

# God's Church in Apostasy Through Church and State Unity

By Melissa Hanson, M. Ed.

## Abstract

This paper examines Revelation 17 as a figurative prophecy describing the apostasy of Protestant churches in the last days through their unification with the Roman Catholic Church and the civil powers of the world. Each prophetic symbol—including the “great harlot (whore),” “Babylon,” “wine of fornication,” “scarlet beast,” “seven heads,” and “ten horns”—is analyzed in detail using the biblical text and the interpretive writings of Ellen G. White.

Particular emphasis is placed on the prophetic equivalence of **heads, mountains, and kings** as symbols of successive world powers, as well as the **ten horns** as both civil and religious powers of a nation paralleling the ten toes of Daniel 2's statue. Together these symbols portray a comprehensive picture of Satan's kingdom throughout history, culminating in a final global alliance against God's faithful people.

## Introduction

Revelation 17 offers one of the most striking depictions of end-time apostasy, where John beholds a woman, arrayed in purple and scarlet, holding a golden cup of abominations, and drunk with the blood of saints. The narrative portrays the final phase of Satan's counterfeit kingdom where false religion joins with secular power to oppose God and His people.

This thesis systematically defines the prophetic symbols in Revelation 17. These symbols are of utmost importance in understanding the meaning of this prophecy because the symbols demonstrate God's control over the nations, ultimately resulting in the triumphal kingdom of Christ. Ellen White states:

*All the symbolical representations serve a double purpose. From them God's people learn not only that the physical forces of the earth are under the control of the Creator, **but also that under his control are the religious movements of the nations.** Especially is this true with reference to the enforcement of Sunday observance. (17LtMs, Ms 153, 1902, par. 7)*

This thesis demonstrates the symbols' relevance to Protestant apostasy in alliance with Catholicism and civil authorities. It underscores the urgent warning for God's people to separate from Babylon and remain faithful to the Lamb who ultimately triumphs.

## The Harlot (“Whore”) and Apostate Church

The “great harlot” or “whore” of Rev. 17:1 symbolizes God’s professed church in apostasy (Eze. 16:14-16; GC 381). Hosea 4:12 (NKJV) states, “*My people ask counsel from their wooden idols... For their spirit of harlotry has caused them to stray. And they played the harlot against their God.*” Throughout Scripture, harlotry represents unfaithfulness to God by embracing idolatry and foreign alliances (e.g. Isaiah 1:21; Ezekiel 16:15-59). In this context, the harlot primarily refers to apostate Protestantism at the end of time. It has abandoned its purity as the “chaste virgin” of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2), fallen from its original state described in Rev.12:1, and united back with her “mother”—the Roman Catholic Church. The Bible likely prophesies the apostate Protestant churches’ fall in Ezekiel. 16:44-45 (KJV), “*As is the mother, so is her daughter! Thou art your mother’s daughter...*” Ellen White confirms that the woman represents the fallen Protestant churches by stating:

*Babylon is said to be ‘the mother of harlots.’ By her daughters must be symbolized churches that cling to her doctrines and traditions, and follow her example of sacrificing the truth and the approval of God, in order to form an unlawful alliance with the world ... the fall of Babylon must apply to religious bodies that were once pure and have become corrupt ... it cannot refer to the Roman Church alone, for that church has been in a fallen condition for many centuries. (GC 382.3)*

*The churches, represented by Babylon, are represented as having fallen from their spiritual state to become a persecuting power against those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. To John this persecuting power is represented as having horns like a lamb, but as speaking like a dragon. (Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, 117 [1896]).*

Furthermore, the harlot’s forehead bears the name *Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots* (Rev. 17:5), revealing her lineage from Rome, the “mother” church. Ellen White explains:

*Then I saw the mother of harlots, that the mother was not the daughters, but separate and distinct from them. She has had her day, and it is past, and her daughters, Protestant sects, were next to come on the stage and act out the same mind that the mother had when she persecuted the saints. I saw that the mother had been declining in power the daughters have been growing, and soon they will exercise the power once manifested by the mother. (IEGWLM 244.1)*

These quotes demonstrate that the great harlot is not primarily speaking of the Roman Catholic Church; instead, the harlot in Revelation 17 represents the Protestant churches, specifically of the United States of America, joined with the papacy, using civil power to persecute God’s people.

