

The Eight Kings of Revelation 17

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By Jeffrey Ho

Bible prophecy that involves the determination of the identity of symbols is very fascinating. The interpretation of these symbols requires them to be identified. The symbol in Daniel 2—the image in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, which had the head of gold, the arms and breasts of silver, the belly and thighs of bronze, the lower legs of iron, and the feet and toes of iron and clay—needs to be identified. The symbols in Daniel 7—four wild beasts, which were the lion, the bear, the leopard, the terrible beast, and even the little horn which came up from the terrible beast—need to be identified. The symbols in Daniel 8—two sacrificial animals, which were the ram and the goat, and even the horn from littleness which came forth from one of the four winds of the heavens—need to be identified. The symbol in Revelation 12—the great red dragon, which had seven heads and ten horns—needs to be identified. The two symbols in Revelation 13—the sea beast, which had seven heads and ten horns, and the earth beast—need to be identified.

One of the symbols in Revelation 17—the scarlet beast, which has seven heads and ten horns—is no exception and likewise needs to be identified. While the determination of the identities of the seven heads of the dragon and of the sea beast is not a concern in those chapters where they appear, the determination of the identities of the seven heads of the scarlet beast is a requirement. The purpose of this article is to provide an exegesis of the verses¹ in Revelation 17 which are key in determining the identity of the scarlet beast, along with its seven heads and ten horns.

THE TIMEFRAME OF REVELATION 17

Before identifying who the scarlet beast represents, it is very important to determine the main time period during which the two main symbols of Revelation 17—the prostitute and the scarlet beast—exist. A comparison will be made between Revelation 17:1, 3 and Revelation 21:9–10.

“Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls which had been full of the seven last plagues came to me and spoke with me, saying, ‘Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.’ So he carried me away in [the] Spirit to a great and high mountain and showed me the great city—the holy Jerusalem—coming down out of heaven from God.” Revelation 21:9–10.

Here an angel invites John to come and see the new Jerusalem descending from heaven to earth. This invitation certainly carried John’s mind forward to the end of the 1000 years, very far into the future from John’s time. In other words, while John is watching the new Jerusalem come down, it is not to be expected that such an event should occur in his day.

¹All scriptural verses in this article are taken from the *Spirit of Prophecy Version (SPV)*, <http://www.spvbible.org/>.

“Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying to me, ‘Come here, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is sitting upon the many waters,’ . . . So he carried me away in [the] Spirit into [the] wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, which had seven heads and ten horns.” Revelation 17:1, 3.

Similarly, at the beginning of Revelation 17, an angel invites John to come and see the judgment² of the great prostitute. This invitation certainly carried John’s mind forward to the time of the end, when the prostitute is judged, condemned, and receives the punishment meted out to her by God. In other words, while John is watching the prostitute receive her punishment, it is not to be expected that such an event should occur in his day. Therefore, Revelation 17 is to be interpreted from the viewpoint of AD 1798 and later—the era of the time of the end and the investigative judgment.³ The second evidence that shows that the prophetic events in Revelation 17 are to be interpreted from the viewpoint of AD 1798 and later is found in Revelation 12 and 13. Now, the four beasts of Daniel 7 when they first appear on the scene in total have seven heads and ten horns. In Revelation 17, the seven heads and ten horns of the scarlet beast are related to the seven heads and ten horns of the dragon (Revelation 12) and the sea beast (Revelation 13). One interesting detail about the dragon and the sea beast is the appearance of royal crowns (Greek, *diadēma*⁴) on them.

The royal crowns on the heads of the dragon focus on the time period during the reign of the four Mediterranean world powers in succession: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. During the reign of the four world kingdoms, the ten kingdoms that arose out of the fourth kingdom have not yet begun to reign, so that is why the ten horns do not have royal crowns on them at this time. In Revelation 12, the primary earthly identity of the dragon is Imperial Rome during the birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. The royal crowns on the horns of the sea beast focus on the time period during the reign of the ten kingdoms which came out of the Western Roman Empire, and which subsequently became the nations of Europe. During the reign of the nations of Europe, the four world kingdoms that preceded them are no longer reigning, so that is why the seven heads do not have royal crowns on them at this time. In Revelation 13, the primary earthly identity of the sea beast is Papal Rome in a union of church and state with the political powers of Europe during the 42-month or 1260-day prophetic period from AD 538 to AD 1798.

However, royal crowns do not appear anywhere on the scarlet beast.⁵ This is very significant. The absence of royal crowns on both the heads and the horns of the scarlet beast introduces a new time period which is distinct from the periods of the dragon (Imperial Rome) and the sea beast (Papal Rome during the 1260 years), and which occurs after these two periods. This new period is the time of the end beginning in AD 1798. This detail of the scarlet beast further confirms that the judgment of the prostitute occurs in the time of the end, which is the main time period of Revelation 17.

