

NOON BIBLE STUDY: REVELATION 17 (PART 3)

REVELATION 17:1-2 - WHAT JOHN IS GOING TO SEE

REVELATION 17:3-6 - WOMAN RIDING BEAST

THE BEAST:
SCARLET COLORED.
FULL OF BLASPHEMOUS NAMES (WRITTEN ON THE BEAST?)
SEVEN HEADS
TEN HORNS

REVELATION 17:7 - WHY DO YOU WONDER? I'LL TELL YOU WHAT YOU'RE SEEING

REVELATION 17:8-14 - SOME DETAILS ABOUT THE BEAST

- V. 8: 1 - "WAS AND IS NOT AND IS ABOUT TO COME UP OUT OF THE ABYSS AND GO TO DESTRUCTION"
- 2 - THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH (WHOSE NAMES ARE NOT WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE) WILL WONDER WHEN THEY SEE THE BEAST THAT HE WAS AND IS NOT AND WILL COME.
- V. 9: 3 - SEVEN HEADS ARE SEVEN MOUNTAINS THAT THE WOMAN (THE BABYLON SYSTEM) SITS ON
- V. 10: 4 - SEVEN HEADS ARE ALSO SEVEN KINGS. WE ARE TOLD 5 HAVE FALLEN, ONE IS AND ANOTHER HAS NOT YET COME. WHEN THE 7TH KING COMES HE WILL "REMAIN A LITTLE WHILE".
- V. 11: 5 - THE BEAST ITSELF IS AN ADDITIONAL KING (8!) THAT IS LIKE AND WITH THE 7 OTHERS AND WHO WILL BE DESTROYED.
- V. 12-13: 6 - THE 10 HORNS ARE 10 KINGS WILL HAVEN'T YET BEEN GIVEN A KINGDOM. BUT THEY WILL BE ALIGNED WITH THE BEAST AND HAVE A SHORT RULE (CP. 1 HOUR).
- 7 - THEIR SINGULAR PURPOSE IS TO GIVE THEIR POWER AND AUTHORITY TO THE BEAST.

THE GOAL OF THESE KINGS AND THEIR KINGDOMS WILL BE TO TRY AND DEFEAT THE LAMB AND THE LAMB'S FOLLOWERS. BUT THAT *WILL NOT* HAPPEN (V. 14).

THE PHRASES "WAS AND IS NOT AND IS ABOUT TO COME" AND "WAS AND IS NOT" INDICATE THIS IS SOMETHING THAT HAS BEEN AND GOES AWAY AND COMES BACK. THIS ACTUALLY HELPS US CONNECT THE BEAST TO SOMETHING WE HAVE ALREADY SEEN.

AS WE HAVE STUDIED REVELATION WE HAVE DISCOVERED THAT RATHER THAN BEING A CHRONOLOGICAL TIMELINE STYLE BOOK, WE HAVE SIGNS AND VISIONS AND INTERLUDES AND SEALS AND TRUMPETS AND BOWLS. OUR STUDY APPROACH HAS BEEN TO ASK "WHAT DOES JOHN SEE NEXT?" AS

OPPOSED TO "WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?" THIS CHAPTER IS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF WHY THAT'S THE BETTER APPROACH. WHAT JOHN SEES IN REVELATION 17 IS SOMETHING HE/WE HAVE ALREADY SEEN IN REVELATION 13. THIS ISN'T SOMETHING WE'RE SEEING THAT IS NEW, IT'S JUST A NEW WAY OF SEEING SOMETHING WE'VE ALREADY BEEN SHOWN. LET'S REVIEW WHAT WE SAW THERE AND THEN RETURN TO REVELATION 17.

REVELATION 13:1 - AND THE DRAGON STOOD ON THE SAND OF THE SEASHORE. THEN I SAW A BEAST COMING UP OUT OF THE SEA, HAVING TEN HORNS AND SEVEN HEADS, AND ON HIS HORNS WERE TEN DIADEMS, AND ON HIS HEADS WERE BLASPHEMOUS NAMES.

REVELATION 13:2 - AND THE BEAST WHICH I SAW WAS LIKE A LEOPARD, AND HIS FEET WERE LIKE THOSE OF A BEAR, AND HIS MOUTH LIKE THE MOUTH OF A LION. AND THE DRAGON GAVE HIM HIS POWER AND HIS THRONE AND GREAT AUTHORITY.

THIS BEAST IS DOING THE DRAGON'S (DEVIL'S) WORK.

