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Revelation - Why The Dragon Has Seven Crowns And The Beast Has Ten



By Dan Maines

Why The Dragon Has Seven Crowns And The Beast Has Ten

Introduction

† One of the most overlooked details in Revelation is the difference between the crowns of the dragon and the crowns of the beast. (Revelation 12:3; Revelation 13:1)

† Revelation 12 shows a great red dragon with seven heads, ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. (Revelation 12:3)

† Revelation 13 shows a beast rising from the sea with seven heads, ten horns, and ten crowns upon his horns. (Revelation 13:1)

† The numbers are not accidental. The change in the location and number of the crowns reveals a transfer of authority and helps identify the dragon and the beast in their first century setting. (Revelation 13:2; Revelation 17:9-12)

Revelation 12:3

Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven crowns.

† The dragon is identified later in the chapter as Satan. (Revelation 12:9)

† The seven heads are identified as seven mountains and seven kings associated with Rome. (Revelation 17:9-10)

† At this stage the crowns appear upon the heads because the focus is upon the succession of ruling authority. (Revelation 17:10)

† The dragon stands behind the earthly kingdom and its rulers. (Revelation 13:2; Ephesians 6:12)

† The ten horns are present, but they are not yet crowned in the vision. (Revelation 12:3; Revelation 17:12)

† The ten horns had not yet received royal authority when the dragon is first introduced. (Revelation 17:12)

Revelation 12:9

And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

† John leaves no doubt concerning the dragon's identity. (Revelation 12:9)

† The dragon is not Rome itself but the spiritual power working through Rome. (Revelation 13:2)

† Satan used earthly governments to oppose God's covenant people. (Revelation 12:13; Revelation 13:7)

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 crowns, and on his heads were blasphemous names.

† The beast receives its authority from the dragon. (Revelation 13:2)

† The crowns have moved from the heads to the horns. (Revelation 12:3; Revelation 13:1)

† The vision now emphasizes the exercise of power rather than the succession of rulers. (Revelation 17:12-13)

† The beast represents the visible political power through which Satan operated. (Revelation 13:2; Daniel 7:7)

† The crowns appear on the horns because the kings are now acting with the beast. (Revelation 13:1; Revelation 17:12-13)

Revelation 13:2

And the beast that 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.

† Satan delegated authority to the beastly Roman power. (Revelation 13:2)

† The beast combines characteristics of the kingdoms seen by Daniel. (Daniel 7:3-7)

† Rome became the final persecuting kingdom described in Daniel's vision. (Daniel 7:23-25)

† The dragon possessed the authority while the beast carried out the work on earth. (Revelation 13:2; Revelation 17:13)

Revelation 17:9-10

Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains upon which the woman sits, and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while.

† Revelation itself explains the meaning of the seven heads. (Revelation 17:9-10)

† The heads represent kings associated with Rome. (Revelation 17:9-10)

† Five had fallen, one was reigning, and one was yet to come when John wrote. (Revelation 17:10)

† This places the prophecy within the first century rather than thousands of years later. (Revelation 1:1-3; Revelation 22:10)

Revelation 17:12

The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour.

† The ten horns represent kings who received authority with the beast. (Revelation 17:12)

† Because the horns represent ruling authority, the crowns appear upon the horns in Revelation 13. (Revelation 13:1; Revelation 17:12)

† The focus has shifted from the heads to the rulers exercising power under the beast. (Revelation 17:12-13)

† The ten crowned horns emphasize active governmental authority. (Revelation 17:12-13)

Revelation 17:13-14

These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast.

These 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.

† The ten horns are not merely symbolic decorations but rulers who actively support the beast. (Revelation 17:13)

† Their crowns in Revelation 13 emphasize their participation in the beast's authority. (Revelation 13:1; Revelation 17:12-13)

† Though united against Christ, they could not overcome the Lamb. (Revelation 17:14)

† Christ's victory demonstrates that all earthly authority remains subject to His rule. (Revelation 19:16; Matthew 28:18)

Why Seven Crowns In Revelation 12?

† The dragon's seven crowns emphasize authority connected to the seven heads. (Revelation 12:3)

† The focus is on the succession of kings through whom Satan exercised influence. (Revelation 17:10)

† The dragon is the source behind the empire's authority. (Revelation 13:2)

† The crowns upon the heads draw attention to the ruling line itself. (Revelation 12:3; Revelation 17:10)

Why Ten Crowns In Revelation 13?

