

# Revelation 17:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

## Analysis

---

The angel's promise to explain the mystery of the woman and beast indicates that apocalyptic symbols require divine interpretation. Human wisdom cannot decode these visions; God must reveal their meaning. The 'mystery' (Greek 'mystērion') refers not to incomprehensibility but to truth hidden until divinely disclosed. Reformed theology emphasizes that Scripture interprets Scripture—the angel will explain symbols using biblical imagery. The beast carrying the harlot represents political power supporting false religion, while the woman represents apostate religious systems. Understanding requires spiritual discernment, not mere intellectual analysis.

## Historical Context

---

Mystery religions pervaded the Roman world, claiming secret knowledge available only to initiates. John's use of 'mystery' reclaims this term for divine revelation—true understanding comes through God's disclosure, not human initiation rites. The symbolism would resonate with readers familiar with Rome's religious-political fusion and imperial cult.

## Related Passages

---

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

## Study Questions

---

1. How does recognizing that divine mysteries require God's interpretation humble your approach to difficult biblical passages?
2. What does the angel's offer to explain symbolism teach about Scripture's perspicuity—clarity for those whom God enlightens?

## Interlinear Text

---

καὶ	εἶπέν	μοι	τὰ	ἄγγελος,	Διὰτί	ἐθαύμασας;	ἐγὼ
And	said	unto me	which	the angel	Wherefore	didst thou marvel	I
G2532	G2036	G3427	G3588	G32	G1302	G2296	G1473
σοι	ἐρῶ	τὰ	μυστήριον	τὰ	γυναικός,	καὶ	τὰ
thee	will tell	which	the mystery	which	of the woman	And	which
G4671	G2046	G3588	G3466	G3588	G1135	G2532	G3588
θηρίου	τὰ	βαστάζοντος	αὐτήν,	τὰ	ἔχοντος	τὰ	
of the beast	which	that carrieth	her	which	hath	which	
G2342	G3588	G941	G846	G3588	G2192	G3588	
ἐπτὰ	κεφαλὰς	καὶ	τὰ	δέκα	κέρατα.		
the seven	heads	And	which	ten	horns		
G2033	G2776	G2532	G3588	G1176	G2768		

## Additional Cross-References

---

**Revelation 17:8** (Parallel theme): 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.