REVELATION 13:3-8 - I SAW ONE OF HIS HEADS AS IF IT HAD BEEN SLAIN, AND HIS FATAL WOUND WAS HEALED. AND THE WHOLE EARTH WAS AMAZED AND FOLLOWED AFTER THE BEAST; 4 THEY WORSHIPED THE DRAGON BECAUSE HE GAVE HIS AUTHORITY TO THE BEAST; AND THEY WORSHIPED THE BEAST, SAYING, "WHO IS LIKE THE BEAST, AND WHO IS ABLE TO WAGE WAR WITH HIM?" 5 THERE WAS GIVEN TO HIM A MOUTH SPEAKING ARROGANT WORDS AND BLASPHEMIES, AND AUTHORITY TO ACT FOR FORTY-TWO MONTHS WAS GIVEN TO HIM. 6 AND HE OPENED HIS MOUTH IN BLASPHEMIES AGAINST GOD, TO BLASPHEME HIS NAME AND HIS TABERNACLE, THAT IS, THOSE WHO DWELL IN HEAVEN. 7 IT WAS ALSO GIVEN TO HIM TO MAKE WAR WITH THE SAINTS AND TO OVERCOME THEM, AND AUTHORITY OVER EVERY TRIBE AND PEOPLE AND TONGUE AND NATION WAS GIVEN TO HIM. 8 ALL WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH WILL WORSHIP HIM, EVERYONE WHOSE NAME HAS NOT BEEN WRITTEN FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD IN THE BOOK OF LIFE OF THE LAMB WHO HAS BEEN SLAIN.

ONE OF THE HEADS OF THIS BEAST APPEARS TO HAVE A "MORTAL WOUND" (ESV) - IN OTHER WORDS HAVING BEEN KILLED/SLAIN, YET HEALED. THIS IS RELATED TO IDEA OF THE BEAST THAT "WAS, AND IS NOT, AND IS ABOUT TO COME..."

AS A RESULT THE PEOPLE OF THE EARTH ARE IN AWE OF THIS BEAST. THEN WE SEE A SECOND BEAST APPEAR WHO WILL SUPPORT THE FIRST BEAST WITH FALSE SIGNS AND WONDERS.

REVELATION 13:11-14 - THEN I SAW ANOTHER BEAST COMING UP OUT OF THE EARTH; AND HE HAD TWO HORNS LIKE A LAMB AND HE SPOKE AS A DRAGON. 12 HE EXERCISES ALL THE AUTHORITY OF THE FIRST BEAST IN HIS PRESENCE. AND HE MAKES THE EARTH AND THOSE WHO DWELL IN IT TO WORSHIP THE FIRST BEAST, WHOSE FATAL WOUND WAS HEALED. 13 HE PERFORMS GREAT SIGNS, SO THAT HE EVEN MAKES FIRE COME DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN TO THE EARTH IN THE PRESENCE OF MEN. 14 AND HE DECEIVES THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH BECAUSE OF THE SIGNS WHICH IT WAS GIVEN HIM TO PERFORM IN THE PRESENCE OF THE BEAST, TELLING THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH TO MAKE AN IMAGE TO THE BEAST WHO HAD THE WOUND OF THE SWORD AND HAS COME TO LIFE.

IN ADDITION TO REVELATION 17 & 13, THIS BEAST IS SEEN BY DANIEL IN DANIEL 7

DANIEL 7:7-8 - "AFTER THIS I KEPT LOOKING IN THE NIGHT VISIONS, AND BEHOLD, A FOURTH BEAST, DREADFUL AND TERRIFYING AND EXTREMELY STRONG; AND IT HAD LARGE IRON TEETH. IT DEVOURED AND CRUSHED AND TRAMPLED DOWN THE REMAINDER WITH ITS FEET; AND IT WAS DIFFERENT FROM ALL THE BEASTS THAT WERE BEFORE IT, AND IT HAD **TEN HORNS**. 8 "WHILE I WAS CONTEMPLATING THE HORNS, BEHOLD, **ANOTHER HORN**, A LITTLE ONE, CAME UP AMONG THEM, AND **THREE** OF THE FIRST HORNS WERE PULLED OUT BY THE ROOTS BEFORE IT; AND BEHOLD, THIS HORN POSSESSED EYES LIKE THE EYES OF A MAN AND A MOUTH UTTERING GREAT BOASTS.

