

## ***The Church of the Servant King***

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### **PROPHECY SERIES**

(Proph21T\_Revelation\_chp17\_The Scarlet Woman & Beast)

#### **REVELATION 17:1-18**

And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I shall show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, 2 with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality." 3 And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names having seven heads and ten horns. 4 And the woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality, 5 and upon her forehead a name was written, a mystery,

"BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."

And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. And when I saw her, I wondered greatly. 7 And the angel said to me, "Why do you wonder? I shall tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her which has the seven heads and the ten horns. 8 The beast that you saw was and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and to go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth will wonder, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come. 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. 11 "And the beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction. 12 "And 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. 13 These have one purpose and they give their power and authority to the beast. 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." 15 And he said to me, "The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues. 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. 17 For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God should be fulfilled. 18 And the woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth."

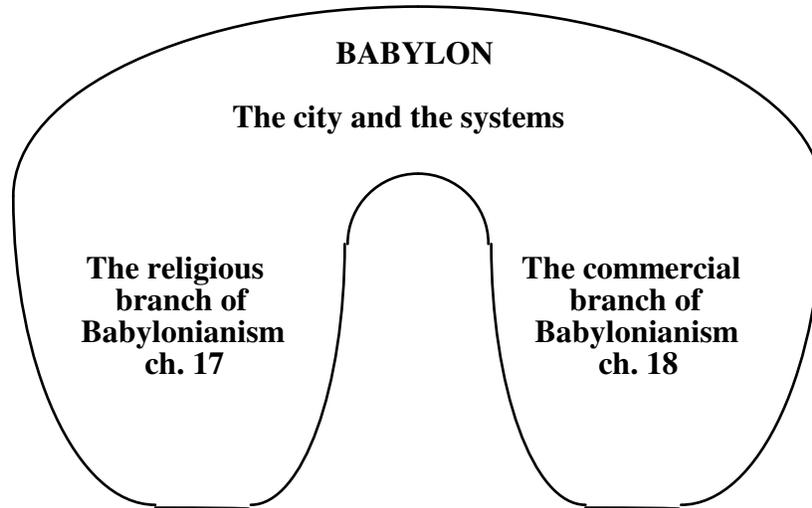
Since verses 7-18 explain the first six verses, we will examine the two sections of this chapter concurrently. I will present a phrase from verses 1-6 followed by the counterpart from verses 7-18. Then, I will attempt to provide a clearer explanation. ("Section 1" = verses 1-6; "Section 2" = verses 7-18).

As we begin to analyze chapters 17 & 18, it is important to understand that in these chapters, John is provided insight into two aspects of the future "Babylon" that is used by Satan to

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catapult his earthly, human representatives into power. There is a city named “Babylon” and that city is the base or hub around which two significant forces revolve – “religion” and “economics” or “commerce.” Chapter 17 addresses the religious system and chapter 18 addresses the commercial system.<sup>1</sup>



There are several images mentioned in chapter 17 – the “great harlot” who sits on many waters, the “woman sitting on a scarlet beast,” and the beast having seven heads and ten horns. The following tables attempt to present an analysis and interpretation of these images in a format that is helpful to the audio/visual study sessions.

The Great Harlot (v. 1)				
Section 1		Section 2		Explanation
Verse	Phrase	Verse	Phrase	
1 & 2	“...the great harlot who sits on many waters...”  “...with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality.” <sup>2</sup>	15	“...The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.”	The “great harlot” imagery highlights the nature of the religious system that is universal and ecumenical in nature, i.e. she “sits on many waters”. The “many waters” are the unbelievers of the world over which she holds influence.  The “great harlot” is destroyed at some point in the Tribulation period (probably the mid-point of the Tribulation) by the “beast.” She is destroyed by “fire.”
		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.”	

<sup>1</sup> The diagram is borrowed from Thomas Constable, “Notes on Revelation,” [www.soniclight.com](http://www.soniclight.com)

<sup>2</sup> The Greek word that is translated “immorality” in the NASV translation can be, and often is, translated “fornication” (Gr. *eporneusan* – ἐπόρνευσαν). Fornication and adultery are frequent analogies used in Scripture to describe unfaithfulness to Yahweh (or Jesus Christ). Not only did it serve to highlight the unfaithfulness, but it also highlighted practices that were almost always associated with idolatry, i.e. physical, literal fornication and adultery with cult members who were effectively prostitutes. For examples, see Lev 20:5; Num 25:1; 2 Chron 21:11; Isa 1:21; 23:17; Jer 2:20; 3:1, 6, 8; Ezek 26:15-17, 28, 29, 31, 34, 35, 41; 20:30; 23:5, 9, 43, 44; Hos 2:5; 3:3; 4:5, 10, 13-15; Mic 1:7.

