

# Revelation 17:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:

## Analysis

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**And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:....** This verse from Revelation's vision of babylon the harlot - false religion, political-religious alliance judged employs apocalyptic imagery rich with Old Testament allusions and symbolic meaning. The Greek text uses vivid apocalyptic language characteristic of Jewish prophetic literature, drawing heavily from Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Zechariah.

The symbolism must be interpreted within its first-century context while recognizing timeless spiritual realities. The imagery would resonate powerfully with persecuted believers facing Roman imperial cult worship, providing hope that despite present suffering, Christ reigns sovereign and will consummate His kingdom. The apocalyptic genre uses symbolic numbers (seven, twelve, 144,000), colors, beasts, and cosmic imagery to convey theological truth rather than photographic descriptions.

Christologically, Revelation consistently exalts Jesus as the victorious Lamb, the faithful witness, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Every vision ultimately points to Christ's supremacy, His finished redemptive work, and His certain return to judge the living and dead and establish the new creation.

## Historical Context

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John received this revelation circa AD 95 during Domitian's persecution, exiled on Patmos for his testimony. The seven churches of Asia Minor faced increasing pressure to participate in emperor worship and pagan religious practices. Refusal meant economic hardship, social ostracism, and potential martyrdom. Understanding this context illuminates Revelation's encouragement to faithful endurance.

The apocalyptic genre was familiar to first-century Jewish and Christian readers. Rather than newspaper-style predictions, apocalyptic literature uses symbolic imagery to reveal spiritual realities behind earthly events, encourage the faithful, warn the unfaithful, and assert God's ultimate sovereignty over history. Parallels with Daniel, Ezekiel, and intertestamental apocalyptic writings would help original readers decode the symbols.

Rome's imperial cult demanded worship of Caesar as divine, placing Christians in impossible situations—compromise their faith or face persecution. Revelation identifies Rome as "Babylon" and assures believers that despite appearances, the Lamb conquered through His death and resurrection, and all earthly kingdoms will submit to His reign.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

## Study Questions

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1. How does Revelation 17:1 reveal God's character, particularly His sovereignty, holiness, and justice?
2. What specific encouragement or warning does this verse offer for maintaining faithful Christian witness amid cultural pressure?

3. How does this passage point to Christ's victory and the hope of new creation, and how should that shape your present priorities?

## Interlinear Text

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καὶ	ήλθεν	εἰς	ἐκ	τῶν	ἐπτὰ	ἀγγέλων	τῶν	ἐχόντων
And	there came	one	of	which	the seven	angels	which	had
G2532	G2064	G1520	G1537	G3588	G2033	G32	G3588	G2192
τῶν	ἐπτὰ	φιάλας	καὶ	ἐλάλησεν	μετ'	ἐμοῦ	λέγων	
which	the seven	vials	And	talked	with	me	saying	
G3588	G2033	G5357	G2532	G2980	G3326	G1700	G3004	
μοι,	Δεῦρο	δείξω	σοι	τῶν	κρίμα	τῶν		
unto me	Come hither	I will shew	unto thee	which	the judgment	which		
G3427	G1204	G1166	G4671	G3588	G2917	G3588		
πόρνης	τῶν	μεγάλης	τῶν	καθημένης	ἐπὶ	τῶν	ὑδάτων	
whore	which	of the great	which	that sitteth	upon	which	waters	
G4204	G3588	G3173	G3588	G2521	G1909	G3588	G5204	
τῶν	πολλῶν							
which	many							
G3588	G4183							

## Additional Cross-References

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**Revelation 19:2** (Judgment): For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.

**Jeremiah 51:13** (Parallel theme): O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thine end is come, and the measure of thy covetousness.

**Revelation 16:19** (Judgment): And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

**Revelation 21:9** (Parallel theme): And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

**Revelation 15:1** (Judgment): And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

**Isaiah 1:21** (Judgment): How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers.

**Jeremiah 2:20** (Parallel theme): For of old time I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy bands; and thou saidst, I will not transgress; when upon every high hill and under every green tree thou wanderest, playing the harlot.

**Isaiah 57:3** (Parallel theme): But draw near hither, ye sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer and the whore.

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