



Trumpet Staff

The Heart of Prophecy for the Last Days

It's one of the most mysterious, yet powerful, verses in the Bible!

- Stephen Flurry
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Revelation 17:10 is one of the greatest prophecies in all the Bible! "Contained within this one verse is the heart of prophecy for these latter days." That is what my father, Gerald Flurry, writes in [Daniel Unlocks Revelation](#). The *heart* of prophecy! The core understanding of end-time prophecy is packed into this one verse:

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

Five are *fallen*—one is—and another is *not yet come*. What does this mean? To understand, let us first examine the overview of Revelation 17.

Mystery, Babylon the Great

"And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication" (Revelation 17:1-2).

In Bible prophecy, a woman symbolizes a church. This passage is about a religion or church, one that is led by Satan! It is a church that fornicates with the kings of the Earth. Verses 4 and 15 show that this woman is fabulously wealthy and presides over many nations that speak different languages. This is a worldly church that mixes religion with politics. She is like a prostitute selling her ability to influence people to political governments in return for more power. She successfully gains powerful influence over great nations.

"So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns" (verse 3). Revelation repeatedly uses the term "beast" to symbolize a powerful empire, for example in Revelation 12 and 13. Related imagery appears in Daniel 7. (These symbols are thoroughly explained by Herbert W. Armstrong in his booklet [Who or What Is the Prophetic Beast?](#), which we will send you free upon request.)

2

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The Revelation 13 beast pictures the Roman Empire. Verse 3 notes that this beast was wounded but then healed. Though the Roman Empire was overrun in a.d. 476, it was *healed, resurrected*, in the Imperial Restoration of Justinian in a.d. 554. From that point forward, the empire's relationship with the Roman Catholic Church made it something quite different.

This church-state union is known in history as *the Holy Roman Empire*. And this is specifically what is portrayed in Revelation 17. The seven heads of this beast symbolize *seven resurrections* of this empire that are to occur. The picture of a *woman* riding the beast shows that these resurrections were *guided by a church*.

"And upon her forehead was a name written, mystery, babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth" (verse 5). Verse 3 also notes that this beast is full of blasphemy (as do Revelation 13:1 and 6). This is a great false church that claims to be Christian but is steeped in the pagan religious mysteries of ancient Babylon. It is a universal religion of Babylonian customs and traditions overlaid with a veneer of "worshiping Christ."

This church is also called the *mother* of harlots. Hundreds of *daughter* churches came out of her in protest. *But they all came from her*. They squabble with her over her right to rule them, yet their pagan teachings and festivals *came from her*.

3

(Trumpet Staff)

This prophecy was recorded 1,900 years ago—yet it describes what has happened in the centuries since *perfectly*, and in *detail*!

The name "Babylon" means *confusion*. The religion of Babylon was known as a "mystery religion." Look at the traditional Christian world. There are hundreds and hundreds of denominations, all differing, yet all sharing the same origin, the same mother, and the same teachings and festivals tracing back to paganism—and all wrapped in a cloak of "Christianity."

We are accustomed to this state of affairs in traditional Christianity. But when you think about it, it is full of confusion!

"And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration" (Revelation 17:6). This church has a very dark history of persecuting and even *killing* many of those who actually were true Christians. Your Bible prophesied this *1,900 years ago*, and that has been the history ever since!

The Seven Resurrections

4

Justinian I (Wikimedia Commons)

“And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns” (Revelation 17:7). The detail and precision in this prophecy are astounding! Yet many people are perplexed by it and assume the meaning is unknowable.

5

Charlemagne (Wikimedia Commons)

But why should we marvel? God unlocks these mysteries to true Christians who submit to Him and let the Bible interpret itself. As my father writes in [Daniel Unlocks Revelation](#), we can understand this if we put the pieces together and face the facts!

6

Otto the Great (Wikimedia Commons)

“The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is” (verse 8). The beast symbolizes the Roman Empire. Its seven heads symbolize seven resurrections of that ancient system under a great false church: the “Holy” Roman Empire.

7

Charles V (Wikimedia Commons)

Verse 8 describes this beast emerging from the “bottomless pit.” Verse 9 compares the seven resurrections to mountains. In other words, the history of this empire has peaks and valleys. In *The Outline of History*, H. G. Wells wrote: “The Roman Empire staggers, sprawls, is thrust off the stage, and reappears, and—if we may carry the image one step further—it is the church of Rome which plays the part of the magician and keeps this corpse alive.”

