

## CHAPTER 17

***"But the angel said to me, 'Why did you marvel? 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 will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is'" (17:7,8).***

I have already observed that it is in the *seventeenth*, not in the *thirteenth* chapter of the Revelation, that we find the most early history of Antichrist. He is there seen as a beast, "with seven heads and ten horns;" *i.e.* he is the virtual possessor of all the power of the Roman earth; but neither his heads nor his horns are crowned--for the crowns are on the Dragon then (chap. xii.), and Antichrist is seen in the somewhat humble place of the sustainer of the harlot; in other words, when he first appears he is virtually her servant, and, subordinately to her, holds the authority of those *systems* by which the kingdoms are regulated during the time that the political and moral *system* of Babylon prevails. He sustains this system for a season, and therefore the woman is seen riding upon his strength. How long he remains as the pillar of this system which he afterwards destroys, I do not know to be anywhere revealed. But it is doubtless during this period that he first becomes known among men. The ten kings would not concur to give their glory to a stranger. His intellect, his taste, his leopard grace, and his fitness for the majesty of power, will have been sufficiently proved before they give him their crowns, and before the Dragon resigns to him his throne and great authority.<sup>1</sup>

Thus we see that in chapter 17 we go back in time. It may help to remember the observation by Biss cited in the Introduction<sup>2</sup> that often, as with the writings of the Old Testament, we are given the final outcome first in a summary statement and then the details which lead up to it afterward. We are now before the pouring out of the bowls of wrath described in chapter 16, and it is very likely we are at the beginning of the tribulation period itself. Verses 1 and 2 speak of "the great harlot" with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication. *"Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, 'Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters'."*

After this we read, in verse 3, that the angel now carries John to another place--a wilderness, and another time--one long past: *"And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. . . . And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."*<sup>3</sup> The phrase "abominations of the earth" would seem to imply she is the mother of *all* the abominations of the earth, that is, from the earliest days of mankind.

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1 B. W. Newton, *Thoughts on the Apocalypse*, pg. 189.

2 From appendix G, pg. 101, at the end of Tregelles' book, *"The Hope of Christ's Second Coming."* These appendices were written by Cecil Yates Biss (who prepared the second edition of the book for printing).

3 According to Walvoord, "the word *mystery* is a descriptive reference to the title, not a part of the title itself." Johnson (*Revelation*, pg. 556) agrees, writing, "But does the word belong to the name 'MYSTERY BABYLON' itself, or is it a prefix before the actual name -- viz., "She has a name written on her forehead, which is a mystery, 'Babylon . . .'? Scholars disagree, but the latter explanation fits better with John's use of *mysterion* as a word denoting a divine mystery or allegory that is now revealed."

John records that this "mother of harlots" was drunk with the blood of the saints. Do the Old Testament scriptures provide any light?

Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before Yahweh. . . . And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar [Babylonia]. . . . And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name<sup>4</sup> for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth." But Yahweh came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. . . . So Yahweh scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. Therefore its name is called Babel. . . ."<sup>5</sup>

The Genesis records tells us that Nimrod became a powerful tyrant, subjugating and enslaving men into his service. It was this aspect of his personality that is being referred to when he is called a mighty hunter; he was a "hunter of men." Seiss writes that Nimrod was the organizer of an arbitrary imperialism over and against the patriarchal order and the divine institutes. A brazen offender, who did not hesitate to withstand God to his very face, he and his followers built the great tower of which we just read. And he also states that, according to extrabiblical records that have been preserved, Nimrod's wife, Semiramis, was a high priestess of the so-called Babylonian mysteries, which consisted of secret religious rites developed as a part of the worship of idols in Babylon. She gave birth to a son, Tammuz, whom she claimed was conceived miraculously and who, according to legend, was killed and brought back to life. There seems no doubt that here in Genesis chapter 11 we have the beginning of a new religion--an idolatrous one--which was to contend with the divine worship of the patriarchs. This religion was not the gradual growth of unenlightened thinking but was conceived in intentional rebellion against Yahweh.

Yahweh punished man for this great sin. He confused their language and scattered them over the earth. But the seeds of this idolatrous religion were dispersed with them to take root in every new settlement. Who was the ensign of all the Assyrian princes? *Semiramis*, the Dove Goddess.<sup>6</sup> And in Ezekiel 8:14 we read of Israelite women weeping for Tammuz, the son of this goddess, in the very Temple of Yahweh itself.<sup>7</sup>

John records in verse 3 that the harlot he saw was sitting on a beast which had seven heads and ten horns. According to Walvoord, "The fact that the woman is riding the beast and is not the beast itself signifies that she represents ecclesiastical power as distinct from the beast which is

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4 According to Seiss, "a *Sem*, token, sign, banner, ensign, or mark of confederation, fellowship and organized unity as an undivided people."

5 Gen. 10:8-10; 11:4-9.

6 Seiss, *Lectures*, vol. III, pg. 117.

7 The magnitude of this sin is brought out by Charles Feinberg in his commentary on Ezekiel (pp. 51-52): "The worship of Tammuz came from Babylon through the Phoenicians (Canaanites) and then the Greeks. Tammuz, mentioned nowhere else in the Scriptures, was the Babylonian Dumuzi, beloved of Ishtar, and is to be identified with the Greek Adonis. He was the god of spring vegetation, who died and was revived after the scorching summer heat. Women joined Ishtar in mourning a dead lover in the intense drought during our months of June and July, so that vegetation might be assured. . . .With the worship of this god in ancient times were connected the basest immoralities. With the greatest abandon women gave themselves up to the most shameful practices. Idolatry and immorality are inseparable twins throughout the history of the world."

the political power."<sup>8</sup> Archer states: "She seems to represent . . . the secularized religious establishment, closely linked with the government (and yet sufficiently distinct from the government to be capable of rejection and destruction by the government and citizenry of Antichrist after they feel her to be no longer useful)."<sup>9</sup>

Accepting this as a valid conclusion, we will leave the ecclesiastical aspect for now and concentrate on the political--the seven heads and ten horns. What or who do they represent? Starting with the seven heads, we read: "*The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. There are also seven kings.<sup>10</sup> Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come*" (17:9,10).

Most commentators agree that the seven heads represent seven empires. Zahn states:

"The heads are consecutive phases of the greatness of the world kingdom at enmity with God through all changes of history . . . the seven heads cannot be individual rulers of one and the same kingdom, but only kingdoms which follow each other, together with their respective kings."<sup>11</sup>

What are these seven kingdoms or empires? Daniel, during the reign of Belshazzar, had a vision of four beasts which represented four empires. They were Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece,<sup>12</sup> and Rome, the first reaching back only as far as the period in which Daniel was living. According to Zahn, "since the time of Daniel the idea of the kingdoms had become inseparably blended with that of their founders or representatives."<sup>13</sup> These four empires of Daniel's vision must certainly be included in the seven empires of Revelation. Here in Revelation, however, the empires must of necessity reach back farther than Babylon, for as we noted above, the seven heads are also seven kings of which five have fallen and "one is." This "one is" can be no other than Rome, the empire in which John was living. Therefore, five empires have already fallen. Preceding Rome there were but five great ones: Greece, Persia, Babylon, Assyria, and Egypt. After Rome (the sixth empire), another kingdom will follow (the seventh), but it will not reign long. Upon this follows the eighth--that of the antichrist--which is a revival of one of the earlier kingdoms. But which earlier kingdom? We will come back to this point.

Looking at the seven mountains (hills), Seiss notes that if the seven kings and their kingdoms go back to the time of Egypt's ascendancy, so must the seven hills: "The seven imperial mountains on which she rides must therefore fill up the whole interval; or there was a time, and the most of her history, when she did not ride at all, which is not the fact."<sup>14</sup> Walvoord agrees with him that the seven mountains refer to successive imperial governments. Since the woman has been "riding" since the time of Egypt's greatness, then her idolatrous religion must go back to that time also. The origin of her idolatry was very likely the apostate and idolatrous religion of

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8 Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, pg. 245.

9 Archer, unpublished class notes.

10 Walvoord points out that in the Greek there is no word for "there" as given in the KJV. Translated literally the phrase is "and are seven kings." The NIV translation is "They are also seven kings." *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, pg. 251.

11 Zahn, *Introduction*, vol. III, pg. 441.

12 An excerpt from T. R. Birks, *The Two Later Visions of Daniel*, pp. 22-26, about Alexander the Great will be found at the end of this chapter. The reader should find them most interesting.

13 *Ibid.*, vol. III, pg. 441.

14 Seiss, *Lectures*, vol. III, pg. 128.

Nimrod, which had spread with the people to new localities when Yahweh confused their language. Kelly and Alexander McCaul however, argue that the seven hills do indeed represent Rome, and we will offer their evidence for this view shortly.