²This judgment, from the Greek word *krima*, refers to the judicial verdict of condemnation and the subsequent punishment. See Frederick William Danker, ed., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 3d ed., rev. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 567. This condemnation and punishment occurs after the investigative judgment.

³C. Mervyn Maxwell, *God Cares* (Nampa: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1985), 2:473.

⁴*diadēma* occurs in the New Testament only in Revelation 12:3; 13:1; and 19:12. The possessors of the *diadēma* are the dragon, the sea beast, and Jesus Christ, respectively.

⁵Maxwell, 2:473.

The existence or nonexistence of royal crowns, and where they appear on the seven-headed, ten-horned animal, plays a crucial role in determining the main time period of the dragon of Revelation 12, as well as the beasts of Revelation 13 and 17.

The third evidence that shows that the prophetic events in Revelation 17 are to be interpreted from the viewpoint of AD 1798 and later is found in the most significant difference between the sea beast of Revelation 13 and the scarlet beast of Revelation 17. For centuries the Roman Catholic Church of the Middle Ages and the European states were so interrelated and mutually supportive that this union of church and state could be characterized by a single complex symbol: the sea beast.⁶ However, by the time the events in Revelation 17 occur, two distinct symbols characterized by a prostitute and a scarlet beast now appear on the scene. This observation of the two distinct symbols of the prostitute and the scarlet beast, in contrast to the one symbol of the sea beast, represents a separation of church and state.⁷ “The beast in chapter 17 has the great harlot **‘sitting’** on its back. Church (the harlot) and state (the beast) though related are now observed as distinct entities.”⁸ Since the time the Papacy began its dominating career in AD 538, the only time a separation of church and state has ever existed has been during the time of the end, which began in AD 1798 when the Papacy received its deadly wound.

Therefore, once again, Revelation 17 is to be interpreted from the viewpoint of AD 1798 and later—the era of the time of the end and the investigative judgment. In fact, the time of the end is the only time period that fits into the correct identification of the scarlet beast and its seven heads. The remaining portion of this article will be an exegesis of Revelation 17:8–12.

REVELATION 17:8

“The beast which you saw was, and is not, and is to come up from the abyss and to go to destruction. And those who dwell upon the earth, whose names have not been written in the book of life from [the] foundation of [the] world, will marvel when [they] see the beast which was, and is not, although he is.”

“The beast which you saw was, and is not, and is to come up from the abyss”

Verses 8, 10, and 11 contain certain formulas which are carefully crafted. All three formulas are divided into three parts, with each part containing a time element. The time element in each part of all three formulas goes in the following order: (1) past, (2) present, (3) future.

With this as a foundation, the first formula in verse 8 contains the three time elements: “was” (past), “is not” (present), and “is to come up” (future). This tripartite formula indicates that the scarlet beast passes through

⁶Ibid., 2:475.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

three phases during its entire existence—past, present, and future.⁹ The past, present, and future phases of the scarlet beast are to be identified with the seven heads.¹⁰ Thus, throughout its existence, the scarlet beast rules through one of its seven heads during different periods of history.¹¹ Robert L. Thomas writes, “Each head of the beast is a partial incarnation of satanic power that rules for a given period, so the beast can exist on earth without interruption in the form of seven consecutive kingdoms.”¹² This concept is similar¹³ to the seven heads of the dragon of Revelation 12 and the seven heads of the sea beast of Revelation 13, although the identities of the seven heads are not a concern in those chapters.

The sea beast of Revelation 13 first and foremost represents the Papacy, even though its appearance is an amalgamation of the four beasts of Daniel 7. Likewise, the scarlet beast, which succeeds and is modeled after the sea beast, first and foremost also represents the Papacy. Now, there are four animal symbols in chapters 12, 13, and 17: the dragon, the earth beast, the sea beast, and the scarlet beast. At first this seems to indicate four different powers.¹⁴ However, Revelation 16:13 and 20:10 speak of them as only three—the “dragon,” the “false prophet” (the earth beast), and the “beast” (not the “beasts”).¹⁵ Because these two passages speak about the “beast” (sea beast) in the singular, and not the “beasts” (sea beast and scarlet beast) in the plural, this indicates that the scarlet beast is not different from the sea beast, but is one and the same as the sea beast.¹⁶ Therefore, the scarlet beast of Revelation 17 is the same power as the sea beast of Revelation 13, both of which are in water and have seven heads and ten horns.¹⁷

Now that the scarlet beast has been identified, what is the relationship between the three different time elements and the scarlet beast itself? The scarlet beast’s present state (is not) is in comparison with what it used to be in the past (was) and is in comparison with what it will be in the future (is to come up).¹⁸ Therefore, it is the Papacy which goes through three different phases in its entire career, which will be demonstrated below.

