**Prophetic Sequences of Prophetic Beasts**

Paul Lundgrin

Pastor, Arlington SDA Church

Abstract

Revelation 17 describes a prostitute riding a seven-headed, ten-horned beast and further identifies the seven heads as seven mountains and seven kings. Revelation 12:3 states that a seven-headed, ten-horned beast is wearing crowns on its heads. Revelation 13:1 describes a similar beast with ten crowns on its horns, but Revelation 17 does not mention crowns on either the heads or the horns. There is a vital reason for transferring the crowns from the heads to the horns, the absence of crowns on the Revelation 17 beast, and its impact on apocalyptic prophecy. The locations of the crowns in Revelation 12, 13, and 17 provide important details for understanding the sequence and ~~the~~ timing of the events concerning prophetic fulfillment. One similarity between the interpretive frameworks of historicism and futurism is the sequential analysis of prophetic events. The prophecies of Daniel 7, Revelation 13, and Revelation 17 are interconnected through recurring symbols and timelines. The characteristics of the beasts, such as their heads, horns, origins, and crowns, symbolize evolving forms of religious and political power throughout history, increasing in power and geographic reach, culminating in the prostitute riding the scarlet beast in Revelation 17. This entity, called Babylon the Great, represents the ultimate consolidation of church and state, empowered by Satan, who exercises dominion over the world’s religions and nations. This study provides a framework for interpreting end-time prophecy, emphasizing the global scope and spiritual significance of the final conflict between good and evil.

**Methods of Prophetic Interpretation**

# Through the centuries, Bible students have had varied interpretations of the prophetic symbols in the apocalyptic prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. They usually consider the prophecies and interpretations of the symbols based on a particular belief system they advocate. Since John wrote the book of Revelation, students of prophecy have developed four primary schools of thought regarding how they believe the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation should be interpreted. Each perspective affects how individual prophecies are interpreted and produces a structure, or paradigm, for the broader subject of biblical interpretation. While most prophecy students understand these interpretive models, we can develop a more complete understanding of the 10-horned 7-headed beast of Revelation 17 by considering the various prophetic schematics. The four major approaches for understanding prophecy are idealism, preterism, futurism, and historicism.

**Idealism—Symbolic or Spiritual View Applying to All Generations**

The idealist perspective on Revelation does not try to associate prophetic symbols with specific events in the past or future (Tenney, 1961). Instead, it considers Revelation to be a drama with transcendent realities, like the struggle between Christ and Satan and between Christians and opposing worldly powers, that apply to all generations (Gregg, 1997). Idealists look for spiritual lessons rather than any connection between prophecy and history (Shea, 2004). So, an idealist believes that separate individuals can obtain completely different spiritual lessons from the same prophetic story.

**Preterism—Everything Happened in the First Century AD**

Preterists believe that all the prophecies contained in the book of Revelation occurred during the lifetime of those who lived during the first century and it contains no information about our future (Noe, 2006). Jesus said regarding the end times, “This generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.” (Matthew 24:34) So, according to preterists, everything described earlier in the chapter must have been fulfilled during the generation living during the time Jesus said these words (Kik, 1971). Luis de Alcazar, in an attempt to challenge the historicist view, advanced the preterist view that events had to occur before AD 70 when Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed (Bigalke Jr., 2009). Some preterists assert that events such as the second coming (Simmons, 2016) and judgment refers to Christ’s judgment of Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70 (Knorr, 2025). They maintain that Revelation symbolizes first-century events, not end-time events.

**Futurism—Most Prophetic Events are Literal and Will Occur in the Future**

Most Christians today use the futurist view as the framework to understand eschatological prophecy. Like preterism, futurism has roots in the Counter-Reformation when Jesuit scholar Francisco Ribera (1537-1591) countered Protestant claims that the Church of Rome was the Antichrist by claiming the Antichrist would appear in the distant future (Froom, 1948). Later, in 1833, Darby proposed the concept of a *secret rapture* of the church occurring before the Great Tribulation and suggested that the church age is an interval between the 69th and 70th weeks described in the Book of Daniel (Harper, 2011). Futurists believe that the major events described in Bible prophecy are literal, physical, apocalyptic, and yet to occur (Gregg, 1997). Futurists think a literal Antichrist will appear and restore the Jewish temple services in a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem (Hitchcock, 2012). The futurists understand that Bible prophecies are literal descriptions of future events.

**Historicism—Most Prophecies Were Symbolic and Occurred in the Past, Includes Few Future Literal Events**

Most historicists believe the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation are symbolic and relate to events from the time the authors wrote them until Jesus’ return and creation of a new earth. Vetne (2003) explains that historicism interprets ancient apocalyptic writings as predictions meant by their original authors to disclose details about actual events occurring from their own time up until the end of the world. Hans LaRondelle stated the favored Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) interpretation of the seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven churches represent the past period of Christian history, and the seven bowls (last plagues) representing God’s final message are yet future (1997). The SDA church, which advances the historicist view, maintains that only a few prophecies in Revelation symbolize future literal events, unlike most other prophecies which it considers are fulfilled.

A student of prophecy who believes that apocalyptic prophecies are relevant to the final generation living on earth before Jesus returns, cannot consider preterism or idealism relevant. Logically, preterism cannot apply to us since preterists believe 20 centuries have passed since the prophecies have been fulfilled. Idealism cannot apply because idealists believe that prophecies have equal relevance for each generation. Those who eagerly await Jesus’ second coming embrace the historicist or futurist view because they are considering the events that alert us Jesus is coming soon.

Historicists and futurists have similar views on one important concept that applies to prophetic interpretation. While scholars of both models disagree about which events pertain to specific apocalyptic prophecies, they do believe that apocalyptic prophecies describe sequential symbolic or literal events. However, they may overlook relationships existing between the apocalyptic prophecies of Daniel and Revelation because their paradigms prevent them from considering prophetic relationships that diverge from their approach to Biblical interpretation.

The futurist and historicist perspectives have a shared convention requiring certain prophecies to be in the future (futurist) or the past (historicist). For example, futurists interpreting Nebuchadnezzar’s image in Daniel 2 believe the prophecy has a future fulfillment, with parts of the image representing a literal series of world empires. They believe that the 10 toes of Daniel 2 are literal kingdoms of a revived Roman Empire existing just before Jesus’ second coming. Traditional Adventists interpret the Daniel 2 image as representing a historical progression of world kingdoms beginning with Babylon. They believe the feet and toes represent divided nations of Europe after the Roman Empire fell in 476 AD, leaving a gap of centuries between the historical nations and the rock of Daniel 2:34 that destroys the image, which they understand to represent Christ’s second coming. Adherents of either the historical or futurist view must incorporate gaps of time in their prophetic schema to ensure that time-based prophecies match their preconceptions. Despite the differences in timing, both approaches in this illustration concerning the events in Daniel use sequential order.

