

SECTION FOUR

CHAPTERS 12–14

THE TRINITY OF EVIL: DRAGON, BEAST, AND FALSE PROPHET



○ U T L I N E

Chapter 12—The Woman and the Dragon

Chapter 13—The Beast and the False Prophet

Chapter 14—Christ's Return and the Judgment

REVELATION CHAPTER TWELVE



A NEW VISION BEGINS

The voice of the seventh angel at the end of the previous chapter signaled the close of earth's history. All seven of the warning trumpets have sounded, finishing their message to the inhabitants of the earth. Chapter 12 begins a new picture with new symbolic characters and meanings that will present the *testimony of Jesus* again. In contrast to the trumpet series, where the symbolism was often difficult to establish, much of this section is clear and direct. Though there still are some differences of opinion, the various views of prophecy agree more on Chapter 12 than any other chapter of the Revelation. The picture is painted in bright colors and with broad stroke, leaving only the minor details to be quibbled about.

This fourth and middle section of the Book begins with Chapter 12 and ends with Chapter 14. The most notable of the new characters are the Dragon, Beast, and False Prophet, which form that infamous trinity of evil

whose careers are detailed through the rest of the Revelation. Chapter 12 is really an allegory, illustrating the birth and destiny of the Kingdom of Christ and the ambition of her terrible spiritual enemy, the Dragon. Chapter 13 explains the rise of the Beast and False Prophet, and their two-pronged attack upon the Church. Chapter 14 concludes the section with a graphic description of heaven and the return of Christ. This structured approach to the introductions of these characters makes it predictable that their judgments will be likewise presented systematically. We see this beginning with the sixth section, which describes the end of the Beast and False Prophet (Chapter 19), followed by the seventh section's description of the end of the greatest of all evil ones, Satan as the Dragon (Chapter 20).

THE WOMAN, THE DRAGON, AND THE MANCHILD

The striking feature of Chapter 12 is how accurately it foretells the future of the Church Age. John, banished to the Isle of Patmos, could not possibly have so correctly predicted these events, but the Holy Spirit communicating through him could, and the wonderful purpose and consistency of the vision adds new confirmation to our faith. The allegory is based on symbols developed in the Old Testament and continued by the writers of the New.

Our first step should be to study and establish the primary symbols: the *woman*, the *Dragon*, and the *Manchild*. The Dragon is interpreted for us; he is *that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan* (v9). Here we have another opportunity to check the validity of our first premise in interpreting the Revelation given in the introduction (page 16), where we proposed that the key to understanding the symbols of the Revelation lies in finding their consistent usage elsewhere in the Scriptures. Is a dragon a consistent symbol for Satan in the Bible? Without question it is. From the Garden of Eden in Genesis to the Beasts of Revelation, this creature (Satan is a created being) represents the chief enemy of God under several names. He is called *Leviathan* in Isaiah 27:1, the *crooked serpent* in Job 26:13, and *Rahab, the dragon* in Isaiah 51:9 to mention a few. In the NT the Greek word is *drakon*, and according to Strong's Greek Dictionary it refers to "a fabulous kind of serpent," but

ancient non-Christian Greek writers used it also for three-headed monsters and other mythical creatures. While the OT writers often used dragons to represent evil and Satan, in the NT only the Book of Revelation talks of dragons, and they always represent Satan.

In Chapter 9 we concluded that the star that fell from heaven to earth and opened the bottomless pit symbolized Satan. The question could be asked why Satan is symbolized by a star there but a dragon here. The answer lies primarily in the intent of each overall picture. Chapter 9 showed Satan as ruler of his kingdom of evil during the Church Age, but Chapter 12 shows the broader picture: his long and unending attempt to overthrow God and corrupt His creation. Jesus is also represented by several different symbols. He is the Lamb, the Lion, the Morning Star, the Mighty Angel, etc. The symbols always present an aspect or feature of the object or being, and not the whole. This is similar to many OT types and shadows realized in NT truths.

The *Manchild* is an obvious representation of Christ, for He alone was *caught up unto God* (v5), referring to His ascension immediately following His death and resurrection. The details of His ascension were presented in Chapter 5, and here we are given only a shortened version.

Unlike the Dragon, the *woman* in this allegory is not clearly identified, and there are two possible meanings. The first possibility is that the *woman* represents the nation of Israel, the Jewish Old Testament Church, and the second is that she represents the Universal Church, made up of OT Jews and NT Christians. Both sides have strong arguments and the decision is not an easy one. Fortunately, there is very little difference in the overall meaning of the vision using either of these two options. Nor does one or the other conflict with, or better support the rest of the Book. I favor the idea that the *woman* is the Jewish OT Church, and will give the reasons why later on.

