

## Chapter 17

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This chapter deals with the earthly organizations of the Devil. It discusses the great and abominable church, or the church of the devil. It also speaks of the wicked nations of the world. It makes repeated inferences to the fact that the Catholic church and the ancient city of Rome are representations of such organizations. They are ideal representations, in that they brought about much of the desires of the Adversary. I will caution, that though the commentary on this chapter speaks of the Catholic church as the church of the devil, one should keep in mind the words of Nephi who said, "*whoso belongeth not to the church of the Lamb of God belongeth to that great church, which is the mother of abominations; and she is the whore of all the earth (1 Nephi 14:10)*".

**Verse 1:** The Prophet Nephi was shown the same vision that John received and recorded as the Book of Revelation; however, Nephi was only permitted to write a portion of his vision. He was told, that at a later point and time, John would record the vision in its fullness. We read,

*"And I looked and beheld a man, and he was dressed in a white robe. And the angel said unto me: Behold one of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Behold, he shall see and write the remainder of these things; yea, and also many things which have been. And he shall also write concerning the end of the world. Wherefore, the things which he shall write are just and true; and behold they are written in the book which thou beheld proceeding out of the mouth of the Jew; and at the time they proceeded out of the mouth of the Jew, or, at the time the book proceeded out of the mouth of the Jew, the things which were written were plain and pure, and most precious and easy to the understanding of all men. And behold, the things which this apostle of the Lamb shall write are many things which thou hast seen; and behold, the remainder shalt thou see (1 Nephi 14:19-24)"*.

Nephi was able to record much of his vision concerning this chapter. As one compares the two accounts, it is clear that the words of Nephi give us a much greater understanding of John's words. As Nephi begins seeing this portion of John's vision, he writes, "*.....Look, and behold that great and abominable church, which is the mother of abominations, whose founder is the devil (1 Nephi 14:9)*". John recorded his vision and wrote, "*And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto*

***me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters''.***

John and Nephi refer to the church of the devil using quite different symbols. John says he saw the great whore, while Nephi records that he saw the great and abominable church, or the mother of abominations. A whore is typically one that sells sexual favors for gain. We might rephrase the definition to read, one that sells that which is highly precious and valuable for worldly gain. The term abominable comes from the word abomination, which is defined by the bible dictionary as the word used to denote any heathen or immoral practice. We can see the relationship between the two images, as a whore is one who practices abominations. The fact that the church of the devil is considered great and the mother of abominations would represent that the root of such acts stem from this image. A mother is a child's source of life. In this case, the symbolism of mother is used as the source of abominations. Such a church would take the precious truths of the gospel and manipulate and use them to accomplish self gratifying goals and earthly gain.

Usually when one refers to a church, the image of the church of the Lamb comes to mind. Nephi clarifies that there are two churches. *"...Behold there are save two churches only; the one is the church of the Lamb of God, and the other is the church of the devil; wherefore, whoso belongeth not to the church of the Lamb of God belongeth to that great church, which is the mother of abominations; and she is the whore of all the earth (1 Nephi 14:10)"*. It is cut and dry, either one follows the Lord, or one doesn't. Is there any other path? No!

The accounting by John and Nephi show specific imagery that could lead one to the conclusion that the great and abominable church is the Catholic church. Quite frankly, that was the case following the meridian of time. *"The apostles were killed and the saints were driven by the Roman emperors, and with the death of these important people, the authority went with them and authority was lost..... About AD 300 Constantine, who was not a Christian, organized the great worldwide religion. Men with keen intelligence got together....at Nicea and created a God. They did not pray for wisdom or revelation. They claimed no revelation from the Lord. They made it just about like a political party would do, and out of their own mortal minds created a God which is still worshipped by the great majority of Christians (The Teaching of Spencer W. Kimball, page 426)"*. The formation of the Catholic church was seen by Nephi when he wrote, *"And after they" (the plain and precious truths) "go forth by the hand of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, from the Jews unto the Gentiles, thou seest the formation of a great and abominable church, which is most abominable above all other churches; for behold, they have taken*