**Sequential Analysis – An Additional Method to Consider Prophecy**

A student of prophecy examining the beast of Revelation 17 may find it challenging to interpret its meaning without a structured prophetic framework. This framework involves various elements, but the sequential order of events depicted in apocalyptic prophecy is fundamental to the conclusions drawn in this paper. An essential aspect of understanding this sequence is linking events across different prophecies. A Bible student can identify and define the events given in each prophecy. Once these events are identified, they can be compared across multiple prophecies. The Bible provides an example of this process in Daniel chapters 2 and 8. In Daniel 2, the sequence of events begins with Nebuchadnezzar’s image, starting with the head of gold, followed by the chest and arms of silver, and the belly and thighs of bronze. In a later vision, Gabriel explains to Daniel that the first two beasts, the Ram with two horns and the shaggy goat, symbolize Medo-Persia and Greece (Daniel 8:20–21). Historically, students of prophecy have linked the silver and bronze in the Daniel 2 image to the kingdoms of Medo-Persia and Greece in Daniel 8. This straightforward example provides a key to deciphering other prophecies based on sequences. By developing a timeline of each of these prophecies in Daniel and Revelation, we can identify elements that connect different prophecies and construct a matrix of sequential prophecies.

Revelation 17 presents a vivid depiction of a great prostitute riding a beast with seven heads and ten horns. Unlike many prophecies in Daniel and Revelation that emphasize a sequence of events, Revelation 17 offers a unique perspective on apocalyptic prophecy. Instead of detailing the rise and fall of kingdoms or entities, it provides additional insights into the figures of a woman and a beast, thereby completing the narrative of events John observed in previous visions. One of the seven angels with the seven bowls invites John, saying, “Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute” (Revelation 17:1), and further states, “I will explain to you” (Revelation 17:7). This method is similar to what occurs in Daniel 9:22, where Gabriel imparts insight and understanding to Daniel regarding an earlier vision from Chapter 8, saying, “Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding.” To fully comprehend the intended meaning of the symbols, it is essential to consider the earlier visions in both Daniel and Revelation, which incorporate elements like the seven-headed, ten-horned beast described in Revelation 17.

A ten-horned beast or dragon is described in three earlier visions, Daniel 7:7, Revelation 12:3, and Revelation 13:1–10. These references consistently present the beast as an entity emerging within a chronological framework. To gain a deeper understanding of these visions, one effective approach is to examine the sequence of events and the entities involved in each prophecy. By identifying similar entities across multiple sequences, we can establish connections and construct a prophetic matrix. Let's start by analyzing the sequence of events in Daniel 7 in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Prophecy 1 sequential events Daniel 7 from 605 BC to Second Coming*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Link | Verse | Symbol | Entity | Date |
|  | 4 | Lion | Babylon | 605 – 538 BC |
|  | 5 | Bear | Medo-Persia | 538 – 331 BC |
|  | 6 | Leopard | Greece | 331 – 168 BC |
| 1 | 7 | Monster Beast | Rome | 168 BC – AD 476 |
| 1 | 8, 24 (a) | 10 Horns | 10 Tribes | AD 476 – 538 |
| 2 | 8, 24–25 (b) | Little Horn | Papacy | AD 538 – 1798 |
|  | 9–10, 26 (a) | Courtroom Scene | Ancient of Days | 1798 |
|  | 11, 26 | Little Horn | Papacy Falls | 1798 |
| 4 | 11, 26 | Beast Reappears | Babylon Global Power | Future |
| 5 | 11, 26–27 | Beast Destroyed,  Holy People Given Power | Babylon Global Power | Second Coming/  Final Judgment |

Daniel 7:7–8 introduces us to a powerful and terrifying beast with ten horns. In this part of the study, we focus specifically on the timing of prophecies that feature a beast with ten horns. Notably, a similar seven-headed, ten-horned dragon is depicted in Revelation 12, which suggests a thematic link between these visions. By organizing the events in Revelation 12 in a manner similar to the sequence outlined in Daniel 7, we can better understand the interconnectedness of these prophecies. This approach allows us to build a comprehensive prophetic framework, enhancing our interpretation of the apocalyptic symbols and their significance.

A ten-horned creature appears again in the second prophetic sequence shown in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*Prophecy 2 sequential events Revelation 12:1–6 from before 4 BC to AD 1798*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Link | Verse | Symbol | Entity | Date |
| 1 | 3 | Dragon–7 Heads, 10 Horns | Lucifer | Before 4 BC |
|  | 4–5 | Male Child | Jesus | 4 BC |
| 3 | 5 | Child Snatched to His Throne | Jesus | AD 30 |
| 2 | 6 | God Sustains for 1,260 Day/Years | Woman/God’s Church | AD 538 – 1798 |

In Revelation 12:3, the beast is described as a dragon with seven heads in addition to its ten horns. We do not have enough information to determine if a relationship exists between the Daniel 7 and Revelation 12 beasts (Link 1) based solely on their descriptions. However, when we consider the sequence of events outlined in each prophecy, we can begin developing a matrix that relates similar entities to events. Considering the timing and entities of both prophecies, there is another relationship that may reveal parallel sequences. Daniel 7:25 states that God’s people will be delivered into the hands of one of the horns of the beast for 1,260 years (time, times and half a time or a year, two years and half a year—360+720+180 days or years of prophetic time). Revelation 12:6 reveals that the woman in this prophecy fled to the wilderness for 1,260 days. So, we have two links between Prophecy 1 and Prophecy 2, the beast/dragon with ten horns and God’s protection of His people for 1,260 years.