“The beast . . . was”

This points back to the sea beast of Revelation 13 in which the main emphasis was the 42-month union of church and state from AD 538 to AD 1798 (Revelation 13:1–2). The scarlet beast was alive; it was a persecuting power during this time. This was the past phase of the scarlet beast.

⁹Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the Book of Revelation* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2002), 513.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8–22: An Exegetical Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1995), 292.

¹³I say “similar,” because the identities of the seven heads of the dragon and the sea beast may not be totally identical to the identities of the seven heads of the scarlet beast.

¹⁴In Revelation 12, Satan (the dragon) persecutes Christ through Imperial Rome. In Revelation 13, there is a new scene and new powers: the Papacy (the sea beast) and the United States of America (the earth beast). Since all three animals are different powers in these two chapters, one might assume that, in another new scene which occurs in Revelation 17, the scarlet beast is a new power distinct from the previous three animals.

¹⁵Maxwell, 2:474.

¹⁶Revelation 19:20 mentions the “beast” and the “false prophet,” without the dragon. But here “beast” is also in the singular, and this singular indicates that the sea beast and the scarlet beast represent the same power: the Papacy.

¹⁷Maxwell, 2:474.

¹⁸Ibid.

“The beast . . . is not”

This points back to the sea beast during the separation of church and state which began in AD 1798 (when the deadly wound was inflicted on one of the seven heads) and continues to the present day (Revelation 13:3a). The scarlet beast is now dead; it is not a persecuting power during this time. This is the present phase of the scarlet beast.

“The beast . . . is to come up from the abyss”

This points back to the sea beast during the reunion of church and state once the deadly wound is fully healed (Revelation 13:3b). The scarlet beast will be resurrected; it will once again become a persecuting power during this time. This will be the future phase of the scarlet beast.

It must be emphasized again that the dominant characteristic of the Papacy at the height of its power was persecution. Maxwell writes:

The dragon and the beast, both having seven heads and ten horns, represent one and the same spirit of church-state persecution. (Church-state persecution is a primary concern of Revelation.) Their seven heads call attention to the same sevenfold sequence of persecuting government. . . . (a) the dragon calls special attention to *non-Christian persecution*, and (b) the beast calls attention to the old-fashioned *Catholic-style persecution*, . . . As for the two stages of the “beast” itself, its leopard-bodied stage (chapter 13) calls attention to persecution during the Middle Ages, and its scarlet-colored stage (chapter 17) calls attention first to its weakness at the beginning of the judgment hour and second to its dramatic but brief resurgence as an old-fashioned Catholic-style persecuting power immediately prior to the second coming.¹⁹

“from the abyss”

The Greek word *abyssos* literally means “deep hole.”²⁰ In the New Testament, *abyssos* is used only in a metaphorical sense. One of the metaphorical meanings of *abyssos* is the place associated with the dead, the underworld.²¹ It is in this sense that the word “abyss” in verse 8 is to be understood. Therefore, if the scarlet beast comes up from the abyss, then at one time he went down into the abyss. Going down into the abyss would represent the scarlet beast receiving the deadly wound (i.e., its metaphorical death) and its subsequent loss of persecuting power over the inhabitants of the earth.

“go to destruction”

Despite the scarlet beast’s being resurrected and coming back to full power, it will appear on the scene but will then be destroyed. God will bring about its destruction with certainty. “But the beast was seized, and the false prophet who had performed on his behalf the miracles by which he deceived those who had received the

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Danker, 2.

²¹Ibid. Cf. Romans 10:7.

mark of the beast and those who had been worshipping his image [was seized] with this [beast]; the two, while [they] were alive, were thrown into the lake of fire which was burning with sulfur.” Revelation 19:20.

“those who dwell upon the earth, whose names have not been written in the book of life from [the] foundation of [the] world, will marvel when [they] see the beast”

This is a repetition of Revelation 13 where the whole earth marvels at the resurrected sea beast that had the deadly wound. “I saw one of his heads as if [it] had been slaughtered to death, but his wound of death was healed. And the whole earth marveled after the beast; and they worshipped the dragon who had given authority to the beast, and they worshipped the beast, saying, ‘Who [is] like the beast? Who is able to wage war against him?’” Revelation 13:3–4. “All those who dwell upon the earth will worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slaughtered from [the] foundation of [the] world.” Revelation 13:8.

