"The Scarlet Beast, the Seven Heads, and the Ten Horns"
Revelation 17:8-14

November 8, 2026

Last Week: Beauty (Babylon) and the Beast

Today: The Scarlet Beast, the Seven Heads, and the Ten Horns

OUTLINE:

- 17:8-11, Explanation of the Beast and the Seven Heads
- 17:12-14, Explanation of the Ten Horns and the Handing Over of Their Authority to the Beast

17:8/ "The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise…"

1 Jn. 2:18, "Antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come."
Examples:

- Antiochus Epiphanes
- Nero
- Adolf Hitler

17:10/ "They are also seven kings, five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come…"

What are the seven heads/mountains/kings?

1. Preterist (***past***):
    a. Associated with Rome, "the City on the Seven Hills"
    b. Seven particular emperors of Rome: Julius Caesar, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero ("one is?"), Galba, Otho??
2. Historicist (***timeline***):
    a. Associated with Rome, "the City on the Seven Hills"
    b. The seven forms of government under the Roman Empire (the king, the consulate, the dictatorship, the decemvirate, the military tribunes, the triumvirate, the Caesars)
3. Idealist (***spiritual***):
    a. Associated with the world powers that oppose God and oppress God's people
    b. "Seven" is a symbolic number of completion of the rulers that oppose God and oppress God's people.
4. Futurist (***future***):
    a. Associated with Rome, "the City on the Seven Hills"
    b. The seven empires who persecuted God's people: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and "the one not yet come"—the empire of the Antichrist

(Revived Roman Empire)…but what of the eighth? The Antichrist himself?

17:12-13/ What are these ten horns/kings?

1. Preterist *(**past**)*:
    a. These ten are a different sort of king than the seven listed above. Instead, these are the countries and rulers subjected by Rome: Franks, Lombards, Saxons, Vandals, etc.
2. Historicist *(**timeline**)*:
    a. These are the ten Roman-Gothic kingdoms existing in AD 532: Anglo-Saxons, Franks, Lombards, Visigoths, etc.
3. Idealist *(**spiritual**)*:
    a. Ten (like seven) is symbolic for a completed number. These are powers identified with the "kings from the east" mentioned in Rev. 16:12 or other anti-Christian powers on earth.
4. Futurist *(**future**)*:
    a. These ten are a different sort of king than the seven listed above. These kings rule "not in succession but simultaneously at the end time" (Walvoord).
    b. Evidently the Antichrist will have to put down three of these rulers who revolt against him. Dan. 7:8 describes this: "I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another horn, a little one, before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots. And behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things."