In regards to the beast, it is clearly declared three times in verses 8-11 that the beast does not exist in the present; and twice it is declared that it will appear in the future. The pertinent phrases follow:

*"The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend . . ."* (vs. 8).

*"And those . . . will marvel . . . when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is"* (vs. 8).

*"The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth . . ."* (vs. 11).

Is there an allusion here to 13:3? *"And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast."* Walvoord states that this wounding of one of the heads is a reference to the Roman Empire: *"Though the wound by the sword apparently refers to the decline of the historic Roman Empire and its revival is indicated by the expression 'did live,' the man who serves at the head of the empire is the symbol of this miraculous restoration."*<sup>15</sup> Ladd writes: *"The fact that both one of the heads and the beast himself received the mortal wound suggests that the beast is in some way to be identified with his ten heads."*<sup>16</sup> Seiss disagrees and says that *"this Beast is a man who once was living, who was fatally wounded . . . and who . . . returns again to take the lead in the activities and administrations upon earth."*<sup>17</sup> Archer agrees with Seiss: *"His rise to power in the Roman Confederacy is marked by one serious conflict in which he was gravely wounded (an assassination attempt?) apparently unto death."*<sup>18</sup> Milligan's view coincides:

Still further we seem entitled to infer that when this beast appears he shall have the marks of his death upon him. *They that dwell on the earth shall marvel when they behold the beast, how that he was, and is not, and shall be present.* The inference is fair that there must be something *visible* upon him by which these different states may be distinguished. In other words, the beast exhibits marks which show that he had both died and passed through death. He is the counterpart of *"the Lamb standing as though it had been slaughtered."*<sup>19</sup>

B. W. Newton gives another interpretation:

Another explanation . . . is this--that Antichrist is here regarded as about to be a second Nebuchadnezzar, or a revived head of Babylon, which he becomes as soon as he has destroyed the woman. Accordingly, Antichrist in the Old Testament prophets is continually called the king of Babylon, and the Assyrian. . . .

We can easily suppose how all the earth will wonder when they see not only Babylon and Assyria but a king of Babylon restored and reigning over the whole Roman world. If this interpretation, which I doubt not is the correct one, be

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15 Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, pg. 207.

16 Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John*, pg. 179. Note that the quote actually has "his ten heads," but this is obviously a simple mistake and not Ladd's intent.

17 Seiss, *Lectures*, vol. II, pg. 400.

18 Archer, unpublished class notes.

19 Milligan, *The Book of Revelation*, pg. 283.

received, the passage will read thus: "The beast that thou sawest, was and is not, and is about to ascend out of the abyss and to go into perdition; and those who 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, because he was, and is not, and will be present."

The history of Nebuchadnezzar is necessarily related to that of Antichrist. Nebuchadnezzar was the first king of that Gentile dynasty which Antichrist concludes. Antichrist inherits that power which was first committed to Nebuchadnezzar as the golden head of the image shown to Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar was the first "treader down" of Israel--Antichrist the last. Nebuchadnezzar raised an image, and caused it to be worshipped, destroying those who refused--so will Antichrist. Nebuchadnezzar was the spring of Babylon's energies--so will Antichrist. The offences which Nebuchadnezzar commenced against Israel and Israel's God, are said in Jeremiah to be finally punished when the last king of Babylon--Antichrist, is smitten.

It is worthy of note too, that the power of Nebuchadnezzar, after he had conquered Tyre, touched almost all the countries of the Roman world over which Antichrist will reign. The commercial energy of the Phenicians had reached and planted colonies in almost every country of the Roman world. Nebuchadnezzar succeeding to their power, thus foreshadowed the dominion which, in its Roman shape, will finally accrue to his last great heir. Well, therefore, may Antichrist be considered as the monarch of Babylon revived.<sup>20</sup>

The last view we shall consider is that of Samuel J. Andrews:

In the progress of the Beast to supreme power, there seem to be two stages presented under different forms. He is wounded as unto death (xiii, 3), but his wound is healed. He is also spoken of as "ascending out of the abyss,"--bottomless pit,--(xi, 7), into which he must first have descended, and from this time on overcomes all enemies. From these expressions it may be inferred that for a time after his appearance he meets with some special resistance, probably the testimony of the two witnesses (xi,8--), and at this time receives a deadly wound, or in other words, descends into the abyss. His wound being healed, or rising from the abyss, he makes war upon the witnesses and kills them. From this time on no one is able to resist him, and "power is given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations." Interpreting "the abyss" as the place of the dead, some early fathers believed that Antichrist would be a man raised from the dead. But the language, "as it were wounded to death," does not affirm his death; and we may understand the abyss into which he descends to be presented here as the abode of demons. . . . Thus taken, we are taught that by the Spirit of God in the mouths of the two witnesses Antichrist is unmasked, and successfully resisted for a time in his efforts to deceive the faithful; but, strengthened anew with demoniac power, he enters upon his victorious career.<sup>21</sup>

Which is the better view? That still remains to be decided.

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20 B. W. Newton, *Thoughts on the Apocalypse*, pp. 312-313.

21 Samuel J. Andrews, *Christianity and Anti-Christianity in their Final Conflict*, pp. 65,66.

Returning to verse 3, it was stated that the beast had seven heads and ten horns. The ten horns are generally interpreted to mean ten kings who are allied with the beast. According to verse 12, they have "*received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast.*" According to Archer,

The ten horns, then, represent the ten nations who will combine at the beginning of the 70th week (Dan. 9) as a revived Roman Empire, with Antichrist emerging as their supreme leader through his speedy triumph over the rest of them. Thus they share authority with the Beast for only a short time ("one hour"). Note that they are described to John as having "not yet received a kingdom" (by 95 A.D.), and are therefore yet future (in contradistinction to the five of the seven kings of v. 10 who have already fallen). Thus the seven kings are not to be confused with the ten horns of this verse.<sup>22</sup>

Walvoord essentially agrees:

Further detail is given concerning the final stage of the world empire as having a nucleus of ten kings apparently joined in a confederacy represented by the ten horns. These kings in contrast to the seven heads of the beast are kings who rule not in succession but simultaneously at the end time. By comparison with chapter 13, it will be seen that this is the form of the Roman Empire just preceding the world empire. The ten horns' rule as kings is subject to that of the beast itself, and their sphere of power is brief. They are a phase of the transmission of power from the various kingdoms to that of the beast itself."<sup>23</sup>

Vaughan makes an interesting observation:

My brethren, St John lived in the time of the vitality of the sixth head, and we live in the time of the vitality of the seventh. In many respects the world and its events move slowly. Centuries passed after St John was laid, last and alone of the Apostles, in his tranquil grave at Ephesus; and still the giant Empire gave no signs of dissolution. The word of his prophecy, like the earlier and yet more marvellous prophecy of Daniel, lay still and seemed to sleep. Unbelievers may have mocked it; *fools* certainly *understood* not: but the Word of God never dies, never really sleeps: it bides its time, *but at the end it shall speak and not lie*. How wonderful [astounding] must the first tokens have been of the approaching accomplishment of this word of God! the first mutterings of the portentous earthquake which shook asunder the continuity of that vast fabric, the growth of ages and generations, and threw in upon it hordes of rude barbarians, destined to re-make it after the fashion wholly new! Was not the Christian eye, think you, fixed upon that amazing process? Did not the figures of strange animals, painted by Daniel and by St John *as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*, seem almost to start from the canvass, giving energy to the dormant and life to the dead? And as the work slowly shaped itself, modifying from time to time its first rude outline, but never varying its one distinctive feature--that of partition not of agglomeration, of a number of kingdoms not of one kingdom, of ten horns rather than of one head--must not men have

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22 Archer, unpublished class notes.

23 Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, pg. 255.

stopped sometimes to compare the prediction with the fact, the prophecy with the history? must they not have said to themselves, Surely this hath God spoken, and *this hath God wrought*; surely, if man had been the speaker, he would not thus have foretold; if man had been the doer, he could not thus have fulfilled?<sup>24</sup>

Most commentators agree that this kingdom which once existed and will exist again is a revived Roman empire. Frost agrees with this, but he does have an interesting viewpoint in regards to the Antichrist himself.