**Table 3**

*Prophecy 3 sequential events Revelation 12:7 – 14:5 from AD 30 to 144,000 in heaven*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Link | Verse | Symbol | Entity | Date |
| 3 | 12:7 | Resurrection | Jesus | AD 30 |
|  | 12:7–10 | War/Devil Cast Out of Heaven | Michael/Dragon | AD 30 |
| 2 | 12:13–16 | Dragon Pursues Woman | Devil/God’s Church | AD 538 - 1798 |
| 1 | 13:1–10 | Sea Beast – 10 Horns/7 Heads | Lucifer/Devil Controls Babylon From Abyss | Last Days |
| 4 | 13:11–14 | Lamb-like Beast – 2 Horns | Lucifer Released/  Physically Appears | After Babylon Forms |
|  | 13:14–18 | Lucifer Sets Up Image | Lucifer Controlled Theocracy | Before Probation Closes |
| 5 | 14:1–5 | 144,000 Sing New Song | 144,000 | 144,000 in Heaven |

The final appearance of the dragon in the three sequential prophecies is found in Prophecy 3 shown in Table 3. Revelation 13:1–10 describes another beast with 10 horns and seven heads. Like the first two prophecies, John described a 1,260-year period, but the sequence of events has changed. In Prophecy 3, the 1,260-year time period precedes the emergence of the seven-headed ten-horned beast, whereas in Prophecies 1 and 2, the dragon appears first. To address this discrepancy, we must examine the events in Prophecies 2 and 3. The concluding event in Prophecy 2 is God’s sustenance of His church during the 1,260-year period from AD 538 to 1798 (Revelation 12:6). Revelation 12:7 alludes to Christ’s resurrection which occurred five centuries before the Dark Ages. This indicates that a new sequence begins in Prophecy 3 with Jesus’ resurrection (implied), the war in heaven, and then the 1,260 years. Consequently, the dragon of Revelation 13:1 must emerge after the 1,260 years ended in 1798.

Another crucial element that confirms the sequence of events in Prophecy 3 is the resurrection of Jesus, as described in Prophecies 2 and 3. In Prophecy 2, Revelation 12:5 depicts the male child being “snatched up to God and to his throne.” Revelation 12:7 in Prophecy 3 describes a war in heaven between Michael and his angels and the dragon and his angels. Revelation 12:10–11 reveals that the Messiah hurled the accuser down by the blood of the lamb. The heavenly war, which occurred after the resurrection, had to take place between the time Jesus was snatched up to God and the dragon’s pursuit of the woman. This provides a second link connecting Prophecies 2 and 3, establishing the timing of these prophecies.

With this overview of timing sequences in the three prophecies, we can delve deeper into the relationships between Links 2 through 5. These links are crucial in determining the appearance of the beasts or dragons mentioned in Link 1. By establishing when these entities appear, we lay the groundwork for interpreting the seven-headed, ten-horned beast described in Revelation 17.

**Linkages Between Sequential Prophecies**

God provided Daniel and John with numerous symbols to represent future prophetic events. While the Bible often provides information to interpret these symbols, students of prophecy can enhance their understanding by examining similarities between prophetic elements. By analyzing the sequential order of events within each prophecy, they can confirm the relationships between symbols and use related prophecies to fill in any informational gaps. In our study of the beast in Revelation 17, we can investigate the connections between the three sequential prophecies to deepen our comprehension of the beasts described in Daniel 7, Revelation 12, and Revelation 13.

***Link 2 – The Dragon Chases the Woman and the Lord Sustains His People***

Traditionally SDAs have maintained an interpretation of a 1,260-year period as spanning from AD 538 to 1798. According to Brown (2024), this historical position emerged from the Millerite movement in the 1800s, based on several key points: (a) the little horn on the fourth beast in Daniel 7 is identified as the papacy; (b) the “times, times, and half a time” mentioned in Daniel 7:25, representing 1,260 days, parallels the representation in Revelation 11–13; (c) the beast in Revelation 13 is linked to the little horn, also identified as the papacy; (d) the 1,260 prophetic days are interpreted as literal years; (e) the information from Daniel 7:7–8 and Revelation 13:2–3 helps pinpoint the historical dates of 538 and 1798; and (f) these dates can be applied to other texts such as Revelation 12:6, which also mentions this period. Thus, the three sequential prophecies that mention a beast—Prophecies 1 through 3—also encompass the 1,260-year period during which the beast was active. Daniel describes the “three and one-half times” of the little horn in Daniel 7:8, 25 in Prophecy 1. John describes a 1,260-day period during which the woman is protected from the dragon in Revelation 12:6 in Prophecy 2, and this is repeated in Prophecy 3 (Revelation 12:13–16). The link between the three sequential prophecies, providing a fixed period of 1,260 years, is supported by SDA historical interpretation and the interconnections between the three prophecies.

***Link 3 – The Resurrection of Jesus***

Prophecies 2 and 3 use the resurrection of Jesus as a pivotal timing marker within the sequence of events. In Revelation 12:5, John wrote “She gave birth to a son, a male child, who ‘will rule all the nations with an iron scepter.’ And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne.” Additionally, Revelation 12:7 describes a war in heaven. According to (Brown, 2024) there are two sequences in Revelation 12: the first sequence is verses 4–6 and includes verses 7–12 as a part of the second sequence in Revelation 12:13–14. While stating scholars concur that Revelation 12 contains three parts, Blajer (2022) also considers that the first sequence concludes with verse 6. Although Revelation 12:7 does not directly mention the resurrection, it does depict a heavenly conflict that could only occur after Jesus shed his blood (referenced in Revelation 12:11) and before the 1,260-day/year period (mentioned in Revelation 12:14). Logically, this celestial battle would have taken place immediately after the Father accepted Jesus’ sacrifice for sinful humanity. Therefore, it is implied that Jesus’ resurrection occurred just before Satan and his angels were cast out of heaven, linking Revelation 12:5 and Revelation 12:7.

***Link 4 – The Lamb-like Beast***

A long-standing position of the SDA church is that the lamblike beast with two horns in Revelation 13 is the United States. Many Adventist pioneers including Hiram Edson, J.N. Andrews, John Loughborough, and Uriah Smith advanced this perspective, later confirmed by Ellen White (Kuryliak, 2023). While this concept predated the Millerite movement, SDA leaders advanced the idea that the US initially showed gentle lamb-like attributes but became increasingly dragon-like due to its support of slavery (O’Reggio, 2006). However, after the Civil War, SDA eschatology adapted to the concept that Jesus’ second coming was not as imminent and the US was exhibiting more lamb-like than dragon-like characteristics (Lawson, 1996). However, the SDA church continues to maintain the US is the Lamb-like beast of Revelation 13 while exhibiting lamb-like characteristics (Goldstein, 2021; Knott & Finley, 2018). In a later section, I present another perspective of the Lamb-like beast but the opinion that the Revelation 13:11 beast is the US does not affect what the Bible describes about the Revelation 17 beast.

Daniel wrote about a future king who will appear after the little horn falls in the Daniel 7 sequence. The details of the events that occur after the little horn appears can assist in establishing the link between Daniel 7 and Revelation 13.