† The beast's ten crowns emphasize authority exercised through the ten horns. (Revelation 13:1; Revelation 17:12)

† The horns are identified as kings who rule with the beast. (Revelation 17:12)

† The crowns move from the heads to the horns because the vision shifts from succession to administration. (Revelation 12:3; Revelation 13:1; Revelation 17:12-13)

† Revelation is presenting the same kingdom from different perspectives. (Revelation 12:3; Revelation 13:1-2)

† The dragon is the spiritual power behind Rome. (Revelation 12:9; Revelation 13:2)

† The beast is the visible political power of Rome. (Revelation 13:2; Daniel 7:23)

† The change from seven crowned heads to ten crowned horns demonstrates progression within the vision rather than a different kingdom. (Revelation 12:3; Revelation 13:1)

Historical References

† Josephus recorded Rome's authority over Judea and the rulers involved in the Jewish War. (Josephus, Wars of the Jews)

† Tacitus documented the succession of Roman emperors during the first century. (Tacitus, Histories)

† Irenaeus connected Revelation's heads with kings and kingdoms. (Irenaeus, Against Heresies)

† Eusebius connected Revelation's judgments with first century historical events. (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History)

How It Applies To Us Today

† Revelation was written to real believers facing real persecution. (Revelation 1:9; Revelation 2:10)

† God remained sovereign even when Satan appeared to control earthly governments. (Revelation 17:14; Romans 13:1)

† The dragon's authority was temporary. (Revelation 12:12)

† The beast's authority was temporary. (Revelation 13:5)

† Christ's kingdom outlasted both. (Daniel 2:44; Revelation 11:15)

† We live under the reign of the victorious King today. (Ephesians 1:20-22; Hebrews 12:28)

Q & A Appendix

Q: Are the dragon and the beast the same person?

A: No. The dragon is Satan, while the beast is the Roman power through which Satan worked. (Revelation 12:9; Revelation 13:2)

Q: Why does the dragon have seven crowns while the beast has ten?

A: The dragon's crowns are on the heads because the focus is on the succession of kings. The beast's crowns are on the horns because the focus is on kings exercising authority with the beast. (Revelation 12:3; Revelation 13:1; Revelation 17:10-12)

Q: Why are there only seven crowns on the dragon if he has ten horns?

A: Because the vision is emphasizing the seven heads identified as kings. The ten horns had not yet received royal authority when the dragon first appears. Later the crowns appear on the horns when those kings receive authority with the

beast. (Revelation 12:3; Revelation 13:1; Revelation 17:10-12)

Q: Does this support a first century fulfillment?

A: Yes. Revelation says five kings had fallen, one was reigning, and one was yet to come when John wrote. (Revelation 17:10)

Q: Is the beast a future world ruler?

A: No. Revelation places the beast within the Roman world known to John's audience. (Revelation 1:1-3; Revelation 17:9-10)

Q: If the dragon is Satan, why does he have the same seven heads and ten horns as the beast?

A: Because the beast derives its authority from the dragon. The shared heads and horns show that the beast is the earthly manifestation of Satan's authority. The dragon is the spiritual power, while the beast is the political power. (Revelation 13:2; Revelation 13:4)

Q: Why are the crowns called diadems?

A: A diadem represents kingly authority and rulership. The crowns identify both the dragon and the beast as exercising governmental power through kings and kingdoms. (Revelation 12:3; Revelation 13:1; Revelation 17:10-12)

Q: Do the seven heads represent seven literal mountains only?

A: No. Revelation says the seven heads are seven mountains and seven kings. The mountains identify Rome, while the kings identify the line of rulers connected with Rome. (Revelation 17:9-10)

Q: Why does Revelation show the dragon first and the beast second?

A: Revelation first reveals the spiritual source of the persecution and then reveals the earthly instrument through which that persecution was carried out. The dragon gives the beast his power, throne, and authority. (Revelation 12:9; Revelation 13:2)

Q: What is the main lesson of the different crowns?

A: The different crowns show that Revelation is tracing the flow of authority from Satan, to the Roman rulers, to the kings who acted with the beast. The visions complement one another and reveal different aspects of the same first century reality. (Revelation 12:3; Revelation 13:1; Revelation 17:10-13)

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Revelation 12:3; Revelation 12:9; Revelation 13:1; Revelation 13:2; Revelation 17:9-10; Revelation 17:12; Revelation 17:13-14

† Josephus, Wars of the Jews; Tacitus, Histories; Irenaeus, Against Heresies; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

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