

THE REVELATION

SEPTEMBER 29, 2024

Chapter 17:9 - 18

d) The Interpretation of Her Beast (17:9-14)

(1) The Identity of the Seven Heads (17:9-10)

Rev 17:9 "Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits,¹⁰ and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while.

Much has been made of these “seven mountains” in the Christian commentaries through the ages. Most have landed on the premise that these mountains are the seven hills of Rome; therefore, the city of Rome has become the target of most commentary. Furthermore, because Rome is the target of political power, a quick jump is made to the Catholic Church whose headquarter is in the same city, as the target of religious power. With that basis, the Church becomes the *great harlot* of this passage. A proof passage from Paul’s writing concerning *the great apostasy* still to come before the Second Coming is also attached to the Church in Rome. For emphasis, you will be hard-pressed to pick up a Christian commentary that does not accept this interpretation and interpret the rest of the REVELATION under that light. I categorically reject that premise and interpretation. Even though the REVELATION uses symbolic language, it gives the proper meaning of each symbol shortly after it is presented. In this verse, the meaning is given immediately after the symbol is presented.

This verse states, “The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits, and they are seven kings.” Thus, we have the interpretation, the “mountains” are “kings.” We have no need to speculate any further; the seven hills of Rome are not the seven kings – they are just hills. Kings sit on thrones. Thrones are always elevated above the people. Each empire has a king and each king has a throne.

Let us take a moment to review some of the symbols that apply to the *scarlet beast*. The seven heads represented the seven empires that had controlled the *Nation of Israel* in some form over the ages. The ten horns represented the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream which were interpreted as a combination of the ten countries that were formed when each leg of the Roman Empire died. The ten crowns (diadems) represented the authority of those ten countries. Here, the seven mountains represented the seven thrones of the kings of the seven empires. The person sitting on the throne ruled the empire and he was the emperor. Many rulers might sit in succession on the same throne through the ages as the ruler of the same empire, but the empire had only one ruler at a time. It does not matter to the LORD that five kings sat in succession on the throne of an empire; what matters to the LORD is that the throne of that empire ruled over Israel. This example is found in the Babylonian Empire. Its first king was Nebuchadnezzar, its second Amel-Marduk, its third Neriglissar, its fourth Labashi-Marduk, its fifth Nabonidus. Five men sat on the same throne during the 70-year history of the Babylonian Empire, yet, to the LORD, it was only one throne that ruled over Israel

regardless of the names of five humans that served in that position. Therefore, the thrones or “mountains” of these seven empires of the world represented the seven sets of “kings” who sat in power over the *Nation of Israel*.

(2) The Heritage of the Eighth Beast (17:11)

Rev 17:11 "The beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction.

When the last empire recovers as the *Revived Roman Empire*, seven thrones of seven empires will be represented by these seven heads of this beast. However, this verse says about the *Revived Empire* that he “is himself also an eighth and is *one* of the seven, and he goes to destruction.” In order to understand this verse, we must return to chapter seven in the book of Daniel. For background, Daniel was living in the last days of the Babylonian Empire. Belshazzar was acting as king even though he was truly the *king in waiting*. The great Egyptian and Assyrian Empires had already passed. Babylon would soon pass to the Persians. Nebuchadnezzar had already died and so had four other kings. Belshazzar was the son of the last Babylonian king. He was acting as king in the city while his father paid more attention to the luxuries of life than the business of being the emperor. Daniel’s numbering of the empires begins with Babylon, not Egypt. Therefore, he starts counting with Babylon being empire one and he will end with the fourth empire being what we call the *Roman Empire*, Daniel says the following.

Da 7:7 "After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.⁸ "While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts.

Daniel sees this *Roman Empire* as it is in its last days before it dies, one nation with ten states. We have made much about these ten states or countries in the past and how the tribes that killed the *Roman Empire* established these ten countries as the *ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream*; the reality is that the conquering nations allowed the ten countries to remain with their original borders even though five were controlled by the Germanic tribes and the other five were controlled by the Ottoman Muslim Turks. Here, *ten horns* still means *ten countries*. For Daniel, these *ten countries* represented the people who live within the borders of *Britain, France, Spain, Italy, North Africa, Macedonia, Greece, Syria, Turkey and Egypt*.

But Daniel sees a *little horn* squeeze in among the *ten*. The *little horn* killed the kings of three of the countries and became the ruler of the empire but also controlled one of the *ten*. Thus, with the resurrection of the *Revived Roman Empire*, the seventh revived head of the beast, the eighth ruler, the *little horn*, was the human emperor of *the first beast* but he will also be the king of one of the *ten countries*.