* Little horn assumes power – 538
  + Little horn uproots three horns (Daniel 7:8)
  + A king arises and subdues 3 kings (Daniel 7:24)
* A courtroom scene – 1798
  + Thrones set in place/court was seated (Daniel 7:9-10)
  + The court sits (Daniel 7:26)
* Link 4:The beast lives after the courtroom scene – a future time after 1798
  + Daniel watches and hears its boastful words (Daniel 7:11)
  + Power taken away (Daniel 7:26)
* The beast is destroyed – future second coming/final judgment
  + The beast is slain, its body destroyed, and thrown into the fire (Daniel 7:11)
  + The king is completely destroyed forever (Daniel 7:26)

Revelation 13–14

* Dragon/Satan from Spirit world pursues woman (Revelation 12:13–16) – 538-1798
* Dragon/Satan prepares to wage war against woman’s offspring from the Spirit world (Revelation 12:17)
* Babylon appears – Dragon/Satan from Spirit world gives 10/horned 7/headed sea beast (Babylon) its power (Revelation 13:4) – future after 1798
* Link 4:Dragon/Satan/Angel King/earth beast released from Spirit world/Abyss/earth (Revelation 13:11, see also Revelation 9:1, 9:11, 11:7, 17:8) – after Babylon appears
* The earth beast performs signs, deceives inhabitants, forces worship of sea beast, and forces mark (Revelation 13:12-16)
* 144,000 sing a new song in heaven/second coming (Revelation 14:1–5)

We can obtain some additional insights from Prophecies 1 and 3 by considering the sequence of events in the two prophecies. Pfandl (2010) maintained that the prophecies of Daniel follow a principle of repetition and enlargement. Regalado (2009) identified a “progression of elements” and a progression of time periods within Daniel 7. We can extend the Pfandl and Regalado concepts of repetition, enlargement, and progressions to expand our understanding of the monster, the sea, and the earth beasts in Daniel 7 and Revelation 12–14. If we hypothesize the three prophecies we are studying might relate to modified versions of the same entity, it produces a very fascinating result. Reynolds (2020) presented that spiritual Babylon has extended throughout history and has coexisted with Satan, the dragon. Since Adam and Eve’s fall, the Devil has existed as a devious spiritual being exerting control through human entities. I understand that the Daniel 7 beast was a limited version of Satan’s operation which has continued to develop throughout history culminating in the second coming of Jesus and the beast’s destruction in Revelation 17. Daniel 7:11 reveals a less powerful entity in the ten-horned monster beast, which pursues Jesus and His people as a 7-headed, 10-horned dragon and mutates into an evil being who imposes his will on the world’s population in Daniel 7:26 and Revelation 13:11–18.

***Link 5 – Jesus Returns and the 144,000 Sing a New Song***

Jesus will return to earth to dispose of the sin issue and save the people who have chosen to accept His offer of salvation. SDAs believe that Jesus will return to remove evil and set up His eternal universe of righteousness (Cottrell, 1973). The 144,000 sing the song of Moses, which refers to a similar song when God saved the children of Israel from Pharaoh (Fortin, 2021). In Prophecy 1, Daniel 7:11, 26 states the beast will lose its power, its body will be destroyed, and it will be thrown into a blazing fire. Daniel continues in verse 27 to say that the holy people will receive sovereignty, power, and greatness. From a timing perspective, this information links with Prophecy 3 (Revelation 14:1–5) which describes the 144,000 singing a song of deliverance when God saves them from the oppression of the beast.

**The Dragon and Beasts in Four Prophecies**

While we have established linkages between three prophecies, we have not delved into the varying descriptions of the beasts provided by Daniel and John. Before we begin to study the Revelation 17 beast, we need to consider the physical characteristics of the earlier beasts and ponder a critical question. Did Daniel and John describe beasts on four occasions linked by sequences of events and characteristics that were unrelated to each other? We have considered the timing linkages so let us evaluate the characteristics. Table 4 outlines the similarities between the four, horned entities described in Daniel and Revelation.

**Table 4**

*Characteristics of four beasts found in Daniel and Revelation*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Daniel 7** | **Revelation**  **12:1–17** | **Revelation**  **13:1–10** | **Revelation 13:11–18** |
| **Name** | Terrible Beast | Dragon/Devil/Satan | Sea Beast | Earth Beast |
| **Origin** | Four beasts came from *Sea* (Lion/Bear/  Leopard/Terrible Beast) but rise from *Earth* | Red Dragon Comes from *Heaven* | Combined Leopard/Bear Feet/Lion Mouth Comes from *Sea* | Lamb-like Beast comes from *Earth* |
| **Horns** | Ten Horns/Ten Kings | Ten Horns | Ten Horns/Ten Crowns | Two Horns |
| **Heads** | One Head | Seven Heads/Seven Crowns | Seven Heads/  Blasphemous Names, One Head/Fatal Wound Healed | One Head |
| **Voice** | Frightening, Powerful, Spoke Boastfully |  | Proud Words Blasphemies | Spoke Like the Dragon or Devil |
| **Actions** | Iron Teeth, Crushed Devoured Trampled Victims, Changes Times/Laws, Devours Earth, Little Horn/King Uproots Three Horns/Kings | Dragon’s Tail Swept a Third of Stars Out of Heaven to Earth, Dragon Hurled to Earth | Dragon Gives Power/Throne/  Great Authority Over All for 42 months | Has Authority of Sea Beast, Creates Image of Sea Beast, Performs Miracles, Calls Fire from Heaven |
| **Impact** | Holy People Delivered to Him Times/Time/  Half Time | Woman Protected 1,260 Days Time/Times/Half Time | Conquers Holy People | Forced a Mark – 666 |
| **Results** | Power Handed Back to the Holy People of the Most High | Dragon Wages War with Women’s Offspring | People Worshipped Dragon and Earth Beast | Empowered Earth Beast to Force People to Worship Its Image |
| **Final Reward** | Terrible Beast Slain, Body Destroyed, Thrown Into Fire |  |  |  |

**Characteristics of Four Prophetic Beasts**

The following paragraphs provide additional background concerning the origins and the two primary physical characteristics of the four entities in the table that will assist when we study the Revelation 17 beast.

**The Origins**

The terrible beast came from the sea and rose out of the earth, the dragon came from heaven, the sea beast came from the sea, and the earth beast came out of the earth. The sea or waters in prophecy has traditionally been interpreted as “peoples, multitudes, nations and languages” based on the definition in Revelation 17:15. The reference to heaven as the dragon’s origin is clear since Revelation 12:9 identifies the dragon as the Devil, or Satan. However, the Bible does not provide another verse identifying the meaning of the earth as used in Daniel 7:17 and Revelation 13:11.

