

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

The Role of the Scarlet Beast

Revelation 17:3,7-17

INTRODUCTION:

We have spent the last two weeks in Revelation 17, looking at the vision concerning the judgment of the harlot named Babylon the Great and the interpretation of that vision that told us who or really what the harlot represented.

When we got to the interpretation, we discovered that the interpretation was harder to understand than the vision itself. Because of that it is very easy to get sidetracked with the details in this chapter. **It is very important that we understand the purpose of this vision.** We will find that the purpose is given to us in verse 1. "I will show you the judgment of the great harlot." The purpose is to show the destruction and punishment of the prostitute. THAT IS THE POINT!

That is the intended message of chapters 17 & 18. The ultimate judgment of the harlot is the forest. We must be very careful that we do not get lost by looking only at the trees!

The harlot is adorned as this seductive, attractive, well-dressed, wealthy, prostitute. As such, she represents the economic structure of the world and the non-Christian systems of the world to oppose the people of God. She uses wealth and immorality to draw men away from God and into idolatry.

She is the ungodly world system that has existed throughout the ages and will continue to exist until the end of history. These worldly systems try to dictate the proper way to live and act.

Now we are going to look at the role of the Scarlet beast that is accompanying the harlot.

All Stand and Read Scripture

Revelation 17:3,7-17 (NASB)

³And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns.

...⁷ And the angel said to me, "Why do you wonder? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. ⁸"The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will wonder when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come. ⁹Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits, ¹⁰ and they are seven kings; five have fallen,

one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while.
¹¹ The beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth and is *one* of the seven, and he goes to destruction. ¹² The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour.
¹³ These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast.

Victory for the Lamb

¹⁴ These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him *are the* called and chosen and faithful.”

¹⁵ And he *said to me, “The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues. ¹⁶ And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire. ¹⁷ For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God will be fulfilled.

Prayer

Our Father we thank You that You have preserved for us this Revelation from Christ. I thank you that we can read it and hear it and preach it freely. I pray that we will all cherish this opportunity to gain a better understanding of what is being revealed here. Help me to present this message with clarity and accuracy that Your Son may be glorified. We pray that You, through Your Holy Spirit, will be present in our midst that the message may be driven deep into our minds. Help us to recognize the beast as he works in our midst that we might avoid his temptations and remain faithful to you. Allow these words to work through us and bear much fruit for You.

In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

BODY:

I. THE SCARLET BEAST.

Revelation 17:3 (NASB)

³ And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns.

Here we see the harlot riding on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns. This is, first of all, telling us that the harlot and the beast are working as allies in their opposition against the church, the people of God. The beast plays a prominent role in the life and in the work of the harlot, Babylon the Great. That becomes especially clear when we step into our passage here in **verse 7**, as it begins with this angel telling John that he will tell him the mystery of the woman AND of the beast with seven heads and ten horns.

The color scarlet symbolizes bloodshed, warfare, and ruthlessness. We know that the scarlet beast with the seven heads and ten horns is the same beast that is referred to in chapter 10. This **beast symbolizes** all of the satanically inspired kingdoms and governments of this world that are opposed to God and His people.

From here we learn a few more things about the beast. In **verse 8** we learn the fate of the beast. The angel mocks the beast of being the phony of Christ. One of the things that we see throughout the time the beast is introduced to us and up through the time of his ultimate judgment, is that the beast is portrayed as an imitator of Christ. The beast wants to imitate the lamb in some capacity and set himself out as someone that the world must look out to in order to experience the blessings of life.

So we continue to see this parody being set up of the beast imitating Christ. We see it here as the angel refers to the beast as the one that "**was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction.**" That plays off of the same description that Jesus used to introduce Himself back in ...

Revelation 1:8 (NASB) where Jesus says...

⁸“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

So Jesus is an eternal being that has always existed whereas this beast is a phony, a fraud, and imitator whose time is short, and whose end is approaching when he will be cast into eternal punishment.

II. THE SEVEN HEADS, MOUNTAINS, AND KINGS.

Once we get beyond the beast's fate we get into some very difficult passages to interpret. This starts in **verses 9 and 10** where we are told that "**The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits, 10 and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while.**"

So the obvious question is **who or what are these seven heads?** Well, first of all we know they are not literally seven heads but are symbolic. We are seeing a vision in apocryphal writing. The genre then dictates that the heads are symbolic. But secondly we also see that the seven heads are seven mountains and the seven mountains are seven kings. **I don't know about you, but, for me, heads, mountains, and kings are not literally the same thing!** They are symbolic! So symbolically, these heads, mountains, and kings all represent the same thing.

The "prophecy experts" will try to interpret these seven kings to be a succession of Caesars, to a succession of kingdoms, or a conglomerate of kingdoms around Asia Minor and so on. They try to name names and establish dates. They twist things all around to try to make something work based upon past history, but nothing seems to fit.

But I believe the solution is much simpler than that. We already know that in the book of Revelation that **the number 7 symbolizes what? Completion or Fullness.**

We see the number seven all through the book.

Seven **Churches**, Seven **Angels**, Seven **Stars**, Seven **Eyes**, Seven **Horns**, Seven **Spirits**, Seven **Thunders**, Seven **Seals**, Seven **Trumpets**, Seven **Bowls**, and on and on and on.

And the number is never random and they are never literal. John does not just pick out a number. He uses the number seven to represent completion or fullness.

Here John mentions **Heads, Kings, and Mountains.** Each of these represent power.