There is no difference in interpreting the first part of the vision using either of the two possible meanings for the *woman*, for the first twelve verses of this allegory take place at Christ's first coming, when there was no NT Church. Therefore, the two options for the symbolic *woman* are identical up to verse 12, both identifying her with the OT people of God, the Israelites. The prophets had long foretold that out of Israel, from the tribe of Judah and

lineage of David, Messiah would come. And long before the prophets, in the garden of Eden, God had promised that from the seed of woman would come One that would bruise the Dragon's head (Gen 3:15).

There is a powerful message in this allegory, one that all Christians, regardless of their view of prophecy, can appreciate and rejoice in. We see the great hatred of Satan, and his long war against God and His Redeemer. Then we see him finally defeated and cast out of heaven, no longer able to stand and accuse redeemed men before the Throne of God. The heavens break forth into great rejoicing, but the earth's inhabitants must wait awhile, until the iniquity of man has come to the full and Christ returns to judge the world. The story continues into Chapter 13 with the rise of the Beast and False Prophet, but the main point of the passage before us is the defeat of Satan by Jesus rising from the dead, and what that momentous event means for mankind. Keeping the main characters in mind, read the chapter all the way through to get the overall picture and intent of the passage. Then we will go through the details and implications that must be understood and reconciled with the rest of the Scriptures.

1. *And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:*
2. *And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.*
3. *And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.*
4. *And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.*
5. *And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.*

6. *And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.*
7. *And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,*
8. *And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.*
9. *And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*
10. *And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.*
11. *And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.*
12. *Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.*

THE WOMAN: THE FIRST COVENANT

In this vision, John sees a great wonder or sign (*semeion*, see 1:1) appear. The sign is in heaven, indicating its spiritual significance. A *woman* stands surrounded by the celestial bodies of the sun, moon, and stars. She is with child, and is ready to give birth. The woman represents Israel, the nation of God's choice for almost 2,000 years and the recipients of the First Covenant. She is a glorious woman, clothed with the sun, standing on the moon and wearing a crown of 12 stars. This portrait is taken from Genesis 37, when Joseph dreamed that the sun, moon, and 11 stars bowed down to him. His family immediately understood that the sun and moon represented his father

and mother and the stars symbolized his brothers. Israel as a nation began with this family, when God changed Jacob's name to Israel, and his sons became the 12 patriarchs of Judaism.

Israel was afforded every spiritual help and blessing, while the other tribes of the world were not. Read Ezekiel 16 for an illustration of how lavishly God blessed Israel. God's interaction with man during this time was within the framework of the Israelite Covenant, and He spoke to the children of Israel through great prophets and leaders. The sun, moon, and stars figuratively represent stability and truth (see glossary), and with these two pillars God made OT Israel to be His own chosen people.

The OT prophets often used a *woman* to represent the Jewish nation. Usually these representations are negative, such as Hosea's unfaithful wife, and Ezekiel's parable of two women (Judah and Israel) who became harlots (Eze 23). The NT writers built on this foundation and used the husband/wife relationship as an illustration of Christ and the Church (Eph 5), and even OT writings contain similar types in the accounts of Isaac and Rebekah, Ruth and Boaz, and the Song of Solomon. Christ is the Groom, and the Church His chosen, pure, and chaste Bride (Mt 25:1-13, John 3:29). The wedding will take place after this world has ended, at the *marriage supper of the Lamb* (19:9). Later, in Revelation 17, we will read about a wicked *woman*, a Harlot and close friend of Babylon who persecutes the Church. This *woman* symbolizes the apostate church, which is pictured filled with iniquities and great wickedness, fully compromised with the world.

Because of these types and symbols, many prophecy students understand the celestial woman to be a representation of the Universal Church; that is, OT Israel and NT Christianity. There is not much to be said against this approach, and it may even be the correct one. I believe, however, that the celestial woman signifies Israel of the First Covenant, primarily because of verse 17, which differentiates between the *woman*, and *the remnant of her seed*, further described as those *which keep the commandments of God*. It appears that these are two separate entities rather than one and the same (the Church). If the *woman* is the Universal Church, who are those *which keep the commandments of Jesus* that the Dragon goes off to persecute (v17)? However, if the *woman* is the Jewish Church at the time of Christ, this *remnant of her*

seed is obviously the primitive Christian Church of Jews and Gentiles. For it is evident that the NT Church sprang from Israel, and was entirely Jewish for several years. Additionally, Paul referred to this Church as *a remnant* and *a seed* several times in Romans 9, showing how it would grow to include the Gentiles. This picture better matches the OT prophecies of the accepting of the Gentiles (*her seed*) into the Kingdom of God. As far as I am aware, the Church is never represented in the Bible as the mother of Christ; she is the *Bride of Christ*, the *Lamb's wife*, the *body of Christ*, but never its mother. Israel, however, is often pictured as the mother of Christ, as we will show.