*away from the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious; and also many covenants of the Lord have they taken away (1 Nephi 13:26)". It was the Catholic church that was responsible for many of the adulterations that occurred between the original text of the apostles writings and the present day Bible. They changed the covenant of baptism to incorporate sprinkling, and introduced many ideas foreign to the gospel of Christ, such as prayers to the virgin Mary, and many of the saints. President Lorenzo Snow said, "It is very evident that the authority of administering in gospel ordinances has been lost for many centuries.....The church established by the Apostles gradually fell away, wandered into the wilderness and lost her authority (her priesthood), and, departing from the order of God, she lost, also her gifts and graces; she transgressed the laws, and changed the ordinances of the gospel; changed immersion into sprinkling, and quite neglected laying on of hands; despised prophesy and disbelieved in signs following (The Teachings of Lorenzo Snow, compiled by Clyde J. Williams, page 15)". In this day and age, we find many churches that could be classified as the great and abominable church, or the great whore. Today the great and abominable church is any church that the adversary might use to lead men astray.*

Without a total restoration of the gospel from heaven, it was impossible for the church of the Lamb to arise after the adulteration of the truth by the Catholic church. Through history we find that almost every Christian church evolved from the Catholic church, some being closer and some being further from the truth. The fact is none of them was, or is the church of the Lamb. The Savior used the analogy of the tree. He said that an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit. Could one then take the seed of an evil tree, and hope to grow a good tree from that seed? No, the seed can only produce a tree as good as the tree it came from. Since man was only left with the pieces of truth left behind by the Catholic church, man could only hope to produce a church as good as those remains. Many churches, or trees, did arise after centuries of rule by the Catholic church; however, they were far from the church of God.

Both John and Nephi clarify that the many waters that both prophets used as symbols, represent "**peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues (Revelation 17:15)**" or as Nephi said, "*all the earth, among all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people (1 Nephi 14:11)*". It is over these that the great whore does reign.

The Catholic church during John's time was the perfect symbol of the great whore. To the saints of the time, it was the great whore. It was the Catholic church that Nephi saw. Today the Catholic church of the meridian of time is represented in many churches and

organizations of men. It is these organizations that lead the multitude of earth's people away from the gospel of Jesus Christ.

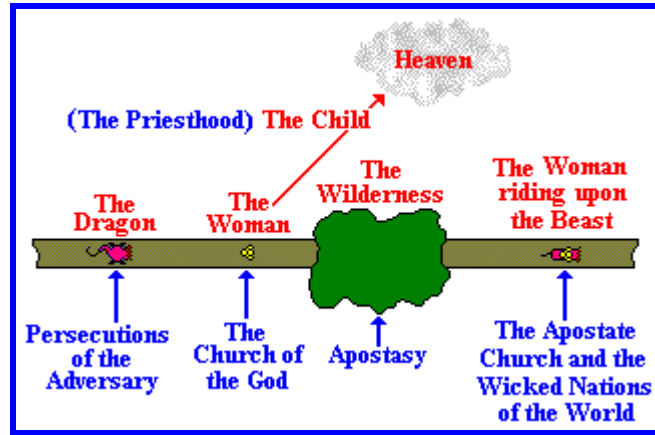
John gives us an insight as to what the basic focus of the next chapter is going to be, when he says that he was shown the judgment of the great whore. The remainder of this chapter will discuss the details surrounding the devil's church.

**Verse 2:** *"With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication"*. In the name of God, many kings and rulers have justified wars and murders. During the Spanish Inquisitions, thousands were murdered, and tens of thousands suffered fates almost comparable to death. It was Queen Isabella, the queen of Spain, that proudly declared, *"..in the love of Christ and His maid mother I have caused great misery (The Great Apostasy, James E. Talmage, page 155)"*. The crusades brought the death of thousands who were proclaimed heathens and would not convert to "Christianity". In the name of God, Kings ruled countries. Having the great and abominable church proclaiming them next to God in authority and power. Truly the great whore did commit grievous fornication's with the kings and inhabitants of the earth.

Fornication is used synonymously with adultery, chastity, lust, sexual immorality, and whoredom. It can also be used to represent any apostate condition. That is, any state of being in which there is opposition to the laws and principles of God. The inhabitants of the world have partaken of fornications of every kind, from sexual immorality, to white lies, to murder. They have truly become drunk with the wine of fornication. Wine symbolizes the by product of something, while the word drunk is used to represent strong feeling and emotion for something. Is it not true that the people of this world have become emotionally enthralled with the gains of their sins?

