

4.

MOUNTAINS, HEADS AND KINGS

Now we must analyze a part of the Revelation passage which is a little bit difficult. Please follow with me carefully through a few simple steps of logic. This vision is not as hard to understand as it seems at first glance. All that is required is a little wisdom which God is happy to grant to all who ask.

We are told that this prostitute is riding on a beast. This beast has seven heads and ten horns. In another writing we will address the subject of the beast and the ten horns. But for now we will concentrate just on the seven heads of the beast.

The angel helps us here by explaining: "The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits and they are seven kings" (Rev

17:9,10 NASB). Here is a simple formula. Each head represents a mountain and a king. We could think of it like this:

1 head = 1 mountain = 1 king.

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Then we read: "Five have fallen" (Rev 17:10). So we learn that of the seven [1 head = 1 mountain = 1 king] entities five of them have already fallen. This means that they have already come and gone from history. This would then leave our chart looking something like the one below with the "fallen" ones crossed out, leaving only two groups remaining:

1 head = 1 mountain = 1 king.

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Of the two entities remaining, we read: "one is, and the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must continue a short time" (Rev 17:10). No doubt, after almost 2,000 years of history, the entity which "is," or rather was at the time Revelation was written, has by now

also “fallen” or disappeared. So we can also mark it out too. This then leaves us with the final one which had “not yet come.”

1 head = 1 mountain = 1 king.

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What does all this signify? In Bible prophecy, often a “head” on some kind of beast means a leader or a king. We have already seen this in our “1 head = 1 king” formula. The mountains probably represent kingdoms. We find some support for this interpretation in the book of Daniel.

While the prophet is seeing a vision, he saw “a stone cut out without hands” which smashed the feet of a large image and “became a *great mountain* and filled the whole earth” (Dan 2:35). This then would mean when the Lord Jesus returns, He will smash the antichrist empire and that His Kingdom will become great (a great mountain) and fill the whole earth. Therefore, we can conclude that the mountains represent kingdoms.

Earlier in chapter 17 we are told that the great prostitute is sitting on the seven mountains (vs 9). By now I trust that you readers have begun to realize what is meant by the word “Babylon.” No doubt you are all understanding the immensity of her sin and her degraded, lustful behavior. She is the epitome of wealth, luxury, worldly excess of every sort and sin.

So what we see here is that the spirit of Babylon, with all that this represents will come into a full expression seven times throughout world history, in seven kingdoms (seven mountains) under the reign of seven kings. Five of those expressions had already “fallen” or come and gone by the time John saw this vision. One of those expressions existed at that time and a final one was coming.

This would mean that we could look back in world history and find five instances of an empire which became successful, wealthy and then totally decadent. I do not claim to be a student of history. But I can imagine that ancient Babylon was a place which might fit our description.

Ancient Egypt under some of the Pharaohs might also have risen to the heights of excess which we have described. Possibly the Media-Persian empire or the kingdom of Alexander the Great, or even ancient Assyria could fit our pattern. Although this writer is not able to identify each of the five with accuracy, exactly who they were is not critical to our understanding. Certainly there were five and they have already fallen.

The one manifestation of Babylon which “is” or rather was in existence in the days of John the apostle is easier to identify. The Roman Empire which was then prominent fits our description exactly. It became famous for its

excesses. Orgies, feasts, entertainments including violent, bloody spectacles involving animals, people and gladiators, sexual perversion, luxury and all the ingredients of Babylon which we have discussed were found in the Roman empire in full bloom.

This kingdom would then represent the sixth [1 head = 1 mountain = 1 king] entity which by now has also been reduced to a mere shadow of its former power, fame and sin.

What we are looking for today is the final, full manifestation of Babylon. We can expect to see in our generation a "city" which is becoming all that the Roman Empire was and more. So, we can look for something so self-indulgent, so focused on surrounding herself with every kind of luxury and pleasure, a city/nation which is in the process of becoming so immoral and vile, that it will perhaps put the others six manifestations of this prostitute to shame.

It is certain that at the end of this age, there will appear a last great "Babylon" which, in terms of luxury, excess and sin, will rise up to a kind of huge pus-filled head, until she is judged by God and destroyed.