Her purple and scarlet attire is a stark contrast to her former clothing of the sun in Revelation 12:1. These specific colors boast of both wealth and sin (Isaiah 1:18). Ellen White gives further comment on the harlot’s attire: “*The purple and scarlet color, the gold and precious stones and pearls, vividly picture the magnificence and more than kingly pomp affected by the haughty see of Rome*” (GC 382.2). The purity and innocence lost is vividly displayed in the colors that the harlot wears, matching the scarlet color of the beast she is riding.

In Rev. 17:3, the harlot “sits” upon the scarlet beast. However, in Rev. 17:1, the woman “sits” (“*kathemai*”) upon many waters, and in Rev. 17:9, John describes seven mountains which are seven heads on which the woman sits. The Greek word for “sits,” (“*kathemai*”) means to “dwell,” but it also has the connotation of rulership, such as sitting on a throne in the description of the twenty-four elders (Rev. 11:16). Moreover, two of the three references to the woman sitting have the preposition, “upon” with them (Rev. 17:1 and 3), so the woman (apostate Protestantism) is sitting on the beast (a civil worldwide kingdom- Dan. 7:23) and the waters “peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues”- Rev. 17:15) ruling, like its “mother” (the papacy) had done previously over the nations of the world.

## Babylon and the Final Crisis

Tragically, Protestant churches, once founded on biblical truth, have adopted Rome’s errors and aligned with civil governments. Revelation 17:18 states that the woman is the “*great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth,*” and in verse 5, the harlot’s forehead has the name, “*Mystery Babylon the Great.*” Ellen White defines Babylon: “The fallen denominational churches are Babylon” (Ev 365.1). She gives further light in the following quotes::

*Many of the Protestant churches are following Rome’s example of iniquitous connection with ‘the kings of the earth’ ... and the term ‘Babylon’—confusion—may be appropriately applied to these bodies. (GC 383.1)*

*Babylon is said to be a harlot; and the prophet beheld her drunken with the blood of saints and martyrs. The Babylon thus described represents Rome, that apostate church which has so cruelly persecuted the followers of Christ. But Babylon the harlot is the mother of daughters who follow her example of corruption. Thus are represented those churches that cling to the doctrines and traditions of Rome and follow her worldly practices, and whose fall is announced in the second angel’s message. (4SP 233.1)*

*The state of corruption and apostasy that in the last days would exist in the religious world, was presented to the prophet John in the vision of Babylon, ‘that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.’ Revelation 17:18 (PP 167.1)*

Thus, she defines “Babylon” as the symbol of religious confusion of the apostate Protestant churches united with the Roman Catholic Church that reigns “over the kings of the earth” in the last days before Christ’s coming.

In Revelation 17:2, the Bible states that the great harlot has committed fornication with the “*kings of the earth.*” In Revelation 18:2-3, Babylon is called “the great” and “the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her.” She has united her religious power with papal and civil power to become a persecuting force towards God’s people. Ellen White defines the kings of the earth as “state churches” by stating “*Many of the Protestant churches are following Rome’s example of iniquitous connection with ‘the kings of the earth’—the state churches...*” (GC 383.1). The Bible distinguishes the “kings of the earth” from the “inhabitants of the earth” who were made drunk with the wine of her fornication (Rev. 17:2). This distinction could be a clue that the kings of the earth may primarily be pointing to the civil leaders of the “earth” beast

found in Revelation 13:11, “*And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.*” This second beast of Revelation 13, whom Ellen White clearly identifies as the United States (GC88 440), will cause “*as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed*” (Rev. 13:15), signifying the combination of church and state, another characteristic of Babylon’s “confusion.”

Additionally, John is carried by the Spirit into the “wilderness” (eremos) before he sees the harlot sitting on a scarlet beast (Rev. 17:3). This Greek word for wilderness means “a solitary, lonely, desolate, uninhabited place.” Again, if the beast coming up from the earth in Revelation 13:11 is contrasted with the beast rising from the sea (“waters” meaning “peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues {Rev. 17:15}”), the earth beast likely rose from an “uninhabited” location, the meaning of the word, “wilderness,” which describes the original setting of the United States of America. Ellen White comments:

*The beast with two horns, Revelation 13:11-17, is in a different locality, “Coming up out of the earth;” not by the conquest of nations and peoples, but growing as a plant, out of the earth. This represents the united states, a locality outside of the dominion of “All the world,” as known to the ancients. (4SP 502.4)*

The word for earth (*ge*) can also mean “the main land as opposed to the sea” and “a country or land enclosed within fixed boundaries” further supporting the idea that the “kings of the earth” may specifically refer to the civil leaders of the United States of America (although it also includes all the civil leaders of the world).