The prophet Isaiah prophesied similarly of the last days when he said, *"The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant (Isaiah 24:5)"*.

**Verse 3:** *"So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns"*. In chapter thirteen, John told of the church of God going into the wilderness, or a state of apostasy. The church was being persecuted by the dragon, or Satan. Due to it's entering the wilderness, the priesthood and gifts of God were taken from the earth. This verse returns us to the wilderness.



*Illustration of the symbolic accounting in chapter 13 & 17*

In this verse, we are again shown a woman, or the church, only this time its' condition has changed dramatically. This was due to the absence of the authority and blessings of God. Previously, John described the wicked nations of the earth as a beast. We find that the woman now rides upon the beast, representing the fact that the apostate church has joined the wicked nations being lead by the adversary. John says that they are full of names of Blasphemy. *"The awful sin of blasphemy consist in taking to one's self the divine prerogatives and powers of God (The Great Apostasy, James E. Talmage, page 138)"*. The apostate church arose from the wilderness with the great Roman Empire. *"Here we find the pope of Rome, the head of the only church recognized at the time, assuming to remit the punishments due in the hereafter for sins committed in mortality. A pope assuming to sit in judgment as God himself (The Great Apostasy, James E. Talmage, page 138)"!* It is obviously, quite fitting that the whore and the beast be associated with the names of blasphemy.

**Verse 4:**

*"And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication"*. The color purple represents power, authority, and luxury. The color scarlet represents nobility and honor. The fact that the woman was decked with gold, precious stones, and pearls, would represent the fact that she was rich with the things of the world. Each of these symbols represent worldly wealth, power, and riches. In her hand was a golden cup. A cup represents overflowing abundance. It is typically used to represent salvation, as a cup is a vessel that contains nourishment; however, the cup that this woman holds is full of the sins of the world. This symbolic combination carries the connotation that the symbolic woman is the source of sin for the world. Her sins overflow, yet she presents them in a golden cup,

concealing them under the appearance of salvation. Like the cup, the color gold also carries the symbolic meaning of salvation.



It is not unlike the adversary to disguise the filth of sin under a shadow of what would appear to be righteousness. That is exactly the point that John is relaying here.

During the translation of the Book of Mormon, 116 pages of the manuscript were lost by Martin Harris. The Lord was very displeased with the Prophet Joseph and Martin Harris. He explained that many men were anxious to hinder and destroy the work of the restoration. He explained,

*"Verily, verily, I say unto you, that Satan has great hold upon their hearts; he stirreth them up to iniquity against that which is good; And their hearts are corrupt, and full of wickedness and abominations; and they love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil; therefore they will not ask of me. Satan stirreth them up, that he may lead their souls to destruction. And thus he has laid a cunning plan, thinking to destroy the work of God; but I will require this at their hands, and it shall turn to their shame and condemnation in the day of judgment. Yea, he stirreth up their hearts to anger against this work. Yea, he saith unto them: Deceive and lie in wait to catch, that ye may destroy; behold, this is no harm. And thus he flattereth them, and telleth them that it is no sin to lie that they may catch a man in a lie, that they may destroy him. And thus he flattereth them, and leadeth them along until he draggeth their souls down to hell; and thus he causeth them to catch themselves in their own snare. And thus he goeth up and down, to and fro in the earth, seeking to destroy the souls of men. Now, behold, they have altered these words, because Satan saith unto them: He hath deceived you--and thus he flattereth them away to do iniquity, to get thee to tempt the Lord thy God (Doctrine and Covenants 10:20-29)".*

The warning to us is simply to make sure that we see good for good and evil for evil. Let us not allow ourselves, like many men, to be deceived of Satan and see iniquity for righteousness. Such deception is John's message to the righteous, as he symbolically teaches of the golden cup. It is this very same warning that the Lord spoke of to the Prophet Joseph after the losing of the 116 pages of the Book of Mormon manuscript.