Notice the parallel in the wording between Revelation 13:8 and 17:8. This confirms that the scarlet beast on which the prostitute—end-time Babylon—is sitting is the same religio-political power that persecuted the faithful followers of Christ for many centuries during the Middle Ages.²²

It is at this time that, after centuries of inactivity during which the Papacy did not persecute God’s people, this apostate religious power will revive to full power and cause the whole world to marvel and wonder in amazement at the Papacy.

“the beast which was, and is not, although he is”

Verse 8 begins with a description of the scarlet beast and ends with another description of the scarlet beast. The second description of the scarlet beast is identical to the first description except for the third attribute.²³ The concessive conjunction “although” indicates that admittedly the scarlet beast will ultimately be alive, but it is a fact that it used to be alive and is now dead. The phrase “although he is” is to be interpreted as future time because it is used in coordination with the immediate context of the earth dwellers when they see the scarlet beast in the future.²⁴

REVELATION 17:9–10

“The seven heads are seven mountains upon which the woman is sitting, and they are seven kings: five fell, and one is, the other has not yet come, but when he comes, it is necessary for him to remain for a short [time].”

²²Stefanovic, 514.

²³All three descriptions of the scarlet beast (two in verse 8, and one in verse 11) are identical for the first two attributes: “was,” and “is not.” Only the third attribute is different in all three descriptions: “is to come up from the abyss,” “although he is,” and “he is [the] eighth [king].” This indicates that the scarlet beast can be known solely by the name “the beast which was and is not,” which is actually confirmed in verse 11.

²⁴However, although this second description of the scarlet beast has all three time elements in it, it will not be used along with the other three formulas in verses 8, 10, and 11 because it does not have a fourth attribute like those three formulas do, as it will be shown below.

“The seven heads are seven mountains upon which the woman is sitting, and they are seven kings”

Now begins the interpretation of the seven heads of the scarlet beast. All that is needed to interpret the prophetic symbols in verses 9–10 are found in the book of Daniel, which is the key to understanding Revelation. A head represents a kingdom (Daniel 7:6). Here in Revelation 17, a head equals a mountain. A mountain represents a kingdom or nation (Daniel 2:35, 44; cf. Jeremiah 51:24–25). Here in Revelation 17, a mountain equals a king. A king represents a kingdom (Daniel 7:17, 23). Therefore, these two verses confirm the prophetic Old Testament equation: “head” = “mountain” = “king” → kingdom. The seven kings stand for seven successive world kingdoms which have appeared and will appear on earth.

Here the angel refers to the woman as sitting upon the seven “mountains,” which is the same as saying that the woman is sitting upon the seven “heads.” However, in verse 3 she is spoken of simply as sitting upon the “beast.” Therefore, sitting upon the seven heads is the same as sitting upon the beast. Accordingly, there is no sharp distinction between the scarlet beast and its seven heads.²⁵ Rather, there is a direct correlation between the scarlet beast and its seven heads. As a result, this direct correlation plays the key role in determining the identities of the scarlet beast and its seven heads. As stated earlier in verse 8, the past, present, and future phases of the scarlet beast are to be identified with the seven heads, thereby maintaining this direct correlation.

“five fell, and one is, the other has not yet come”

One very important thing that needs to be clarified, since this will also affect and is most important for verse 11, is the issue of grammatical gender. Certain languages have grammatical gender embedded in their nouns. For example, using the definite article, French has two genders: *le* (masculine) and *la* (feminine). Spanish has two genders: *el* (masculine) and *la* (feminine). German has three genders: *der* (masculine), *das* (neuter), and *die* (feminine). Now, Koine Greek, the Greek used in the New Testament, has three genders: *ho* (masculine), *hē* (feminine), and *to* (neuter).

With this as a foundation, it can now be determined what is spoken of in verse 10. Verse 10 literally reads, “The five fell, and the one is, the other” Here all three definite articles are masculine. “One” (Greek, *heis*) is masculine.²⁶ “Other” (Greek, *allos*) is masculine.²⁷ Therefore, all three parts contain masculine words.²⁸ “Head” (Greek, *kephalē*) is feminine. “Mountain” (Greek, *oros*) is neuter. “King” (Greek, *basileus*) is masculine. So far Revelation 17 talks about seven heads, seven mountains, and seven kings. What do “the five, the one, the other” refer to? With all the previous grammatical information put together, verse 10 means “five

²⁵Francis D. Nichol, ed., *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, rev. (Hagerstown: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1980), 7:855.

²⁶“One” is an adjective that has different forms depending on its gender: *heis* (masculine), *mia* (feminine), and *hen* (neuter).