THIS BEAST DANIEL SAW HAD 10 HORNS, AND THEN AN ADDITIONAL HORN GROWS, KNOCKING OUT 3 OF THE 10 ($10-3=7$). SO THE DANIEL'S BEAST HAD 10 HORNS AND THEN 7 HORNS AND THEN AN 8TH HORN THAT IS WITH THE 7. FOR ANYONE NEW TO THE BIBLE, OR UNFAMILIAR WITH BIBLICAL PROPHECY, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO SEE THAT THERE IS A COMMON PATTERN OF NUMBERS IN THESE VISIONS. (THERE ARE MORE PARALLELS IN DANIEL AND IT WOULD BE GOOD TO READ DANIEL 2 & 7 ON YOUR OWN TIME).

IN THE BIBLE'S PROPHETIC LITERATURE, BEASTS, HEADS/HORNS SYMBOLIZE KINGDOMS AND/OR THE KINGS OF THOSE KINGDOMS, OFTEN WITH LITTLE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE TWO. INTERESTINGLY, THE LANGUAGE USED HERE ABOUT THIS BEAST IS SIMILAR TO THE LANGUAGE USED ABOUT THE LAMB. THE BEAST WE SEE IN REVELATION 13 HAS POWER, AUTHORITY AND A THRONE AND MOST SHOCKINGLY, APPEARS TO BE "SLAIN" AND "HEALED." AS A RESULT THE WHOLE WORLD "FOLLOWS" & "WORSHIPS" THIS BEAST. IT IS A FALSE AND DECEPTIVE ALTERNATIVE TO CHRIST - MIMICKING HIS POWER AND RULE AND EVEN HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION. A FALSE SUBSTITUTE WHICH IS ACTUALLY EMPOWERED BY THE DRAGON. COULD WE NOT CONCLUDE THAT SUCH AN AFFRONT TO JESUS CHRIST & A MOCKING & MIMICKING COUNTERFEIT IS IN FACT "ANTI-CHRIST"?

IS THIS A PERSON? A PERSON WHO APPEARS TO BE TAKEN OUT (KILLED OR REMOVED) BUT THEN RETURNS? WITH THIS INTERPRETATION, A FIGURE WHO IS BLASPHEMOUS TO GOD AND OPPRESSIVE TO THE SAINTS WOULD BE THE ONE THROUGH WHOM THE BABYLON-SYSTEM IS RULED OVER. A COMMON IDEA WITHIN THIS INTERPRETATION IS THAT THIS PERSON COULD BE LITERALLY OR DECEIVINGLY PHYSICALLY WOUNDED OR KILLED AND HEALED, THIS PERSON COULD BE DISPOSED OF AND RETURNED TO POWER.

IS THIS A SYSTEM? A KINGDOM THAT APPEARS TO BE DESTROYED BUT THEN COMES BACK IN POWER? WITH THIS INTERPRETATION A "KINGDOM" IS THE VEHICLE THROUGH WHICH THE BABYLON-SYSTEM IS ADVANCING. IN SUCH A CASE A NATION OR GOVERNMENT COULD RISE TO POWER, BE REMOVED FROM POWER/DEFEATED, AND THEN RETURN TO POWER AGAIN. THIS COULD BE THE SAME KINGDOM OR ANOTHER KINGDOM THAT RESEMBLES THE PREVIOUS ONE.

HERE IS HOW DANIEL'S VISION OF THIS BEAST CONCLUDES:

DANIEL 7:23-26 - "THUS HE SAID: 'THE FOURTH BEAST WILL BE A FOURTH KINGDOM ON THE EARTH, WHICH WILL BE DIFFERENT FROM ALL THE OTHER KINGDOMS AND WILL DEVOUR THE WHOLE EARTH AND TREAD IT DOWN AND CRUSH IT. 24 'AS FOR THE TEN HORNS, OUT OF THIS KINGDOM **TEN KINGS** WILL ARISE; AND ANOTHER WILL ARISE AFTER THEM, AND HE WILL BE DIFFERENT FROM THE PREVIOUS ONES AND WILL SUBDUE **THREE KINGS**. 25 'HE WILL SPEAK OUT AGAINST THE MOST HIGH AND WEAR DOWN THE SAINTS OF THE HIGHEST ONE, AND HE WILL INTEND TO MAKE ALTERATIONS IN TIMES AND IN LAW; AND THEY WILL BE GIVEN INTO HIS HAND FOR A TIME, TIMES, AND HALF A TIME. 26 'BUT THE COURT WILL SIT FOR JUDGMENT, AND HIS DOMINION WILL BE TAKEN AWAY, ANNIHILATED AND DESTROYED FOREVER.