**Verse 5:**

Here again we find symbolic reference to the ancient temple cloths. The priest hung a gold plate on their forehead that read "**HOLINESS TO THE LORD**". Here the great and abominable church has a name on its' forehead, but it is the name of wickedness. It reads, "**MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.**" Such symbolism represents the devotions and priorities of the of the person wearing it. To this point we have touched on all the names on the whore's forehead, except for the term "**MYSTERY**". We previously discussed Babylon the great as a symbol of worldliness and sin and we discussed the mother of Harlots and abominations as the source of any heathen or immoral practice.

The term mystery, or secret, goes back to the days of Adam. Adam's son, Cain entered into a secret covenant with Satan, and "*Satan swore unto Cain that he would do according to his commands. And all these things were done in secret (Moses 5:30)*". After the pact was drawn, "*Cain said: Truly I am Mahan, the master of this great secret, that **I may murder and get gain**. Wherefore Cain was called Master Mahan, and he gloried in his wickedness (Moses 5:31)*". After entering into the great secret, Cain killed his brother Abel. What is the great secret? It is to get worldly gain at any expense. What did Cain hope to gain? Cain told the Lord that he killed his brother *because of his brother's flocks (Moses 5:38)*. Truly, the great secret, the "Mystery" spoken of by John, is the secret combinations of the Book of Mormon. It is the mystery that brought an end to the Jaredites. It is the great secret that the wicked of the earth have handed down throughout the generations. The Pearl of Great Price says, "*For, from the days of Cain, there was a secret combination, and their works were in the dark, and they knew every man his brother (Moses 5:51)*". It is this great mystery that the great whore harbors on earth today.

**Verse 6:**

*"And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration"*. Again, John uses the word drunken to carry the idea of strong feeling or emotion for something, close to becoming an obsession. We find that the great whore is drunken with the killing of the followers of God. The whore is obsessed with their elimination. History says that this has actually been the case. At one point during the rule of the Roman Empire, the Christians were almost extinguished. We can read of the hideous deaths of the apostles and other saints. Throughout time, the wicked organizations have sought to destroy Gods' work by killing his servants. Even in modern times we experienced the fate of the Prophet Joseph Smith as the great whore took his life.

John says that he beheld this occurrence with admiration. The word admiration in this context can be quite confusing. Usually the word admiration carries the meaning of desire to be like something or someone. The Bible Dictionary warns that the word, as used in the bible, is better thought of as wonder or amazement, with no implication of esteem or approval. In fact, the Greek translation says that the word is better defined as wonder or amazement. Is it any wonder? As I ponder the same event, I find myself awe struck, that people could find it within themselves to accomplish such acts.

The Prophet Nephi saw the drunkenness of the great whore and wrote, "*And it came to pass that I beheld the church of the Lamb of God, and its numbers were few, because of the wickedness and abominations of the whore who sat upon many waters; nevertheless, I beheld that the church of the Lamb, who were the saints of God, were also upon all the face of the earth; and their dominions upon the face of the earth were small, because of the wickedness of the great whore whom I saw (1 Nephi 14:12)*".

**Verses 7-9:** *"And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth."* John, knowing that his use of symbols is quite mysterious, offers to define the mystery, or meaning, behind the symbolic woman and beast that he has illustrated.





John starts by saying that the beast was and is not. Toward the end of the verse he states that the beast was, and is not, and is yet. This phrasing creates an image of impossibility. How can something be, and not be, and to become. That would be like saying that a baby was born, but not born, yet will be born. In the world we live in, we understand all things in terms of limits. Where does it start, where does it end? To understand the concept that John is speaking of, we need to go beyond the finite understanding of the natural man. The Lord describes himself in an infinite way when he told Isaiah, "*For behold, I am God; and I am a God of miracles; and I will show unto the world that I am the same, yesterday, today, and forever.....(Joseph Smith Translation of Isaiah 29:25)*". The adversary would like mankind to believe that his kingdom is as the kingdom of God in terms of eternity. True, it was established before the foundations of this world. It was established upon the face of the earth from the days of Cain, and is on the earth today. It will yet accomplish much wickedness before the great and dreadful day when the Lord promised, "*I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother (Haggai 2:22)*".