²⁷“Other” is an adjective that has different forms depending on its gender: *allos* (masculine), *allē* (feminine), and *allo* (neuter).

²⁸The number “five” was omitted for discussion because its form never changes in any context. Therefore, in the present discussion it has no value in proving the point under consideration.

kings fell, and one king is, the other king has not yet come.” They are linked together because the masculine gender of the definite articles and adjectives matches the masculine gender of “king.”

“five fell, and one is, the other has not yet come, but when he comes”

It was stated earlier that verses 8, 10, and 11 contain certain formulas which are carefully crafted according to ordered time. The second formula in verse 10 contains the three time elements: “fell” (past), “is” (present), and “when he comes” (future). This tripartite formula indicates that the kings as a single unit pass through three phases during their entire existence—past, present, and future. This tripartite formula of the kings is directly correlated with the tripartite formula of the scarlet beast “which was, and is not, and is to come up from the abyss.” Earlier an assertion was made: the past, present, and future phases of the scarlet beast are to be identified with the seven heads. This can now be taken one step further: the past, present, and future phases of the scarlet beast are to be identified and chronologically aligned with the past, present, and future phases of the seven kings. Therefore, the past phase of the scarlet beast is correlated with the past phase of the first five kings, the present phase of the scarlet beast is correlated with the present phase of the sixth king, and the future phase of the scarlet beast is correlated with the future phase of the seventh king. This direct correlation will be demonstrated in an upcoming chart.

The king’s present state (one is) is in comparison with the state of the kings who came before it (five fell) and is in comparison with the state of the king who will come after it (when the other comes). Recall that the “present time” of Revelation 17 is the time of the end (Revelation 17:1, 3), which began in AD 1798 when the sea beast received its deadly wound. Therefore, the “present phase” occurs during the “present time.”

There is a variety of interpretations as to who these kings represent. Some say that they represent seven Roman Emperors of the first century AD. Others say that they represent seven end-time popes. Still others say that they represent seven administrative styles of Roman government. However, none of these interpretations fit the prophetic usage of “king” as a kingdom, which was firmly established in Daniel 7. Even among those who interpret “king” as a kingdom, there is a variety of interpretations. Some include the ancient nations of Egypt and Assyria in the past phases. Others include revolutionary France and the United States of America in the present and future phases. Although they are kingdoms or nations, Daniel 7 speaks nothing about them, so they should all be discarded as possible candidates. Again, all that is needed to identify the seven kings is found in Daniel 7, the key to the interpretation of Revelation.²⁹

“five fell”

The five kings who used to exist are the kingdoms which were world powers before AD 1798. They were (1) Babylon, (2) Medo-Persia, (3) Greece, (4) Rome, and (5) Papal Rome.

“one is”

The sixth king has existed since AD 1798 up to this day. Beginning in 1798, the kingdom was (6) Papal Rome, wounded.

²⁹Maxwell, 2:474.

“the other has not yet come, but when he comes”

The seventh king will come after and replace the sixth king. Still future, the kingdom will be (7) Papal Rome, healed.

“but when he comes, it is necessary for him to remain for a short [time]”

When it appears on the global scene in the future, the length of rule of the seventh king (Papal Rome, healed), in comparison with the previous six kings, will be short, for Christ will come quickly and bring an end to the seventh king’s existence (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:8).

There are only seven heads on the scarlet beast. This means that when the seventh king arrives, there will not be another earthly kingdom to replace it; the seventh king is the last power to appear on earth, and emphasis is placed on the shortness of this last power’s length of rule. Therefore, the seventh king will remain until the end of time.

REVELATION 17:11

“And the beast which was, and is not, even he is [the] eighth [king] and derives from the seven, and is going to destruction.”

“the beast which was, and is not”

The expressions “was” and “is not” were widely used in the ancient world as an epitaph to mean, respectively, “who lived” and “who no longer lives.”³⁰ This indicates that the scarlet beast was alive at one time and subsequently died.

“[the] eighth [king]”

Notice that the SPV supplies two words here: (1) “the,” and (2) “king.” The addition of the definite article “the” before “eighth” is a grammatical necessity.³¹ The addition of the noun “king” after “eighth” is a grammatical, not an interpretational, clarification. Earlier it was shown that grammatical gender played a role in determining “king,” and not “head” or “mountain,” as the seven subjects of verse 10 that go through three phases. Here in verse 11, “eighth” (Greek, *ogdoos*) is masculine.³² Therefore, the scarlet beast is not the eighth head or the eighth mountain, but is the eighth king. They are linked together because the masculine gender of “eighth” matches the masculine gender of “king.”