Therefore, the great city of Babylon is the woman or harlot of Revelation 17, the apostate Protestant churches joined with the Roman Catholic Church and the civil leaders, specifically of the United States, but also encompassing the world.

## **Protestant Apostasy and the Wine of Fornication**

The harlot is grasping a golden cup full of “abominations and the filthiness of her fornication” (Rev. 17:4). The intoxication of these abominations is described in Jeremiah 51:7, “*Babylon hath been a golden cup... that made all the earth drunken. The nations have drunken her wine; therefore the nations are mad.*” Intoxicated, the state churches can no longer reason logically. Ellen White declares, “*In the seventeenth of Revelation is foretold the destruction of all the churches who corrupt themselves by idolatrous devotion to the service of the Papacy*” (Lt232-1899.20). They have been deceived by the harlot’s “abominations,” which the Bible often defines as idolatry (Deut. 7:25).

The “wine of fornication” (Rev. 17:2) represents false doctrines including immorality, Sunday sacredness, immortality of the soul, and ecumenical compromise—through which the harlot intoxicates the nations. Deuteronomy 32:32-33 explains this “wine” by stating, “*For their vine is the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter. Their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps.*” Since Revelation

12:9 defines the Devil as a dragon, these false doctrines ultimately come from him; however, he uses the Protestant churches and the nations as his mediums. Ellen White adds additional light:

*The fallen denominational churches are Babylon. Babylon has been fostering poisonous doctrines, the wine of error. This wine of error is made up of false doctrines, such as the natural immortality of the soul, the eternal torment of the wicked, the denial of the pre-existence of Christ prior to His birth in Bethlehem, [and] the advocating and exalting of the first day of the week above God's holy, sanctified day. (Lt57-1893.10)*

*The wine of Babylon is the exalting of the false and spurious Sabbath above the Sabbath which the Lord Jehovah hath blessed and sanctified for the use of man, also the immortality of the soul. These kindred heresies, and the rejection of the truth, convert the church into Babylon. Kings, merchants, rulers, and religious teachers are all in corrupt harmony. (Lt16-1893.19)*

*The higher critics put themselves in the place of God, and review the Word of God, revising or endorsing it. In this way, all nations are induced to drink the wine of fornication of Babylon" (Lt48, 1897.36).*

Additionally, Ellen White teaches that fornication is the transgression of God's Sabbath, and the Protestant churches wine of false doctrines have crucified God's Law: "*And the Protestant world has taken this child of the papacy (Sunday) to be regarded as sacred. In the Word of God this is called her fornication" (7BC 979.7, parentheses added).*

*The wine of the wrath of her fornication refers to the churches fallen. It is a spiritual, a moral, fall. The time has come for the Lord to vindicate His law which has been crucified as was Christ between two thieves. (Ms146, 1897 [December 5, 1897] par. 7).*

Therefore, the harlot's wine of false doctrines has intoxicated the churches, leading them into idolatry through the disobedience of God's Law, the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20). This "wine of fornication" has made the churches intoxicated with heresies, originating from Satan, himself.

## **The Scarlet Beast = Satan's Worldwide Kingdom (The Cumulation of All Civil World Kingdoms)**

The harlot rides the scarlet beast, symbolizing Satan's unified civil world kingdom which mirrors the dragon of Revelation 12 and the sea beast of Revelation 13. Beasts in the Bible represent civil world kingdoms according to Daniel 7:23: "*The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom...*" Ellen White confirms that Satan's kingdom consists of a conglomerate union of civil world kingdoms. She states in the following quotes::

*There will be a universal bond of union, one great harmony, a confederacy of Satan's forces. 'And shall give their power and strength unto the beast' ... In the warfare to be waged in the last days there will be united, in opposition to God's people, all the corrupt powers that have apostatized from allegiance to the law of Jehovah. (3SM 392.4-5)*

*Through the great powers controlled by paganism and the papacy, symbolized by the dragon (Rev. 12) and the leopard-like beast (sea beast- Rev. 13), Satan for many centuries destroyed God's faithful witnesses. (4SP 276.2, parentheses supplied)*