EACH GENERATION HAS BEEN CALLED TO BE ALERT REGARDING THESE MATTERS. THIS MEANT SOMETHING TO THE JEWS IN DANIEL'S DAY AND IT MEANT SOMETHING TO THE CHRISTIANS OF REVELATION'S WRITING. IF YOU RECALL, ANOTHER STUDY KEY TO OUR APPROACH IS TO ASK "WHAT DID THIS MEAN TO THEM" FIRST AND THEN "WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO US". THE TEXT OF REVELATION HAS TO SPEAK TO THE FIRST CENTURY CHURCH AND PROVIDE WISDOM AND HOPE AND NOT JUST BE A DECODER RING FOR 21ST CENTURY NEWSFEEDS. SO, WITH ALL OF THESE WILD IMAGES, WHAT DID THIS MEAN TO OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF JOHN'S DAY?

WHILE JOHN USES THE WORD "MYSTERY", THE EARLY CHURCH CERTAINLY MUST HAVE HAD ROME IN MIND AS THEY READ THESE THINGS. THERE ARE HISTORICAL INDIVIDUALS AND EVENTS THAT FIT WITH THESE THINGS. BOTH THE EMPIRE AND EMPEROR OF ROME FIT MUCH OF THIS. THE EARLY CHURCH HAD EYES WIDE OPEN WHEN READING THIS PASSAGE.

FOR US NOW, WE CAN SEE THE PATTERNS OF THE PREVIOUS EMPIRES AND LOOK AT OUR WORLD AND THE THINGS THAT UNFOLD IN THE DAYS AHEAD. WE'RE WATCHING FOR DECEPTION. WE'RE WATCHING FOR EVIL. WE'RE WATCHING FOR AUTHORITY FIGURES AND AUTHORITY SYSTEMS WHICH WORK AGAINST GOD AND HIS WAYS...

A COUPLE POINTS TO CLOSE:

1 - THESE CHAPTERS REVEAL THAT MOST OF US ARE NOT WELL VERSED IN SCRIPTURE AND THAT MUST CHANGE. SOME OF US MAY BE OVERWHELMED TODAY AND EVEN DISCOURAGED AFTER WHAT WE HAVE LOOKED AT. DO NOT ALLOW THAT FEELING TO CAUSE YOU TO PUSH AWAY FROM THE BIBLE - INSTEAD RECOGNIZE THAT WE ALL NEED TO KEEP READING AND PRAYING AND READING AND PRAYING. I HAVE BEEN ACTIVELY STUDYING THE BIBLE FOR OVER 20 YEARS, FOCUSED ON JUDAIC STUDIES AS AN UNDERGRAD AND THEN ATTENDED BIBLE COLLEGE AFTER THAT - AND THERE ARE MANY PLACES OF SCRIPTURE THAT I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND. BUT I DON'T WANT TO QUIT IN MY QUEST FOR TRUTH AND UNDERSTANDING - ESPECIALLY IN MATTERS THAT APPEAR TO BE CRITICAL TO THE DAYS IN WHICH I LIVE. NONE OF US WILL READ THROUGH THE BIBLE ONCE AND "GET IT". IN FACT IF YOU COMPLETE THE GREAT AND IMPORTANT WORK OF READING THE BIBLE, YOU WILL LIKELY UNDERSTAND LESS THAN YOU DON'T! BUT THE BIBLE IS A LIVING BOOK, GOD'S HOLY WORD AND IT IS PART OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD - AND RELATIONSHIPS TAKE TIME AND REQUIRE COMMUNICATION AND THOUGHT AND EFFORT. WE LIVE IN AN INCREDIBLE ERA OF ACCESSIBILITY TO THE BIBLE - UNPARALLELED IN HISTORY. DO NOT SETTLE FOR A NICE ENCOURAGING VERSE ON YOUR FRIDGE MAGNET. DIVE IN AND AS THE AUTHOR OF THE BOOK TO TEACH YOU.