The terrible beast of Daniel 7 came from the sea, or groups of people. Daniel 7:17 also identified it as the fourth *king* in a series of beasts that rose from the earth. The Lamb-like beast came out of the earth with no reference to a sea of people. The juxtaposition of the beasts coming from the sea but rising from the earth requires further evaluation. SDAs have traditionally identified that earth in the context of the Lamb-like beast means land or a geographic body. However, Daniel clearly described that the fourth beast came from groups of people (the sea) and was a king (from the earth). I believe God was trying to make a point through Daniel and John. Each beast of Daniel 7 represented three elements. The first element was the king who politically ruled over subjects (Daniel 7:17). The second element was the subjects of the king, represented by the beast coming out of the sea (Daniel 7:3). The final element was the entity who rose out of the earth. I will return to this beast rising out of the earth after we consider the other entities.

In Revelation 13:1, John describes the beast as coming out of the sea, which according to symbolic interpretation, represents a group of people. This suggests that the sea beast symbolizes a collective entity, rather than a single ruler or king. Using the language of Daniel 7:3, we can infer that this beast is not a single king who rules over subjects. In contrast, when we examine the earth beast in Revelation 13:11, Daniel 7 provides further insight to help us understand its significance. Daniel 7:17 explains that the beasts who arose out of the earth symbolize great kings. Since the earth beast did not rise out of the sea, it does not directly represent a group of people. Instead, Revelation 13:11–17 portrays the earth beast’s actions as those of a king, emphasizing its role as an individual rather than a nation or a group of people.

The terrible beast crushes, devours, and tramples its victims, changes times and laws, and devours earth. The earth beast creates an image to the sea beast and enforces its mark. These beasts, or kings, arise from the earth and their actions suggest evil intent. The term *earth* in the context of these beasts may be related to the Greek word *abyssos* which could be significant for this study. In the New Testament context, *abyssos* is often translated as *abyss* or *bottomless pit,* a place associated with the confinement of evil spirits. This imagery implies that *earth* means a shaft or a pit in the ground where they are confined. This interpretation aligns with the ancient Jewish concept of *tehom,* a dwelling place for spirits, which corresponds to the idea of abyss as a subterranean realm. Most biblical references to the Abyss are found in Revelation, where it is associated with an evil beast or angel that is released from or confined to this realm.

**The Horns**

Remember, the terrible beast arose from the earth and was identified as a king. In Daniel 7:24, the ten horns on this beast are defined as ten kings who come from the same kingdom (terrible beast). This imagery is echoed in Revelation 12–13 with the dragon and the sea beast, suggesting the horns on the dragon and sea beast also symbolize ten kings or political entities. Notably, crowns are on the ten horns of the sea beast, unlike the horns of the terrible beast. The earth beast, however, has two horns, making a significant change from the earlier beasts. In Revelation 5:6, John described the Lamb of God as having seven horns which indicates perfection or completeness. This suggests that references to horns in Revelation do not always represent kings. For the earth beast, two horns could imply a semblance of authority or power that imitates the true Lamb but falls short of divine perfection. Furthermore, the absence of crowns on the earth beast’s two horns indicates a lack of kingly power beyond what exists in the beast itself. Therefore, if the Bible does not explain the symbolism of the horns in a particular prophecy, we lack specific information to define them.

**The Heads**

The earth beast is described as having one head while the dragon had seven heads, each wearing a crown. In a later vision, John notes that the crowns were not on the heads of the sea beast, but had shifted to its horns. In John’s vision of the earth beast, the lamb-like beast has one head. The Bible provides clues to help decipher the symbolism of the heads in Revelation 13 and 17.

* Each head bears a blasphemous name. (Revelation 13:1)
* One of the heads had been wounded and healed. (Revelation 13:3)
* The beast is given a mouth to blaspheme God. (Revelation 13:5)
* The seven heads are seven mountains or hills. (Revelation 17:9)
* The seven heads are seven kings. (Revelation 17:10)
* Five of the seven heads have fallen. (Revelation 17:10)
* One head is. (Revelation 17:10)
* Another head is yet to come. (Revelation 17:10)
* The beast that ascends out of the Abyss will be the eighth king and is a companion of the seven heads. (Revelation 17:8, 11)

These clues are essential for understanding the meaning of the heads of the beasts in Revelation 12 and 13 as well as the beasts in Daniel 7 and Revelation 17. A crucial aspect of this analysis is determining the time frame relevant to this vision. Revelation 17:10 references to a time in the past, present, and future leading to varied interpretations. This verse is unclear and one of the Bible’s most vexing texts (Paulien, N.D.). Paulien identified SDA authors, such as Mervyn Maxwell and Kenneth Strand, who disagreed on the timing of the prophecy yet agreed that the heads symbolized political entities. Stefanovic (2013) stated that the *present* time refers to the year 1798, following the time the woman fled into the wilderness. While SDA scholars have not reached a consensus on the exact timing of the *present* head (is) in Revelation 17:10, most concur that the heads of the Revelation 17 beast represent political entities (which may include papal Rome).

We can start evaluating the clues by examining Revelation 13:1, which reveals that each of these heads had a blasphemous name. This suggests that these heads have a religious nature and claim divine authority. One of these heads, representing Christianity/Catholicism, was wounded in 1798 when Napoleon captured the pope, but it has since healed. If this head symbolizes a religious system, it follows that the other heads also represent religious systems. While Revelation 17:9 could be interpreted to mean political powers, the Bible often uses mountains or hills to symbolize religious bodies. The number seven, as in seven heads, signifies completeness, such as seven colors in the rainbow or seven days in a week. The ancients often considered hills and mountains to be God’s sacred dwellings, and placed temples in those locations. The Bible frequently refers to Israel as Mount Zion, my holy hill, or my holy mountain (see Daniel 9:16, 20; Psalm 2:6, 15:1, 24:3; Joel 2:1, 3:17; Zephaniah 3:11). Currently, there are seven major religious systems in the world, symbolized by seven hills, as people look to these systems for knowledge and understanding of God.

