

# SALVATION IN SYMBOLS & SIGNS

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Corresponds to Program 65, 66

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the NKJV and KJV.

## The Harlot and the Seven Kings STUDY GUIDE

### THE HARLOT

#### Revelation 17:1-6

A “woman” in Bible prophecy represents a church. God likens His people, His church, unto a “comely and delicate woman” (Jeremiah 6:2) and to a cherished betrothed bride (Isaiah 54:5-6; Hosea 2:19-20; John 3:29; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 19:7-8). We also talk about the church being the pure bride of Christ, so a harlot is an impure woman, representing an impure or apostate church. We also know that water represents “peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues” because the angel reveals this to John in verse 15. The act of “sitting” represents control, as a rider sitting in the saddle controls a horse. In this case, the angel is telling John to come with him and be shown the judgment of the apostate church that controls the people of many nations. It should also not be lost upon us that the angel tells John that this great harlot, or dominant apostate church, has committed fornication with the kings and leaders of the earth, suggesting it is a political/religious power.

John then makes a point of telling us that the angel “carried him away.” He was taken somewhere, not physically, but in the spirit, or in vision. This is a very important key to understanding this chapter. As far as John was concerned, he was not viewing whatever he was shown from the time and place in which he was living on the island of Patmos around the year A.D. 95. John’s view was from wherever it was the angel had taken him. In fact, John had been taken into “the wilderness.”

Note that it is not “a” wilderness but “the” wilderness, an exclusive or specific wilderness.

#### Revelation 12:6, 14-16

The woman representing God’s pure church fled into “the” wilderness to a special place where she was fed by God for 1,260 days. We have covered the pure woman, the wilderness, and the 1,260-day timeframe in earlier studies, but notice that this time there are two women or churches on Earth that are diametrically opposed. One is pure, fleeing from persecution. The other is a harlot, inflicting the very persecution that the pure church is fleeing from. This explains verse 6 of Revelation 17, describing the harlot church as “drunken with the blood of saints.”



“...And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.”

#### REVELATION 17:3

### THE SEVEN KINGS

#### Revelation 17:7-8

The beast “was, and is not, and will ascend.” This phrase is used at least two other times in the book of Revelation. Each time it attempts to mirror Jesus “who is and who was and who is to come” (Revelation 1:8, 18). This earthly power is a counterfeit of Jesus Christ.

#### Romans 10:7

The Greek word “deep” here is the same word used in Revelation for the “abyss” out of which the Revelation 17 beast arises. This verse in Romans is describing Christ who died and was resurrected. In the devil’s counterfeit, the beast is also mortally wounded and then ascends out of the abyss (Revelation 13:3, 17:8). When we compare Revelation 17:8 with Revelation 13:8, we see in both of these verses the same safety net given

### KEY SCRIPTURES

**Rev. 17:1** THE JUDGMENT OF THE GREAT HARLOT

**Rev. 12:6** THE WOMAN FLED INTO THE WILDERNESS

**Rev. 17:8** THE BEAST...WAS, & IS NOT, & WILL ASCEND

**Romans 10:7** WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?

to mankind by God to escape this counterfeit deception in the form of the “Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8). Those who have their names in that book will not follow and worship this earthly power but will worship God only.

### Revelation 17:9-11

The original Greek reads, “even he is eight.” The number eight does not refer to an eighth head or kingdom, since the context insists that there are “seven heads” and “seven kings” (Revelation 17:9-10). The answer to the “eighth” is found in the phrase “and is of the seven,” that is, the eighth is one of the seven previous kings already mentioned. This makes sense when we understand that one of the previous kings, specifically Papal Rome, received a deadly wound that was to be healed. As already noted, only one kingdom has experienced death and resurrection. As mentioned in Revelation 13, it is Papal Rome (Revelation 13:3).

Verse 11 states that the beast “is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven” (the Greek translates to “and is out of the seven”). This means that the head that was mortally wounded or slain, and upon returning to life is “of the seven.” Therefore, the eighth head must be Papal Rome, resurrected and restored after its deadly wound is healed. Papal Rome will reach worldwide dominance and power in the end time. It is the fifth king renewed, but by whom or what means is the papacy restored to civil power?

A key description of the papacy is found in verse eight. It says that the beast “was, and is not, and yet is” (Revelation 17:8). This is describing the union of the harlot (apostate church) with the beast (state). The papacy “was” riding the beast (supported by civil power), “is not” now riding the beast (supported by civil power), and “yet is” (recovering from the deadly wound) and “will ascend out of the bottomless pit” (Revelation 17:8). It will be healed from the wound inflicted by the beast of the bottomless pit.