The Kingdom of the Adversary *was* established on the earth, though in an eternal perspective his kingdom *is not*. It has no place in the eternal plan of God beyond this mortal probation. It will reign, but only for a short time before the Lord will dismantle the great beast. And *yet*, the kingdom of the adversary is very real. It plays a key role in our eternal progression. We must be cautious that we do not confuse the Lord's kingdom which,

***Was, Is, and Always Will Be***

with the adversary's kingdom which,

***Was, Is Not, and Yet Is***

We must remember that there is but one kingdom that will survive the Lords' wrath. The prophet Daniel wrote, "*And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed (Daniel 7:14)*".

John further describes the beast by saying that he ascended out of the bottomless pit, and will go into perdition. The term perdition was explained by Bruce R. McConkie in his book, Mormon Doctrine,

as a title given to those that are without hope of obtaining any degree of salvation. They are those that have wholly given themselves to iniquity (Mormon Doctrine, page 566).

John then makes reference to the Book of Life. How many of us have wondered if our choices in life are acceptable in the sight of the Lord? How many of us have wondered if we will be number with those that will enter into the Lord's rest? John prophesied that in the last days the people of the earth will wonder if their names are written in the book of life. The book of life symbolizes the recording of the acts of men. In this book, only those deemed worthy to return to the Lord's presence will have their name written. The Doctrine and Covenants teaches that at the day of judgment we will be judged from books, "*.....and another book was opened, which was the book of life; but the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works; consequently, the books spoken of must be the books which contained the record of their works, and refer to the records which are kept on the earth. And the book which was the book of life is the record which is kept in heaven; the principle agreeing precisely with the doctrine which is commanded you in the revelation contained in the letter which I wrote to you previous to my leaving my place--that in all your recordings it may be recorded in heaven (Doctrine and Covenants 128:7)*". The Lord teaches that as we purify ourselves to the point of being worthy to return to His presence, our names are written in the book of Life. "*Behold, this is pleasing unto your Lord, and the angels rejoice over you; the alms of your prayers have come up into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, and are recorded in the book of the names of the sanctified, even them of the celestial world (Doctrine and Covenants 88:2)*".

Finally, John defines the seven heads of the beast as symbols for seven mountains upon which the great and abominable church sits. The word sit, is used to represent rulership or like the word "seat" represents a capital or stronghold. It is interesting that the city of Rome is built on seven mountains. The seven mountains are as follows;

***The Seven Mountains (Hills) on which Rome was built***



**Verse 10:** *"And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space"*. In chapter thirteen, John describes the beast as having seven crowns. This chapter does not make reference to the seven crowns; however, here we find John defining an unnamed symbol with a definition that is quite fitting to our interpretation of the symbol in chapter thirteen.

**7 Crowns = 7 Kings**

Who are the seven kings? We might speculate as to their identity, assuming that John is speaking literally; however, that would be all we would gain, speculation. The first five we can assume came prior to John's time. The sixth, is in power during John's time. This quite possibly being the king of Rome, "Caesar". And the last was in John's future. Have we seen him? Is he yet to come?

**Verse 11:** *"And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition"*. Again, we find John using terms that seem almost contradictory in nature. We are told that there are seven kings; however, he makes reference to the eighth. This eighth king was, is not, and is. He is also known as perdition. Sound familiar? The same terminology was used for the adversary in verse nine. Here we find that the seven kings exercising dominion over the beast, or the wicked nations of the world, are driven and empowered by another; the king of darkness; he that shall reign in perdition. Like most of Satan's cunning plans, he does not openly display his motives and intentions. He hides behind the organizations of men and waits to deceive. To many there are just seven kings. There are just worldly organizations, which mean no harm. The truth is, there is an eighth. There is damnation webbed within the kingdoms of the world. Satan is real, and he desires us to join his host in the depths of perdition.

**Verse 12:** *"And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast"*. Normally when one pictures horns, an image of an animal's horn comes to mind. In this case, John is probably speaking of the horns of a crown. The peaks on a crown are often called horns. Given this, it is logical that the horns would carry similar symbolic meaning to that of the crown. John says the ten horns are ten kings.