8

Napoleon Bonaparte (Wikimedia Commons)

Compare these scriptures to a snapshot of European history over the past 1,500 years.

9

Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler (Wikimedia Commons)

In a.d. 554, East Roman Emperor Justinian recognized the supremacy of the pope. The old Roman system sprang back to life, now as the “Holy” Roman Empire! The wound of Revelation 13:3 was healed!

In a.d. 800, Pope Leo iii crowned Charlemagne as emperor of the Romans. The pope even pronounced him “the 73rd emperor of the fourth world empire.” He recognized that this was yet another resurrection of the Roman Empire, that fourth world-ruling system of Daniel 7, Revelation 13 and Revelation 17!

In a.d. 936, Otto the Great became king over the united German tribes when he was crowned at Aachen, the capital used by Charlemagne. In a.d. 962, his army entered Italy at the request of Pope John XII, who was under siege and who crowned Otto Holy Roman emperor at the Vatican. The revived church-state combine dominated central Europe.

In 1438, the throne of the Holy Roman Empire was revived by the monarchs of the Habsburg dynasty, who went on to hold the throne continuously until 1740.

In 1804, with Pope Pius VII in attendance, Napoleon Bonaparte crowned himself emperor of the French Empire. The territories he conquered included those of the Holy Roman Empire.

In 1870, Giuseppe Garibaldi revived the Holy Roman Empire for the sixth time. This sixth resurrection culminated in the Hitler-Mussolini axis (1936–1945).

In 2019, the same Holy Roman Empire is emerging out of the pit once again! This seventh resurrection is now taking shape.

One Is, the Other Is Not Yet Come

Now consider again this astounding verse: “And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space” (Revelation 17:10).

The five that “are fallen” extend over a period of 1,260 years, just as God prophesied in Revelation 13:5. (Forty-two months equal 1,260 days. Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6 establish the principle of substituting a *day for a year* in prophecy. In this case, these 42 months equal *1,260 years*.) From Justinian’s Imperial Restoration in a.d. 554 (first king) to the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo in 1814 (fifth king) is precisely 1,260 years!

The Apostle John lived hundreds of years before the Holy Roman Empire began. But in Revelation 17, God carried him forward in a vision to the time of that empire’s *sixth* resurrection, which culminated in the Hitler-Mussolini axis. The reason God carried John forward to the sixth resurrection is that *the full meaning of this prophecy* would be revealed *during the time of the sixth resurrection*: the time when “one is.” God revealed this prophecy to His servant *during* the sixth resurrection, and that man warned of *another* resurrection that was “not yet come.” That man was Herbert W. Armstrong.

Here is what my father writes in his booklet *Prophecy Again*: “This revelation is about the period when Mr. Armstrong, God’s end-time Elijah, was doing this work of God. ... During World War II, we saw the Hitler-Mussolini axis, but then it disappeared from the scene. It ‘was not’! And yet, God says, ‘it is’! The Axis powers lost the war, but as Mr. Armstrong preached time and again, they just went underground—into ‘the bottomless pit’ (verse 8). They’re still there—they’re just *underground*.”

Verse 10 is not *only* about the last two resurrections of the Holy Roman Empire. *It’s also about the last two eras of God’s Church!* God revealed the full truth about this prophecy through Herbert W. Armstrong, whom He also used as the human leader of the sixth era of God’s Church (Revelation 3:7-13). Mr. Armstrong *warned* about the seventh and final resurrection, but the seventh head had not yet ascended out of the bottomless pit when Mr. Armstrong died in 1986.

Revelation 17:10 is the heart of prophecy for *our time today*!

The Feeble Sixth Head

Another fascinating detail in this prophetic passage is the way God characterizes the *sixth* head of the beast in verse 8: it “was, and is not.” The reason for this description is because the Hitler-Mussolini axis “was not in any sense the power-wielding old Roman Empire,” Mr. Armstrong wrote in [*Who or What Is the Prophetic Beast?*](#)

We tend to think of the sixth head of the beast as being much worse than the previous five resurrections because of the widespread carnage caused by modern warfare: 60 to 70 million people killed, hundreds of millions wounded. But in terms of a *world-ruling* empire ascending out of the heart of Europe, the Hitler-Mussolini axis was actually quite feeble and short-lived compared to the previous five resurrections, which conquered the established western part of the world.

