

**Rev 17:3-8 (NIV)**

- 1) The angel's question in vs. 7 was rhetorical in that he was getting ready to explain the mystery of the woman and the beast she was riding.
- 2) John understood who the woman and the beast were – the woman represented a false religious system and the beast the antichrist.
- 3) What he did not get was the connection between them.
- 4) In order for John to get that connection, the angel must begin with more detail about them.
- 5) The beast is described as one who was, and is not, and is about to come again.
- 6) In the discussion of chapter 13 vs. 3 and 12, that same phrase refers to the Antichrist's faked death and resurrection.
- 7) In chapter 13 vs. 14 we see the false prophet will use that alleged miracle to deceive the entire world into worshipping the Antichrist ().
- 8) Up to that point, the Antichrist's political and economic empire will coexist with the false religious system headed by the false prophet.
- 9) But after his "resurrection," (staged or otherwise) the Antichrist, then indwelt by a powerful demon out of the abyss, will turn on the false religious system and destroy it.
- 10) He will tolerate only one religion — the worship of himself.
- 11) As you may recall, this takes place approximately halfway thru the tribulation.
- 12) Christians will not be taken in by this fake resurrection – unbelievers “inhabitants of the earth” will be.

**Rev 17:9-11 (NIV)**

- 13) As read here from the NIV, the angel's statement is "This calls for a mind with wisdom.”
- 14) The NASB2020 and many other translations render this as “Here is the mind which has wisdom.”
- 15) In either case, the statement invites John and his readers to pay close attention to what follows.
- 16) MacArthur makes the statement here:  
“It will take much wisdom and spiritual insight to understand it, and perhaps only those alive at the time will fully comprehend it.”
- 17) The first aspect of this difficult section reads:  
“The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits.”
- 18) Many commentators have looked at this passage and made the assumption that the seven hills forces one to see Rome as city under discussion because the city does set on 7 hills.
- 19) Many also assume that the woman then becomes the Roman Catholic church.

- 20) All such speculation is unnecessary because the text plainly identifies the mountains as seven kings. I really don't think there is a second underlying meaning.
- 21) These kings represent seven world empires embodied in their rulers.
- 22) The angel tells John that five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come.
- 23) Again, per John MacArthur, the five Gentile world empires that had fallen by the time of John's vision are Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece.
- 24) The one that existed at that time was obviously Rome.
- 25) The other one that has not yet come is the Antichrist's final world empire.
- 26) Commenting on the significance of the first six empires, Henry Morris writes,
- Though none of these empires ever actually ruled the whole world, each was the greatest kingdom of its own time, particularly in reference to the land and people of Israel and these kingdoms' opposition to the proclamation of God's Word and the accomplishment of His purposes in the world. . . .
- These, of course, have not been the only kingdoms that have been at enmity with God and His purposes. In this category could also be placed such kingdoms as Syria, Edom, Moab, Midian, and many others, but none of these were empires of great size and influence. On the other hand, there were other great and powerful empires in the ancient world — China, India, and the Incas, for example — but these had only peripheral contact with the Word of God and the chosen people. There were only six kingdoms that met both criteria up to the time of Christ and the apostles. Furthermore, all six of these were not only legitimate heirs of political Babel but also of religious Babel as well. Babylonia, Egypt, Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome were all strongholds of the world religion of evolutionary pantheism and idolatrous polytheism. Thus, they appropriately are represented as six heads on the great beast that supports the harlot. (Morris, Revelation Record, 337. Italics in the original.)
- 27) Ok, let me see if I can bring this a little further into perspective.
- 28) If we were at the half-way point of the tribulation today, I am sure everyone in here could think of 5 countries (empires) that would fall into the category of enemies of God and God's people.
- 29) There may be world powers (empires) at the actual time of the tribulation that are far worse enemies of God and His people than any we can think of today.
- 30) To John's readers, the empires that would fit the picture were the ones just mentioned.
- 31) I think the idea is to get the readers of any time period to grasp the total domination that will occur under the antichrist's empire.
- 32) As MacArthur intimated in his comment "...perhaps only those alive at the time will fully comprehend it."