Since the sea beast is a composite beast of the kingdoms of Daniel 7, described with seven heads and ten horns like the scarlet beast of Revelation 17, the scarlet beast is likely the same composite beast of civil world kingdoms ruling throughout history. The Bible supports that the sea beast is the culmination of the four civil world kingdoms of Daniel 7. According to Revelation 13:2, "... *the (sea) beast which I saw was like unto a leopard (Greece), and his feet were as the feet of a bear (Medo-Persia), and his mouth as the mouth of a lion (Babylon)...*" (parentheses supplied). Ellen White supports the Bible's composite mixture of kingdoms composing the sea beast:

*This beast (sea beast) has the characteristics of the four beasts of Dan 7, which represent the four empires of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. It is the inheritor of the power held by these four empires successively. {4SP 502.3, parentheses supplied}*

Additionally, she affirmed that the terrible beast of Daniel 7 is none other than the dragon of Revelation 12: "*The dragon (pagan Rome) gave the beast (the church) his power (civil power), and seat (city of Rome), and great authority*" (4SP 502.5).

Therefore, the terrible beast of Daniel 7 is the dragon (pagan Rome), and (the sea beast of Revelation 13 (the papacy) is the continuation of the dragon (pagan Rome) disguised in a religious garb. The scarlet beast, then, is the composite cumulation of all of Satan's civil world kingdoms, including the papacy which is also a civil kingdom.

Moreover, the scarlet beast is "full of names of blasphemy" (Rev. 17:3), mirroring the description of the "little horn" in Daniel 7 and the sea beast in Revelation 13:6 (papal Rome-GC88 439.1). This description indicates that this last civil power has become a religious power, mixing church and state, since the Bible defines "blasphemy" as claiming divine abilities such as the forgiveness of sin (Matt. 9:2-3). It is both a civil and religious power that persecutes God's people just before Christ's coming (Rev. 17:6).

The scarlet beast is said to arise from the "bottomless pit and go to perdition" (Rev. 17:8). The bottomless pit is a symbol of the earth which is where Satan and his angels were cast (Rev. 12:12). It is this same location in the fifth trumpet where a star fallen "from heaven to the **earth**" (Rev. 9:1). According to Revelation 1:20, "stars" can be "angels." Satan, the "angel of the bottomless pit" (Rev. 9:11), battles against God's Word (Rev. 11:7), eventually loses the war against God at Christ's second coming, and is "cast into the bottomless pit" where "he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled" (Rev. 20:3). According to Revelation 20:9, this location is on the earth. These texts, then, teach that the "bottomless pit" is the earth and may specifically point to the United States (the earth beast) since it is the primary world kingdom at the end of time. Ellen White confirms that the bottomless pit is the earth and quotes the prophecy in Jeremiah that she says applies to the "great day of God":

***The "bottomless pit" represents the earth in confusion and darkness. Looking forward to the great day of God, Jeremiah declares: "I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void\****

*and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down.” Jeremiah 4:23-26. (HF 398.2)*

The Greek word for “bottomless pit” is “abyssos.” It has a similar definition as the Hebrew word, “thowm,” for “deep” in Genesis 1:2, meaning “an abyss.” Jeremiah’s prophecy and Ellen White’s description seem to point back to the state of the earth before creation. At the coming of Christ, the earth will be returned to its original state before God recreates it. Therefore, the beast from the bottomless pit is a world kingdom (Dan. 7:23), and the bottomless pit is the earth in a chaotic state.

The beast that “was, is not, and yet is” (Rev. 17:8) likely refers to Satan’s composite world kingdom that existed in past pagan nations, then morphed into papal Rome (paganism in a religious disguise) but was nearly destroyed in 1798 when the pope was taken captive by the French (*Project, Catholic Textbook*, 2022) in its “is not” stage. However, Satan’s world kingdom survived and mutated into its “yet is,” phase, combining its papal power with the apostate Protestant churches of America.