There was an OT Church, which we call the Jewish Church, and there is a NT Church. God has always had a chosen people, those who honor Him and follow His commandments. The coming of Christ and the instituting of the New Covenant vastly changed the way God and man fellowship together, but the people of God existed before and after Christ, confirmed in that Stephen calls the children of Israel the *church in the wilderness* (Acts 7:38). The Universal Church consists of the pre-flood sons of God, the faithful ones of the children of Israel, and the people of God in this present Age of Grace. In this sense the Church is clearly represented by a *woman*, the Bride of Christ of the Old and New Covenants—the *elect lady and her children* of II John. And now we find ourselves on the other side, advocating that the *woman* represents the Universal Church.

There is a Scripture that helps explain the problem of the symbolic *woman*. Found in Isaiah 54, it directly foretells the extending of salvation to the Gentiles in an allegory of two women. *Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord* (Is 54:1). Here Israel is the married wife who travails with child, and the barren, desolate woman is the NT Apostolic Church, the unnatural branch grafted in when the natural branches were rejected because of unbelief (Rom 11:17). The Kingdom of Christ inheriting the Gentiles will become more fruitful than the OT Jewish Covenant according to Isaiah 54, which continues: *thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles...thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more...for thy Maker is thine husband...for the Lord hath called thee as a woman*

forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God (Is 54:3-6). This shows God accepting the Gentiles as His people and extending to them His covenant of peace which will never end (Is 54:10). The *forsaken and grieved* woman is now said to be *called*, while the *married wife* (Israel after the flesh) is in *bondage*, according to the words of Paul as he quotes Isaiah 54:1 in Galatians 4:22-31.

God's people at the time-setting of 12:1 were the children of Israel under the First Covenant, confirmed in that the prophets presented Israel as the mother of the Messiah. This is the *married wife*, the celestial woman. The once *barren* woman is the NT Church under the Second Covenant, being made up of believing Jews and Gentiles. Like Hagar of old, the gloriously arrayed woman of 12:1 is sent into the wilderness. Israel, because of her immorality, is sent away (Jer 3) and the barren woman, once forsaken and refused, becomes *a wife of youth* (Is 54:6), the *Bride of Christ*. (For more study, see Micah 5:3 where Israel is symbolized by a woman, and Jeremiah 31:22 where a woman represents the future NT Church overshadowing the OT law represented by a man.)

The *woman* John sees is in great pain, ready to give birth (v2). The word for *pained* (*basanizo*) is the same Greek word that is translated *torment* in 9:5, 11:10, 14:10, and 20:10. It is a strong word, and nowhere else in Scripture is it used to describe childbirth.

The pain and torment of the *woman* is a direct allusion to the troubles of the Jewish nation at the time of Christ until its end in A.D. 70 at the hands of the Romans. Besides Revelation 12, the picture of Israel as a woman with child is found also in Isaiah, and is a clear parallel to this allegory. *Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a Man child. Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children* (Is 66:7-8). Written just before the Babylonian Captivity, the words of this prophecy probably caused a lot of questions during that time. But about 550 years later their precise fulfillment came. Jesus, from the tribe of Judah, came and died only 40 years before the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish religion. *Before her pain* [her destruction], *she was delivered of a Manchild*. Isaiah's prophecy continues by

showing the birth of Christianity out of the death of Judaism, for Zion's trouble brought forth the children of the Kingdom (see also Is 62:4-5).

Looking back at the overall picture of Chapter 12, we see Israel at the time of Christ, crying out and travailing in pain. The Jewish nation was experiencing a strange and terrible national crisis like none it had ever faced before. Split by violent religious factions and power-greedy leaders, Judaism was in civil war, her people following one false messiah after another. As one reads the NT portrayal of the Jewish rejection of Christ, what stands out most is the violence and acrimony of that rejection. Bitter was the fighting of the Jews against the Romans and Christians, but just as bitter was the infighting among sects like the Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, and Zealots. The time of trouble and pain ended with the complete destruction of Jerusalem and scattering of the Jewish people into the world. The Jewish religious system collapsed, and the *woman* to whom God had given so much had been forced—because of her own actions—to flee into the wilderness.

THE DRAGON: THAT OLD SERPENT, THE DEVIL

Another sign appears in heaven, a *great red Dragon* that has seven crowned heads and ten horns. The Dragon's powerful tail sweeps a third of the stars out of the heavens and casts them to the earth, and now he stands before the woman in order to *devour* the *Manchild* as soon as He is born. His evil plan is somehow thwarted, and the Child is snatched out of his grasp and caught up to God, where He will rule the people with a *rod of iron*. Here is clearly illustrated the extended antagonism of Satan against God, and his determination to wreck anything and everything good that God has designed. Satan has failed in his most important goal, which was to corrupt the One sent to redeem mankind. That failure brings immediate restrictions to his authority and power.