They are symbols of authority. When combined with the number seven, **they represent the fullness or completeness of human power and authority on earth throughout history.**

The number 10 is always associated with evil and power. The fact that we see ten horns on this beast symbolizes to us that the beast is Satanically inspired and has complete earthly power and authority in opposition to Christ and His church.

It is upon this earthy power and authority that the harlot, Babylon the Great, is riding upon. She uses the beast's earthly power to draw men away from God and into idolatry. The economic systems and religions of this world are in allegiance with her. She has been in allegiance with them throughout history.

Then we have further information concerning the beast in verse 10.

¹⁰...five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while.

In the broadest sense, what this means is that **there has been a past history to the beast's reign, there is a present reality to the beast's reign, and the beast will continue to reign for just a short period of time more.** And that is really the point here. As terrifying as this beast is, his time is short and he is destined for destruction.

III. THE EIGHTH BEAST.

Then we read...

¹¹The beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth and is *one* of the seven, and he goes to destruction.

What is the eighth that is one of the seven?

First you must remember who the first seven heads, kings, and mountains were that the eighth is one of. The beast is a manifestation or symbol representing the governments and kingdoms of this world that are in opposition to Christ and His people.

Here we are told that the eighth will be like the previous seven. It is as though there is an intermingling of beasts and heads here. It is saying that the final beast who comes near the end of the fullness of time will have the same evil, God hating, nature as every manifestation of the beasts before it. It will be like all of the other ones that have expanded all of history, **but this one will be worse.**

He is not just **A** head, but he is like an entirely new beast with all of the power of all of the beasts before him. We see this verses 12 and 13.

¹²The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour. ¹³These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast.

Again ten represents power and evil. So all of the evil kingdoms near the end of these last days will all merge together for the beast. This will create a beast that will be as bad or worse than all of the other worldly kingdoms combined. That is how terrifying the final beast will be.

This will be the beast to end all beasts!

It will rise up waging war on Christ and all of His saints. Then we see that the Lord will conquer him.

14 These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful.”

This is the battle of Har-Magedon that we saw in chapter 16.

The great battle to end all battles. And just as the battle is ready to begin...it is over! This battle is referred to several times in Revelation. The final beast gathers his armies for battle and the Lamb will overcome them.

As we approach the end of the last days, this eighth beast has an alliance with the harlot. But we learn in verses 16 and 17 that this alliance is going to end.

Revelation 17:16-17 (NASB)

16 And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire. 17 For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God will be fulfilled.

The individual kingdoms of the earth are going to give complete control over to the beast that is opposed to the church. So that now all of the kingdoms of the earth will turn against the economic and religious systems of the world. It seems odd that they would turn against its ally, the harlot, but remember, this is God's judgment of the harlot. This is what John told us was the purpose of the vision.

Who is He going to use to bring about this judgment? He has put it in the hearts of the final beast to do this. Suddenly the beast is going to despise all religion and he now wants all of the power and wealth for himself. While the previous judgments were against a fourth and a third of the earth, now it is at a global scale. It is going to do so as God's means of judgment. He is going to allow the beast to devour the harlot. It appears that when this happens the whole world is going to experience an economic disaster.

And thus the harlot is judged. We are going to get further details on this in the next chapter.

CONCLUSION:

So in this vision we get a clear picture of the relationship between the harlot and the beast. The relationship was established in order to lure those who dwell on the earth into idolatry. We see the way it was, the way it is, the way will be, and ultimately, we see the judgment that will come.

We see this seduction happening around us all of the time. We see it in the shows and in the advertising on **TV**. We see it on the **movie** screens. We see it in the **news** and even on the **streets**. We see **pornography and nakedness** all over the **internet**. We hear it in our **music**. We even see it in the **kids video games**. The harlot is everywhere and the world finds great pleasure in her passionate relationships.

We certainly see the harlot working here in the United States! She is trying to dictate to us not only **how to live**, but also what is "politically" correct and acceptable. We are told that abortion is ok. We are told that divorce is no big deal. If you can find someone more attractive and lucrative, why not go for it? Extramarital relationships are fine. Homosexuality? No problem! Sacrificing ourselves to enjoy a brief high on drugs? If you can do it without being caught, "Why not?"

But God says "NO!" These lusts are of the world. They are only temporary pleasures.

1 John 2:15 (NASB)

¹⁵ Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

You may think, " **I have done all of those things! I cannot possibly be saved!**

Guess what?

All of us has sinned. Despite how much we have sinned, God still desires that all men everywhere should repent.

2 Peter 3:9 (NASB) tells us of one of His promises...

⁹ The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for **any** to perish but for all to come to repentance.

Thus God has patiently allowed you live up until now to still allow you to turn to Him. He wants everyone to understand that they are dead in their sin and turn to Him. You do not need to clean up your life before you come to Him, you come to Him and let **Him** clean up your life!

So once again God says...

1 John 2:15 (NASB)

¹⁵ Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

In just a few minutes we are going to sing our "invitation" hymn. If God is speaking to you right now and asking you to turn your life over to Him...If you are tired of the pain and disappointments that this world has brought upon you...If you want the assurance that you have not lived this life in vain...listen to Him, accept His call, and walk up to me at the front of the church during the singing of the hymn.

I will share with you what God expects from you in this life.

My favorite verse in the Bible is...

John 10:27-28 (NASB) **Jesus** says...

²⁷ My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸ and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.

This is the Day!