Therefore, the beast of Rev. 17 is a conglomerate of world-wide earthly kingdoms of Satan’s comprehensive kingdom throughout history that has ruled and persecuted God’s people, past, present, and future until the coming of Christ. It is the continuation of the beasts of Daniel 7, represented by the dragon in Revelation 12 and adding the sea beast in Revelation 13, the papacy, which grew from the “little horn” on the terrible beast’s head of pagan Rome (Dan. 7:8). The earth beast of Revelation 13, the United States of America, is added to the scarlet beast which completes Satan’s composite, worldwide beast kingdom that wars against God’s people at the end of time. Ellen White confirms that these earthly kingdoms make up a larger whole: *“There are only two kingdoms in this world,—the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of Satan. To one of these kingdoms each one of us must belong”* (ST September 26, 1900, par. 11).

## **Heads, Mountains, and Kings- Civil Rulers/Governments of Satan’s World Kingdom**

Revelation 17:9–10 identifies the seven **heads** as both **mountains** and **kings**, demonstrating their equivalence. Indeed, Revelation 17:9–10 explains: *“The seven heads are seven mountains ... and there are seven kings.”*

In Daniel 2:37-38, the Bible interchanges kings, heads, and kingdoms: *“Thou, O king, art a king of kings... Thou art this head of gold... And after thee shall arise another kingdom...”* (Dan. 2:37-39). Additionally, Ellen White groups crowned “heads” with “presidents” and “rulers in high places” (FE 471.3). She also confirms that heads can be civil rulers and governments by stating that a “head” can make a decree: *“I saw that the two-horned beast had a dragon mouth, and that his power was in his head, and that the decree would go out of his mouth (1LtMs, Ms 15, 1850, par. 5).* Therefore, “heads” can represent both civil leaders and their governments.

The papacy is no exception. It is the civil head of its own nation. The Bible states that John saw the sea beast and “one of the **heads** as it were wounded to death, and his deadly wound was healed” (Rev. 13:3). Ellen White calls the papacy a “head” that will oppose God’s people at the end of time.

*“The world is filled with storm and war and variance. Yet under one **head—the papal power—the people will unite to oppose God in the person of His witnesses**” (7T 182.2).*

Interestingly, God says to His people in Jeremiah 2:16, “Also the people of Noph and Tahpanhes (Egypt) have broken the **crown of thy head** (civil rule)” (parentheses supplied). Additionally, Jeremiah 13:20-21 states, “Lift up your eyes and see. Those who come from the north ... What will you say when He punishes you? For you have taught them to **be chieftains, to be head over you**. Will not pangs seize you like a woman in labor?” Lamentations 5:16 also confirms, “**The crown has fallen from our head. Woe unto us that we have sinned!**” These Bible references attribute civil rulership to the meaning of the symbol, “head.”

Moreover, in Psalm 74:13-14: “Thou brakest the **heads of the dragons in the waters** ... Thou brakest the **heads of the leviathan** (“liviathan”-“sea monster”) in pieces (sea beast- papacy) and gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness (earth beast- United States)” (parentheses supplied). This Old Testament prophecy is strikingly similar to the prophecy of Revelation 13 when the sea beast’s “head” is wounded (Rev. 13:3), and the beast from the earth rises (Rev. 13:11), giving refuge to God’s people in the “wilderness” (Rev. 12:14, 16). The national head of the papacy lost its power to rule the world temporarily when the earth beast arose, granting religious freedom to its citizens. Therefore, from these Bible texts and Ellen White quotes, a “head” in prophecy represents a civil leader or government, including the papacy that is a civil head (4SP 277.2).

Moreover, mountains in prophecy symbolize national governments. The Lord declares:

*Who hath measured heaven with a span and calculated the dust of the earth in a measure? Weighed the **mountains in scales** and the hills in balances? . . . Behold the **nations** are as a drop in a bucket and are counted as the small dust **on the scales**. (Is. 40:12, 15, NKJV)*

*And I will render unto **Babylon** and to all the inhabitants of Chaldea all their evil that they have done in Zion in your sight,” saith the Lord. “Behold, I am against thee, O destroying **mountain**, saith the Lord, which destroyest all the earth. (Jer. 51:24)*

These texts indicates that Babylon is a “mountain” or could be a “head” in Rev. 17 since mountains and heads are synonymous and can represent national governments. James White affirms this definition of “mountains” when he agreed with William Miller by stating, “*Figures always have a figurative meaning, and are used much in prophecy to represent future things, times and events -- such as **mountains, meaning governments**, Dan. ii, 35, 44” (Life Incidents, 1868, 36).*

