

REV. 17-18 THE FALL OF RELIGIOUS AND COMMERCIAL BABYLON

We begin in Rev. 17 which starts with a religious harlot riding a large red beast. It pictures the tumultuous relationship between Church and State, with the False Prophet being its religious leader and the Beast being its political and military leader.

We now continue with the account in Rev. 17:7-10, "But the angel said to me, 'Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. *The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition.* And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see *the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.* Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. There are also seven kings. *Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come.* And when he comes, he must continue a short time."

John was astonished when he saw a rich and fallen woman mounting a seven-headed beast with ten horns on its seventh head, picturing the final ten rulers that make war with Christ when He returns. This symbol is a manifestation of the Fourth Beast power, pictured in Daniel 7:7--the Roman Empire, but *now being led by a false religious system.*

So this Beast in Rev. 17 is different than *the Beast in Rev. 13*, which no woman rides, it rules itself, and has a body depicting the ruling powers of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. The ten horns on this 7th head or "Rome" indicate ten future resurrections. From the time it receives a deadly wound on its head, which we consider is the end of the Roman Empire in A. D. 476, there would be ten revivals, with three being the transitional Germanic rulers, and then comes the Imperial Restoration by Justinian in 554. Rev. 17 indicates *seven resurgences* of the "woman" riding the Beast, starting with Justinian's rule and ending at Christ's return.

From what we know, Justinian was the first head, crowned by the Pope in 554. Charlemagne was the second head, crowned by the Pope in A. D. 800. Next comes the third head, Otto the Great, crowned by the Pope in 962. Charles V would be the fourth head, crowned by the Pope in 1520. Then comes the fifth head, Napoleon, crowned by the Pope in 1804. The

sixth head would be *the German-Italian Empire*, starting in 1870 with Garibaldi uniting Italy. Then in 1922 Mussolini claims to be a new Caesar and in 1935, of forming a Holy Roman Empire. He signed a secret Concordat with the Pope in 1929 and the Pact of Steel with Hitler. Yet, eventually, just as Persia became "the hump" of the bear, or *predominant* in the Medo-Persian Empire, so Hitler gradually became the prominent part of *this sixth head*, signing a Concordat with the Pope in 1933 and initiating WW II with the hope of conquering *the entire world!*

There is thus a seventh head still to arise in the future. It will likely be similar to the sixth head in its brutality, totalitarianism, black arts, and world-conquering goals. So, as we understand it, five heads have fallen, means "the *was*," one continues to have an influence--"the *is*," and a final one as a "Holy Roman empire" yet to come--the "*will ascend*" part.

The unsuspecting world will be stunned when it sees the sudden rise of this last head having great power and miraculous signs. Yet, those who have God's spirit will not be deceived by it, but only those whose "names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world" (Rev 17:9). Paul talks about converted members "whose names are in the Book of Life" (Phil. 4:3). This book was prepared by God "from the foundation of the world," for a person's name is written in it when receiving God's spirit--but it can also be erased (Rev. 3:5).

John continues, "The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition. The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast. These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful" (Rev. 17:11-14).

As *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says of these ten rulers, "They will receive authority for one hour...as kings *along with the beast*. While the 7 heads may be *chronologically successive rulers* of the Roman Empire who are singled out as prominent, the 10 horns...are *contemporaneous with each other*, and...will receive political power for a brief time."

What does the account mean when it says the final manifestation of this *Holy Roman Empire* “was, and is not, and yet is”? It seems to deal with *the great resemblance* it will have with the former *sixth head*, which apparently ended like the other five heads, but actually *still influences* what the *seventh head* will become. Indeed, it was *the sixth head* which was the most empowered by Satan, with Hitler dabbling in black magic and at times likely becoming demon-possessed. He also manipulated the minds of most of the Germans in order to do his will and then almost succeeded in eliminating the Jews (and other races) from the face of the earth. When it says he is also an “eighth head” it can mean he plays two separate roles—one *before* receiving the deadly wound (Rev. 13:3, 14), and the other *after* his *miraculous recovery*. Or it can mean it is such a different system in power and scope from the previous six heads that it can be seen as a separate entity, although it does succeed the sixth head and is also the seventh head.

John continues, “Then he said to me, ‘The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth’” (Rev. 17:15-18).