				The "kings of the earth" have submitted to the influence of this false religious system.
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The "harlot" and the "woman" are evidently two different aspects of the same image. While the "harlot" is the religious system, the "woman" is evidently the city ("Babylon") that is the capital of this religious system's power base. Evidently, this "Babylon" is a literal city that is the center of a composite of religious and economic powers.

The ancient Babylon is better understood here as the archetypal head of all entrenched worldly resistance to God. Babylon is a trans-historical reality including idolatrous kingdoms as diverse as Sodom, Gomorrah, Egypt, Babylon, Tyre, Nineveh, and Rome. Babylon is an eschatological symbol of satanic deception and power; it is a divine mystery that can never be wholly reducible to empirical earthly institutions. It may be said that Babylon represents the total culture of the world apart from God, while the divine system is depicted by the New Jerusalem. Rome is simply one manifestation of the total system.<sup>3</sup>

Babylon is the Satanic counterfeit of what God will establish in the New Jerusalem at Jesus' 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent as the Messiah-King of the earth. Initially, the "woman" – the city Babylon – and the "harlot" – the religious/economic system centered there, will exert controlling influence over the "beast" and the "beast" will support her. We will see that this arrangement is used by Satan to catapult the "beast" to power. Once the "beast" ascends to power during the period of pseudo peace and prosperity for the "kings of the earth" and the population of the earth, there will be some supernatural events experienced by the "beast" that result in a transformation of the coalition of kings that comprise the "beast." One of the kings of the coalition that is the "beast" will be "as if slain" and experience a pseudo-resurrection after a visit to the "Abyss" – the abode of Satan and his demon legions (9:1-2, 11; 11:7).

The Woman (v. 3)				
Section 1		Section 2		Explanation
Verse	Phrase	Verse	Phrase	
3-4	"...a woman sitting ...clothed in purple and scarlet...adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls... having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality..."	18	And the woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth.	The "woman" is identified in chapter 18 as Babylon (e.g. 18:10, 21). The "woman" is the city; whereas, the "harlot" is the religious system promoted from the city.  This religious system promotes the slaughter of the true believers in God and His Messiah in the name of religion, in the name of god.
5	"...upon her forehead a name was written...BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."			The religious system is idolatrous and demonically empowered. It's origins extend back in time to just after the Noaic Flood (see previous session).

<sup>3</sup> Alan Johnson, "Revelation," in *Hebrews-Revelation*, Vol. 12 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 12 vols. edited by Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 155 cited by Thomas Constable, "Notes on Revelation, [www.soniclight.com](http://www.soniclight.com)

6	"...the woman drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus."			
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**Correlation Between Revelation 12, 13 & 17 and Daniel 2 & 7:** When we initially studied Revelation 13, I indicated that we would defer an analysis and interpretation of the "heads" and "horns" of the "dragon" and the "beast" mentioned in Revelation 12 & 13 until we arrived at Revelation 17.

The Beast (v.3)				
Section 1		Section 2		Explanation
Verse	Phrase	Verse	Phrase	
3	"...and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns."	9	"The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits."	Compare to Revelation 12:3; 13:1: 17:3 and Daniel 7:7-8.  See associated chart.
		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."	
		12	"And 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."	Some theologians have interpreted the seven hills or mountains to be the city of Rome since Rome was surrounded by seven mountains. However, if the hills represent kings, then the reference to seven hills is not to be interpreted literally. Some have interpreted the seven hills to represent the more prominent rulers of Rome; however, which five are deserving of such prominence. Some have indicated that the seven hills represent empires of the past – Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and ancient Rome. However, the angel interpreted the hills to be "kings." <sup>4</sup>
		13	"These [ten horns, ten kings] have one purpose and they give their power and authority to the beast."	
		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."	
		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."	
17	For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their	The "beast" (the coalition of rulers with the most prominent ruler being the Anti-Christ) will be empowered by Satan and in Satan's power, the "beast" will seek to eliminate believers.  As a part of the effort to consolidate its power, the "beast" will eliminate the "harlot" – the city and the ecumenical religious system supported by the city of Babylon.		