Because “heads” and “mountains” are synonymous according to Revelation 17:9, the seven heads in Revelation 17 could represent civil national rulers and/or their governments. Because Babylon is specifically mentioned in Revelation 17:5 and 18:2 (Revelation 18 being the continuation of the

prophecy of Revelation 17), it is logical that Babylon is one of the “heads,” or “mountains” of the scarlet beast. Since the sea beast (the papacy) in Revelation 13:3 has a wounded “head” that was healed and the scarlet beast has the name, *Mother of Harlots*, which refers to the papacy, it is also reasonable that the Roman papacy is one of the heads of the scarlet beast. Because the sea beast is a composite of the previous successive beasts or world kingdoms of Daniel 7—the lion (Babylon), the bear (Medo-Persia), and the leopard (Greece), it logically follows that the seven heads or mountains of Revelation 17 consist of seven successive world kingdoms throughout history that have composed Satan’s kingdom (with “kings” representing “kingdoms” as in Daniel 2:38-39). The Bible supports the concept of successive kingdoms according to Daniel 7:23: “*The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom....*” This text illustrates that the beast kingdoms in Daniel 7 were successive. Ellen White also supports this idea of successive beast kingdoms in the following quotes::

*This beast (sea beast) has the characteristics of the four beasts of Dan 7, which represent the four empires of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. It is the inheritor of the power held by these four empires **successively**. (4SP 502.3, parentheses supplied)*

***The first persecuting power** is represented by the dragon itself; in heathenism there was open alliance with Satan, and open defiance of God. **In the second persecuting power**, the dragon is masked; but the spirit of Satan actuates it,—the dragon supplies the motive power. **In the third persecuting power**, all traces of the dragon are absent, and a lamb-like beast appears; but when it speaks, its dragon voice betrays the Satanic power concealed under a fair exterior, and shows it to be of the same family as the two preceding powers. In all the opposition to Christ and his pure religion, “that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan,” — “the God of this world,” — is the moving power; earthly persecuting powers are simply instruments in his hands. (GC88 680.3)*

*In the book of the Revelation, under the symbols of a great red dragon, a leopard-like beast, and a beast with lamb-like horns, [Revelation 12 and 13] are brought to view **those earthly governments** which are especially engaged in trampling upon God’s law and persecuting his people. (4SP 276.1)*

Therefore, the seven heads, mountains, and kings likely represent successive earthly governments and their rulers that have oppressed God’s people throughout history, including: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and finally the United States in union with apostate Protestantism and Catholicism. The “eighth” is the united nations of the world embodying the spirit and power of all the previous governments (Rev. 17:9-11), ruled by Satan, himself, likely after he has appeared on the earth claiming to be Christ. Ellen White confirms: “Satan ... desires to embrace the **whole world in his confederacy**. Hiding his deformity under the garb of Christianity, he assumes the attributes of a Christian, and claims to be Christ Himself” (Manuscript Releases 8:346 [1901]).

These seven kingdoms fit the description of “five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come, and when he comes, he must continue a short time” (Rev. 17:10, NKJV). At the time that the apostle John was alive, five of these kingdoms had fallen—Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece, “one is”—Rome, and the United States had “not yet come,” but when it rose, it would continue for only a “short time.”

Interestingly, the phrase, “a short time” compares with the phrase in Revelation 12:12, “*Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea (compare Rev. 13- earth beast and sea beast), for the devil has come down unto you having great wrath, because he knoweth he has but a short time.*” This is another clue that the “short time” coincides with the devil coming to the earth and sea, tying the events found in Revelation 13 and giving a time frame for when the United States of America would become a world power.

The scarlet beast was “*full of names of blasphemy*” (Rev. 17:3), making it not only a civil government, but also a religious government that had combined church and state, having the same number of heads (civil governments) and horns (religious and civil powers) as the dragon (Satan- Rev. 12:9) and the sea beast (papacy) of Rev. 13. These civil governments rise and fall, but all are persecuting civil powers that war against God’s people throughout time. Ellen White observes: “*The efficiency of Satan’s kingdom is found in the blending together of satanic forces to extend the contagion of evil*” (OHC 185.2). Therefore, the scarlet beast is a Satanic kingdom, composed of civil governments with religious powers, having the name of blasphemy (name meaning character- RH, July 14, 1910) and representing a combination of church and state.

