

Revelation 17 – The Prophetic Portrait of the Church of Rome



This is the continuation of the series, [Antichrist And His Ten Kingdoms](#) – By Albert Close.

Revelation 17:1 And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:

2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:

5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

THE DIVINE INTERPRETATION.

7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

8 The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

9 And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.

10 And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

11 And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

12 And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

15 And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

16 And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

17 For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

18 And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

In this chapter we have the Great Whore; in Rev. 21:9 we have The Bride of Christ, i.e, His True Church (Eph. 5:23, 25, 27).

The pair of women symbolize a pair of churches— the Church of Christ and her great arch-enemy, the Church of Rome.

As to Babylon, John adds, “When I saw her, I wondered with great wonder. (R.V.) And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman.” “The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth ; the waters are peoples, and multitudes and nations, and tongues. And the woman which thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth.” (Rev. 17:7, 9, 15, 18.)

“These prophecies present two broadly contrasted WOMEN identified with two broadly contrasted CITIES, one reality being in each case doubly represented as a WOMAN and as a CITY. The Harlot and Babylon are one. The Bride and the Heavenly Jerusalem are one.”

“It is impossible to find in Scripture a contrast more marked, and the conclusion is irresistible that whatever the one may represent the other must prefigure its *Opposite*. They are not two disconnected visions but a pair—a pair associated, not by likeness, but by contrast.” (Guinness’ *Approaching End of the Age*, pp. 141–145.)

Let us examine this 17th chapter in proof of the foregoing conclusion.

WHAT IS SPIRITUAL WHOREDOME?

Revelation 17:1 And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:

Spiritual whoredom in scripture is idolatry. For example, in Ezekiel 16:17, when Jerusalem had fallen into the sin of idolatry, the Lord through the prophet said: “Thou hast taken thy fair jewels of My gold and of My silver which I had given thee, and madest to thyself images of men and didst commit whoredom with them.” See also Jer. 3:6–9.

The myriads of images before which Roman Catholics bow down, the Mass, the worship of the Host (Eucharist), the worship of, and prayers to saints, &c., in the Church of Rome all stamp the Church of Rome as the greatest of idolatrous systems.

ALL RANKS AND CLASSES DECEIVED.

Revelation 17:2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

The "Kings of the earth" in this verse refer specially to the Kings of the Roman earth; the earth which St. John saw in his vision i.e. the sphere of the fourth beast. There are limitations here which are implied but not expressed. When we read that Augustus Cesar at the birth of Christ issued a decree that "all the world should be taxed" we do not interpret it literally as the world we know today, but as the then Roman world. The decree, although it employed the expression "All the world," did not apply to China, India, or other parts of the outlying world.

All the Kings of Western Europe became Roman Catholics and owned submission to the Popes of Rome from the fall of the Roman Empire to the Reformation. Britain in 1531 was the first kingdom to throw off the Pope's temporal yoke. All the other European kingdoms followed suit during the succeeding centuries. In 1870 Italy put an end to the last vestige of temporal power, when Victor Immanuel dethroned the Pope and was himself proclaimed King of Italy.

Instead of leading the nations of the earth to the Water of Life, the Church of Rome has made them drunk with the wine of idolatry and superstition. The inhabitants or masses of the people of the Roman earth, i.e., Western Europe, were all blighted and "made drunk" with Romish superstition during the Dark Ages, many are so still. Contrast the social, moral and intellectual condition today, of Papal Italy, Austria, Spain, or Portugal with that of Protestant Britain, Holland, Norway, Sweden or Denmark. Again, contrast the condition of Papal Ireland with that of Protestant Ireland, or Papal South America with Protestant North America. The Papal countries appear to be blighted and cursed, whilst on the other hand the Protestant are progressive, philanthropic, enlightened and blessed. Those nations which embraced the Reformation movement in the sixteenth century, have steadily advanced ever since, politically, morally, socially and intellectually, whilst those nations which still clung to the Papacy have as steadily retrograded. A striking proof of the blighting influence of Romanism is found in the fact that Roman Catholic Irishmen when they emigrate to America, or to the Colonies, and break away from Rome, speedily come to the front in every walk of life.

Germany since Eichhorn's day in A.D. 1791 has as a nation been drifting into rationalism and atheism. She abandoned Luther and the gospel and the cataclysm of 1914-18 was the result. Britain and America on the other hand are more noble than ever and hold their own with the best and keenest minds in their adopted lands.

THE ECCLESIASTICAL AND TEMPORAL POWER OF THE POPES FORETOLD UNDER THE DOUBLE SYMBOL OF A WOMAN AND A BEAST.

Revelation 17:3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

Political powers always have been and continue even in our own days to be represented under the symbols of beasts or birds, viz., Britain as a lion, Russia a bear, America an eagle, etc. In this verse we have Papal Rome prefigured as both a temporal and ecclesiastical power, and such she was till 1870 when the temporal power fell. The "Beast" symbolizes the temporal, and the "woman" the ecclesiastical power—a double symbol. Scarlet is the official color of the Pope as temporal monarch. In St. Paul's Church, Rome, 109 Popes are pictured in scarlet robes.

THE TEN PAPAL KINGDOMS OF EUROPE.

When the Roman Empire fell in A.D. 476 ten Western European kingdoms rose out of the ruins simultaneously with the Popes, and for centuries owned submission to the old seat of power with the Pope on the throne as King of kings.

The historian Machiavelli, who had no interest in prophecy, as a historical record, gives the following list of the nations which occupied the territory of the Western Empire, i.e., the body of the fourth beast from which the ten horns projected in the vision. See also Dan. 7:19,20.

A.D. 476. The Lombards, Franks, Burgundians, Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Vandals, Heruli, Sueves, Huns, and Saxons – Ten.

These have changed their names again and again, but all down the ages since they have averaged ten in number, and to-day number exactly ten.

THE TEN KINGDOMS TODAY.

A.D. 1911. Italy, Austria, Switzerland, France, Germany, Britain, Holland, Belgium, Spain, and Portugal. Ten and no more, ten and no less. The Northern European kingdoms are not included, as they lie outside the bounds of the Roman Empire. Neither are the Eastern European kingdoms, as they belong to the bodies of the first, second, and third beasts, or in other words, to the realms of the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, and Grecian empires, foretold in Dan. vii. The Roman Empire had its own territory, which had not belonged to any of the preceding empires, i.e., **its own body as a beast**. It, however, exercised dominion over the territories of the other beasts or empires. "*They had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged.*" See Dan. 7:12.

Some Protestants have by some strange freak of mind laid hold of the interpretation invented after the Reformation by the Jesuit Ribera for the purpose of turning the edge of this truth from the Church of Rome. They, like him, are looking for a future literal Antichrist, and a future rise of ten kingdoms out of the realms of the whole Roman Empire. They overlook the

previously mentioned fact, that although the Roman Empire exercised dominion over the bodies or territories of the three preceding empires, or beasts, it had, nevertheless, *its own body as a beast*, and that it was from the body or head of this fourth beast only that the ten horns projected i.e., Western Europe. See Dan. 7:19, 20. Like all Jesuit interpretations, it has a clever *semblance* of truth, which often deceives the hurried or superficial reader.

After the Settlement of Europe at the Peace Conference of 1919 A.D., the number of kingdoms may for a few years vary in number as they did between Waterloo in 1815 and the Franco-Prussian War in A.D. 1870-71. They numbered thirteen then.

(Continued in [The Character of Antichrist and Papal Persecution of the Saints](#))

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