The papacy lost civil support in the year 1798 when, according to Bible prophecy and recorded history, a “beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit” inflicted the “deadly wound” (Revelation 17:8; 13:3). This phrase in Revelation 17:8, along with the phrase, “he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness” (Revelation 17:3), gives us the time frame under which John was shown this particular prophetic vision. The wilderness refers to the period of papal persecution from A.D. 538 to A.D. 1798. At the end of this wilderness time, this beast, identified as atheistic France, “ascended out of the bottomless pit,” arrested the pope, and disposed of the civil support of the papacy—a setback it has yet to recover from. It is from this historic perspective that John sees the seven kings, five of whom are fallen.

Revelation 17 is a summary or conclusion of the prophetic history of Revelation in connection with Daniel. According to

Revelation 13:1–3, 11:8, and 13:11, the seven “kings” brought to view in this summary are:

1. Babylon
2. Medo Persia
3. Greece
4. Pagan Rome
5. Papal Rome
6. Atheistic France
7. United States of America

Historical location can be challenging in the book of Revelation, but it is key to prophetic interpretation. For example, in Revelation 14:6–12, the context helps us to identify the historical location of the particular prophecy. The “judgment” hour in Revelation 14:7 points us to a post-1844 location for this message. Likewise, the following key points help identify the time element of the seven kings:

1. “One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls” shows John the final “judgment of the great harlot,” directing us to an end-time scenario (Revelation 17:1).
2. John is taken out of his day and carried “away in the Spirit into the wilderness,” pointing us to the Dark Ages from A.D. 538 to A.D. 1798 (Revelation 17:3; 12:6, 14).
3. John sees that the harlot is not yet riding the beast, identifying a post-1798 location when Papal Rome loses civil support (Revelation 17:7, 8, 11).
4. John sees that the beast will ascend out of the bottomless pit, again identifying a post-1798 time-frame (Revelation 11:7, 17:8).
5. John is shown ten horns without crowns, indicating a time when monarchies are no longer functioning as world leaders (Revelation 13:2; 17:3, 12).

### Revelation 17:12-18

The identity of the ten horns takes us back in history to the nations of Europe, from among which the papal power, this harlot woman, arose. As noted above in point five, the end-time prophetic picture of the 10 horns has changed somewhat from Daniel’s prophetic time frame during the Dark Ages. Three of the 10 horns were plucked up and those horns had crowns. In Revelation’s last day prophetic picture, none of the horns are plucked up and none have crowns. Yet, like Daniel’s prophecy, this end-time prophetic picture indicates a worldwide following and support (as noted in verse 15 the harlot is sitting on the waters—peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues supporting spiritual Babylon).

The seventh king points to the support of “another beast” that comes up out of the “earth” in Revelation 13:11. This earth beast, or earthly “king,” will “exercise all the authority of the first beast in his presence,” and will cause “the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose

deadly wound was healed” (Revelation 13:12). This second beast in Revelation 13 is the United States of America, the earthly power that rose with “two horns like a lamb” but speaks like a “dragon” (Revelation 13:11).

The seventh and final king—the United States of America—that first rose to prominence upon the Christian principles of civil and religious liberty, will eventually abandon those principles and speak like a dragon (Revelation 13:11). In so doing, the U.S. gives full healing to the papal church/state by making an image to the papacy and enforcing worship with economic sanctions and a death decree (Revelation 13:15-17). This seventh king supports the papacy (the fifth king) and continues “a short time” (Revelation 17:10).

Also, note that Revelation 17 twice emphasizes the word perdition (emphasis supplied throughout):

“The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition” (verse 8).

“The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition” (verse 11).

Traditionally, we interpret the “man of sin” in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 to be the leading antichrist figure of Bible prophecy—the pope. However, this passage also refers to the church-state union of the papacy as “the son of perdition” (2 Thessalonians 2:3), another link to Revelation 17:8 and 11, and the identity of the fifth and eighth kings as being Papal Rome. The papacy is the fifth king, who is also the eighth since he is “out of the

seven” and goes into perdition. In John 17:12, Jesus identifies Judas, the disciple who betrayed Jesus to the Jewish civil authority for money, as “the son of perdition.” So here in Revelation 17:8 and 11, it fitly represents a professedly Christian power who betrays Jesus for money, uniting church and state and enforcing economic sanctions (Revelation 13:15–17).

### Summary

This chapter is a very real, yet prophetic, summary of world history. The full and final apostasy of the world supporting the harlot and giving their strength to her false doctrines is pictured in Revelation 17. God will finally avenge the blood of His saints. The final movements will place the entire world not just against God’s people, but against the Lamb Who will overcome them for He is “Lord of lords and King of kings” (Revelation 17:14). It is our prayer that you will take your stand with the Lamb and refuse to give your support to the church-state system soon to arise in our world, fulfilling the final events of Earth’s history which precede the return of Jesus Christ. Amen ★