

**Welcome To The First Church Of The Great Whore
Church Without Jesus
Revelation 17:1 – 13**

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John has been faithful to what he told us Jesus asked him to do.

Revelation 1:10–11

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet, saying, "**Write in a book what you see**, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea." (NASB95)

He has not only reported what he has seen, but also what he has heard, felt, smelled and tasted. We have been provided, by John, a complete sensory experience. Jesus has picked the right person to provide His revelation to.

Revelation 1:1–3

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John, who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near." (NASB95)

Some of what John has reported to us has been downright weird. Now that we have arrived in chapter 17, fasten your seat belt and place your tray tables in the up position as we have arrived at the mother lode of weird.

Rather, my contention in this book is that if it's weird, it's important. Every passage plays a coherent role in the mosaic whole. (Heiser 2015, 20)

So let's dig in.

Back to Revelation 1:1

Again, about the Greek word used Revelation 1:1 that tells us “He sent and communicated it.” Communicated is the word ἐσήμανεν (esemanen) which comes from σημαίνω (semaino) – “to cause something to be both specific and clear—“to indicate clearly, to make clear.”” (Louw and Nida 1996, 405)

Jesus is not hiding anything from us, He is revealing to us through John what it is He wants us to know and He is doing so through very clear words, references, and signs.

Literally, “a mark, sign. To give a public sign or signal (Septuagint: Num. 10:9). In the NT to signify, make known, declare.” (Zodhiates 2000)

So let’s look at where we are going. There are two things referred to as Babylon in Revelation. There is religious Babylon, and there is civil Babylon.

Chapter 17 is about religious Babylon.

Revelation 17:1–6

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, “Come here, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality.” 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. The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality, and on her forehead a name was written, a mystery, “BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.” And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. When I saw her, I wondered greatly.” (NASB95)

So one of the angels who had one of the seven bowl judgements invites John to see a judgement, he would like to show John something.

Oh, and he provides some details too as we can see. So looking closer at the woman John sees “The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality, and on her forehead a name was written, a mystery, “BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.”” (Revelation 17:4–5, NASB95)

This imagery is not lost on the world either. If you look closely at one of the symbols of the European Union, they use Europa riding a beast, in this case, a bull. A woman riding a beast. And in the performance during halftime of Super Bowl 49, Katy Perry riding a beast.

Let’s unpack what the Lord is revealing to us here.

Revelation 17:1

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, “Come here, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters,” (NASB95)

We do not know which of the seven angels is transporting John to see this image, but it is one of the angels he just saw pour out bowl judgements at the conclusion of the Great Tribulation.

Something we need to remember is that at times in Revelation, we are not following along in linear time, just as an author will give you some information and then backtrack to provide fuller detail, the Lord is doing the same here in Revelation.

This is an example of one of those “flashbacks” that are used in television shows and novels, here it is the Lord using the technique.

He is going to have us back up to the moment right after the rapture of the church takes place. In Revelation, we saw that the rapture had already occurred by the time we get to Revelation 4:1. There we see that John has arrived in heaven, but after Jesus brought the church home.

We know that based on the Divine Council scene we see in chapter 4 that it is the church who is now making up the Divine Council.

Chapter 17 is not, as some would teach, Jerusalem in the 1st century. That is a view that many who are preterists would hold to. I do not hold to that view.

The following event, the rapture of the church, has taken place. This event signals the consolidation of the First Church of the Great Whore. This is not the beginning of that organizations as, from what we have seen earlier in scripture, it has been around awhile. The consolidation of power though is as a result of this event and one other event as well.

1 Thessalonians 4:13–18

“But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words.” (ESV)

1 Corinthians 15:50–53

“I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.” (ESV)

The church is gone, and with the church leaving, the Holy Spirit has left the room as well. What a great time to plant a thoroughly dead church that reflects what we want in a church rather than what God wants. See Genesis 11, 1 Kings 12, 2 Chronicles 11, Revelation 3.

Why do I say the First Church of the Great Whore, it has to do with terms used throughout scripture that when we understand them, we begin to see what this actually is.