2 - THESE CHAPTERS ARE SAYING SOMETHING WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND AND BE PRAYING AND WATCHFUL FOR. THE THINGS WE HAVE READ IN REVELATION 17 SPEAK OF GREAT DECEPTION, GREAT DELUSION, AND GREAT EVIL. GOD'S PEOPLE MUST BE SEPARATED FOR THE LIFE AND WORK OF GOD. WE MUST TAKE SERIOUSLY OUR CALLING TO BE HOLY AND OBEDIENT FOLLOWERS OF JESUS CHRIST. IT MAY SEEM LIKE THESE THINGS ARE A LONG WAY OFF OR NOT AFFECTING OUR WORLD TODAY - BUT ISN'T THAT EXACTLY WHAT THE DECEIVING ONE WOULD WANT US TO THINK? WE SHOULDN'T BE AFRAID OR PARANOID BUT WE MUST BE WATCHFUL. JESUS TEACHES THAT TO HIS DISCIPLES OFTEN IN THE GOSPEL ACCOUNTS. WE SHOULD AVOID JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS AND IN A RUSH TO SAY WE HAVE IT ALL FIGURED OUT. INSTEAD, WE SHOULD LOOK AT THE WORLD THROUGH THE LENS OF THE PROPHETIC AND BE LOVING AND ZEALOUS WATCHMEN FOR OUR LIVES AND WORLD. WE MAY NOT SEE THE FINAL BEAST IN OUR LIFETIME, BUT THE "SPIRIT OF THE ANTICHRIST, OF WHICH YOU HAVE HEARD IS COMING, IS NOW ALREADY IN THE WORLD" (1 JOHN 4:3). TIME IS SHORT.

3 - THE FINAL REFLECTION OF THIS SECTION IS A REMINDER THAT CONSISTENT THROUGHOUT THESE DISTURBING PROPHECIES IS AN ACCOUNT OF THE CONCLUSION TO THE WHOLE STORY - NAMELY, THAT GOD WINS. THAT TRUTH SHOULDN'T NEGATE THE SOBRIETY THAT WE JUST DISCUSSED IN THE PREVIOUS POINT - BUT IT SHOULD FUEL OUR FAITH AND INSPIRE BOLDNESS AND COURAGE IN THE PEOPLE OF GOD. IN EACH OF THE PASSAGES WE LOOKED AT TODAY THE END OF THE STORY IS IN VIEW.

REVELATION 17:14 - "THESE (KINGS) WILL WAGE WAR AGAINST THE LAMB, AND THE LAMB WILL OVERCOME THEM, BECAUSE HE IS LORD OF LORDS AND KING OF KINGS, AND THOSE WHO ARE WITH HIM ARE THE CALLED AND CHOSEN AND FAITHFUL."

REVELATION 14:1 - THEN I LOOKED, AND BEHOLD, THE LAMB WAS STANDING ON MOUNT ZION...

DANIEL 7:27 - 'THEN THE SOVEREIGNTY, THE DOMINION AND THE GREATNESS OF ALL THE KINGDOMS UNDER THE WHOLE HEAVEN WILL BE GIVEN TO THE PEOPLE OF THE SAINTS OF THE HIGHEST ONE; HIS KINGDOM WILL BE AN EVERLASTING KINGDOM, AND ALL THE DOMINIONS WILL SERVE AND OBEY HIM.'

EVEN REVELATION 17 ITSELF BEGINS BY TELLING US THAT THIS IS ALL THE STORY OF THE "JUDGMENT OF THE GREAT HARLOT" (17:1). EVEN AS WE LEARN ABOUT THESE BEASTS, WE'RE READING ABOUT THEIR DOWNFALL NOT THEIR VICTORY.

YET, WHILE THERE IS VICTORY ASSURED, THAT DOESN'T MEAN THERE ISN'T A BATTLE THAT MUST FIRST BE WAGED. THE BATTLE IS ONGOING AND WE ARE NOT SPECTATORS IN THIS BATTLE. WE'RE BOTH SOLDIERS AND TARGETS IN THIS WAR. BUT WHAT A GAMECHANGER TO KNOW THAT WE DON'T FIGHT FOR THE VICTORY, WE FIGHT FROM A PLACE OF VICTORY. AND WE AREN'T LEFT TO FIGHT WITH OUR OWN STRENGTH, BUT INVITED AND COMMANDED "TO BE STRONG IN THE LORD AND IN THE POWER OF HIS MIGHT (EPHESIANS 6:10)." AND HE AND HIS POWER WILL OVERCOME BECAUSE HE IS THE LORD OF LORDS AND KING OF KINGS. AND HE SHALL REIGN FOREVER AND EVER.