Revelation 17:10 describes the heads as seven kings, indicating they have dominions and subjects who obey these religious systems as a way of serving God. The next clue involves the timing of the prophecy. The religious systems represented by the heads should encompass the world’s entire population, so we must think globally when considering these systems. By combining the blasphemous nature of these religious systems with the timing, we can establish when the vision applies. At the time of John’s vision, five heads had fallen. The term *fallen* could mean overthrown, but it also could mean brought down or shown to be false (see Revelation 14:8 for a parallel). Only one historical event could have exposed entire religious systems as false; the physical coming of Jesus to earth. Through His life and death, Jesus revealed Heathenism (man creates his own gods), Judaism (which rejected Jesus), Eastern Religions (man can become God), Islam (which denies Jesus is God), and Atheism (which denies God’s existence) as anti-Christ and blasphemous. This message’s timing could only have been relevant in John’s day.

The angel also told John in Revelation 17:10 that one religious system “is” and another “is yet to come.” The religious systems are listed in Table 5. The religious system that began and existed in John’s day was Christianity which later evolved into Catholicism. Over 17 centuries, Satan gained control of the Christian church. After the Catholic Church’s fall in 1798, a new religious system will emerge and “remains for a little while.” However, Revelation 13:3 indicates that the sea beast with the fatal wound will experience a miraculous recovery and will again play a significant role in end-time events.

**Table 5**

*World religions from John’s perspective in AD 95*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Religious Systems | | |
| Heads have Fallen | One Is | One is Yet to Come |
| Atheism | Christianity, Apostles 95 a.d. | 1 Protestant Reformation |
| Heathenism | Rom. Catholic by 4th century | 2 Final Remnant led by 144k |
| Eastern Religions |  |  |
| Islam |  |  |
| Judaism |  |  |

**Progression of Elements**

We have examined the timing linkages between the three beasts and the dragon to connect similar elements that will help us understand the beast in Revelation 17. The next step is to explore if we can identify patterns of repetition, enlargement, and progressions of elements (Pfandl, 2010; Regalado, 2009) among these four entities. A key parallel among all the entities is their extensive power and authority over the people of earth. This power, initially wielded by Babylon—the first beast in Daniel 7—continues to expand through subsequent beasts, ultimately culminating with the prostitute riding the beast in Revelation 17. As the time of Jesus’ second coming draws near, the Devil will exercise increasing levels of power over humanity. Observing the progression of these beasts, we see a trend of expanding geographic scope and control over their subjects.

**The Terrible Beast**

The traditional SDA interpretation identifies the terrible beast as the Roman Empire, which was dominant as a secular and religious power from 168 BC to AD 476 (La Rondelle, 1989). This beast is described as coming from the sea, yet it also rises from the earth (Daniel 7:3, 17). Daniel’s description highlights three elements—the king, the subjects of the king (the sea), and the entity from the earth. This suggests that Rome had a king, either an emperor during its secular rule or a pope during its religious dominance. The four beasts in Daniel 7 came out of the sea, each with a king ruling over a group of people. While God ultimately controlled these empires, Satan, rising from the Abyss or earth, was the hidden force—Babylon—behind the rulers of these four empires. The beasts in Daniel 7 increased in power and geographic reach until the emergence of the terrible beast. Although the four world empires exhibited significant power over their subjects, their influence did not extend globally, as some regimes remained outside their borders and control. The Devil influenced rulers who sought to kill Jesus at His birth and persecuted the Christians during the Dark Ages. According to Daniel 7:11, 26, Satan, the terrible beast, will regain power. Ultimately, God will strip Satan of his power; consuming him with fire and destroying him forever.

The terrible beast had a single head. The first two beasts in Daniel 7 also had one head each, while the third beast had four heads. This again suggests that the leaders wielded spiritual power over their subjects. The rulers of these kingdoms claimed authority over worship and expected to be treated as deities by their subjects. Each head symbolized spiritual power, while the entire beast represented political power concentrated in a single ruler. In its early stages, Rome, the terrible beast, had emperors who claimed both religious and political authority, expecting to be revered as divine by their subjects. Later, Rome developed ten horns which represented ten kingdoms (Daniel 7:24). However, the terrible beast continued to have only one head, indicating that Rome functioned as a universal religious power during the reign of the fourth beast. The beasts in Daniel 7 lacked crowns on their heads or horns, signifying that while they held religious and political power over their subjects, Satan’s influence was limited to external *coercive* power. We will further consider the significance of the crown’s locations as we study the Revelation beasts.

**The Dragon**

While Satan was directly implementing his goals through earthly kings, he was also operating in the spirit realm to influence evil angels and individuals on earth. Revelation 12:3 introduces us to another entity: a red dragon with ten horns and seven heads. Revelation 12:9 clearly identifies this dragon as the Devil, or Satan. John describes two features that differ from the terrible beast in Daniel 7. The dragon originates from heaven and has seven crowns on its heads. This heavenly origin is significant because it marks the beginning of Satan’s rebellion, as depicted in this prophecy.

Before Jesus created the earth, Satan recruited one-third of the angels in heaven to join him in his rebellion against God (Isaiah 14:12–17; Ezekiel 28:12–17). These angels, referred to as stars, were cast out of heaven (Revelation 12:4). Satan has continued to wage war against the woman (Revelation 12:13) and pursue her offspring (Revelation 12:17). From ancient Babylon to the dragon prophecies of Revelation 12, the Devil has persistently worked behind the scenes to influence the growth of Babylon through religious and political entities.

The dragon wears seven *diadems* (crowns of authority) on its seven heads. In Revelation 13, each head of the sea beast bears a blasphemous name (Revelation 13:1). Since the heads of the beasts represent religious systems, this suggests that the dragon pursues the woman and her offspring through false religion. The Devil is constantly attempting to mislead people by imitating God’s truth. In John’s vision of the dragon, Satan employs *spiritual* power to further Babylon’s development and achieve his goals on earth.

**The Sea Beast**

The beast described in Revelation 13 builds upon the characteristics of the earlier beasts, incorporating elements from the lion, leopard, bear, and ten horns of the terrible beast in Daniel 7. It has seven heads and wears crowns similar to the dragon of Revelation 12. However, unlike the dragon, the diadems (crowns of authority) are placed on its horns rather than its heads. Adventist historicists often interpret both the dragon and the sea beast as representations of pagan or papal Rome, but many have not resolved the differences between the dragon and the sea beast including the placement of the crowns (Galiza, 2015). There remains an unresolved challenge within the historicist perspective regarding the traditional interpretation of the sea beast as a symbol of Rome.