In OT prophetic discourse the imagery of the prostitute is commonly used to denote religious apostasy. (Mounce 1997, 308)

The Holy Spirit is very specific about names, terms, place names, numbers, events, etc. used in the scriptures. Everything fits and everything matters.

What can this rival Woman be but the organized Antichurch, the pseudo church, the Bride made out of Satan, the universal body and congregation of false believers and false worshipers? As Christ has had a visible Church in all time, embodying the wisdom and spirit of heaven, and maintaining the confession of His truth and worship, so has the Devil had a corresponding following in all time, embodying the sensual and devilish wisdom and spirit, and maintaining the profession and teaching of Satan’s lies. (Seiss 1913, 112-113)

This “Church” will likely “build on the remnants of the professing Christian church that existed before the Rapture. Professing Christians who will not be raptured will remain to form the base of this “church.” Tribulation saints, of course, will oppose this false church.” (Ryrie 1996, 139)

Unlike the true church, which has a husband, the Lamb of God (Revelation 21:9), this woman is a prostitute and has no husband.

Throughout the scriptures, harlotry is used as a type of false religion to include entire nations referred to as harlots. It means that you say you are a follower of YAHWEH yet not really following Him. Remember Hosea.

Hosea 1:1–2

“This is the word of the LORD which was revealed to Hosea son of Beeri during the time when Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah ruled Judah, and during the time when Jeroboam son of Joash ruled Israel. When the LORD first spoke through Hosea, he said to him, “Go marry a prostitute who will bear illegitimate children conceived through prostitution, because the nation continually commits spiritual prostitution by turning away from the LORD.” (NET)

Isaiah 1:21–23

“How tragic that the once-faithful city has become a prostitute! She was once a center of justice, fairness resided in her, but now only murderers. Your silver has become scum, your beer is diluted with water. Your officials are rebels, they associate with thieves. All of them love bribery, and look for payoffs. They do not take up the cause of the orphan, or defend the rights of the widow.” (NET)

Jeremiah 2:20

“For long ago I broke your yoke and burst your bonds; but you said, ‘I will not serve.’ Yes, on every high hill and under every green tree you bowed down like a whore.” (ESV)

Ezekiel 16:15

“But you trusted in your beauty. You did what whores do, as a result of your fame. You passed out your sexual favors to anyone who passed by, giving yourself to anyone.” (ISV)

This “church” is being designed by all those who have been left behind. Other non-Christian religions who are trying to piece together where everyone went to, are there as well. There will be an answer and it will make the Laodiceans in the crowd happy.

Revelation 3:15–17

“I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. Because you say, ‘I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,’ and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,” (NASB95)

The three churches Jesus warned of being left behind if they did not repent, the dead Orthodox and compromised church of Thyatira, the church of the living dead in Sardis and the apostate church of Laodicea, are now left behind, some of their members are gone, but not all. And now look out for the lie.

The great prostitute in Revelation 17 symbolizes the false religious system of Babylon—probably some form of apostate and paganized Christendom that embraces all those who will be “left behind” following the rapture (see Romans 5:9; 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; 5:9; Revelation 3:10). (Rhodes 2019, Kindle Location 1276)

The picture of the woman as utterly evil signifies spiritual adultery, portraying those who outwardly and religiously seem to be joined to the true God but who are untrue to this relationship. The symbolism of spiritual adultery is not ordinarily used of heathen nations who know not God, but always of people who outwardly carry the name of God while actually worshiping and serving other gods. (Walvoord 2008, 244)

2 Thessalonians 2:1–12

“Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter

seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore God sends them **a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false**, in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (ESV)

The Greek is a bit more specific about the translated term “what is false.” The Greek, when translated, reads: “And then shall the Lawless One be disclosed [in his true identity], whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth and render inoperative by the sudden appearance of His personal presence, the coming and presence of whom [the man of lawlessness] is according to the operation of Satan in the sphere of miracles demonstrating power and attesting miracles and miracles of a startling, imposing, amazement-wakening character which deceive, and whose coming and presence is in the sphere of every kind of wicked deception geared to [the gullibility of] those who are perishing, [this gullibility being] caused by the fact that they did not accept the love for the truth to the end that they might be saved. And because of this God sends them a deluding influence resulting in their believing the lie, in order that they all might be judged who did not believe the truth but took delight in wickedness.” (Wuest 1961, 2 Thess 2:8-12)

Part of this religious commitment to “the lie” will be as the result of the worlds religious leaders gathering to determine what happened when millions disappeared. How ready are some for this today?