Next, God reveals the meaning of the symbols being used. The “woman” or this religious counterfeit system of Christianity is huge, worldwide, and multilingual in scope. Its political capital allows the world’s rulers to come, sign treaties and pay homage. This is why it says “the kings of the earth *committed fornication*, and the inhabitants of the earth were *made drunk* with the wine of her fornication” (Rev. 17:2). This description comes from Jeremiah 50:7, “Babylon was a golden cup in the Lord’s hand, that made all the earth drunk. The nations drank her wine; therefore the nations are *deranged*.” People under this religion can’t think straight. It consists mainly of mindless devotion to many “mysteries,” incense-filled rooms with an altar and idols. Also it has people repeating the prayers of the rosary, adoring Mary, and having

confessions with priests, instead of God. Eventually, as this account says, the ten rulers (Gk. *basileus*, leader or king), become fed up with this system and being manipulated by this religious leader, the False Prophet, and turn violently against him, burning his capital, presumably Rome, with all its former glory.

As our booklet “The Book of Revelation Unveiled” brings out, “In the end, however, her honeymoon with political leaders will turn sour. The kings supporting her widespread influence will come to despise her. Possibly they will finally recognize that God is not with her, that her claims of divine support are a lie. Whatever the reason, they will turn on her with a vengeance” (p. 65).

So they will instead side with the Beast and delegate the rest of their power to him. The city where the False Prophet resides is described as “that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth” (Rev. 17:18). It said in Rev. 17:9, “The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits.” We know these seven mountains are symbolic of kingdoms, but they can also be literal, for Rome is known for millennia as “the city of seven hills.” These hills are Aventine Hill, Caelian Hill, Capitoline Hill, Esquiline Hill, Palatine Hill, Quirinal Hill and Viminal Hill. In fact, the European Union started in Rome in 1957 with the Treaty of Rome.

Actually, Rome today is not such an important city, but with the False Prophet performing mindboggling miracles and the Beast having great satanic power (Rev. 13:1-18), Rome seems to be destined to become a great religious, commercial and political center. We will just have to wait and see.

Next, in Rev. 18 there is a *detailed* description of the fall of this city, symbolized as “Babylon.” This fall was noted in Rev. 14:8-11; 16:19, and Rev. 17:16, that says, “And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these *will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire*.”

John then writes, “After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, ‘Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!’” (Rev. 18:1-2). This happens toward the end of the 3 ½ year period when things are coming

to a head. Just as ancient Babylon and Niniveh were destroyed, so it will happen to Rome, the proud capital of the ancient Roman Empire and of the fourth beast of Dan. 7. Notice also the evidence that the food laws are still in effect, for there are *unclean* birds being described. If all the animals are now “clean” and eatable, why bring up the dietary restrictions of unclean animals during the end time?

John continues with his narrative, “For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury. And I heard another voice from heaven saying, ‘Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her. In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, ‘I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.’ Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her” (Rev. 18:3-8).

Here it shows “Babylon” has influenced the nations not only religiously, but also commercially. This is common in history, when a conquering power controls a region, the merchants need its permission to buy and sell, similar to what we saw in Rev. 13 with the mark of the beast and people unable to buy or sell without having that authorization (Rev. 13:16-17). God warns the faithful brethren not to become corrupted by yielding to this Beast power and its mark.

The indication is that this city will be destroyed by fire in one day. We don’t know if this occurs because of a nuclear attack, massive bombing or something else, but it will make quick work of the city.

As our booklet on Revelation mentions, “The commercial aspects of Satan’s kingdom, as described in chapter 18, reflect the favoritism and greed that have driven the entire system...With her fall the culture of Satan’s empire collapses. His kingdom falls apart. God has warned his people not to get

caught up in this evil system lest they, too, become victims of her destruction” (p. 67).

John describes its fall, “The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, ‘Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! *For in one hour your judgment has come.*’ And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore: merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet...and bodies and souls of men (possibly slavery, such as in WW II Germany). The fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you... and you shall find them no more at all. The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, and saying, ‘Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple...and pearls! *For in one hour such great riches came to nothing.*’ Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, ‘What is like this great city?’ They threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and wailing, and saying, ‘Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth! For in one hour she is made desolate.’ *‘Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!’* Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, ‘Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore. The sound of harpists...shall not be heard in you...No craftsman of any craft shall be found in you anymore, and the sound of a millstone shall not be heard in you anymore. The light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore, and the voice of bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore. For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for *by your sorcery* all the nations were deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth” (Rev. 18:9-24).

In the next study, we will cover the Second Coming of Christ, the Final Battle, and the death of the False Prophet and the Beast!