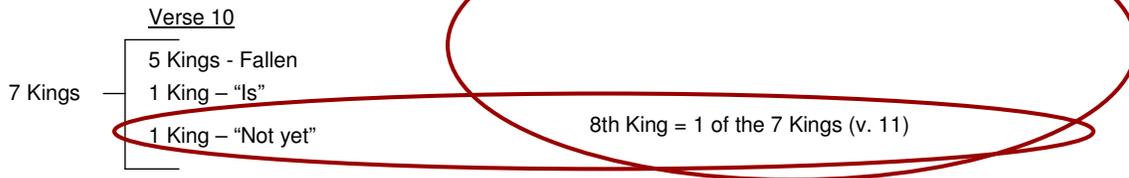
<sup>4</sup> John F. Walvoord, *The Prophecy Knowledge Handbook* (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1990), 607-608.

			kingdom to the beast, until the words of God should be fulfilled.”	
8	“The beast that you saw was and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and to go to destruction...the beast that was and is not and will come.”	11	“And the beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction.”	The “beast,” the coalition of kings with the Anti-Christ as the most prominent member, is the 8 <sup>th</sup> king. The Anti-Christ is the 6 <sup>th</sup> king prior to his “as if slain” and pseudo-resurrection from the Abyss experience. The Anti-Christ is the 7 <sup>th</sup> king after his pseudo-resurrection from the Abyss.

### Scarlet Beast (Revelation 17:3)

7 Heads = 7 Mountains on which the “Woman” sits (v. 7) = 7 Kings (v. 10)

10 Horns = 10 Kings who have authority with the **Beast** (v. 12-13)



- The **Beast** is a coalition of rulers (kings) in a superhuman state of being after having “come up out of the abyss” (17:8) – having been transported to Satan’s headquarters after one of the 7 kings is “as if slain” (13:3) and experiences a pseudo-resurrection (13:3).
- The 1 king (i.e. the 6<sup>th</sup> of the 7) that “is” = the 7<sup>th</sup> king in his “mortal” state of being.
- The 6<sup>th</sup> king (who becomes the 7<sup>th</sup> king) = the Anti-Christ during the 1st half of the Tribulation period.
- The 7<sup>th</sup> king = the Anti-Christ during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the Tribulation and is the 6<sup>th</sup> king in a “superhuman” state of being after ascending from the abyss in a pseudo-resurrection (13:3).
- The 8<sup>th</sup> king is the **Beast** and is simply the coalition of the “10 horns” or “10 kings” (v. 12-13) who have authority with the Beast PLUS the 7th king who is the Anti-Christ (a.k.a. the “little horn” of Dan 7:7-8).

## Reconciliation of Passages With Similar Imagery

	← Heavenly →	← Earthly →		
	<u>Revelation 12:3</u>	<u>Revelation 13:1</u>	<u>Revelation 17:3</u>	<u>Daniel 7:7-8</u>
Description of Imagery	Great <b>Red Dragon</b> having 7 heads & 10 horns & 7 crowns	A “ <b>beast</b> ” from the sea having 10 horns & 7 heads. 10 crowns on horns & blasphemous names on heads.	A “ <b>scarlet beast</b> ” full of blasphemous names, having 7 heads & 10 horns.	A “ <b>beast</b> ” with large iron teeth and 10 horns. Another “ <b>little horn</b> ” emerges and uproots 3 of the 10 other horns. The “ <b>little horn</b> ” has eyes and a mouth that utters great boasts.
Interpretation of Imagery	This is an image of Satan’s demonic executive team that leads the angelic hosts that fell with him. It is the <b>fallen heavenly counterpart</b> to the earthly confederacy that Satan will establish and which is the subject of the other passages herein.	<p>These three passages are all referencing the same “<b>Beast</b>.” A comparison of these passages reveals that there are two separate groups of kings that are mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 7 Kings (5 of whom fall + 2 who represent 2 phases of Anti-Christ’s reign)</li> <li>- 10 Kings (3 of whom are overpowered &amp; supplanted by the Anti-Christ)</li> </ul> <p>The “<b>Beast</b>” is the coalition of 10 kings in a superhuman state of being after having “come up out of the abyss” (17:8). These 10 kings plus the 6<sup>th</sup> of the 7 kings are transported to Satan’s headquarters after the 6<sup>th</sup> king is “as if slain” (13:3) and experiences a pseudo-resurrection (13:3).</p> <p>After experiencing the pseudo-resurrection, the 6<sup>th</sup> king is transformed into a superhuman state of existence and becomes the 7<sup>th</sup> king. The 7<sup>th</sup> king overpowers and supplants 3 of the 10 kings and the remaining kings from the original group of 10 plus the 7<sup>th</sup> king (a.k.a. the “<b>little horn</b>”) form a coalition that is the “<b>Beast</b>.”</p>		