From Jesuit astronomers.

GUY: So, you’re the priest here—you’re the one who does some baptizing now and then. Would you baptize an extraterrestrial?

PAUL: Ha! This will be fun! But first, some disclaimers. When I’m representing and acting on behalf of the Catholic Church, in my role as a priest, it’s not up to me to decide who can or cannot be baptized. It’s up to the Church to decide that. So my first and simplest answer to your question would be this: I’ll be ready and willing to baptize an extraterrestrial if and when the Church decides it’s OK to do so. (Consolmagno and Mueller 2014, 252)

This talk brought to the public arena the evidence that has been ignored by most of the UFO community; evidence that the fallen angels that disguise themselves as extraterrestrial entities are active in our present age to bring about what the Bible calls the “Great Delusion” that would come at the end of the age. (Ruffino and Jordan 2010, Kindle Locations 166-168)

The UFOs do not seem to exist as tangible, manufactured objects. They do not conform to the accepted natural laws of our environment. They seem to be nothing more than transmogrifications tailoring themselves to our abilities to understand. The thousands of contacts with the entities indicate that they are liars and put-on artists. The UFO manifestations seem to be, by and large, merely minor variations of the age-old demonological phenomenon. (Keel 2013, 326)

We feel plain and simple that alien abduction is the deceptive action of malevolent angels and demons that are out to deceive mankind at the close of man’s reign on Earth. The message, the mission, and the actions of these beings prove very well to our satisfaction that this is true. (Ruffino and Jordan 2010, Kindle Locations 4907 - 4909)

Will the lie involve disclosure that we have been visited by aliens (demons)? Possibly. The lie will be, at the very least, a cogent explanation as to what took place and why those who were left behind, were left behind.

Aliens make predictions of an imminent period of global chaos and destruction. They say that a certain number of humans...will be “rescued” from the planet in order to continue the species, either on another planet or back on Earth after the destruction is over. Many abductees report they don’t believe their alien captors and foresee instead a much more sinister use of the “rescued” humans. (Ruffino and Jordan 2010, Kindle Locations 577-580)

So we can expect to see an amalgamation of world religions under one possible umbrella. We already know, due to the language used in the 5th Seal, that there is persecution and death taking place. That it is ritual in nature and involves beheading (Revelation 20:4).

It is obvious that Islam will play a rather sizeable role in this “church.” This is called Chrislam. Chrislam, is an attempt to merge Christianity with Islam. While it began in Nigeria in the 1980s, Chrislamic ideas have spread throughout much of the world. The essential concept of Chrislam is that Christianity and Islam are compatible, that one can be a Christian and a Muslim at the same time. Chrislam is not an actual religion of its own, but a blurring of the differences and distinctions between Christianity and Islam.

From the News

The pope and the grand imam of al-Azhar have signed a historic declaration of fraternity, calling for peace between nations, religions and races, in front of a global audience of religious leaders from Christianity, Islam, Judaism and other faiths.

Pope Francis, the leader of the world’s Catholics, and Sheikh Ahmed al-Tayeb, the head of Sunni Islam’s most prestigious seat of learning, arrived at the ceremony in Abu Dhabi hand-in-hand in a symbol of interfaith brotherhood.

The document pledges that al-Azhar and the Vatican will work together to fight extremism. Claiming to be in the name of “all victims of wars, persecution and injustice”, it warns against a “third world war being fought piecemeal”. (Sherwood 2019)

As you can tell, the groundwork is already taking place

There are other scenarios that exist, one which involves Jews as taking part in the persecution, especially after the Psalm 83 war.

Again, recall the colors being worn by the Great Whore, regal colors of purple and scarlet. Where have I seen those colors connected with a religious establishment?

Revelation 17:1–2

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, “Come here, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality.” (NASB95)

We see that the Great Harlot is the resultant false religion that arises immediately after the rapture of the church. Because the rapture is a worldwide event, this” church” is worldwide as well. “Sits on many waters” is a reference to many different peoples throughout the world, we know that from verse 15.