Hitler’s regime was not as powerful or wide-ranging. He conquered Europe for about four years. But he never conquered Britain. And once his ally, the Empire of Japan, bombed the United States into the war, Hitler’s war machine was no match for America’s industrial might.

Adolf Hitler at the Parteitag der Freiheit, 1935.(Universal History Archive/UGC/Getty Images)

God knew the sixth head of the beast would be meager and insignificant, comparatively speaking, because it would ascend out of the bottomless pit at the very time America and Britain together would reach *their* peaks in power. This involves yet another breathtaking prophecy in your Bible, in Genesis 35:10-11.

It was the descendants of biblical Ephraim (the British Empire) who, with the help of European allies, vanquished the fifth head of the Holy Roman Empire, driving Napoleon into exile in 1814. Napoleon attempted a comeback the following year and was crushed by the British at Waterloo. As British historian Paul Johnson writes, “Waterloo was one of the most decisive battles of history and brought to an end the entire Revolutionary and Napoleonic period.” It was decisive because the 1,260 years that enclosed the “five [that] are fallen” had ended!

Then in the 1940s, it was the modern descendants of the biblical brothers Ephraim and Manasseh (Britain and the United States) who crushed Hitler’s dream of dominating Europe and then the world.

Just think on the *detail* of this stunning prophecy!

The Seventh Resurrection

Over the past 70 years, the Holy Roman Empire has once again been in a historical valley. But now it is emerging out of the pit once again. The seventh resurrection is taking shape. The European Union today is an oversized group of 28 nations, but it is about to downsize to 10 nations or groups of nations. Revelation 17:12 says, “And the ten horns which thou sawest are *ten kings*, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.”

That is referring to a “United States of Europe” led by 10 kings, who are of one mind (verse 13). Those 10 kings, or heads of state, are led by one fearsome leader, prophesied in Daniel 8.

Herbert W. Armstrong predicted that a united Europe would arise out of crisis under the leadership of a strong German leader. He wrote in the November-December 1954 *Plain Truth*: “Germany inevitably [will] emerge as the *leader* of a united Europe. It will require some *spiritual* binding force to inspire this *confidence*—to remove these *fears*—and that spiritual binding force *must* arise from inside Europe! *All Europe* is actually *ready*—just waiting for the *confidence-inspiring leader*”

That seventh resurrection is rising *right now*. It’s just waiting for that strong, confidence-inspiring German leader to unite Europe into a single power. As Mr. Armstrong wrote, it will require a *spiritual* binding force to inspire that confidence.

My father wrote in the October 2018 *Trumpet*: “Bible prophecy makes clear: Soon, Europeans will get exactly what they are asking for, another Charlemagne-type leader. This man will come to power and set himself up as a strongman over all Europe. He will effectively hijack the European Union! ... Regardless of who the strongman is, it is clear that we are seeing a revival of the Holy Roman Empire in Europe in a way that has not been promoted before. ... When this man comes to power, it will affect every human on this Earth in the most horrible ways—unless God protects you! But God only protects those who repent.”

We are facing the worst crisis in mankind’s history. In the past, when Europe has been led by a strongman and allied with the Vatican, it has plunged the Continent and even the world into war.

But there is also *great hope* in these prophecies. The same Bible that accurately forecast the last 1,500 years of European geopolitical history and the current resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire also forecasts that this resurrection will be the *last one*!

Notice the conclusion of my father’s article: “We cannot predict or set dates; only God the Father knows the day or the hour

(Matthew 24:36). But God warns us that we had better know when it is at the door! (verse 33). We must be watching and praying.

“The great hope of all of this is that just beyond that time of tribulation is the greatest, most inspiring event to ever take place”

We have been proving the prophecies of Revelation 17. We have seen how they came to pass, from a.d. 554 to a.d. 2019, in fearsome, violent, living color. The Bible prophesies that the next resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire will wreak even worse destruction in even less time. Other Bible prophecies specify that this “time of tribulation,” because it is so destructive, continues for an even shorter period than the Hitler-Mussolini axis.

But notice Revelation 17:14: “These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.”

The seventh resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire will be the *shortest* resurrection—and the *last resurrection*. Why? Because the Lamb, Jesus Christ, will smash it! This evil empire, this combination of a false church and a beastly state, will finally be destroyed *permanently*. The Bible prophesies that He will then establish *His* government on Earth.

What a powerful, sobering but hopeful vision is contained in Revelation 17. Six kings have now fallen. One is about to come. He will continue, but only for a short space. ■