## **The Ten Horns and the Toes of Daniel 2- Civil and Religious Powers of A World Kingdom**

The ten horns of the beast (Rev. 17:3, 12) symbolize civil and religious powers. They parallel the ten toes of Daniel 2’s statue, representing the remnant of the divided kingdoms of the statue that remains until Christ’s return and their religion and/or ideologies. The ten horns are the continuation of the ten horns found on the terrible beast in Daniel 7. Three of these horns were uprooted by a “little horn” which leaves eight horns. However, in Revelation, the dragon, sea beast, and scarlet beast all have ten horns because they have confiscated the United States’ two horns of Protestantism and Republicanism.

The Bible states in Rev. 13:11, “*And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.*” This description fits the rise of the United States of America, being a Christian nation, resembling a lamb (John 1:36) but becoming a persecuting power at the end of time and speaking as a dragon (Rev. 12:17).

Ellen White defines the earth beast’s horns: “*This beast has two horns, the civil and the ecclesiastical*” (4SP 502.5). Furthermore, she identifies the horns:

*The lamb-like horns, emblems of innocence and gentleness, well represent the character of our government (head), as expressed in its two fundamental principles, Republicanism and Protestantism (horns). (4SP 277.1, parentheses added)*

Horns are instruments of strength and power on a beast, used as weapons against enemies. In the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, horns symbolize civil and/or religious powers (Ps. 75:4, 10; Zech. 1:18-19; Lam. 2:3, 17; Dan. 8:3-4; Rev. 17:16; 4SP 502.5). Ellen White explains:

***Religious powers, allied to heaven by profession, and claiming to have the characteristics of a***

*lamb, will show by their acts that they have the heart of a dragon and that they are instigated and controlled by Satan. The time is coming when God's people will feel the hand of persecution...." (CCh 317.3)*

***Protestantism, a power*** which, while professing to have the temper and spirit of a lamb and to be allied to Heaven, ***speaks with the voice of a dragon***. It is moved by a power from beneath. (14LtMs, Lt 232, 1899, par. 22)

*The lamblike horns and dragon voice of the symbol point to a striking contradiction between the professions and the practice of the nation thus represented. The "speaking" of the nation is the action of its legislative and judicial authorities... The prediction that it will speak "as a dragon" and exercise "all the power of the first beast" plainly foretells a development of the spirit of intolerance and persecution that was manifested by the nations represented by the dragon and the leopardlike beast. And the statement that the beast with two horns "causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast" indicates that the authority of this nation is to be exercised in enforcing some observance which shall be an act of homage to the papacy. (GC 442.1)*

*Foreign nations will follow the example of the United States. Though she leads out, yet the same crisis will come upon our people in all parts of the world. (Testimonies for the Church 6:395, 1900)*

Therefore, the ten horns on the scarlet beast of Revelation 17 likely refer to the civil powers of the United States combined with the religious powers of the Protestant churches. They represent the combination of worldwide civil and religious powers which will persecute God's faithful people at the end of time.

## **One Mind**

Ultimately, the civil and religious powers of the world are united primarily on one purpose—to destroy God's faithful remnant. The Bible states in Revelation 17:13, 17:

*These have one mind, and give their power and strength unto the beast.... For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast until the words of God shall be fulfilled.*

This text indicates that a confederacy has been formed and unity of purpose achieved. Ellen White warns:

*There will be a **universal bond of union, one great harmony, a confederacy of Satan's forces**. 'And shall give their power and strength unto the beast.' Thus is manifested the same arbitrary, oppressive power against religious liberty, freedom to worship God according to the dictates of conscience, as was manifested by the papacy when in the past it persecuted those who dared to refuse to conform with the religious rites and ceremonies of Romanism. (3SM 392.4)*

*The so-called Christian world is to be the theater of great and decisive actions. Men in authority will enact laws controlling the conscience, after the example of the papacy. Babylon will make all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. **Every nation will be involved.** {3SM 392.1}*

*In the warfare to be waged in the last days **there will be united, in opposition to God's people, all the corrupt powers that have apostatized from allegiance to the law of Jehovah.** In this warfare the Sabbath of the fourth commandment will be the great point at issue, for in the Sabbath commandment the great Lawgiver identifies Himself as the Creator of the heavens and the earth.... (3SM 392.5)*

Therefore, the nations of the world will unite with the Protestant and Catholic Churches to destroy God's people by eliminating religious freedom and the ability to worship God according to the dictates of conscience. They will confederate against those who "keep the commandments of God" (Rev. 12:17) and the Creator, Himself.

