. {18} But be glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. {19} I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and be glad in my people; no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress...

M. ***From his mouth issues a sharp sword with which to smite the nations -***

1. (Isa 49:1-2) *Listen to me, O coastlands, and hearken, you peoples from afar. The LORD called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name. {2} He made my mouth like a sharp sword, in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me a polished arrow, in his quiver he hid me away.*
2. (Heb 4:11-14) *Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, that no one fall by the same sort of disobedience. {12} For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. {13} And before him no creature is hidden, but all are open and laid bare to the eyes of him with whom we have to do. {14} Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.*

N. ***and he will rule them with a rod of iron -*** Here too are messianic descriptions of Christ drawn from Psalm 2. We have also seen this description before in Revelation 12.

1. (Psa 2:9-12) *You shall break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." {10} Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. {11} Serve the LORD with fear, with trembling {12} kiss his feet, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way; for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.*
2. (Rev 12:5) *she brought forth a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne*

O. ***Come, gather for the great supper of God, {18} to eat the flesh of kings, the***

flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great. - This is a kind of an anti feast. The antithesis of the wedding feast of the Lamb.

P. *And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had worked the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulphur. {21} And the rest were slain by the sword of him who sits upon the horse, the sword that issues from his mouth; and all the birds were gorged with their flesh -*

1. Here too there is no doubt as to the victor of this epic battle: there is Victory in Jesus. The victory of Jesus is absolutely assured. In fact the vultures are invited before there is even a battle. The victory is not only total it is immediate. Really we do not even see a battle. The armies of heaven are spectators and it is Christ who, on his white horse, alone slays the forces of the beast. He slays them by the word of truth from his mouth. Here then is a new kind of war, the two beasts are captured without a blow being struck. Thus we see the victory of the cross once again made manifest, for there Christ won the victory through the cross, not shedding blood, but offering his own blood as a ransom for many. Here then we have an important insight into the violence of Revelation. The violence happens not so much as a result of the assaults of God as by the reaction of his enemies. In effect what happens is that Jesus speaks the truth and his enemies perish!¹³ Hence God is who he is. Since he is a holy fire, all that is flammable is burnt up. This does not mean God should stop being fire. That his holiness is intolerable, even deadly to the wicked does not mean he should stop being holy. That the truth kills some, does not mean God should lie. Thus it is important to put the "blame" for the destruction where it lies: with the Godless, who were offered every opportunity to repent but refused to do so and where unprepared for the day of his coming.
2. The image of the lake of sulphur and so forth recalls some words of our Lord in Luke's Gospel: *As it was in the days of Lot -- they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built, {29} but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom fire and sulphur rained from heaven and destroyed them all-- {30} so will it be on the day when the Son of man is revealed. {31} On that day, let him who is on the housetop, with his goods in the house, not come down to take them away; and likewise let him who is in the field not turn back. {32} Remember Lot's wife.* (Luke 17:28-32)

¹³There was a good illustration of this principle in the arrest of Jesus as depicted by John *So Judas, procuring a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons. {4} Then Jesus, knowing all that was to befall him, came forward and said to them, "Whom do you seek?" {5} They answered him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am he." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. {6} When he said to them, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground.* (John 18:3-6) Thus, although they do not die, when Jesus speaks the truth and uses the Divine Name, they fall back.

3. To which beast does this verse refer? Likely we have here the beast of Rev. 13. It should be recalled that in Revelation 12 we were shown the Red Dragon with seven heads and ten horns. This dragon, brought forth two beasts, one from the sea (Rome) and the other from the Land (Herodian Dynasty/Temple Leadership). It was this second beast that gave the mark of the beast to all its followers. Here in Chapter 19 we are given a hint that it is this beast that is meant since we are told that its followers had the mark of the beast and that they descend with it into the lake of sulphur. Further, there is mention of the false prophet that we saw back in Rev 16:13. It is unlikely that a false prophet from outside Israel would have had the authority necessary to mislead many. The office of prophet was exercised within the context of the Jewish religion. Thus we have important clues as to the likely identity of the beast referred to here.

Q. Though we might apply this who scenario to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD it is also important to see that as a paradigm for the end of the world. We might do well here to recall another New Testament text which gives some details as to the final struggles. Paul may well be describing Christ's second coming, or he may be speaking of the close of the age (destruction of Jerusalem). Likewise, he may signify both.

1. *(2 Th 2:1-15) Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our assembling to meet him, we beg you, brethren, {2} not to be quickly shaken in mind or excited, either by spirit or by word, or by letter purporting to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. {3} Let no one deceive you in any way; for that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of perdition, {4} who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.¹⁴ {5} Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you this? {6} And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. {7} For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. {8} And then the lawless one will be revealed, and the Lord Jesus will slay him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by his appearing and his coming. {9} The coming of the lawless one by the activity of Satan will be with all power and with pretended signs and wonders, {10} and with all wicked deception for those who are to perish, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. {11} Therefore God sends upon them a strong delusion, to make them believe what is false, {12} so that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. {13} But we are bound to give*

¹⁴If Paul is describing here the destruction of Jerusalem, then once again we see evidence that there was some sort of abomination in the Temple. Beyond mere sinfulness it would appear that outright idolatry of some sort was being practiced. It would seem that Paul is describing the fall of Jerusalem since he presumes the presence of the Temple. However, the end of the world scenario is not excluded here since, as we have said, the temple is also a miniature replica of the cosmos.

thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. {14} To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. {15} So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter