



discover allegiance

*Uncover the issue that will instigate earth's final showdown
and learn who, when and how it will happen*

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It's said that the race to become the next prime minister begins the day after the last election is ended. And only one emerges victorious. And in the cosmic epic drama that we have seen - only one side emerges victorious. The good news is - good wins!



For it is written: As I live, says the LORD, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

Romans 14:11

See also Philippians 2:9-11.

So how does this conflict climax?

THE FINAL SHOWDOWN

There will be a final showdown on planet earth, a climactic end-time struggle in which only one emerges victorious. Christ wins, Satan is vanquished, and those redeemed by the blood of Jesus share in the fruits of His victory. In a real sense, the outcome was assured at the cross. The battle for us is simply to choose whose side we want to be on in the final showdown - the winner's or the loser's.

Yes, Satan has been waging war on earth ever since his fall from heaven. The book of Revelation - often in highly symbolic language, mostly drawn directly from the Old Testament - depicts various aspects of his battle against God and humanity. We now want to look at his final and most furious effort this side of the Second Coming.

To do so, we start with Revelation 13, a book filled with symbols of beasts. In the Bible, beasts are often symbols of political and military powers and empires. We have seen that in Daniel 7, which we will come back to.

Revelation 13 opens with a description of a powerful anti-God power - often described as the anti-Christ, which we saw in Booklet 13 doesn't necessarily mean against Christ but can also mean in place of Christ.

Look at these texts:



Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marvelled and followed the beast. So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him? And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.

Revelation 13:1-7

What is this power?

THE BEAST OF DANIEL 7

Interestingly enough, however bizarre the symbolism of this beast, we have encountered some of it before. In Daniel 7, which we studied in Booklet 13 (on the change of the Sabbath), the prophet had a dream in which he saw four beasts rise out of the sea - beasts that represented four great empires, symbolised by their kings. We saw, too, that these were the same four kingdoms that appeared in Daniel 2. Here's a summary of these four kingdoms in Daniel 7:4-7.

The first was like a *lion* with eagles' wings - representing Babylon.
 The second was like a *bear*, and raised itself on one side - Media Persia.
 The third was like a *leopard* with four heads and four wings - Greece.
 The fourth was *dreadful, terrible*, and strong, with iron teeth and ten horns - Rome.

The vision spent a great deal of time on the fourth power - the Roman one - first shown in its pagan phase, but then the emphasis switched to its papal one. (A review of Booklet 13 would be very helpful here.)

Daniel's attention was then drawn to the ten horns on the fourth beast:



The ten horns are ten kings who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; he shall be different from the first ones, and shall subdue three kings. He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time.

Daniel 7:24-25

THE PAPACY IN PROPHECY

Notice the similarities between the composite beast in Revelation 13 and what appears in Daniel 7. The beast in Revelation 13 has the characteristics of a lion, a leopard, and a bear - symbols of three of the four beasts in Daniel 7. The composite beast in Revelation 13 also has ten horns, as did the fourth beast of Daniel 7. Thus, immediately we see that Revelation 13 points back to and expands on Daniel 7 - just as Daniel 7 built on and expanded on Daniel 2.

Thus, we see here another depiction of the Papacy - the power that has changed God's law by seeking to replace the seventh-day Sabbath with Sunday, a day that has no Scriptural authority.

But there's more. The composite beast in Revelation 13 was a blasphemous power, *speaking great things and blasphemies* (Revelation 13:5) - a parallel depiction of the little horn, the last phase of the fourth beast in Daniel 7, which is also said to *speak pompous words against the Most High*. Daniel 7:25

Blasphemous, pompous words?

Though endless examples could be used, some of the most recent come from the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the first catechism published since the Middle Ages.

For example, in the Gospels, after Jesus had healed a crippled man, He said the following to him: *Man, your sins are forgiven you*. Luke 5: 20

Look at what happened next.



And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?

Luke 5:21

They were right. What man can forgive someone's sin? No man - *but God alone*. Of course, as we have seen, Jesus was God, so He could forgive sin.

Notice, the following quote from the official *Catechism of the Catholic Church*:

There is no offense, however serious, that the Church cannot forgive. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1995, New York: Doubleday, 1995, No. 982

The church cannot forgive?

Or this quote:

By Christ's will, the Church possesses the power to forgive the sins of the baptised. Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 986

The church forgives sin? Hardly. That forgiveness comes only, and directly, from God Himself, with no need of any earthly institution as a mediator. A careful look at the institution of the Papacy itself shows the entire structure is built around the concept that the salvation offered every human through Jesus Christ must be mediated through the institution of the Roman Catholic Church itself - an idea that's blasphemous to the core, for it puts the church, in fact, in place of God.

The church is catholic; she proclaims the fullness of the faith. She bears in herself and administers the totality of the means of salvation. Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 868

These are just a few of the many examples of how, over the long centuries, the institution of the Papacy has sought to usurp the role that belongs only to God. Note again that anti-Christ means also in place of Christ. Hence, we see the depiction of it both in Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 as a blasphemous power.

THE PERSECUTION

Another common feature of the little horn of Daniel 7 and the composite beast of Revelation 13 is that of persecution. Both persecuted the saints - God's faithful people. In Daniel 7, it was said that the saints were given into his hands for *a time and times and half a time*. Daniel 7:25
 Revelation 13, one phase of the beast power is described like this: *And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months*. Revelation 13:5 The verses then go on to describe its activities, which include the power to *make war with the saints and to overcome them*. Revelation 13:7

See the supplementary material on the time aspect of this prophecy of three and a half times (years), forty-two months, or 1260 days of Daniel 7 and Revelation 13.

All these verses together show the persecution of *the saints* as occurring during this same time period. These saints - God's faithful people - are often depicted in the Bible as a woman. See Jeremiah 6:2 and 2 Corinthians 11:2.

THE WOUND

As we have seen, Revelation 13 starts out depicting a hybrid beast power, based on the prophecy of Daniel 7, that symbolises papal Rome. What else could it be? Daniel 7 showed four great empires through history - Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome. Rome was the final power to exist before a judgment in heaven that leads to the establishment of God's eternal kingdom. See Daniel 7:23-27. Pagan Rome vanished long ago, but papal Rome - the little horn power (the latter phase of the fourth beast) - exists today. After all, what power other than Rome arose after ancient Greece and is still in existence? As we can see, too, many characteristics of that little horn power are repeated in the description of this apocalyptic power in Revelation 13.

It is, unquestionably, the Papacy.

In fact, many Bible interpreters use the date A.D. 538, when the Roman Catholic church, through a decree of Emperor Justinian, secured both political and religious control in the West, as the start. Then, 1260 years later would be 1798, the exact year when French General Berthier invaded Rome and took the Pope captive. There were Bible students, even before 1798, who predicted something drastic would happen to Rome around that time. Though the Papacy itself didn't end then, the 1260 years in which *the saints shall be given into his hand* (Daniel 7:25, and see also Revelation 13:7), certainly did.

After Revelation 13:1-2 describes the beast, another element is added. In what many Bible students believe is a direct reference to that 1798 captivity, which ended the 1260 years of the specific period of persecution, Revelation 13:3 reads: *And I saw one of his heads as if it had been*

mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marvelled and followed the beast.

In other words, though something terrible happened to the beast, a *deadly wound* that was to kill it - after all, what else is a deadly wound - was healed, and the beast power was revived. Though the Papacy has had ups and downs since 1798, it's hard to imagine - given its stature in many parts of the world - anything like what happened in 1798 happening to it again.

The point is - though the 1260 years of persecution ended, and though Rome itself had a deadly wound, Rome today has regained a lot of stature and wields massive influence through the devotion of millions and millions of dedicated members all over the world. Also it is widely believed that in conjunction with the United States of America she engineered the demise of the European communist bloc.

Hence, its depiction in prophecy as this beast power in Revelation 13.

THE SECOND BEAST

When planning mischief in Europe, Joseph Stalin was asked about how the Papacy might react. Stalin has been famously quoted as responding: *The pope, how many divisions does he have?*

However cynical, his response does raise an important question regarding this prophecy. No matter how much influence Rome might have, how could it possibly yield the kind of power in which the entire world is pressured to get the infamous mark of the beast?

Fair enough question. And it gets answered right away.

Revelation 13:1-10 is a description of the first beast - the Papacy.

After the Papacy power is identified in Revelation 13:1-10, the next verses introduce another massive power that arises one that has global influence - but only in the context of the Papacy - the world-wide religious and political power that precedes it in the prophecy and in history as well. The verses depicting the Papacy end with a reference to the wound it received in 1798: *He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.* Revelation 13:10

Look at what immediately follows:



Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

Revelation 13:11-12

A few points to consider:

Firstly, this second power is seen *coming up* right after the reference to the wound of the first beast in 1798. Thus, it's logical to assume in and around this time the second beast would arise.

Secondly, this second beast is seen *coming up out of the earth*. In Daniel 7, the beasts were seen as arising out of *the Great Sea*. Daniel 7:2 Meanwhile, Revelation 17:15 says: *The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.* Often in the Bible, masses

of people are depicted by water or flood imagery. The fact that this second beast arises from *earth*, and not from water as did the other beasts, would indicate that it arose from a relatively unpopulated region, as opposed to the part of the world from where the previous empires arose.

Thirdly, this nation had two horns like a lamb. A lamb, in contrast to the animals in the other composite beast - leopard, lion, and bear - symbolises something gentle. Also the second beast had two horns. Horns in the Bible often symbolise power, but unlike the horns on the first beast, which had crowns on them (Revelation 13:1) indicative of monarchies, this beast has none. It represents another kind of government.

Fourthly, the second beast would have to be a major world power - a superpower - because look at what it does: It *causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed*. Revelation 13:11-12 Only the most powerful nation on earth, at least in terms of military might and world-wide influence, would ever be able to do what the prophecy predicts.

ONE NATION ALONE

What power fits this description? Only one - the United States of America.

Firstly, it came into existence as an independent nation in 1788, after the Constitution was ratified by the states - just 10 years before 1798.

Secondly, unlike the other beast powers, it arose from a relatively unpopulated area, often called the New World.

Thirdly, the lamblike qualities, in contrast to the crowns of previous nations, represent a new kind of government - one with gentler features.

Even with all its faults, the United States for most of its history has presented a great hope, and even a model, for religious and political freedom to the world. (Imagine, for instance, how different our world would be had the Soviet Union, not the United States, won the Cold War!)

Finally, the United States is still by far the world's dominant political, military, and economic power - the only nation that could conceivably force the world to worship the first beast power.

What's interesting too, is that in the 1800's, when America was nowhere near the mega nation it would become, many Bible students had identified it as the second beast. This, even when the Americans were still waging war with the Native American population - and not always winning either!

We come, however, to another feature of the second beast. Though it starts out with two horns *like a lamb*, what happens next? Unfortunately, it will speak *like a dragon*, and then force the world to worship the first beast. In other words, though we are not told in the Bible how it will happen, something will cause the United States to become - instead of the beacon of religious freedom and liberty it has always been - the major cause of religious persecution in the world!

Speaking about this beast power, Revelation says:



He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy

or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

Revelation 13: 15-17

Of course, big changes will have to come. But, as we all know too well, we live in a world where, overnight, everything can change - and not for the good either, as we can see regarding America and the mark of the beast.

So in the final stages of this epic struggle on planet earth, God has revealed in Revelation 13 that there will be two powerful agencies that will cooperate to bring about the final global showdown between truth and error.

And the amazing reality is that those two powerful agencies - as identified above - are today significant players in global affairs.

What happens next and how does God respond? Booklet 19 will answer those questions.



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