Who the Antichrist will be, nationally, is a difficult question, but there is reason to believe that he will be a Greek. The evidence in this direction is as follows: First, if there is no Scripture to the contrary, it may almost be taken for granted that Antichrist will be of Grecian extraction from the fact that he will represent the highest development of human wisdom, for Greece stands for this (1 Cor. 1:18-22). Second, the Antichrist will not be a Jew but a Gentile, the Revised Version of Daniel 11:36, 37--which passage plainly refers to the Man of Sin--correcting the Authorized and making it plain that his "fathers" have been Gentile idolaters, worshipping not God but the gods, and that he himself is like to them. Third, when Antichrist comes he will rule over a "small people," which presumably is Greece (Dan. 11:21-23). Fourth, in the last days and at the time of the Antichrist, the children of Judah and Jerusalem will be sold as slaves to the Grecians, which indicates that this people, at the time, are in political and commercial power (Joel 3:1-6). Fifth, the figure in the Revelation which portrays the Antichrist is a leopard (13:1, 2), and it is plainly stated in Daniel that this beast represents the king and country of Greece (Dan. 7:6; 8:21). Sixth and finally, the most full and detailed account of the Antichrist is found in the eleventh chapter of Daniel, the description there passing from the type to the antitype; and the antitype is the Antichrist and his type is that Grecian general, Antiochus Epiphanes, who followed Alexander the Great and ruled over Syria, inclusive of Palestine (11:1-4, 20-39). This last evidence seems conclusive. Incidentally, it gives strong indication of the fact that the Antichrist will not be the last pope of Rome, for no Grecian, and particularly, no Grecian general has ever been a pope, and it is inconceivable that any ever will be.<sup>25</sup>

In his exposition of Matthew twenty-four, Frost makes clear that although he believes the Antichrist will be Grecian and will rule at first as king of Greece over an extensive European and Syrian territory (like Antiochus Epiphanes), toward the middle of his career he will become Emperor of a tenfold kingdom-confederacy which probably will be a revived and enlarged Roman Empire (Dan. 2:40-45; Rev. 17:7-13).<sup>26</sup> The historical Roman Empire, of course, did include the country of Greece.

Benjamin Newton has some very interesting observations to make on the subject. In commenting on Daniel chapter 8, he writes:

It is not wonderful, therefore, that the name to which Scripture has given precedence, when speaking of the Gentiles, should be that of Greece. "Jew and

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24 Vaughan, *Lectures*, pp. 434-435.

25 Frost, *Matthew Twenty-Four and the Revelation*, pp. 174-175.

26 *Ibid.*, pg. 72.

Greek," is an expression continually used in the Scripture as equivalent to "Jew and Gentile:" and at a time yet future, when Israel shall be forgiven, and again be strengthened against her Gentile enemies, we find Greece still used as the great denominative name for Gentilism. "When I have . . . raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O GREECE." Zech. ix. 13.

We might expect, therefore that he who is so peculiarly to concentrate in himself the power of the Gentiles, who is to lead "the sons of Greece" against "the sons of Zion," who is also to be so distinctly marked by intellectual power as to be noted by a peculiar symbol such as no other earthly monarch ever had, and who in the Revelation is symbolised by "a leopard" (in Daniel, the symbol of Greece)--we might expect that such an one, though *Roman* as to the geographical extent and the iron character of his power, would in some especial manner be connected with *Greece*.

Accordingly, this chapter reveals that he will, as a king (at first a petty king), spring from that part of the Roman Empire which the Romans gained from the successors of Alexander. That this chapter treats of Alexander and his conquests is a fact which scepticism itself hardly dares to question. "The ram which thou sawest having two horns, are the kings of Media and Persia. And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king. Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power. And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up." The first king of Grecia has arisen and has fallen: his four successors also have reigned: but they too have passed away, and their kingdoms have vanished without the king of fierce countenance having appeared of whom it is declared that he shall arise "in the *latter* time of *their* kingdom." . . .

We know from the preceding chapter that the *whole* Roman Empire, and therefore, that part of it within which these kingdoms fall, is to be revived. We know also that its Eastern, as well as Western branch, is to be divided. All therefore as to this that we learn additionally from the eighth chapter is, that four of these divisions will be kingdoms which passed from Alexander's successors into the hands of Rome; that is to say, Greece, Egypt, Syria, and the rest of the dominions of Turkey. . . .

That Antichrist is to arise from the Eastern part of the Roman Empire, and from that part of the East which fell under the rule of Alexander's successors, is rendered unquestionable by this chapter. But, seeing that in the eleventh chapter he is mentioned as conflicting with the king of the North (*i.e.* the king of Syria), and also with the king of the South (*i.e.* the king of Egypt), it is plain that he does not arise either from Egypt or Syria. He must therefore arise either from Greece or from the districts immediately contiguous to Constantinople. . . . but it seems far more probable that Greece Proper will be the place of his rise.<sup>27</sup>

In commenting on the vision recorded in Daniel chapter 7, West states: "Territorially, the vision covers, not all the planet, but only the sphere of the empire of the Fourth Beast, viz., the old

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27 Benjamin W. Newton, *Prospects of the Ten Kingdoms of The Roman Empire*, pp. 190-194.



Roman territory from the Euphrates to the British Isles, and from the Danube and Rhine to the cataracts of the Nile."<sup>28</sup>

Only Zahn, and possibly Ladd, disagree with the revived Roman Empire viewpoint, believing it will be a revival of the Greek empire instead. The view of so preeminent a scholar as Zahn cannot be dismissed lightly. Ladd has an excellent summary of it, so I shall quote him in full.

John has also said that the beast had seven heads, one of which was wounded unto death and then healed (13:3). He has also said that the beast itself received the mortal wound but was healed (13:12,14). Now he adds a new fact: the beast is an eighth head, yet it belongs to the seven heads. The symbolism is made difficult by the fact that the beast is sometimes identified with his heads, but is sometimes differentiated from them. The solution to this involved symbolism lies in the interpretation that the beast is the Antichrist, and yet he is not the Antichrist; he is the Antichrist in two of his heads only. As the Antichrist, he has already appeared in history (he was); he does not exist in the present, but he is yet to arise in an embodiment of satanic power. This is why John can say that one of the heads was wounded to death, but the death wound was healed; and also that the beast itself had received a death stroke and had come to life again. In other words, the beast is identified with two of its heads more closely than with the other five. In one of the heads, the beast had himself appeared in history; this head--and the beast himself--had been slain (i.e., had disappeared from history) but is to be revived in a final appearance, which will be a more complete manifestation of the beast than the first (i.e., he shall ascend from the abyss). Still, the other five heads are also heads of the beast, yet it is not identified with them as with the two. The heads are successive manifestations of the worldly kingdoms at enmity with God through all the changes of history. The beast, then, has a twofold meaning: broadly, it is the anti-God worldly power; narrowly, it is one particular kingdom which has a twofold manifestation. Five of the heads are manifestations of the worldly kingdoms as such; two of the heads are specific embodiments of the beast himself. The clue to the understanding of this is the prophecy of Daniel, on which John draws for his symbolism of the beast. In Daniel, the great enemy of God's people is Antichrist, who has previously been manifested in history in the person of Antiochus Epiphanes (Dan. 8:9,21). In typical prophetic manner, these two figures are sometimes blended together so that they seem to be practically one. The beast that you saw was, i.e., it was embodied in Antiochus Epiphanes; it is not, i.e., it does not now exist in this same malevolent form; it is to ascend from the abyss in the person of Antichrist.

John adds a further specific detail about the last appearance of the beast--the Antichrist: "the beast . . . is an eighth, but it belongs to the seven." This is difficult language. The second and final manifestation of the beast is in an eighth king; but it is not *the* eighth king for there are only seven; it is an eighth king which is one of the seven. This suggests that one of the seven is to experience two stages of his existence. This apparently is why John says that the seventh king "will remain only a little while" (vs. 10). He will be shortly followed by an eighth, who is the seventh in his full antichristian manifestation. John means to say that the eighth is like the seven, but yet is different from them. It belongs to the seven

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28 West, *Daniel's Great Prophecy*, pg. 56.

in that it succeeds them in world domination; but it stands apart in that it ascends from the abyss as the full satanic embodiment of the beast.<sup>29</sup>

The view of Tregelles on this revived fourth empire and the antichrist is of interest:

The conclusion from all this appears to be inevitable, that the horn of chapter 7 and that of chapter 8 are one and the same person. If this be not the case, we have at the same time within the same territorial limits and similarly described two kings, alike in blasphemy and persecution, alike in claiming divine honors, alike in their almost unhindered course of evil. The non-identity of the two would involve difficulties of the greatest magnitude--so great that the supposition may be regarded as a moral impossibility. I believe that those who have considered that they are not one and the same have supposed that they were not marked as belonging to the same period. This, however, is utterly contradicted by the express statement of "the last end of the indignation" in this chapter, and by events which are detailed as following immediately on the destruction of the king in chapter 11.

But it has been sometimes asked (rather, I believe, in the way of difficulty than of objection), How can these powers be identical, for that in chapter 7 springs out of one of the ten parts of the Roman earth, that before us from one of the four parts of the third empire? The answer to this is simple and, I believe, satisfactory. In chap. 7 we see that the whole of the Roman earth is to be divided into *ten* kingdoms--these ten being found in its whole extent, the East as well as the West. The four parts of Alexander's empire formed a considerable portion of the eastern half of the Roman territory; and [because], as we see here, these four [are] existent as kingdoms at the time of the end, it only follows that four kingdoms out of the ten will be identical with the parts into which the third empire was long ago divided. A horn springs out of one of these parts. It may be described in a general manner as in chapter 7, as rising from one of the ten kingdoms, or else in a much more definite way as in this chapter, in which we see even what part or direction of the Roman earth will give him his origin.

No one need find any difficulty in the idea of his being spoken of as springing from one of the ten parts of the Roman earth, and here from one of the parts of Alexander's empire. Everyone would see how Simeon (for instance) might be described as one the twelve sons of Jacob, or as one of the six sons of Leah. The latter designation would be the more definite, but the sons of Leah would be all comprehended under the more general expression "sons of Jacob."<sup>30</sup>

Tregelles also believes that the antichrist will come from Syria: "Syria has, I believe, this prominence to this chapter because of its being the part of the divided empire out of which "the vile person" springs who is mentioned in verse 21."<sup>31</sup>

Now is a good time to recall the opening sentence of this study on The Revelation: ***One's eschatology must be based first on the Old Testament, and then the Epistles of Paul and***

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29 Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John*, pp. 230-231.

30 Tregelles, *Remarks on the Prophetic Visions in the Book of Daniel*, pp. 83-85. (I took some liberty with the punctuation and inserted some bracketed words for clearer reading.)

31 *Ibid.*, p. 139.

***Peter, together with the Olivet Discourse and the parables of Jesus, will add many details to it.*** If we go back to the book of Daniel, we find that the final empire described in Nebuchadnezzar's image (ch. 2) and in Daniel's vision of the four beasts (ch. 7) is Roman. On the identity of the four kingdoms in Daniel 2 and 7, all conservative commentators agree, even Zahn (the four empires of Daniel beginning with kingdom (3) in this quote):

Of subordinate importance is the question as to the succession of world empires presented in Rev. Probably (1) Egypt with Pharaoh as the typical name of the king, (2) Assyria with Sennacherib, (3) Babylon with Nebuchadnezzar, (4) the Medo-Persian empire, (5) the Graeco-Macedonian empire, (6) the Roman Empire with its Caesar, (7) the shortlived empire which is to come, to be followed by a renewal of the fifth empire of which Antiochus is the antitype, who is the antichrist of the last days. This is the eighth kingdom.<sup>32</sup>

Today we are living in a "Roman" age, and according to Daniel's interpretation of the image, it is during this Roman phase when the stone demolishes the image. Let's read what Culver has written:

The Roman emperors, and even the early kings who reigned before the republican and imperial periods, ruled largely by the will and choice of the populace. Republicanism, which followed the monarchical period, soon degenerated into something like mob rule, especially after it merged into the imperial period. Some of the greatest emperors were affected by the passing opinions of the Roman mobs. In our own times, which if they appear in the prophecy must be in the fourth period, government in the West has tended to become nearer to the dead level of socialism, and even "the dictatorship of the proletariat." Our American republic (ofttimes miscalled democracy) is based on the supposition that sovereignty rests in the people--that government is only by the consent of the governed. . . . Now comes the denouement. The last, or eschatological portion of the prophecy is reached. When the final, that is, the Roman, age of Gentile history is prevailing, when a climax of division of sovereignty has been reached, presumably many nations being organized into some kind of a loose union in which all men give *their* authority to a ruler or head of some kind, when Gentile power is at its height of strength (though dangerously brittle by reason of a low grade of sovereignty, *then* the end comes. "*And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever*" (Dan. 2:44, A.S.V.).<sup>33</sup>

How can the Roman Empire be both the sixth and the seventh? If kings and their kingdoms are thought of as one and the same, then the text in Revelation 17:10 states that the sixth, that of Rome, "is" and that "the other," that again of Rome, has yet to come. Does some other empire intervene of which nothing is written? The answer must lie in differentiating, to some extent, between kings and kingdoms.

Using Culver's analysis of governments, quoted above, there is a possible interpretation of 17:10-11 that makes sense. First, let's look at how the verses are given in the NKJV:

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32 Zahn, *Introduction*, pg. 447.

33 Culver, *Daniel and the Latter Days*, pp. 120-121.

*There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time. The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.*

Bringing in Culver's observation, we can now expand the above:

*There are also seven kings. Five have fallen [Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece], one is [sovereign Rome], the other has not yet come [confederate Rome]. And when he [confederate Rome] comes, he [the man, not the empire] must continue a short time. The beast that was [the man with the mortal wound, 13:3], and is not, is himself also the eighth [ruler of a kingdom, that of Antichrist] and is of the seven [not Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, sovereign Rome, but confederate Rome].*

It appears, then, that a revived Roman empire, though precariously aligned as a 10-nation confederacy, must be the empire of the last days; there will be no revival of a Grecian one. Antiochus Epiphanes was a type of Antichrist. The true Antichrist will mirror him, but this does not of necessity mean that he has to be Greek. Melchizedek was a type of Christ, but one was a Gentile and the other a Jew. Antiochus is a type of Antichrist, but one was a Greek and the other will be a Roman.

Culver thinks that the Antichrist will be a Jew, basing his deduction on Daniel 11:37: *"He shall regard neither the God of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above them all."*

The "God of his fathers" is, then, the Jehovah God of Israel. Some modern translations render the passage "gods of his fathers" but the oft-recurring Scriptural reference to the "God of your fathers" or the "God of their fathers" or "Lord God" etc. makes it close to a certainty that the common expression for the Jewish God, Jehovah, is meant here. Besides, no true Jew will ever accept a known pagan as his Christ. At first, he will appear to be a pious Jew--afterward his true character will come to light.<sup>34</sup>

Kelly agrees to a Jewish Antichrist:

"Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women." The expression, "the desire of women," clearly, to my mind, refers to Christ--the One to whom all Jews were looking forward, and whose birth must have been above all things desired by Jewish women. It is plain from the connexion that such is the true meaning. For it occurs between "the God of his fathers" (Jehovah) and "any god." Nothing is less likely than, if it had merely referred to natural relationships, that it would have been thus placed. It was, probably, from the wish to apply this to the pope that such an interpretation has found currency. But let us only understand that the prophecy concerns Israel and their land, and all is plain. He shall not "regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women." Christ is distinguished from "the God of his fathers," perhaps, because the Son was to

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34 Robert Culver, class notes handed out while a professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. The word translated "God" in the phrase "God of his fathers" is *elohim*.

become incarnate. But Christ is regarded no more than the God of his fathers--an expression, by the way, which implies that he himself is a Jew. It is "the God of his fathers."<sup>35</sup>

Rev. P. Huchedé also believes him to be Jewish:

Antichrist, being a Jew, will be circumcised; he will observe the Mosaic Law, and finally he will give himself for the Messiah whom Israel still expects, and he will be received by those whose names are not written in the Book of Life, in the Book of the Lamb. (Apoc. 13:8). Hence Our Lord thus reproaches the Jews, "I am come in the name of my Father, and you receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him you will receive." (Jn. 5:43). St. Ireneus, St. Hilary, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, St. Jerome, and St. Damascus are of opinion that Our Lord makes allusion in this passage to Antichrist.<sup>36</sup>

Walvoord takes the opposite view and writes,

There is no evidence that either of the beasts is a Jew. The expression "the God of his fathers" in Daniel 11:37 which would seem to make the king in that passage a Jew is better translated "gods" in keeping with the Hebrew *elohim* which removes any specific Jewish character from the phrase. The Hebrew *elohim* is in many places properly translated in the singular, but it is not specifically singular and therefore could be translated plural. The appeal often made to the phrase "his father," while it is a familiar one in reference to Israel, obviously cannot be limited to the Israelite race, as others have predecessors also; and in the case of the heathen their gods could be referred to as "the gods of their fathers." It is significant that in many cases where the God of Israel is referred to, "LORD" is added to make clear that the God of their fathers is Jehovah.<sup>37</sup>

In including the opinion of Birks, it is best to go back to his discussion of verse 36 first:

*He shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods.* This clause, perhaps, has chiefly led to the impression that the predicted king is an open atheist and blasphemer. Yet a close attention to the passage and to its whole context will shew how little there is to countenance such a view.

Three alternatives are open to us, in the meaning we may attach to these words. This king may deny the very existence of the God of gods, and treat Him as a chimera of superstition: or he may own Him under that very title, and bid open defiance to his power: Or lastly, he may acknowledge Him in words as the Supreme God, and still dishonour His name, by imputing to Him a partnership in the foulest crimes, and thus treat Him as an accomplice in his own wickedness.<sup>38</sup>

After rejecting the first two alternatives, he goes on to state,

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35 Kelly, *The Great Prophecies of Daniel*, pp. 196-197.

36 Rev. P. Huchedé, *History of the Antichrist*, pg. 22.

37 Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, pg. 211.

38 Birks, *The Two Later Visions of Daniel*, pg. 269.

We are thus brought, almost of necessity, to the last alternative. Since the king will utter blasphemies against the true God under this one character, as the Supreme Power of the universe, it is neither a bare denial of His existence, nor open and daring defiance, that is here described. It must rather be the ascription to the Source of all Power, the God of gods, of actions which He disclaims, and maxims which He regards with holy abhorrence. If hateful idolatries were enjoined, and the laws of God daringly repealed; if reason were to be crushed, humanity outraged, doctrines of devils enforced under pain of death, and hideous cruelties inflicted on the servants of Christ, and the name of the God of gods were boldly used to justify the wickedness,--nay, even the wrath of the Omnipotent solemnly denounced against every one who might dare to resist and oppose it; then surely the words would have the most complete fulfilment possible, and the king, who should thus act, would speak marvellous things against EL ELIM, the Supreme and Almighty God.<sup>39</sup>

Now concerning verse 37, *He shall not regard the Elohim of his fathers*, Birks continues:

The clause is rather ambiguous, since the word Elohim may receive two opposite constructions. In our received version, which Bishop Newton and others prefer, it is referred to the one true God, to whom the word belongs in countless passages. But the Septuagint, followed by Mede and many able writers, renders it in the plural, *the gods of his fathers*, and thus refers it to the false gods of the heathen.

That the latter is the true meaning may be proved by several arguments. First, the true God has been already named by a distinct and most expressive title, THE GOD OF GODS. Besides the ambiguity, it would be a needless repetition, if He were spoken of in the very next clause under so different a name.

Next, if the allusion had been to Antiochus, the vile person mentioned before, then the Elohim of his fathers would clearly be the false gods of Syria. Hence, even though a transition is made to another monarch, since the moral unity is so close, and the juncture almost invisible, analogy requires that the phrase should bear a similar meaning.

Thirdly, the king must denote some form or stage of the Roman power. But this empire has been prominently set forth in the previous visions, as heathen and idolatrous, and never as converted to the faith. The rejected Elohim of his fathers must therefore be the gods of his heathen ancestors, whom the king will set aside.

Fourthly, since the singular, *Eloah*, is used in this very passage, it is more natural that its plural form, *Elohim*, should retain the plural sense. Hence false gods must be here denoted by the ambiguous term.

Finally, the word has been used already in this vision to denote the false gods of Syria, which were carried by Ptolemy into Egypt, xi. 8. A direct sanction is thus given to our adoption of the same version here, even though the other application is more frequent.

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39 Ibid., pp. 270-271.

This clause, therefore, in its simplest and most natural sense, declares that the predicted king will abandon every form of idol-worship derived from his Pagan forefathers; and that this open rejection of a religion long inherited will be one marked feature in his ambitious pride.<sup>40</sup>

This last remark I find quite interesting in view of our current situation in Europe and the Mideast.

Related to the question of whether the Antichrist is a Jew or Gentile, it has been questioned whether he is the head of the political realm (the *first* beast), or the head of the ecclesiastical realm (the *second* beast). However, before taking note of what numerous commentators think, it might be good first to get a better idea of what the word "Antichrist" signifies:

The word ἀντίχριστος, etymologically considered, does not involve the idea that this enemy of Christ will demonstrate his enmity by giving himself out to be the true Christ in opposition to Jesus: that aspect of the matter would have found its expression in the definition ψευδόχριστος [false Christ], as in Matt. xxiv. 24. In fact, it is never taught in Scripture that that "Antichrist," or "Man of Sin," who immediately before the coming of Christ will urge his cause and set up his kingdom, and of whom Jesus by His coming will make an end (2 Thess. ii. 8; comp. Isa. xi. 4), will represent himself to be a χρίστος, an anointed of God, or the Χρίστος promised in the Old Testament, the Messiah and Redeemer. . . . The Antichrist, the enemy of Christ, will place himself in the stead of *God*, will have himself, though man, honoured as God, and tyrannically put an end to all worship of God; but especially he will accomplish God's judgments upon Babylonish pseudo-Christendom (Rev. xvii. 16, xviii. 2), and make an end of it. His own kingdom, however, will bear upon it, not the semblance of a kingdom of Messiah, but the signature of the open and absolute apostasy, of open and daring rebellion against God and His Son (Rev. xix. 19).<sup>41</sup>

Now returning to the question of whether the Antichrist is the first or second beast, after consulting numerous commentaries I will give a short sampling of the answers.

Walvoord stops just short of actually stating his view:

Chapter 13, taken as a whole, is one of the great prophetic chapters of Scripture and is the only passage which presents in any detail the two principal evil characters of the end of the age who form with Satan an unholy trinity. Here is clearly presented the fact that the head of the revived Roman Empire ultimately becomes the ruler of the entire world. Dominated by Satan, he is Satan's masterpiece and substitute for Christ, and is aided and supported by the second beast called the false prophet. . . .

Expositors have not agreed entirely as to the identify of these two characters as revealed in other passages of Scripture. The preferable view seems to be that the

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40 Ibid., pp. 271-272.

41 John Ebrard, *Biblical Commentary on the Epistles of St John*, pp. 181-182.

first beast in Revelation 13 is the "little horn" of Daniel 7:8, "the prince that shall come" of Daniel 9:26, the willful king of Daniel 11:36-45, and the man of sin, or the lawless one, of II Thessaloniaonians 2:3. Some prefer to identify the willful king of Daniel 11 and the man of sin in II Thessalonians 2 as the second beast of Revelation 13. The term "antichrist" is variously assigned either to the first or second beast or by some to neither. Among premillennial expositors, the trend seems to be to identify all of these terms with the first beast and relegate the second beast to a subordinate role as a religious rather than a political ruler.<sup>42</sup>

Leon Wood doesn't equivocate. He states, ". . . so long as the Antichrist, the great final ruler of the restored Roman confederacy, continues in power in his day to come, he will subdue all before him and make himself master of much of the world (cf. [Dan.] 11:40-45)."<sup>43</sup>

Ladd also takes the first view: "At the end of the age, the church is destined to undergo the most intense persecution of her history . . . This persecution will be waged by a satanically inspired ruler, called the beast ([Rev.] 11:7), better known as the Antichrist, who will try to frustrate the rule of God on earth by gaining universal power, demanding the worship of men, and inflicting martyrdom on all who remain loyal to Christ."<sup>44</sup>

Culver maintains the first view as well: "Antichrist I hold to be a person who will arise in the end of this age, who will gain mastery over the whole world for a brief period, and will be destroyed by the Lord at His second coming (II Thess. 2:1-9; Rev. 13:1-10)."<sup>45</sup>

Seiss is another who takes the first view:

The Antichrist, though an individual, is not alone. . . . but he has a more intimate and more potent companion, hardly less remarkable than himself, duplicating his power, and without whom he could not be what he is.

. . . Ahab, the seventh head of the line of Israel, could not have been Ahab except for Jezebel, with her herd of foreign priests. And thus the final Antichrist . . . cannot be the Antichrist without his great spiritual consociate and false prophet.<sup>46</sup>

Another proponent of this view is William R. Newell, who states most emphatically, "We feel that the first Beast must be called the Antichrist," and gives nine reasons why it is so.<sup>47</sup>

William Kelly is one who takes the second view:

So far, then, all is plain about this second beast. It is a corporate power that grows up when all was formed and orderly, and consequently arising after the appearance of the first beast. More than that. He arrogates to himself the power of Christ (he has two horns like a lamb); but his speech betrays him--he speaks as a dragon. . . . The first beast is the one for show: it catches the profane world through the display

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42 Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, pg. 210-211.

43 Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel*, pg. 226.

44 Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John*, pg. 165.

45 Culver, *Daniel and the Latter Days*, pg. 128.

46 Seiss, *The Apocalypse, A Series of Lectures*, vol. 2, pp. 413-414.

47 William R. Newell, *The Book of the Revelation*, pp. 195-201.



of power and glory. The second beast is much the more energetic of the two. It is the one that most takes the place of Christ--is a false Christ, or rather is antichrist--*i.e.*, the very expression of Satan in his direct opposition to Christ.<sup>48</sup>

Walter Scott also takes the second view: "In the Apocalypse, chapter 13, two Beasts are seen in vision. The first is the Roman power and its blasphemous head under the direct control of Satan (vv. 1-10). The second Beast is the personal Antichrist (vv. 11-17). . . . The second Beast, or Antichrist, is identical with 'the false prophet,' named three times (chaps. 16.13; 19.20; 20.10)."<sup>49</sup>

One last thought about the Antichrist from McClain:

As to his *political origin*, this great leader will begin as a rather minor figure somewhere among the final subdivisions of the Roman Empire. In the visions of Daniel he is described as a "little horn" coming up in the midst of the "ten horns" on the "fourth beast," and whose first act is one of violence: by his hand three of the ten horns are "plucked up by the roots" (Dan. 7:7-8).<sup>50</sup>

Leaving the political, we turn now to the ecclesiastical aspect. In verses 16-18 we read: "*And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.*" How do the two great figures of this chapter relate to one another? Milligan has some good, and lengthy, observations on this text:

This relation appears in the words, *I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet-coloured beast*, and in later words of the chapter: *the beast that carrieth her*. The woman then is not subordinate to the beast, but is rather his controller and guide. And this relation is precisely what we should expect. The beast is before us in his final stage, in that immediately preceding his own destruction. . . . He has been revealed as the "ten horns" which occupy the place of the seventh head; and these ten horns are ten kings who, having now received their kingdoms and with their kingdoms their diadems, are the actual manifestation in history of the beast as he had been seen in his ideal form in chap. xiii. . . . The woman is therefore superior to the beast. She inspires and animates him. The beast only lends her the material strength needed for the execution of her plans. In the war, accordingly, which is carried on by the ten kings who have *one mind, and who give their power and authority unto the beast*, in the war which the beast and they, with their combined power, wage *for one hour* against the Lamb, it would be a great mistake to suppose that the woman, although she is not mentioned, takes no part and exerts no influence. She is really there, the prime mover in all its horrors. The "one mind" comes from her. The beast can do nothing of himself. The ten kings who are the form in which he appears are not less weak and helpless. They have the outward power, but they cannot regulate it. They want [lack] the skill, the subtlety, the wisdom, which are found only in the spiritual domain. But the great harlot, who at this point of history is the perversion of *Christian* truth, is with them; and they

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48 William Kelly, *Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, pp. 289-290.

49 Walter Scott, *Exposition of the Revelation of Jesus Christ*, pg. 201.

50 McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom*, pg. 184.

depend on her.<sup>51</sup>

Concerning the latter part of verse 16, "*these will hate the harlot, make her desolate,*" etc., we continue with Milligan:

What is the meaning of these words? Surely not that Rome was to be attacked and overthrown by the barbaric hordes that burst upon her from the North: for, in the first place, the Roman manifestation of the world-power had passed away before the ten kings came to their kingdom; and, in the second place, when Rome fell, she fell as the beast, not as the harlot. . . . There seems only one method of explaining the words, but it is one in perfect consonance with the method and purpose of the Apocalypse as a whole. As on many other occasions, the fortunes of the Church of Christ are modelled upon the fortunes of her Master. With that Master the Church was one. He had always identified His people with Himself, in life and death, in time and in eternity. Could the beloved disciple do otherwise? He looked round upon the suffering Church of his day. He was a "companion with it in the tribulation, and kingdom, and patience which are in Jesus." He felt all its wounds and shared all its sorrows, just as he felt and shared the wounds and sorrows of that Lord who lived in him, and in whom he lived. There, therefore, was the mould in which the fortunes of the Church appeared to him. He went back to well-remembered scenes in the life of Christ; and he beheld these repeating themselves, in principle at least, in the members of His Body.

Now there was one scene of the past--how well does he remember it, for he was present at the time!--when the Roman power and a degenerate Judaism, the beast and the harlot of the day, combined to make war upon the Lamb. For a moment they seemed to succeed, yet only for a moment. They nailed the Lamb to the cross; but the Lamb overcame them, and rose in triumph from the grave. But the Seer did not pause there. He looked a few more years onward, and what did he next behold? That wicked partnership was dissolved. These companions in crime had turned round upon one another. The harlot had counselled the beast, and the beast had given the harlot power, to execute the darkest deed which had stained the pages of human history. But the alliance did not last. The alienation of the two from each other, restrained for a little by co-operation in common crime, burst forth afresh, and deepened with each passing year, until it ended in the march of the Roman armies into Palestine, their investment of the Jewish capital, and that sack and burning of the city which still remain the most awful spectacle of bloodshed and of ruin that the world has seen. Even this is not all. St. John looks still further into the future, and the tragedy is repeated in the darker deeds of the last "hour." There will again be a "beast" in the brute power of the ten kings of the world, and a harlot in a degenerate Jerusalem, animating and controlling it. The two will again direct their united energies against the true Church of Christ, the "called, and chosen, and faithful." They may succeed; it will be only for a moment. Again the Lamb will overcome them; and in the hour of defeat the sinful league between them will be broken and the world-power will hate the harlot, and make her desolate and naked, and eat her flesh, and burn her utterly with fire.

This is the prospect set before us in these words, and this the consolation of the

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51 Milligan, *The Book of Revelation*, pp. 297-299.

Church under the trials that await her at the end of the age. "When the wicked spring as the grass, and all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever: but Thou, O Lord, art on high for evermore."<sup>52</sup>

Now let us consider three additional issues before leaving this chapter. First, related to the fourth empire being a "revived Roman Empire," there have been a number of recent articles proposing the view of a "caliphate" of Arab countries, in essence dismissing the 10-nation European confederacy theory of long standing. Could it perhaps be that the 10 nations of Europe are still correct but that they are simply changed in character? Are not Britain, France, and Sweden almost lost, as far as their national identity is concerned, by the tremendous Muslim population within their borders? Could the iron and clay in the feet of the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel chapter 2 be a mixture of the original European population and the ever growing Muslim population?

From the vision of Daniel 2 and that of chap. 7, we may see that the ten kingdoms do not arise until a certain process of deterioration (the mixture of clay with iron) is complete; and that these kingdoms, when all developed, have not any protracted course before them. Just as the sovereignty out of which they sprung was secular, so of course are they also secular. Whatever have been the changes in the Roman earth, as yet we have not seen the definite tenfold division. Indeed, had we seen it, we could have expected nothing other than the appearance of the last horn and the judgment of the Son of Man at his coming.<sup>53</sup>

This observation of Tregelles is most noteworthy. West makes a similar observation:

It is not the beginning of the fourth empire under Augustus we have here [in Daniel ch. 2], but its *end*, and in the *last* days of the ten toes or separate kingdoms into which it is then divided. Such division did not exist in the days of Augustus, nor of Tiberius, nor of Diocletian, nor of Constantine, nor even in the days of Theodosius when the final division east and west was made. The tenfold division of the empire into separate and independent kingdoms follows the work of the Goths, Vandals, Huns and Heruli, in the sixth and seventh centuries, just prior to the emergence of Mohammed, and the medieval and modern kingdoms as now existing, are not the last arrangement of the toes.<sup>54</sup>

One final observation on the ten toes should prove helpful:

. . . we cannot doubt that the same governmental principles will prevail in all the ten kingdoms when developed, because all the toes of the image were alike formed of clay and iron. There will be in all therefore, the same adulteration of power. Again, seeing that the legs and feet of the image were two, and that the Roman Empire has existed in eastern and western branches, we may expect that five kingdoms will be formed in an eastern, and five in a western division of the Roman Empire, even as the toes were five on either foot.

Moreover, the ten toes, though distinct one from the other, are nevertheless, parts

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52 Ibid., pp. 300-302.

53 Tregelles, *Remarks*, pp. 67,68.

54 West, *Daniel's Great Prophecy*, pg. 40.

of one image. The one body from which they spring, gives to them a kind of corporate connection. The same may be said of the horns in the seventh chapter. They spring from the head of one beast. Consequently, the Roman Empire when finally divided, will as distinctly present a form of compact, though divided unity, as when it existed in undivided integrity. . . .

Accordingly, however great and threatening the power of such nations as Russia, yet it shall not *finally* be able to take supremacy from those nations which fall within the Roman Empire. It shall neither succeed in introducing among them its principles, nor in preventing them from spreading "clay-iron" principles among themselves, nor in frustrating their final connection as similarly constituted kingdoms of the Roman earth.<sup>55</sup>

(Please take time to read Appendix 6, written by Ken, which addresses this subject in more depth.)

Second, could the Reformers be at least partially right in their view of the Antichrist? They believed that the Pope (in a continuing succession) was the Antichrist. Among modern scholars, as indicated by the previous citations, the majority view concerning the identity of the Antichrist in the Book of Revelation seems to be that he is the first beast of Revelation 13, the political leader. However, there is that minority view which sees the second beast, the religious leader, as the Antichrist. Assuming for the moment that this view is correct and that Rome should turn out to be the capital of the (first) Beast's empire, then it seems to me that some merit can be more justifiably given to the belief of the Reformers. During the tribulation period, with the Beast's capital at Rome and the Pope right there in the Vatican, he (the Pope) most certainly could be the leader (that is, the Antichrist) of the apostate church, who works alongside and gives guidance to the Beast. Now let us remember that we are talking about a relatively small land area here. In other words, whether the Beast's capital is Athens or Rome, the Pope is near at hand.

However, in order to maintain the above view, we must reject the view which places the Antichrist in Jerusalem, for the Pope has never had residence there:

Some modern expositors regard the Antichrist as the civil head of the Roman empire, but this is not so. He is the false messiah, the minister of Satan amongst the Jews in Jerusalem, working signs and displaying wonders through direct satanic power. He sits in the temple of God then set up in Jerusalem, and claims divine worship. The Beast (Rome), the false prophet or the Antichrist, and the dragon (Satan) are deified and worshipped, counterfeiting the worship of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The apostate nation accepts the Antichrist as king. In no sense is he a great political power. True, he influences Christendom, but religiously, not politically. The government of the world, civil and political, is then in the hands of a great Gentile chief. It is he whose throne is in Rome who rules politically under Satan. The Antichrist has his seat in Jerusalem. The head of Gentile dominion in Rome. The two men are ministers of Satan, confederates in wickedness; the one a Jew, the other a Gentile.<sup>56</sup>

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55 Benjamin Newton, *Prospects of the Ten Kingdoms*, pp. 58-59.

56 Scott, *Exposition of The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, pp. 198-199.

Although Huchedé takes the view that the first beast is the Antichrist, he too is of the opinion that Jerusalem will be his capital:

When Antichrist shall have conquered all his enemies, power shall be given him over all tribes, peoples, languages, and nations; he will be the first Jew to reign over the whole world. When he shall find himself master of the world, he will choose for [his] capital the city in which Our Lord was crucified. (Apoc. 11:8). If he did otherwise, he would fail to make the Jews receive him for the Messiah since their hearts will be fixed on terrestrial glory and Jerusalem, in their esteem, must be the sojourn of the Messiah.<sup>57</sup>

Will there ever be a Jewish pope? What may seem entirely out of the realm of possibility now may change in the years to come. What seemingly greater coup by Satan against Israel and Christ than to have a Jewish pope the head of an apostate so-called Christian church!

Third, can the seven hills represent Rome? A restatement of the pertinent scriptures (17:5-9) will be helpful:

*And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement. But the angel said to me, Why did you marvel? 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 will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits.*

Let us go back now to Kelly and his view. This following quote is, I confess, unusually lengthy. However, it seems justified in that it connects Rome with the beast, and this in an aspect that is new, I think, for most of us. (Also, I think he has hit the nail on the head concerning what is happening in America today--"for men when they have tried democracy are apt to grow weary and disappointed, and then some vigorous arm takes advantage of the reaction, and a despotic power is the not unnatural result.") Now, let us read the full quotation:

"Here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sits" (verse 9). This is a material point, though simple. It is a local mark, intended to indicate to the wise mind, where this woman has her seat. There ought not to be the least doubt that it is a reference to Rome. The word "Babylon" had been used, it is true, in speaking of it, as Sodom and Egypt were figuratively applied to Jerusalem in chapter xi; but the Chaldean capital had nothing to do with the city of Rev. xvii. That had long passed away as an imperial city; whereas in verse 18 it is said of this Babylon that "it reigns over the kings of the earth." More than this, the literal Babylon in Chaldea was built on the plain of Shinar. Here the woman was seated on seven mountains; and all the world is

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57 Huchedé, *History of the Antichrist*, pp. 22-23. The bracketed word is original, being inserted most likely by the translator of the French original.

aware that such is the well-known characteristic of Rome. In prose or in poetry, if any city were described as being seated upon seven hills, every one would say, That must be Rome.

But we have an additional explanation in the following verse. "There [or they] are seven kings: the five are fallen, the one is, and the other is not yet come: and when he comes, he must continue a short space" (verse 10). Here the Holy Ghost, without entering into detail, refers to the various forms of government which were to succeed each other in the famous city Rome: seven heads or kings; but not contemporary: for five, as it is said, were fallen; one is, and the other is not yet come. This implies succession. Five different modes of government had already passed away. "One is," namely, the imperial form then subsisting, when the apostle lived--the line of Cæsars. Another of the seven was not yet come, which, when it did, must continue a short space.

"And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goes into destruction" (verse 11). There is this peculiar character attributed to the beast here, that in one sense he would be of the seven, and in another he would form an eighth or extraordinary beast. It would in certain respects be a new form of power altogether, while in others it would be but a revival of what had gone before. The reason is, that the beast at first might be like any other empire. It might owe its rise providentially to human revolutions; for men when they have tried democracy are apt to grow weary and disappointed, and then some vigorous arm takes advantage of the reaction, and a despotic power is the not unnatural result. I have no doubt this will be the history of the west. The eighth head, though an individual ruler, is spoken of as the beast or empire, because he is morally the empire, directing as supreme all its authority. He is of the seven, for there will be a continuance or taking up of some such form of power as before. But he will be the eighth, because there will be something so peculiar as to deserve a name to itself. That new feature may refer perhaps to the diabolical power that stamps the beast in his last or quasi-resurrection state.

"And the ten horns which thou saw are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet, but receive authority as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and authority to the beast." . . . the meaning is that these are kings who receive royal authority for one and the same time with the beast. . . .

Thus in the facts of the past we know there was a united unbroken power, when the Roman empire governed the western world, and did not admit of different independent kingdoms within its own limits. There was no such thing then as the kings of Spain, France, Italy, &c. It was an all-absorbing power, and would never have allowed such separate kingdoms to cluster round the imperial city. But the peculiarity of the future revived empire is that it will admit of distinct kings. Two things will be united which never were before. First, there has been the empire without kings -- at least, so it was in the west, which is the question here. Then there were kings without the empire. The new feature will be this: neither the beast without the kings, nor the kings without the beast; but both the beast and

the kingdoms going on together. This is what never has existed before.<sup>58</sup>

McCaul's contribution on this subject is as follows:

The author himself tells us, in the verse just referred to, that he was speaking of the great city, which in his own days ruled over the kings of the earth, whereas the literal Babylon, far from having any dominion, was then a desolation. . . . St. John is speaking of a particular city, whose geographical position and universal empire are so accurately described, as to agree to but one city in the world. The city whose wall encompassed the seven hills, and which claimed an empire co-equal with the limits of the earth, cannot easily be mistaken. Jewish rabbies and Christian fathers, Romanists, and Protestants, all agree that Babylon is Rome. . . . But whether Rome heathen, Rome Papal, or Rome anti-Christian, or Rome absolute, including all three, be spoken of, is a matter of controversy.<sup>59</sup>

McCaul's exegesis of Revelation 17:5-6 is lengthy but thorough. After giving evidence that the prophecy cannot be applied to Pagan Rome or to Antichristian Rome, he goes on to state,

. . . it necessarily follows, that it does apply to Papal Rome, or more properly that it depicts the destinies of Rome from the days of the apostle down to the period of her utter and final destruction. Seventeen hundred years of that interval have already elapsed, a space amply sufficient to test the truth of the prophecy. The terms of the prediction also are unequivocal, and the features of the portrait such as may easily be recognised. The apostle describes a Church, the spouse of Christ, faithless to her Lord, and gone astray after idols--the head or mother of many Churches equally idolatrous; a cruel persecutor of the disciples of Christ, and procuring for her false doctrine a pseudo-catholicity. Such is the meaning of the text and its context, . . .