However, Jesus, our Creator and Redeemer (John 1:1-3, 12, 14), is assured victory: "*These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings*" (Rev. 17:14). Christ is the "Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29). Revelation 19:16 declare Him as "King of Kings and Lord of Lords." He is the final victor, and Satan is the defeated foe. Our message today is found in Revelation 18:2-4:

*... Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit ... For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed with her ... Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.*

This urgent warning for God's people living in these last days pleads with all the inhabitants of the earth to separate themselves from Babylon and be faithful to the Lamb who ultimately triumphs.

## **Conclusion**

Revelation 17 portrays the apostasy of Protestant churches uniting with Catholicism and civil powers under Satan's dominion. The **heads, mountains, and kings** are interchangeable symbols of successive world governments and their rulers. The **ten horns**, like the **ten toes of Daniel 2**, represent individual but confederate national civil and religious powers that unite in opposition to Christ's people. However, despite this opposition, the Lamb triumphs, and the faithful remnant will stand with Him in victory. Our message today is to tell the world to come out of Babylon before it is too late.

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## Appendix II:

### Definition of Symbols of Rev. 17

**Harlot/Whore/Woman-** church in apostasy (Rev. 17:1, 3-6; 19:2; Is. 1:21; 23:16-17; Jer. 3:2-13, 20; Eze. 16:15-49; Hosea 4:6-11)

**Waters-** peoples, multitudes, nations, tongues (Rev. 17:1,15; 19:6; Num. 24:7; Is. 17:12-13)

**Wine of Fornication-** false doctrines/idolatry (Rev. 17:2; 14:8, 18:3; Deut. 32:32-33; Is. 28:7)

**Purple/Scarlet/Pearls/Gold-** symbols of wealth/power of kings/ungodly character (Rev. 17:4; Eze. 23:5-6, 14); idolatry (Jer. 10:8-9); “**scarlet**” (red)- sinful (Is. 1:9); dragon/Satan/his followers (Rev. 17:3; 12:3, 9); papacy’s colors (GC 382.2)

**Golden Cup-** (Rev. 17:4, 6; 18:6; Jer. 51:7); utensil of the temple (I Chron. 28:17-18; Dan. 5:2-4); symbol of fate (Eze. 23:32-33; Matt. 26:39; Ps. 16:5; I Cor. 10:21); often associated with wickedness/wrath of God (Rev. 14:10; 16:19; Ps 75:8; 11:6; Jer. 51:7)

**Kings of the Earth-** civil authority of the nations, specifically of the American “earth” beast (Rev. 17:2; 13:11-14; 16:14; 18:3, 9; 6:15-16; 19:19; Is. 24:21-22)

**Scarlet Beast-** red dragon beast (Rev. 17:3, 8; 12:3, 9; 11:7-8; 13:1); Satan’s overarching kingdom disguised in religious garb that unites the world’s nations through the combination of church & state (see “Beast”/“Dragon” in Rev. 12 & 13)

**Wilderness/Bottomless Pit-** earth in state of chaos and confusion (Rev. 17:8; 9:2; 12:6, 14)

**Names of Blasphemy-** claiming divinity, such as the forgiveness of sin (Rev. 17:3; 13:1, 5-6; Matt. 9:2-3)

**Seven Heads/Mountains/Seven Kings-** civil leaders/governments, specifically reigning over God’s people throughout history that compose the dragon’s (Satan’s- [Rev. 12:9]) and the sea beast’s kingdom (Rev. 17:9-10; Dan. 7:3-8, 11-12, 17, 23; Rev. 12:3; 13:1-3, 7; Jer. 31:23; 51:24-25; Ps. 74:13-14)

**Ten Horns/Kings-** civil and religious powers of a nation (Rev. 17:12; Dan. 7:7-8, 17, 20-21, 23-24)

**One Mind-** unified in thought and purpose (Rev. 17:13; Rom. 12:16; 15:6)

**Lamb-** Christ (Rev. 17:15; 5:6, 8, 12-13; 13:11; 14:1, 4, 10)

**Mystery Babylon the Great-** symbol of a false church/state system perpetuating spiritual confusion that persecutes God’s people (Rev. 17:5-6, 18; 14:8; 18:2; Jer. 51:41-43, 49, 52; Gen. 11:9)