***Does that help clear up that portion of the passage?***

## ***Revelation – NOTES – 2021***

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- 33) The angel goes on to explain that when the Antichrist comes, he must remain a little while.
- 34) His empire will be short-lived; he will be given "authority to act for forty-two months" (13:5; the second half of the Tribulation).
- 35) Then the angel offered the puzzling comment that the ***beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction.***
- 36) The question then becomes, how can the beast (the Antichrist) be an eighth king and also one of the seven?
- 37) The answer is found in the phrase the beast . . . was and is not.
- 38) The antichrist will be one of the seven kings before his supposed death and resurrection and an eighth king afterwards during the second phase of his rule.
- 39) As noted earlier in verse 8, the antichrist will go to destruction — eternal damnation in the lake of fire (19:20; 20:10).
- 40) Unlike the first six empires, his empire will be destroyed by a direct act of God.

### **Rev 17:12-14 (NIV)**

- 1) The angel further explained that the ten horns which John saw are ten kings.
- 2) They cannot be known to any earlier generation because they have not yet received a kingdom, since they are part of the Antichrist's future empire.
- 3) They will receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour.
- 4) Perhaps the Antichrist's empire will be divided into 10 administrative regions, which these ten kings will rule under him.
- 5) The reference to one hour is a figure of speech that emphasizes the brevity of their rule; their reign will be short-lived because their master's empire itself will be short-lived.
- 6) During their brief reign, they will be unanimously devoted to the Antichrist.
  - a) They will have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the beast.
- 7) They will do his will, and his will alone.
- 8) The agenda of the ten kings, like that of Satan and the Antichrist, will be to wage war against the Lamb at the Battle of Armageddon.
- 9) If we look back at chapter 16, we will see another facet of this international consortium of evil.

### **Rev 16:13-15 (NIV)**

- 10) These three exceptionally deceitful and powerful demons will be the agents to gather the kings for that battle.
- 11) This leads one to conclude that the 10 of the ten horns is not literal but perhaps figurative symbolizing all the kings of the earth.

**Rev 17:15 (NIV)**

- 1) In 17:1, the prostitute is described as one "who sits on many waters".
- 2) The great prostitute is called "Babylon" (17:5) and the imagery of the waters comes from Jeremiah's prophecy to Babylon.

**Jer 51:13 (NIV)**

- 3) Although the saints reading John's letter see Babylon and Rome as part of their present world, this Babylon (great prostitute) represents a far-reaching, anti-God power that will encompass the world.
- 4) The angel explained that the waters. . . represent masses of people of every nation and language.
- 5) The Antichrist will influence or even possess the leaders across the world, but we must see also that his influence will extend to all people.
- 6) The "masses" also will be overtaken by the great prostitute and will be enamored by her. In doing so, they will become hostile to God.
- 7) The leaders and the people will be joined in their adoration of the Antichrist.

**Rev 17:16-18 (NIV)**

- 1) At first glance, this may seem a bit odd that the Antichrist and the ten kings would hate the prostitute.
  - a) Especially to the point of destruction in such a complete and graphic way.
- 2) There are a couple of opinions regarding the why of this.
- 3) First, there is the "nature of evil." (LABC)

This verse describes the nature and outcome of evil. In a dramatic turn of events, the beast on whom the prostitute rides will turn on her and destroy her. In fact, the Beast has hated the prostitute all along. This is how evil operates. Destructive by its very nature, it turns on itself. The Beast and the ten kings (Satan and the leaders) will end up destroying what they have made. The very evil of the culture they have created will leave it in shambles.

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- 4) Second, and, I think more plausible, is that symbolically in this context the prostitute (Babylon) represents the false religious system that will exist at that time.
- 5) Having used this false religious system to help him gain control of the world, the Antichrist will discard it.
- 6) As we will see he will demand that the world is to worship only him.
- 7) Thus, he will turn on the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire.

## ***Revelation – NOTES – 2021***

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- 8) That graphic language of extreme violence is used to make clear that the Antichrist and his henchmen will utterly and completely obliterate all vestiges of the false religious system.
- 9) The Antichrist's self-serving, satanically inspired actions are, however, precisely in the scope of God's sovereign plan.
- 10) In fact, it is God who will put it in the hearts of the Antichrist's followers to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast.
- 11) God's power is behind the destruction and consolidation of the evil empire;
  - a) As always, Satan is the instrument of God's purposes.
- 12) God hates every form of false religion and will not tolerate those who seek to rob Him of His glory (Isa 42:8).
- 13) The Antichrist's religious empire will be judged and destroyed.
- 14) And, as we will see as we proceed into chapter 18 that the political and economic aspects of that evil world empire will also be destroyed.