“the beast which was, and is not, even he is [the] eighth [king]”

This is the third formula which is carefully crafted according to ordered time and is almost identical to the scarlet beast’s first description. The third formula in verse 11 contains the three time elements: “was” (past),

³⁰David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 52c (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998), 940.

³¹See Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 248, 256–266.

³²“Eighth” is an adjective that has different forms depending on its gender: *ogdoos* (masculine), *ogdoē* (feminine), and *ogdoon* (neuter).

“is not” (present), and “he is the eighth king” (future). This tripartite formula indicates that the scarlet beast passes through three phases during its entire existence—past, present, and future. The scarlet beast’s present state (is not) is in comparison with what it used to be in the past (was) and is in comparison with what it will be in the future (the eighth king).

“even he is [the] eighth [king] and derives from the seven”

The scarlet beast, which was alive at one time and is now dead, is here called the eighth king, where “eighth” is an ordinal number. This ordinal number reconfirms that the eight kings are to be placed in an ordered sequence. Therefore, because the eighth king comes after the seventh king which itself is to come in the future, this indicates that the scarlet beast will also have some sort of existence in the future.

Now, the scarlet beast cannot have an existence as the eighth king until the first seven kings have appeared on the scene. This is because the scarlet beast is derived from the seven kings. In order to be derived from the seven kings, the seventh king must appear first, must have an existence first. In other words, while the sixth king currently exists and the seventh king does not exist yet, it cannot be said that the scarlet beast is derived from the seven kings. Therefore, the phrase “derives from the seven” reinforces the fact that the scarlet beast becomes the eighth king in the future. The scarlet beast, when it comes up from the abyss, is the demonic sum of all seven previous kings in character.³³

Consequently, both the seventh head and the scarlet beast are still to come in the future. The entirety of the scarlet beast is the eighth king, which is actually identical to the seventh king.³⁴ Recall that, throughout its entire existence, the scarlet beast rules through one of its seven heads during different periods of history, thereby indicating that there is a direct correlation between the scarlet beast and its seven heads. Therefore, when the seventh head (seventh king) appears on the scene, the scarlet beast (eighth king) is resurrected and becomes alive once again. “The slaying of one of the heads means the slaying of the beast.”³⁵ “When the beast’s head received a ‘mortal wound,’ the beast as a whole was critically injured. And when the wound is healed, the beast as a whole is healed.”³⁶

Once Papal Rome is healed (seventh king) by once again having the power to persecute the world, the entire scarlet beast (eighth king)—Papal Rome supported by the United States of America (the false prophet) in a reunion of church and state (Revelation 13:12a)—will realize its climactic self-actualization and will become the most powerful religio-political power in the world. Maxwell writes, “During the beast’s serious illness its

³³This is the same as the amalgamated sea beast of Revelation 13, which was the demonic sum of all four previous kings in character: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.

³⁴The eighth king does not need to be chronologically successive to the seventh king because the eighth king is not the eighth head, but is the entire scarlet beast. On the other hand, the first seven kings need to be chronologically successive because they are seven heads which are arranged into past, present, and future time. Moreover, “even” is used as an intensive adverb to emphasize the scarlet beast as being the eighth king not because it is chronologically successive to the seventh king, but because it will have a revived existence in the future despite its current dead state. As the exegesis proceeds, it will be shown that the eighth kingdom is the same as the seventh kingdom in identity (the healed Papacy) and in chronology (concurrent future existence).

³⁵George Eldon Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), 226.

³⁶Maxwell, 2:475.

lamb-horned rival occupies front center. The beast appears to have been upstaged permanently; but it hasn't been. In fact, the lamb-horned animal soon offers the beast its services in order to help it stage its comeback. The beast recovers and rises to its greatest power yet, as symbolized by its seventh head."³⁷

“is going to destruction”

The scarlet beast, after it comes up from the abyss, will be destroyed at the end of time.

THE SCARLET BEAST AND THE EIGHT KINGS

The information provided so far can now be tabulated. First, the three formulas of Revelation 17:8, 10–11 will be provided, but with one further modification. While previously the three formulas were spoken of as containing three different time phases (past, present, future), the future phase will now be split further into two parts due to the content provided in that phase. All four phases will be numbered from one to four. Verse 8 will be designated “A,” verse 10 will be designated “B,” and verse 11 will be designated “C.” These designations and numberings result in the following three charts:³⁸

Formula of the Scarlet Beast’s History in Four Phases

- A1) the beast which you saw was,
- A2) and is not,
- A3) and is to come up from the abyss
- A4) and to go to destruction. (Revelation 17:8)

Formula of the Seven Kings’ History in Four Phases

- B1) five fell,
- B2) and one is,
- B3) the other has not yet come, but when he comes
- B4) it is necessary for him to remain for a short [time]. (Revelation 17:10)