**10 Horns = 10 Kings**

The number ten could be a literal representation, indicating "10" actual kings; however, it could also be a symbolic representation. The number ten is often used as a number of totality. This symbolic definition comes from several illustrations, the 10 plagues of Egypt,

the 10 commandments, the 10 lepers, and the 10 virgins. This would mean that John was taking of all the earthly kingdoms; however, the Prophet Daniel spoke of the ten kings in a somewhat more literal light. For further explanation of the ten kings reference the commentary on Revelations chapter twelve, verse three.

**Verse 13:** *"These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast".* To be of one mind, symbolizes that the objectives and desires of all involved are in unison. It should be noted that the ten kings gave their allegiance to the beast, not the whore. In verses sixteen and seventeen of this chapter we find that the ten kings and the great whore are far from unison.

**Verse 14:** *"These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful".* As prophesied by Isaiah, Ezekial, Jeremiah, Zechariah, Nephi, and many other servants of the All Mighty, the wicked nations of the world will come against the elect of God. Nephi wrote, *"And it came to pass that I beheld that the great mother of abominations did gather together multitudes upon the face of all the earth, among all the nations of the Gentiles, to fight against the Lamb of God (1 Nephi 14:13)"*. We have read Johns' prophesies of Armageddon, and the battles preceding it. This verse is but another reference to that great battle. We can see the preparation every day, in the news and outside our very windows, if we but open our eyes.

John mentioned that those that were of the Lords', were called, chosen, and faithful. The Lord plainly stated in the Doctrine and Covenants, *"Behold, there are many called, but few are chosen. And why are they not chosen? Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men ..... (Doctrine and Covenants 121:34-35)"*. To be on the Lords' side, we must set our hearts upon the things of God. We must commit ourselves to following after His words. You can always tell which troop a soldier belongs to by the way he follows the commanders orders. Finally, we must prepare ourselves to serve in the Lords' army. Could one expect a soldier to serve in an army without training? The only place on earth that one can be fully trained to serve in the Lord's army is in the House of the Lord. That is why the Savior spoke of those that were chosen as having on the wedding garment. *"For many are called, but few chosen; wherefore all do not have on the wedding garment (Joseph Smith Translation of Matthew 22:14)"*. The sacred garment of Lord is the Armor of the righteous. Those that wear it and honor it will find peace in the Lords' rest.

**Verse 15:** *"And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues".* As one often hears the expression, "A sea of people", John uses the term water to represent the people of the earth. This verse is given in explanation to symbolism given in verse one of this chapter.

**Verse 16-17:** *"And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled".* Here is an interesting twist to the story. The horns, or kings, that are part of the beast, shall despise the great whore. In other words, the wicked nations of the world who previously seemed to be in league with the church of the devil, do not appear to have a total unison of favoritism toward the devils' church. Though this is not surprising, since we know that the great deceiver does not embrace harmony and brotherhood. We also know that he will not support his own. The Prophet Alma explained, *"...and thus we see that the devil will not support his children at the last day, but doth speedily drag them down to hell (Alma 30:60)"*.

The wicked who fight against the Lord, will not only bring about their own condemnation by their wicked acts, but they will be instrumental in their own destruction. The Lord will cause the wicked to fulfill all his words. Apparently, they will fight amongst themselves as well as against the Lord. Through their own contention, they will bring about what John calls their desolation and nakedness. The word desolate is defined as devoid of inhabitants; barren; lifeless (American Heritage Dictionary, third edition). Likewise, nakedness carries the meaning of poverty and the absence of possessions. They will utterly destroy all that is of worldly value. And after all, isn't that the only thing that is of value to them? The great prophet Isaiah wrote of these days, *"The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinances, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left (Isaiah 24:5-6)"*.

The symbolic passage "shall eat her flesh" is used to symbolize the destruction of worldliness. The symbolic act of eating represents consumption, destruction, and devouring. Flesh represents that which is carnal in nature. It represents the natural man, wickedness, and iniquity.

Both Isaiah and John speak of the wicked being burned. There will be a time in which the earth will be burned. In modern day

revelation the Lord promises, "*Behold, vengeance cometh speedily upon the inhabitants of the earth, a day of wrath, **a day of burning**, a day of desolation, of weeping, of mourning, and of lamentation; and as a whirlwind it shall come upon all the face of the earth, saith the Lord (Doctrine and Covenants 112:24)*".

