

## Revelation Pastor Lou DeVizia

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Introduction: We now have identified the key players in the drama of this chapter. The "great harlot" is the one-world religion of last days "Babylon". The harlot is carried by the "beast" which we know to be the great last days' ruler, the Antichrist (Daniel's "little horn" and "prince" who would come, the New Testament's "man of sin" and "son of perdition"), and his empire, represented by the seven heads and ten horns. All of this will emerge in the Great Tribulation - it is highly plausible that the seeds of all exists in the world today - it will all come to full maturity in the post-Rapture world. A world ruler will establish order, a false peace. A great tool to bring that about will be religion - there will be a great, single religion in the world; it will be Satanically controlled and characterized by promises of peace, false signs and wonders, great deception by lying prophets, and it will work hand-in-hand with the political, economic, and military rule of Antichrist. The religion will literally be used by Antichrist as a device to establish world control. And of course, the whole system will be quite openly hostile to Israel (albeit probably not at first) and, especially, to the remnant of God's elect - the Tribulation saints - those who turn to Christ Jesus during this time. All of this has been seen in various ways in Revelation up to this point.

Think of it - all of the religion in the world will be turned to nothing with the chaos of the Rapture. That is quite natural. Every non-Christian religion will immediately proven false. But that will not end religion! On the contrary, the world will become more religious than ever. And there will be just one religion, consumed with lies and blasphemies, hating the true God, and of course denying Christ. This religion is the harlot. But what is to become of it? That is the subject of the rest of Chapter 17. The religion will not go on for the entire Tribulation period. Antichrist's goal is to establish himself as the object of the world's worship in an effort to thwart the work of God in establishing the kingdom of Christ. And so Antichrist, controlled by Satan, will double-cross the harlot, and the one-world religion that rode to prominence on his back will be destroyed in favor of actually, literally worshipping *him*. Then, ultimately, he too will be destroyed by the Lord Jesus when He returns.

1. Verses 7-14 - The beast: Antichrist and his kingdom, political and religious power, ultimate defeat and destruction.

- v.7 - His tool: **the woman**. The harlot. She represents the blasphemous religion of the Tribulation that Antichrist uses to gain influence and unity in the world.

- v.8 - His blasphemous rise to power: **was, and is not, and will ascend**. Antichrist will seem to be killed and resurrected, causing amazement among the world's people as they turn to him in blasphemous worship. This is Daniel's "abomination which causes desolation" (referred to by Jesus also).

NOTE: **...not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world** - clear terminology describing the *non-elect*.

- v.9 - His religious power base: **seven mountains**. Possibly Rome. Identified as such by Victorinus, 3rd Century writer, earliest known commentator on Revelation. Rome famously sits on seven hills. It is also the seat of perhaps the best centrally-organized religion in the world ever, Roman Catholicism.

- vv.10-11a - His historical and political power base: **seven kings... himself also the eighth**. Note the word **also**. The descriptions in *both* v.9 and v.10 describe the seven heads. They are mountains (Rome?) and **kings**. The description of kings seems to point to the history and future of the beast's rule. The great empires of world history inasmuch as they have related to God's

people, Israel, dealt with prominently in the Bible are, in succession: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. **Five have fallen...** the first five empires have fallen. **one is...** the sixth, Rome, existed at the time John wrote Revelation. **the other has not yet come...** the last days™, weakened version of Rome, perhaps; political Babylon, possibly with a rebuilt, literal Babylon as its political capital. **The beast... the eighth...** when Antichrist™ resurrects™ (see v.8), he will assume complete rule, even religiously, creating, in effect, a new empire - the eighth.

- v.11b - His destiny: **perdition**. The Lord Jesus will personally destroy Antichrist™'s rule when He returns (Ch. 19).

- vv.12-13 - His earthly agency: **ten kings**. Antichrist™'s empire will involve the sub-rule of 10 kings.

- v.14 - **His desire: make war with the Lamb**. Why is Antichrist doing all of this? To attempt to thwart God™'s work in establishing the kingdom of Jesus when He return. Antichrist will, of course, fail.

2. Verses 15-18 - The harlot: one-world religion, worldwide influence, destroyed by the beast in fulfillment of God™'s purpose.

- v.15 - Her influence: **peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues**. The one-world religion will be practiced worldwide.

- vv.16-17 - Her destruction: the ten horns... **will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire**. Note the involvement of God here: He puts it into the hearts of the Antichrist™'s agents - the 10 kings - to destroy the one-world religion. This will not end religion, it will change it to the worst religion ever known to man - the direct, deliberate worship of the Antichrist, the power behind whom is Satan himself. In other words, *the world will be worshipping Satan at the time Jesus returns*.

- v.18 - Her identity: **that great city**. The religion, Babylon. See the religious title (name written on her forehead) in v.5; this is essentially a description of the one-world religion. All false religion is descended from Babel, Genesis 11.