To be complete, Daniel says that the *Roman Empire* would be killed.

Da 7:11 "Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking; I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire.¹² "As for the rest of

the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but an extension of life was granted to them for an appointed period of time.

Verse 12 says, “but an extension of life was granted to them for an appointed period of time.” The extension of life means that the slain *Roman Empire* would be granted another life that we are calling the *Revived Roman Empire*.

(3) The Identity of the Ten Horns (17:12)

Rev 17:12 "The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour.

The REVELATION is looking far into the future and that is the reason this verse says, “the ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom.” These kings would live on earth many centuries after the days of John. The verse also says that these kings will join in authority “with the beast for one hour;” this is an incorrect translation. It should say they will join in authority “with the beast in the same hour.” Think of it this way. Each country will vote independently to join the *Revived Roman Empire*. When all the voting is done, the leaders of the *ten countries* will meet to sign the final documents. In that hour, they will receive their authority in the new empire.

(a) The Purpose of the Ten Horns (17:13)

Rev 17:13 "These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast.

Here is the purpose of the uniting of the *ten countries*. It will be to create the *first beast* with all the “power and authority” of their combined countries. The people had voted, the people had united. The empire will speak English, French, Spanish, Italian, Greek, Egyptian, Arabic, Syrian, Hebrew, Aramaic and several other languages and many dialects. As we have seen with the *European Economic Union* today, once the people of a nation join with other nations, stepping out of that union is exceedingly more difficult than entering into the agreement.

(b) The War of the Ten Horns (17:14)

Rev 17:14 "These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful."

The purpose of the *Revived Roman Empire* will be to join forces for one common goal, to “wage war against the Lamb.” For the *Revived Roman Empire*, it is a deadly mistake.

7. The Waters of the Great Harlot (17:15)

Rev 17:15 And he said to me, "The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.

In the introduction to this woman, we were told that she sat “on many waters.” We had already mentioned this verse in the last two lessons. It tells us that the “waters” she sat on were the “peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.” In the commentary on Revelation 17:13 we listed the languages of the people of the *Revived Roman Empire*, here we should mention that there will be one nationality from each of the ten countries but there will also be descendants of all three sons of Noah. No lineage from Noah down will be absent from the population of this empire.

8. The Destruction of the Great Harlot (17:16-18)

a) Destroyed on Earth (17:16)

Rev 17:16 "And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire."

This *great harlot* is religious and there is one thing people who hate God hate more than God, they hate religion and religious restrictions. They want to live in a world without God looking over their shoulder and convicting them of sin. They cannot stand the churning in their souls when the name of God or any god is brought into the picture. Therefore, it will be the intent of the *beast* to kill this *great harlot* as soon as she is no longer needed.

b) Directed by God (17:17)

Rev 17:17a "For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose,

Here we see an interesting paradox. The *beast* wants the *great harlot* dead and so does God. Furthermore, it was God who put the intent of killing the *great harlot* in the heart of the *beast*. This whole parade is directed by God for God and His purpose.

(1) To Build the Kingdom of the Beast (17:17b)

Rev 17:17b and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God will be fulfilled.

We must not run past this verse too quickly. Here we are told that all of the people of the *ten countries* will join together to create the *beast* to kill the *great harlot* and fulfill God's plan. But wait, the *ten countries* will unify behind the religion of the *false prophet* and the *second beast* in order to kill the *great harlot*. The religion of the *Revived Roman Empire* must be one that hates all other religions of the world and will kill as many people as necessary to end those faiths. God wants this *harlot* killed, the *Revived Roman Empire* wants this *harlot* killed and at least one religion of the world wants this *harlot* killed. However, little does the one religion that wants this *harlot* killed realize that it is part of the *great harlot*. Who is this *great harlot*?

(2) To Expose the Woman as the Great City (17:18)

Rev 17:18 "The woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth."

Finally, we arrive at the exposing of the *great harlot*; she is the "great city" that John saw broken into three sections in *bowl seven* (16:19). This sinful woman has "reigned over the kings of the earth." Which kings? She has reigned over the kings of the *ten countries* that united to form the *Revived Roman Empire*. She has also reigned over the kings of the east that would cross the dried Euphrates River to join this *beast* in the valley of Megiddo. She has also reigned over the past kingdoms of the world in some form or fashion. Her name is *Babylon the Great* and she is the *Mother of Harlots*. She began all the false religions in the world that needed to be destroyed once and for all.