The term burning can be used symbolically to represent cleansing, purifying, and destruction. If the term were used symbolically, there might not be an actual burning. Whether literal or figurative, the Lord has promised a day of destruction. The Lord explained that the day of burning shall be set aside for those that are of the world, and not of him. "*For after today cometh the burning--this is speaking after the manner of the Lord--for verily I say, tomorrow all the proud and they that do wickedly shall be as stubble; and I will burn them up, for I am the Lord of Hosts; and I will not spare any that remain in Babylon (Doctrine and Covenants 64:24)*". This great day of the burning of the wicked appears to be at the great and dreadful day of the Lord, the second coming. In the Old Testament we read, "*The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein (Nahum 1:5)*". Those that desire to be spared from the great burning must be numbered among the good. They must be worthy to come into the Lord's rest. At his coming those that are worthy will be taken up and preserved, while the wicked will feel the vengeance of God. "*And when the time cometh that evil fruit shall again come into my vineyard, then will I cause the good and the bad to be gathered; and the good will I preserve unto myself, and the bad will I cast away into its own place. And then cometh the season and the end; and my vineyard will I cause to be burned with fire (Jacob 5:77)*".

**Verse 18:** "*And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth*". Again, we find John drawing a connection between the great and abominable church and the Vatican city. In Bruce R. McConkie's Book, "The Millennial Messiah", Elder McConkie discusses modern day Babylon, and says, "*The city is Babylon; she is the similitude. The city is Rome; but she too is only a type and a figure. The city is all the cities of the world- San Francisco, Chicago, and New York City; London, Paris, and Berlin; Moscow, Tokyo, and Sao Paulo- all of which are subject to the rule and dominion of evil and carnality (Bruce R. McConkie, Millennial Messiah, page 445)*". During John's era, Rome was the great city. His writings repeatedly reference that fact;

- Rome is built on seven mountains.
- Rome was responsible for the martyrdom of the servants of God.
- The great and abominable church sat upon the great city.  
The Catholic church sits upon the city of Rome.
- Rome was the only type fitting the description of the great whore during Johns' time.

This was the similitude of Johns' time. *"What is the church of the devil in our day, and where is the seat of her power? if we accept the angelic word, if we believe as Nephi believed, and if, the Lord willing, we see what Nephi saw, then we shall accept without question the reality around us. The church of the devil is every evil and worldly organization on earth. It is all of the systems, both Christian and non-Christian, that have perverted the pure and perfect gospel; it is all of the governments and powers that run counter to the divine will; it is the societies and political parties and labor unions that sow strife and reap contention. It is communism; it is Islam; it is Buddhism; it is modern Christianity in all it's parts. It is Germany under Hitler, Russia under Stalin, and Italy under Mussolini. It is the man of sin speaking in churches, orating in legislative halls, and commanding the armies of men, and its headquarters are everywhere - in Rome and Moscow, in Paris and London, in Teheran and Washington - everywhere that evil forces, either of church or state or society, can be influenced. The imminent and all-pervading presence of evil in high places is one of the signs of the times (Bruce R. McConkie, Millennial Messiah, page 55)".*

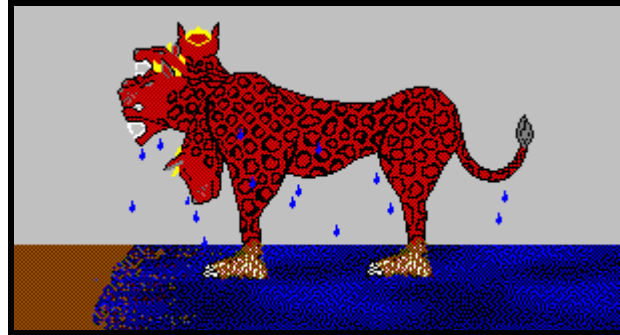
## Symbolic Guide to Key Symbols in Chapter 17

### The Great Whore



The church of the Devil, The Roman Catholic Church is identified as a type. The great whore is associated with the beast. The Catholic church is identified as being the great city Rome and aligning itself with the Roman Empire.

### The Beast



Wicked Nations of the Earth, Ancient Rome is Identified as a type. The sea and the sands thereof are symbols for the people of the earth.

