

## Revelation 17:12-18 – Babylon, the Great Harlot

### Verse 12

*And the ten horns...are ten kings* – Their identity is not revealed but they will form a confederacy and will rule simultaneously at the end time. They will serve under the beast in his worldwide government.

*They receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour* – Their short rule will occur immediately before the return of Jesus Christ to the earth.

### Verse 13

*These have one purpose and they give their power and authority to the beast* – The single purpose of these end time kings and kingdoms is to rule the world under the Antichrist's leadership. Apparently there will be rebellion even within the ranks of this confederacy as the beast will subdue three of these kings (Daniel 7:24).

### Verse 14

*And these will wage war against the Lamb* – This war is mentioned in 16:14, 16 and detailed in 19:19-21.

*And the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings* – We can rejoice because the outcome of the age old struggle is already settled!

*And those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful* – Believers will accompany Christ at His return (19:14). This three-fold designation may be speaking of overcoming believers who finished their lives on earth in victory. Note the parallel in Matthew 22:14 where, "*Many are called, but few are chosen.*" The context in Matthew 22 is reward in the kingdom.

### Verse 15

*The waters which you saw...are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues* – Water is a common symbol for people in the Old Testament (Psalm 18:4, 16, Isaiah 8:7, Jeremiah 47:2).

*Where the harlot sits* – The harlot represents the false religion of the Babylonian system. During the tribulation there will be one world religion that encompasses all nations and peoples.

### Verse 16

*And the ten horns which you saw and the beast, these will hate the harlot and make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire.* – Eventually the beast and his allies will turn against the harlot and utterly destroy her. This will probably occur during the middle of the tribulation when the antichrist breaks his covenant with Israel and demands that everyone on earth worship him (Dan. 9:27, 11: 36-39, Matt. 24:15). Satan's kingdom will divide against itself. A sure sign that it cannot endure (Mark 3:24-26). In 17:2 the harlot is sitting on the beast which pictures her control over the antichrist and his support of her. Having used her for his purposes, the beast now turns against her.

### Verse 17

*For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose* – When people turn away from God and serve Satan, God often takes and uses them to execute His purposes. Their common purpose is world dominion.

*By giving their kingdom to the beast* – Their submission to the antichrist is really their selfish desire to rule.

*Until the words of God should be fulfilled.*

### Verse 18

*And the woman whom you saw is the great city* – This refers to religious Babylon.

*Which reigns over the kings of the earth* – During the first half of the tribulation there will be an ecumenical, worldwide body that will stand above government and be aggressively hostile to true believers in God. In the middle of the tribulation, Antichrist will terminate it and demand universal worship of himself.

"The evidence seems to support the fact that the woman represents an ecumenical or worldwide church embracing all of Christianity religiously, and therefore includes the Roman Catholic Church, the Protestant and Greek Orthodox as well as all others... However it will be an atheistic, humanistic, satanic system which denies everything related to the true God..."

Dr. Thomas Constable  
[www.soniclight.org](http://www.soniclight.org)