According to the sequence of events in Prophecy 3, the rise of the sea beast occurs

after the dragon’s pursuit of the woman. Since the sea beast arises after 1798, it cannot be the papacy. Additionally, if the ten horns represent civil or political powers and the heads represent religious powers, the sea beast represents a broader scope than the papacy. Geographically, the papacies’ influence did not extend to many populated areas worldwide. Religiously, while the Roman Church had varying levels of success against Muslim control of Jerusalem during the Crusades, it did not dominate large populations in China, India, or Africa during the Dark Ages. Revelation 13:7 clearly states that the sea beast had “authority over *every* tribe, people, language and nation” and it had the power to conquer God’s holy people. John also noted that unsaved people throughout the world would worship the sea beast and the dragon (Revelation 13:8). Historically, Rome did not possess such widespread power or receive worship from a globally dispersed population.

John describes the sea beast as speaking blasphemies and receiving its power from the dragon. The sea beast wields earthly power surpassing the power previously exercised by the terrible beast or the dragon. While the heads of the beast represent religious entities, the crowns of authority are on the horns, indicating that civil authorities are superior to the religious authorities during the sea beast’s reign, and political entities will persecute God’s people. The rise of the sea beast parallels the description of Babylon in Revelation 17. The prostitute in Revelation 17 symbolizes an entity once faithful to God but later becomes an end-time adversary known as Babylon (Stefanovic, 2013). The dragon (Satan) will give the sea beast (Babylon) “his power and his throne and great authority” (Revelation 13:2). This beast emerges due to man’s reaction to God’s wrath. A global church-state theocracy, controlled by the dragon, will implement manmade laws in an attempt to mitigate “acts of God” and halt global destruction. Like the lion-beast of Daniel 7:4, Babylon will command *all* people—Heathens, Atheists, Eastern Religions, Muslims, Catholics, Christians, and Jews—to worship as it dictates or face death (Daniel 3:4–6; Revelation 13:15). Babylon, composed of seven religious and 10 political systems, will exhibit Satan’s expansion of *religio-political* power.

**The Earth Beast**

The earth beast described in Revelation 13:11-18 represents the ultimate power that Babylon will yield. Unlike the previous entities discussed, John provides only two clues about this beast: it speaks like the dragon and has two horns like the lamb. J.N. Andrews (1851-1884 as cited in Burt, 2021) stated the two horns of the lamb-like beast symbolized the combination of religious and civil power. This combination indicates a continued expansion of Babylon’s authority, as seen in the previous beasts. The earth beast’s speech, like the dragon’s, further emphasizes its malevolent nature. While this beast shares a common feature with the Daniel 7 beasts in that they both originate from the earth, the beasts of Daniel 7 also emerge from the sea. This distinction implies that the earth beast does not represent a king and his subjects, as the sea component symbolizes groups of people.

Just as Nebuchadnezzar, the lion king/beast, symbolized the first powerful earthly kingdom of Babylon, the earth beast is the physical manifestation of Satan—end-time Babylon—wielding far greater authority and unparalleled global power than Nebuchadnezzar’s reign. Consider the evidence.

* Lucifer in human form comes from the abyss (earth) as angel/king (Revelation 9:11).
* The beast will come out of the Abyss, astonishing earth’s sinful inhabitants, and it will ultimately face destruction (Revelation 17:8).
* Lucifer will possess absolute power, not from nations or people (the sea).
* Isaiah prophesied the Devil would physically appear (Isaiah 14:13–15). Paul described the Devil, calling him “the man of lawlessness” who claims to be God (2 Thessalonians 2:3–9).
* Satan will perform miracles such as calling fire from heaven to assert his divinity (Revelation 13:13).
* Like Nebuchadnezzar, Satan will establish an image (one-world church/state) to end-time Babylon and force people to worship it upon penalty of death (Revelation 13:15).
* Satan will force people to accept his mark in the right hand or forehead to buy or sell (Revelation 13:17).

Lucifer’s theocracy will be the final, updated version of the original Babylon which was also a global church/state. While the sea beast has seven heads and ten horns, the earth beast has a single head, symbolizing the unification of religious and political powers under one “God” reigning on earth. Satan will not tolerate religious diversity or dissenting views, enforcing his blasphemy with miracle-working powers. Those who choose to join Satan’s theocracy will compromise their conscience and abandon their religion to survive. During this time, Satan will exercise *sovereign* power over the world’s inhabitants.

**The Revelation 17 Beast**

John strategically places Revelation 17 after the prophecies of the dragon and the beasts, and before the angels' description of Babylon's fall, to serve as a bridge between the growth of Babylon, Satan's deceptions, and Babylon's ultimate destruction. In this chapter, the angel accompanying John reveals the mystery of the woman, the beast she rides, and her ultimate punishment.

The woman seated on the beast represents the final iteration of Babylon, a theocratic global church/state as described in Revelation 17:5. She is also referred to as the "great city that rules over the kings of the earth" (Revelation 17:18). This mother of prostitutes embodies ultimate evil and is empowered by Satan, the great red dragon. Adorned in purple, symbolizing royalty and state power, and scarlet, representing clergy and religious authority, she demonstrates her complete control over religions and nations by riding the seven-headed, ten-horned sea beast. Although she is rich with the world's treasures, she holds a golden cup filled with her abominations, signifying her moral corruption. Despite possessing everything the world offers, she remains a whore, devoid of true value. She commits adultery with the kings of the earth, who engage in her evil acts to gain immoral favors. The wicked join these kings, accepting her lies and becoming intoxicated with her deceitful promises. The great prostitute is also drunk on the blood of the saints she has murdered during her demonic reign. This mother of prostitutes is named Babylon the Great, the global consolidation of church and state, and the demonic dictator of the world.

The prostitute riding the Revelation 17 beast introduces a new component in the description of the beasts. This addition emphasizes that the Devil is physically present and actively involved with the final iteration of the earth beast and its religio-political theocracy. The description of the beast incorporates elements from earlier entities and provides additional details to enhance understanding. The Revelation 17 beast shares some symbols with the earlier entities, further illustrating the continuity and evolution of these prophetic visions.

The Prostitute Sits by Many Waters (Revelation 17:1)

John wrote that the entities in this study came from the waters, heaven, or earth. The angel in Revelation 17:15 said, “The waters you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations and languages.” This text provides a definition of waters that can apply to other beasts in prophecy. However, the Bible does not say the woman or the scarlet beast came from the sea like the earlier prophecies in Daniel 7 or Revelation 13. This indicates the woman is not a group of people, nation, or language. If the woman is sitting near the waters, a possible conclusion is that the woman has power over the groups of people.

