

# Revelation 17:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

## Analysis

**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....** 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

---

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

---

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

## Study Questions

---

1. How does Revelation 17:16 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

---

καὶ	τὰ	δέκα	κέρατα	ἃ	εῖδες	ἐπὶ	τὸ	θηρίον
<b>And</b>	G3588	<b>the ten</b>	<b>horns</b>	<b>which</b>	<b>thou sawest</b>	<b>upon</b>	G3588	<b>the beast</b>
G2532		G1176	G2768	G3739	G1492	G1909		G2342

  

οὗτοι	μισήσουσιν	τὴν	πόρνην	καὶ	ἡρημωμένην
<b>these</b>	<b>shall hate</b>	G3588	<b>the whore</b>	<b>And</b>	<b>desolate</b>
G3778	G3404		G4204	G2532	G2049

  

ποιήσουσιν	αὐτὴν	καὶ	γυμνήν	καὶ	τὰς	σάρκας	αὐτὴν
<b>shall make</b>	<b>her</b>	<b>And</b>	<b>naked</b>	<b>And</b>	G3588	<b>flesh</b>	<b>her</b>
G4160	G846	G2532	G1131	G2532		G4561	G846

  

φάγονται	καὶ	αὐτὴν	κατακαύσουσιν	ἐν	πυρὶ
<b>shall eat</b>	<b>And</b>	<b>her</b>	<b>burn</b>	<b>with</b>	<b>fire</b>
G5315	G2532	G846	G2618	G1722	G4442

## Additional Cross-References

---

**Revelation 18:8** (Parallel theme): Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

**Leviticus 21:9** (Parallel theme): And the daughter of any priest, if she profane herself by playing the whore, she profaneth her father: she shall be burnt with fire.

**Revelation 18:19** (Parallel theme): And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.