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| <p>A</p> | <p><u>Interpreting Revelation (Especially Ch 17)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of imagery in the text often targets the realities of the time (the whore could represent Rome or Jerusalem; both are historical facts). Rich in imagery and predictions, this apocalyptic literature can be understood as revelatory both about the future and the end of history. • We must take cautions against the errors and misinterpretation of Hal Lindsey (<i>The Late Great Planet Earth</i>) or Dan Brown (<i>Da Vinci Code</i>). | <p>CCSS p 276-7</p> <p>CCSS P 281</p> | |
| <p>B</p> | <p><u>OT Prophets Regard Israel as The Great Harlot</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The great harlot who lives near the many waters. The kings of the earth have had intercourse with her" - Ancient Babylon was located on the Euphrates River, known for its impressive network of irrigation canals. It is, indeed, a city "near the many waters". Jeremiah used this exact phrase in a lengthy oracle foretelling Babylon's destruction. OT prophets often regard the inhabitants of the diasporas who worship idols as the "harlot". • "The kings of the earth have had intercourse with her" - they purchased their offices, enriched themselves, oppressed their people, and acted unjustly, because of their relationship with Rome. They even accepted their idols, thus, the prophets reproached them as the harlot. • In the past, numerous scholars interpreted the harlot in Rev 17 as Rome; however, recent scholars determined that what John meant is Jerusalem. Reading the bible holistically, Jerusalem is the more plausible interpretation. | <p>CCSS p 272</p> <p>CCSS p 272</p> <p>1P 5:13 SN1 & 2</p> | <p>Jer 51:13</p> <p>Is 23:15-17, Nahum 3:4</p> <p>Hos 2:4, Jer 3:3, Ezk 16:15</p> |
| <p>C</p> | <p><u>The NT Church as the Harlot</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not only does the Church's traditions interpret the harlot | <p>SN3</p> | |

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| <p>as the OT Israel, but also the NT Church. The mystery of the Son of God becoming human is the mystery of the unity between the supreme holiness of God’s Divinity and the baseness of the sinful nature of humanity. Through this mystery, humanity is saved and elevated to become children of God.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Not only is the NT Church the harlot, but also the numerous religious organisations throughout history. The difference is that the Son of God dwells in the church of Christ; she will become the new heavenly bride one day. ● According to A1 above, Jerusalem is the harlot. She is also believed to be the prefiguration of the future; the imagery of Jerusalem the harlot is very similar (but not exactly identical) to the historical events that continue to unfold. Indeed, everything is under God’s dominion, all these sinful actions, like Jerusalem the harlot, will see their just punishment and will be reversed. ● According to this interpretation, the harlot can also be Rome. Babylon (Rome) who persecuted the Church (Christ) will ultimately be defeated by Christ and become His Church - Roman Catholic Church. God does have a sense of humour. ● The beast can be interpreted through the same lens. It could represent Nero in the 1st Century; or a foreshadowing of Hitler and Stalin in the 20th Century. These occurrences demonstrate all that is written in Revelation has already been fulfilled. In other words, all the other predictions, including the second coming of Christ, His resurrection, final judgement, and new heaven and new earth must be fulfilled. ● From the “woman” in Rev 12 to the “great harlot, Babylon” in Rev 17, and to the woman described as “a bride adorned for her husband” (21:2) in the conclusion, John proposes that the entire bible is, in fact, a very simple story; a story about a man, Adam, and a woman, Eve. | <p>19:7</p> <p>CCSS p 283</p> <p>CCSS p 285</p> <p>CCSS p 283</p> <p>CCSS 273 Jn 2:4, 19:26 Rev 12:1</p> | <p>Gen 2:23</p> |
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Special Notes:

1. Babylon as Rome

- Peter sees Rome as Babylon (1P5:13)
- “The seven heads represent the seven hills upon which the woman sits” (17:9) - Rome was known as the city on seven hills.
- “The woman was drunk on the blood of the holy ones and on the blood of the witnesses to Jesus” (17:6) - Nero and Domitian persecuted Christians.
- The woman “represents the great city that has sovereignty over the kings of the earth” (17:18), is pictured at the centre of a vast trading empire that enriched many nations (18:11-19).

(Ref. CSB p 514)

2. Babylon as Jerusalem

- Revelation tells us that the “great city” of the harlot Babylon (17:18) is Jerusalem, the city where Jesus was crucified (11:8).
- “In her was found the blood of prophets and holy ones and all who have been slain on the earth” (18:24) - Jerusalem is the only city that spilled the blood of the earliest martyrs.
- OT prophets often portray gentile cities as harlots, including Babylon, Tyre, and Nineveh. However, the image of the harlot city is extensively developed in the OT with reference to Jerusalem. (Jer 2:20, 4:30, Ezk 16:2-15)
- “Depart from her, my people, so as not to take part in her sins and receive a share in her plagues” (18:4), including all that “will come in one day”: pestilence, grief, famine, and fire (18:8). Jesus also urged his disciples to flee the city before its demise (Lk 21:20-21).
- The bible begins with a woman (Eve - daughter of Zion - Jerusalem), and concludes with another woman (New Eve - Mary - the Church - New Jerusalem).

(Ref. CSB p 515)

3. "Simon, Simon, behold Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, but I have prayed that your own faith may not fail; and once you have turned back, you must strengthen your brothers" (Luke 22:31-32). Peter is sustained by a prayer that protects him from Satan, but not so protected that he cannot fall, deny, come so very close to Judas...The New Testament speaks of the safeguards granted Christ's Church, but at the same time there is the threat of abuse, the possibility of defection. Nowhere is the immaculateness of the bride an

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established fact for the bride just to accept and not to worry about any further...Apostasy and relapse are always possible.”

Balthasar then referred to many Church Fathers who share this view, including the following 3:

“Origen, who regards the whole unabridged Old Testament as a model, a visual aid, for the Church; for him, what was relevant in the past has to be still relevant today.”

“For St. Augustine...there can be no doubt that the Scriptures call both the synagogue and the Church adulteresses and prostitutes...the really pure Church is an eschatological concept.”

St. Jerome teaches that when God asked Hosea to take a harlot as his wife, He wanted to show us that “the whore is none other than the human race, to which God goes in order to extract from it the children of promise, the people of Israel”. This is why we find in Jesus’ genealogy pairings of Judah/Tamar, Samson/Dlilah, Boaz/Ruth, David/Bathsheba. “In the Song of Songs she says of herself: ‘I am black but beautiful’” (Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Explorations in Theology II: Spouse of the Word*, pp.207-8; 225-230).