When St. John wrote few things could be considered more improbable, than that Rome, the centre of heathen idolatry, and the seat of polytheistic dominion, should become the Church and Spouse of Christ. For two centuries the accomplishment of the prediction seemed doubtful. After the death of St. John, the Roman hatred of Christianity became fiercer, and the Roman persecution more cruel; but time proved the validity of his claims. Rome, with her Cæsar and her population, confessed the faith of Christ, and the whole tide of imperial power and influence was now directed against idolatry. Who that then witnessed the ardour of Roman faith and zeal, and the purity of Roman doctrine and practice, could have believed that she was to prove unfaithful to her Lord, and one day become the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth? . . . Her blasphemous assumption of infallibility renders it impossible that she should ever amend, . . .<sup>60</sup>

McCaul then goes on to show the universal nature of the Roman Church, that is, its dominion throughout the nations:

But the apostle points also to a pseudo-catholicity of communion. He calls her "the

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58 Kelly, *Lectures*, pp. 362-368.

59 Alexander McCaul, *Lectures on the Prophecies Proving the Divine Origin of Christianity*, pp. 112-113.

60 *Ibid.*, pp. 117, 132-134.

mother of harlots." He predicts that she was not to remain alone, but to have daughters equally corrupt and faithless as herself. . . . Is this the appellation by which she is known? and is it the by-word scoffingly put upon her by her enemies, or the title of glory which she assumes herself, and claims from all her children? Let the creed of Pope Pius IV answer that question, that creed which she prescribes to all who hold any ecclesiastical dignity, and especially to all converts to her communion. Every such person is required to say, "I acknowledge the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church to be THE MOTHER AND THE MISTRESS OF ALL CHURCHES." The very words, marked out by the apostle's MOTHER OF HARLOTS;" "mother and mistress of all Churches," is that which Rome adopts as her distinctive title--a title necessarily distinctive, for there cannot be many mothers. . . . In her most solemn, her peculiar profession of faith, she calls herself the mother of Churches, and their boasted unity of faith and uniformity of worship proclaims them to be harlots like herself.<sup>61</sup>

Much proof is brought forth by McCaul to show that the Roman Church is guilty of the most heinous crimes against humanity, and he states:

Is it possible, that any community calling itself Christian, and professing faith in the meek and merciful Jesus, should be found imbruing its hands in the blood even of idolaters, or persecutors? Is it conceivable that any Church, even of heretics, not to speak of that society which calls itself the Church, the true Church, the only spouse and bride of Christ, should have to answer for the blood of the saints and of the martyrs of Jesus? The wildest imagination could never have fancied anything more abhorrent from the spirit of Christianity.<sup>62</sup>

Let us now move on to chapter 18.

Hence, in God's mercy, and in His great condescension to the infirmities of His people, hence the 18th chapter of this His Book of Revelation. It was communicated to cheer the heart of His Apostle in his exile, it was written to carry comfort into the heart of the Church of every land, by telling him and them that as it has been in every age so would it also be in this, that the mightiest earthly power is as nothing in the sight of God; that as it had been with Egypt and with her kings, as it had been with Assyria and with her kings, as it had been with Babylon, and as it had been with Persia, and as it had been with Greece, so should it be also with Rome and with her kings; *no weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper* [Isa. 54:17], no throne shall ever be established which seeks to tyrannize over truth and right, over Christ and God.<sup>63</sup>

**EXCERPT FROM T. R. BIRKS  
CONCERNING ALEXANDER THE GREAT**

In this remarkable manner had the predicted he-goat, the king of Javan, notable and eminent above all others of his nation, traversed Asia, with unexampled rapidity of conquest, from the

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61 *Ibid.*, pp. 151-152.

62 *Ibid.*, pg. 153.

63 Vaughan, *Lectures*, pp. 441-442.



Hellespont to the Hydaspes and Indus. He had stamped upon the Persian power, and broken it as in utter contempt; "and no one could deliver it out of his hand." He had waxen so great, that the world came, with suppliant and servile embassies, to prostrate itself at his feet. But the remaining words were to be fulfilled at once, after this crowning proof of his greatness, and of the universal extent of his fame. "When the he-goat was strong, the great horn was broken."

'His attendants caught him; they laid him down on his couch, and tended him carefully. As the sickness gained strength, the physicians were summoned, but none of them could render him any help. Being racked with many pains and grievous suffering, he despaired of life, and took off his ring, and gave it to Perdicas. When his friends asked of him, To whom do you leave the kingdom? he said, To the strongest. And he said further (the last words that he uttered) that all his chief friends would celebrate his funeral with great conflicts. In this manner he died, when he had reigned twelve years and seven months; after he had achieved the greatest exploits, not only of all who ever reigned before him, but also of those who have come after him, even to our own times.'

The fulfilment of this prophecy, in the wonderful triumphs of Alexander, is still more interesting, since it seems to have been one direct link in the preservation of the Jewish people. The history in Josephus, though some have questioned its truth, seems in full agreement with the other facts which profane writers have recorded, and illustrates, in a remarkable manner, the overruling providence of God, in whose hand the hearts of kings "are like the rivers of waters, and he turneth them whithersoever he will."

'Now when Alexander was come into Syria, he took Damascus and Sidon, and besieged Tyre; and sending letters to the high-priest of the Jews, he charged him to send him a contingent, and to supply corn for his army and to give him whatever presents were before given to Darius, and to choose the friendship of the Macedonians, for that he would not repent of his conduct. But the high-priest answered those who brought the letters, that he had taken oaths to Darius not to bear arms against him, and these he would not transgress while Darius was alive. When Alexander heard this, he was enraged, and decided not to leave Tyre, as the siege was not nearly finished; but threatened, when he had taken it, to march against the high-priest of the Jews, and to teach all men, by his example, towards what parties their oaths ought to be kept. Wherefore, prosecuting the siege with fresh vigour, he took Tyre, and having ordered its affairs, marched against Gaza, and besieged it.

'When Alexander had taken Gaza, he was eager to go up against the city of Jerusalem. And the high-priest Jaddua, when he heard, was in perplexity and fear, and was at a loss how to meet the Macedonians, since the king was enraged at his former disobedience. Having enjoined therefore supplications to the people, and himself offering sacrifices, he entreated of God to be the shield of his people, and to free them from the impending dangers. And when he slept after the sacrifice, God warned him in a dream to be of good courage, and that they should crown the city with garlands, and open its gates; and the others in white robes, and he himself in priestly attire, should meet the king; fearing no danger whatever, since God would provide. When he awoke from sleep, he himself rejoiced greatly, and having revealed the message to all, and done what was commanded, he awaited the king's arrival.

'When he heard that he was not far distant, he went forward with the priests and the multitude, to meet him in priestly dignity, and differently from other nations, as far as a place called Sapha. Now this name, interpreted, denotes a watch-tower, for both Jerusalem and the temple can be

seen from it. But when the Phoenicians and Chaldeans, who followed the king, expected such a charge as his anger made likely, that that they should plunder the city and destroy the high-priest with tortures, just the contrary came to pass. For when Alexander, at a distance, saw the multitude in white robes, and the priests standing in their linen raiment, and the high-priest in purple and golden clothing, and the mitre on his head, and over it the golden plate whereon the Name of God was written, he came forward alone and did reverence to the Name, and was the first to embrace the high-priest. And when all the Jews around with one voice saluted Alexander, and encircled him, the kings of Syria and all the others were astonished at his conduct, and suspected that the king had lost his reason. But when Parmenio came forward alone, and inquired, why forsooth, when all did obeisance to him, he should do obeisance to the high-priest of the Jews? 'It was not him,' he answered, 'but God, to whom I did reverence, of whom he is honoured to be the high-priest; for I saw this same person in the same robes in a dream, when at Diun in Macedonia. And when I was pondering how I should conquer Asia, he charged me not to delay, but to cross over boldly; for that he would guide my army, and give me the kingdom of the Persians. So that, as I have seen no other in such robes, and see him now wearing them, I am reminded of my dream and the exhortation, and believe that, as I have made the expedition under a Divine guidance, I shall conquer Darius, and destroy the power of the Persians, and that all will prosper according to my wishes.' Having spoken thus to Parmenio, he took the high-priest by the right hand, and came into the city. And when he had gone up to the temple, he sacrificed to God under the instruction of the high-priest, and treated him and the other priests with worthy honours, *And when the book of Daniel the prophet had been read to him, in which he announced that some one of the Greeks would destroy the kingdom of the Persians*, he judged that he himself was the party intended, and being delighted at it, he dismissed the people for the present; but having summoned them the next day, commanded them to ask of him whatever favours they pleased. And when the high-priest entreated that they might use their country's laws, and be free from tributes every seventh year, he granted all their desire. And when they besought him that he would permit the Jews also in Babylonia and Media to use their own laws, he promised readily to do what they required.'

This narrative not only throws light on the prophecy, but illustrates remarkably the care of God over His chosen people. The providence of God has thus put a distinct seal on the fulfilment of these verses in Alexander, by the privileges which were thus procured from the Macedonian for the whole Jewish nation.