Revelation 17:15

And he said to me, “The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.” (NASB95)

After the rapture, prior to the beginning of the Tribulation, a religious gathering takes place and it is there that “the lie” is either concocted, accepted or furthered religiously. This is not the true church but is apostate false religion. As we have seen, agreements already exist between two major religions to deal with extremism. Both of those religions have ways of dealing with extremism and both have massive amounts of blood on their hands already.

As a result of all the missing, coupled with the social and civil upheavals taking place as well, people turn to God. They are looking for an answer from something higher than them. Many come to Christ as a result of the rapture, but others will look for solutions elsewhere, religious in nature, but not necessarily in the creator of the universe.

There is a group of the fallen ones who have been spreading lies for centuries and now that they clearly see the end game has begun, they will loosely merge themselves to enable a world take over. These are the same as those who have demanded worship using different names over the centuries.

Whatever it is that this group produces, is used by the governments of the world to help calm down those who have been left behind. This new/old religious merger will hold power over billions as a result of their ability to craft an answer. Governments worldwide listen to and follow the edicts of this organization.

The world is in utter turmoil post rapture. Millions are missing, economies have collapsed. Institutions have disappeared as a result but yet some of them have grown stronger by virtue of the number of those within the organizations who are still here, post rapture.

Again, those churches which were warned by Jesus that they may have some who are left behind unless they repented and turned to Him.

Many people like to identify this great harlot with the Roman Catholic Church, but false religion is not limited to any one church. (Guzik 2013, Re 17:1-2)

This resultant religious organization, the First Church of the Great Whore, is not the Roman Catholic Church, or the Greek Orthodox Church, or Buddhism, or Islam or any other world religion. It is something new because of the unique set of circumstances the world has found itself in, post rapture.

False religion is always the worst enemy of true religion, and the moral wickedness involved in the union of the church with the world imposes a stupefying drunkenness as far as spiritual things are concerned. The hardest to win to Christ and the most difficult to instruct in spiritual truth are those who have previously embraced false religion with its outward show of a worship of God. (Walvoord 2008, 244)

In 17:2, the “kings of the earth” are the rulers over these nations. The indictment that they “committed adultery” (= idolatry) with the great prostitute is a key phrase in 18:3, 9; and the idea of one nation committing adultery with other nations is frequent in the Old Testament (Isa 23:17; Nah 3:4). (Osborne 2016, 278-279)

All the unredeemed will be caught up in the final false religion; they will give their hearts and souls to the abominable Babylonian harlot. The angel is not describing people who are physically drunk with literal wine committing sexual immorality with an actual prostitute (though that may be happening). Instead, he is talking about those who are intoxicated with Antichrist’s false world religion. (MacArthur 2007, 263)

This image of apostasy is not just limited to the rulers of the earth, we see a now familiar term show up yet again. “Those who dwell on the earth.” We know that term is representative of those who have not and will not give their life to Christ, this term is representative of the lost world, those who truly have nothing after this world is over, thus they are earth dwellers.

For us, this is not our home.

2 Corinthians 5:6–8

“Therefore we are always full of courage, and we know that as long as we are alive here on earth we are absent from the Lord—for we live by faith, not by sight. Thus we are full of courage and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.” (NET)

Wherever the Lord is, that is our real home. We are no longer citizens of this planet if we are in Christ.

Hebrews 13:12–14

“Therefore, to sanctify the people by his own blood, Jesus also suffered outside the camp. We must go out to him, then, outside the camp, bearing the abuse he experienced. For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come.” (NET)

Revelation 17:3–6

“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.** The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality, and on her forehead a name was written, a mystery, “BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.” And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. When I saw her, I wondered greatly.” (NASB95)

After being given the invitation and an advance description of what he would see if he goes with the angel, John goes and is carried away in the Spirit. This is the same term as used earlier in the book in chapter 1. The angel takes him to a wilderness. We are not told which one or anywhere specific. Now John can clearly see, nothing is blocking his vision of what he has been told he would see. He describes what he sees in detail. One of the things he sees he has seen before, now he adds color to the description. The scarlet beast he sees is the same beast he saw back in Revelation 13:1.