Formula of the Scarlet Beast’s History in Four Phases

- C1) the beast which was,
- C2) and is not,
- C3) even he is [the] eighth [king] and derives from the seven,
- C4) and is going to destruction. (Revelation 17:11)

Revelation 17:8 gives the history of the scarlet beast in four phases. Revelation 17:10 gives the same history in four phases, but this time with reference to the seven kings. Revelation 17:11 also gives the same history in

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸These three charts are based on Jacques B. Doukhan, *Secrets of Revelation: The Apocalypse through Hebrew Eyes* (Hagerstown: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2002), 161–162, with my own modifications.

four phases, but this time it combines the general theme of the scarlet beast (verse 8) with the particular theme of the seven kings (verse 10).³⁹

The next step is to align the parts into the same time phase. This means that all the “ones” are put into the past phase, all the “twos” are put into the present phase, all the “threes” are put into the first future phase, and all the “fours” are put into the second future phase. Next to each phase, the scripture verse will be provided to indicate that phase’s historical fulfillment. This alignment of parts into phases results in the following chart:⁴⁰

LINGUISTIC CORRELATION BETWEEN THE SCARLET BEAST AND THE EIGHT KINGS	
<p>Past Historical Phase</p> <p>A1) the beast was B1) five [kings] fell C1) the beast which was</p>	<p>➤ Revelation 13:1–2</p> <p>– the kingdoms of Daniel 7 (1) Babylon, (2) Medo-Persia, (3) Greece, (4) Rome, (5) Papal Rome</p>
<p>Present Historical Phase</p> <p>A2) is not B2) one [king] is C2) is not</p>	<p>➤ Revelation 13:3a</p> <p>– the deadly wound (6) Papal Rome, wounded</p>
<p>Future One Historical Phase</p> <p>A3) is to come up from the abyss B3) when the other [king] comes C3) he is the eighth [king]</p>	<p>➤ Revelation 13:3b</p> <p>– the deadly wound healed (7) Papal Rome, healed (8) Papal Rome-USA</p>
<p>Future Two Historical Phase</p> <p>A4) to go to destruction B4) he must remain for a short time C4) is going to destruction</p>	<p>➤ Revelation 13:3c–4; 19:19–20</p> <p>– Papal Rome-USA reign briefly and are then destroyed by Jesus Christ</p>

CHART SUMMARY

We are now living in the time of the end (AD 1798 and later). From our point of view, five kings have already fallen before this time and no longer exist: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and Papal Rome. Prior to the deadly wound which was inflicted in AD 1798, the Papacy was a persecuting power in a union of church and state (the scarlet beast was). This is the past historical phase.

Because we are living in the time of the end, we are currently living contemporaneously with the sixth king—Papal Rome wounded—during the scarlet beast’s “is not” phase in a separation of church and state. Paradoxical

³⁹Doukhan, 162.

⁴⁰The left half of this chart is based on Doukhan, 162–163, with my own modifications.

cally, the prophecy states that the Papacy currently exists (one king is), yet at the same time the Papacy is dead (the scarlet beast is not). The wounded Papacy is a religious organization that currently exists, but during this time it does not have the power to persecute the world and enforce its own laws upon it. This is the present historical phase.

The future one historical phase announces the future coming of the seventh king—Papal Rome healed—and the resurrection of the scarlet beast, the eighth king—Papal Rome-USA (the sea beast supported by the false prophet) in a reunion of church and state—from death. When the healed Papacy arrives, that means that the United States of America has declared its full allegiance to the Papacy and will act on its behalf. The healed Papacy during this revival now has the power to persecute the world and enforce its own laws upon it.

The future two historical phase announces that, after the Papacy is healed, two things must happen to it: (1) Papal Rome healed will only be allowed to exist for a short time, and (2) Papal Rome-USA will be destroyed at the second coming of Christ.

REVELATION 17:12

“And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have not yet received royal power, but are going to receive ruling authority as kings with the beast for one hour.”

“the ten horns which you saw are ten kings”

The ten kings are ten kingdoms (Daniel 7:17, 23–24). These ten horns of the scarlet beast are an allusion to the ten horns of the terrible beast of Daniel 7, the ten horns of the great red dragon of Revelation 12, and the ten horns of the sea beast of Revelation 13.