**The Color of the Beast (Revelation 17:3)**

Revelation 17 describes the beast as scarlet in color. While Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 do not specify colors for their respective beasts, Revelation 12 identifies the red dragon as Satan. The scarlet hue of the Revelation 17 beast suggests a close relationship to the red dragon, highlighting the demonic nature of this beast.

**The Beast Has Blasphemous Names (Revelation 17:3)**

The sea beast bore a blasphemous name on each of its seven heads, whereas the scarlet beast is entirely covered with blasphemous names. The heads of the sea beast symbolize religions that blaspheme God by promoting false doctrines and denying divine existence. The transition to the scarlet beast being covered in blasphemies signifies that when the great prostitute controls the scarlet beast, she dominates and eliminates all the world's religious systems. This beast, adorned with blasphemies, stands as an affront to God and embodies the spirit of the anti-Christ.

**The Beast Has Ten Horns (Revelation 17:3, 7, 12–14)**

The scarlet beast's ten horns connect it to other entities in this study, as they share this symbolic feature. In Daniel 7, a beast with one head and ten horns represents kings or states that emerged during Rome's dominance. The dragon, existing in the spiritual realm, also had ten horns, indicating a future link with the ten-horned sea beast. While the sea beast's horns are crowned, the scarlet beast's horns are not, suggesting that the political power of Babylon has shifted to the woman riding the scarlet beast. John further explains that the ten horns represent ten kings who will receive authority for a brief period (Revelation 17:12).

**Seven Heads (Revelation 17:3, 7, 9–11)**

The seven heads of the beast are described as seven hills on which the woman sits (Revelation 17:9), symbolizing seven religious systems encompassing the world's population. These heads also represent seven kings (Revelation 17:10), indicating that these religious systems have had subjects, like human kings. In the first century AD, Jesus identified five religious systems as fallen or false: Heathenism, Judaism, Eastern Religions, Islam, and Atheism. The Christian church existed in John's time, and a future church was yet to emerge. In the end times, all religious systems will merge into a single religio-political entity, subservient to the woman riding the scarlet beast. This is shown by the blasphemous names covering the beast and the absence of crowns on its horns.

**The Beast and Eighth King (Revelation 17:8, 11)**

In studying the beast of Revelation 17, it might initially seem that John is describing a single scarlet beast. However, verses 8 and 11 introduce a second beast. If the angel were referring to the scarlet beast in verse 8, he would not describe it as "now is not," indicating that this other beast did not exist at the time of John's vision. Instead, the angel provides an additional description: “The beast, which you saw, once was, now is not, and yet will come up out of the Abyss and go to its destruction.” This suggests that John had seen this beast in an earlier vision. The angel, much like Gabriel did for Daniel in Daniel 9, offers John further insights in Revelation 17. These clues help us identify the second beast:

* It once was
* Now is not
* Will come out of the Abyss
* Will be destroyed
* Is an eighth king
* Belongs to the seven kings, also defined as seven heads

The second beast in Revelation 17 can be identified by examining the timing and description provided by these clues. The angel tells John that the beast existed before the vision, was "not" during the vision, and would emerge from the Abyss in the future. The dragon (Satan) in Revelation 12 *once was* visible until he and his angels were cast out of heaven (Ezekiel 28:12–18) and God made them invisible to humans. Following Jesus' resurrection and ascension, Satan, the prince of this world, was cast into the Abyss (John 12:31; Revelation 12:10–13). The Devil and his angels have been confined to the Abyss (*now is not* visible in John’s day) until they *will come out of the Abyss* and become visible again (Revelation 17:8). Consider this sequence of information:

1. The earth beast is the angel-king of the bottomless pit (Revelation 17:8; 9:11).
2. The angel-king of the bottomless pit is the dragon cast into the earth (Revelation 12:7).
3. The dragon must be released from the earth before the second coming, as he is returned to the Abyss right after Jesus returns (Revelation 20:1–3).
4. The Devil is again released from the Abyss to deceive the nations (Revelation 20:7–8).
5. The angel-king/dragon/Satan *will be destroyed* forever (Revelation 17:11; 20:10).

The second beast of Revelation is also described as an eighth king who belongs to the seven kings (Revelation 17:11). The angel explains that the seven heads/seven hills are also seven kings (Revelation 17:9–10). The eighth king in Revelation parallels the vision of the four beasts described in Daniel 7. The terrible beast originally had ten horns, but the little horn uprooted three of them (Daniel 7:8). This little horn became the *eighth* horn, ruling over the other seven. Similarly, Satan will physically appear as the *eighth* and greatest king (the great prostitute) ruling over the seven heads and claiming to be their God (2 Thessalonians 2:3–4; Daniel 11:36).

**Conclusion**

In Revelation 17, John provides the final depiction and explanation of the beasts found in the apocalyptic prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. For those studying prophecy, it is important to note that one cannot begin a study with the final chapter. Understanding the intricacies of the scarlet beast of Revelation 17 requires a comprehensive study of the prophecies, beginning with the metal statue in Daniel 2. Each prophecy adds to the overall picture culminating in the earth made new. Students of prophecy can utilize concepts of repetition, enlargement, and progression to clarify individual time-based prophecies. However, the prophecies of the beasts and the dragon in Daniel and Revelation present a historical progression over multiple prophecies that extends into the future.

The Devil has been an adversary from before the creation of the world until his ultimate destruction at the end of the millennium. He rebelled and was cast out of heaven before creation (Isaiah 14:12). During Old Testament times, he had access to heaven as prince of this world (Job 1:6) and controlled kings through the four beasts described in Daniel 7. Lucifer was permanently cast out of heaven after Jesus’ resurrection and ascension (John 12:28–31; Revelation 12:7–8). In the end times, he will operate behind the scenes, controlling Babylon, the ultimate union of religion and state (Revelation 13:1–10). Later, Satan will appear in person, claiming to be Christ, and will deceive the world into worshiping him and his false religion (2 Thessalonians 2:3–12; Revelation 13:11–18). As the great prostitute, Satan will dominate the scarlet beast, and all previous political and religious entities will have ceased to exist (Revelation 17). This scarlet beast or eighth king will eventually be destroyed (Revelation 17:11). An angel will cast the Devil, the great prostitute, into the abyss (Revelation 20:2), and a thousand years later, the Devil will join the scarlet beast in the lake of fire for his final destruction (Revelation 20:10). Throughout history, God has allowed Satan to wield increasing power to influence and control the world. As this sinful world draws to a close, Satan will exert ultimate control, supplanting religious and political entities, until the Lord intervenes, exposes the Devil’s evil machinations, and ends his reign on earth forever.

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