Revelation 13:1

“And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore. Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names.” (NASB95)

Now we know the color of the beast out of the sea, scarlet. The woman is riding this beast.

Revelation 17:3–5

“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. The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality, and on her forehead a name was written, a mystery, “BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.”” (NASB95)

We have already discussed this beast earlier. There is a relationship with the beast, the false religion has added, as we discussed, cohesion back to a confused world.

From shortly after the rapture up to the middle of the Tribulation, this false religious system has been all the rage and it has been actively, systematically and ritually eliminating those who are not followers of this false religion.

Revelation 6:9–11

“When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they

were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also.” (NASB95)

But all good things come to an end and this false religious system will tumble when the Beast from the Sea has no need for it anymore as he will be personally enabled by the dragon.

Revelation 14:8

And another angel, a second one, followed, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality.” (NASB95)

Immediately after that pronouncement was the pronouncement about those who will worship the beast, his image and take his mark.

This beast is scarlet.

Isaiah 1:18

“Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.” (ESV)

Some will say the seven heads = seven consecutive world empires, or is it the seven nations at the end with three controlled by the beast? Thus the ten horns. We have to look to Revelation 17:10 for the answer.

Names of blasphemy are on the body this time unlike in 13:1 when they were on each head. The ten horns are the ten nations that make up the Beast’s Kingdom. The angel explained some of this to John.

Revelation 17:6

“And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. When I saw her, I wondered greatly.” (NASB95)

The angel responds to John’s facial expressions when he sees this woman on the beast and explains some of it to him.

The word used for “wondered greatly” is the Greek word θαυμάζω (thaumazo). To be extraordinarily impressed or disturbed by something. Wonder, marvel, be astonished (the context determines whether in a good or bad sense.) (Arndt, Danker and Bauer 2000, 444)

Nothing is said by John or by the angel. John sees and takes in the image of the woman on the beast, and his face betrays what is going on in his mind so as a result, the angel asks John why he disturbed by this and then begins to provide some explanation.

There is a mystery here, but only one mystery, the woman and the beast are heavily linked.

This woman, this picture of the apostate church, being drunk with the blood of the saints shows us the source of all the martyrs who are under the altar at the 5th seal.

The history of the church has demonstrated that apostate Christendom is unsparing in its persecution of those who attempt to maintain a true faith in Jesus Christ. What has been true in the past will be brought to its ultimate in this future time when the martyrs will be beyond number from every kindred, tongue, and nation. The blood shed by the apostate church is exceeded only by that of the martyrs who refuse to worship the beast in the great tribulation. (Walvoord 2008, 248-249)

Revelation 17:7–13

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. 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. Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits, 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. The beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction. 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. These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast.” (NASB95)

Got it?

Clearly, there also appears to have been a meeting between the Beast and the Dragon.

Revelation 17:8 “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.” (NASB95)

While in his between life and death state, the Beast has an NDE except he does not go into the light, instead, he is offered the same deal from the dragon that Jesus was offered, and unlike Jesus, he says yes.

The designation of the beast as the one who “was and is not, and is about to ascend out of the abyss” ties him to the beast with the death-wound who was healed in 13:3, 12, 14. (Thomas 1995, 292)

So, it is clear, thanks to angelic feedback, that this is the same person as the Beast from the sea and is the same person who has the deadly wound and then recovers resulting in worship shifting from this false religion over directly to him.

The angel also explains a bit about the seven heads in verse 10 and tells us they are actual kingdoms here on the earth. The explanation seems to also let us know more about the power behind the throne which we discovered when we took a look at the unseen realm and learned that as a result of the rebellion in Genesis 11, when God subdivide the nations into 70 language groups, He also assigned divine beings to oversee each of those nations.

Those divine beings though began to demand worship themselves from the people they were supposed to be shepherding resulting in the condemnation from God in Psalm 82.

Seven Heads

When John was writing this, the Kingdom list looked like this:

- Egypt
- Assyria
- Babylon
- Medo-Persia
- Greece
- Rome

The seven heads are seven mountains? More to come on this.

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