The question needs to be asked: Is the number ten in “ten kings” literal or metaphorical? Consider the following passages in which an angel utters a numeric interpretation of a prophetic symbol: “These great beasts which are four—four kings will arise out of the earth” (Daniel 7:17); “And the ten horns—from this kingdom ten kings will arise, . . . he will cause three kings to fall” (Daniel 7:24); “The ram which you saw with the two horns [is] the kings of Media and Persia” (Daniel 8:20); “And that which broke, and four arose in place of it, four kingdoms will arise” (Daniel 8:22); “The seven heads are seven mountains . . . and they are seven kings” (Revelation 17:10–11). In all these examples, none of the numbers are to be interpreted as metaphorical. The four kings of Daniel 7:17 are literally four kingdoms. The ten kings and the three kings of Daniel 7:24 are literally ten kingdoms and three kingdoms, respectively. The two horns of Daniel 8:20 are literally two kingdoms. The four kingdoms of Daniel 8:22 are literally four kingdoms. The seven mountains and the seven kings of Revelation 17:10–11 are both literally seven kingdoms. Therefore, there is every good reason to interpret the angel’s utterance of “ten kings” in Revelation 17:12 as literally ten kingdoms.

“who have not yet received royal power”

This is the present status at the present time—the time of the end which began in AD 1798—aligned with the scarlet beast during its “is not” phase and aligned with the sixth king during its “is” phase. Recall the descrip-

tion of the seventh king: “The other has not yet come.” The seventh king does not exist right now while the sixth king still exists, but it will exist in the future. Likewise the ten kings do not have royal power right now, but they will have royal power in the future. During the time of the separation of church and state of the Papacy, the ten kings are not reigning yet. Recall that the ten horns of the scarlet beast currently do not have royal crowns on them.

The ten kings which do not have royal power yet are parallel in status to the ten horns of the dragon of Revelation 12. During the main time period of the dragon—Imperial Rome during the time of Christ—the ten horns did not have royal crowns on them (rather the seven heads had royal crowns on them), because the ten kingdoms which sprung out of the Western Roman Empire did not exist yet. Likewise the ten kings in Revelation 17 do not have royal power yet because currently they do not exist.

“but are going to receive ruling authority as kings with the beast”

This is the future time, during the time of the scarlet beast when it comes up from the abyss and during the time of the seventh king when it finally appears on the scene. The ten kings will then have authority to rule over the whole world as kings together with Papal Rome-USA and will become harshly intolerant totalitarian entities.

In Daniel 7 the ten horns of the terrible beast were originally the ten barbarian kingdoms that sprung out of and replaced the Western Roman Empire in AD 476. In Revelation 13 the ten horns represented the nations of Europe during the Middle Ages. Here in Revelation 17, in the time of the end, the ten horns represent the “kings of the whole world” (Revelation 16:14; cf. 17:2, 18). In other words, the jurisdiction of the ten kings is worldwide.⁴¹ If the ten kings are literally ten kingdoms and their jurisdiction is worldwide, then the ten kings represent ten literal sovereign divisions of the whole world which are to appear in the future.⁴²

However, unlike the certainty of the identities of the scarlet beast and its seven heads due to their past history, as of this writing it is not possible to determine the identities of the ten kings because their royal rule is still to come in the future. Moreover, this exegesis of Revelation 17:12 will be proven or disproven when that time comes.

“but are going to receive ruling authority as kings . . . for one hour”

The “one hour” signifies a very short time for which the ten kings will reign together with the scarlet beast, just as the seventh king will remain only for a short time (Revelation 17:10). Because the ten kings rule with Papal Rome-USA (eighth king) for “one hour,” and Papal Rome healed (seventh king) remains only for a short time, then “one hour” = “a short time.”

⁴¹Likewise Roman Catholicism was once confined to Europe, but now in the time of the end it has spread throughout the whole world.

⁴²In this scenario, currently existing sovereign nations would be under each of the ten sovereign world divisions.

REVELATION 17 SUMMARY

Revelation 17 can now be summed up in the following chart:⁴³

THE EIGHT KINGS AND THE TEN HORNS	
<u>EIGHT KINGS</u>	<u>TEN HORNS</u>
Five have fallen	
1) BABYLON (Head)	No crowns yet
2) MEDO-PERSIA (Head)	No crowns yet
3) GREECE (Head)	No crowns yet
4) ROME (Head)	No crowns yet
5) PAPAL ROME (Head)	Crowns: European monarchies
One currently exists	
*6) PAPAL ROME, WOUNDED (Head)	No crowns again
One is still to come	
7) PAPAL ROME, HEALED (Head)	Royal power: World dictatorships
8) PAPAL ROME-USA (Scarlet Beast – Sum of all seven previous kings)	Royal power: World dictatorships
*The time of the vision in Revelation 17 is the time of the end, beginning in AD 1798 at the end of the 1260-year prophecy.	

⁴³This chart is based on Maxwell, 2:473, with my own modifications.