Satan as the Dragon and later as the Beast (Chapter 13) is seen with *seven heads and ten horns* (v9). Heads represent authority and wisdom, and horns represent power (see glossary). Seven and ten are numbers of fullness and perfection. The Dragon's seven heads have *crowns* (Gk—*diadema*) on them, but not the same crowns (Gk—*stephanos*) that the elders in 4:10 cast before

the Throne, or that the Rider of the white horse wore (6:2), or even that the *woman* of 12:1 had on her head. Satan's diadems indicate his supernatural prominence, while the victory crowns of the elders represent achievement and triumph over evil in this world. The full picture of Christ's glorious return in Chapter 19 shows Him coming with *many crowns* (*diadema*). (Read more about the crowns of Satan, Christ, and their followers at page 204.)

Because of his wickedness, it is easy to forget that Satan was originally created perfect in beauty, strength, and wisdom by God to be His *covering cherub* (Eze 28:16). The Dragon's tail dragging a third of the stars with him to earth seems to be a reference to the initial sin of Satan and the consequences to him and the angels who followed him. The Bible is very brief on the origin and fall of Satan. All we know is that Lucifer was lifted up in pride and rebelled against God. For this he was exposed as a liar and was cast out of God's presence (Eze 28:11-19). According to Jude 6 a large portion of the angels *left their own habitation* and also sinned against God, who has reserved them for punishment and put them in *chains of darkness*. A parallel passage in II Peter 2:4 says they were *cast down to hell* (Gk- *tartaroo*), not *hades* or *gehenna*, but the *bottomless pit*, which is the meaning of *tartaroo*. (Read more on this subject at page 194.)

Though the *third part of the stars* should be understood figuratively, it nonetheless gives an idea of how many angels followed Satan. Without these demons Satan would be much less powerful, for he cannot create as God can. His only chance is to corrupt and distort the creation of God to rebel against Him. And that is why the Dragon stands before the woman *to devour her child as soon as it [is] born*. He remembers the prophetic curse God had pronounced on him for corrupting Eve: *I will put enmity between thee [Satan] and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel* (Gen 3:15). Though Satan did not understand it at the time, Jesus would *bruise* [Satan's] *head* by dying to redeem Man, thereby providing a way to turn a corrupted soul into an incorruptible one.

Satan thought that by killing the Son of God he would win a huge battle in his long war against God (I Cor 2:8), and so he marshaled all his forces in an attempt to stop the Messianic plan. Not succeeding in his plot to kill Jesus as a baby, he personally tempted Him to the utmost, even offering Jesus all

the kingdoms of this world if He would only bow down and worship him. Many other plots were laid, but Satan utterly failed in all attempts to corrupt Him. Finally, he entered into the heart of Judas Iscariot and manipulated the already wicked Jewish leaders to have Jesus put to death. Satan and his angels rejoiced when they saw the Son of God hanging on that cross, but their triumph turned to astonishment and fear when death was swallowed up in victory, and Jesus rose victorious from the grave. *Through death He destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil* (Heb 2:14). Jesus the Messiah prevailed over the Dragon and ascended into heaven. He *is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God* (Heb 12:2) as King forevermore. The Dragon's power was destroyed at Christ's resurrection and he was cast out of heaven along with his angels.

THE MANCHILD

The *Manchild* comes from the seed of the woman, of the lineage of David, and is traceable directly to Abraham, who was promised that *in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed* (Gen 12:3). The OT contains many prophetic details that were precisely fulfilled in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. One of these details is repeated in verse 5, that *He would rule all nations with a rod of iron*. This is a quote from Psalms 2, a prophecy of David looking forward to the coming of the Messiah. He is shown ruling the Gentiles with a *rod of iron* (see also Rev 2:27, 19:15).

At first this picture of Jesus Christ ruling as king with a rod of iron may seem harsh, but it is interesting that the word for *rule* (*poimaino*) is never elsewhere used for human kings or authorities; it is a gentle word, used to describe shepherds tending their flocks. Several times the NT instructs ministers in the Church to *feed* [*poimaino*] *the flock* (I Peter 5:2). Correctly, the picture reveals a benevolent King who loves and nourishes the people who have chosen to follow Him. He leads them in wisdom and care, giving grace, peace, and every aid to the weak. As the Good Shepherd, He feeds them and cares for them and He will not let their harmful ways and habits continue unchecked. He uses the rod of chastisement in love and perfect wisdom, knowing what is best for them.

He rules *all nations* (Gk-*ethnos*), also translated *Gentiles, people, heathen*. The prophets of the OT spoke often of how the Messiah would rule, judge, and inherit the Gentiles (the Hebrew *gowy* is also translated *nations, Gentiles, heathen*). Matthew explains this as fulfilled in the work of Christ; how He would *shew judgment to the Gentiles*, and how *in His name shall the Gentiles trust* (Mt 12:18, 21), a prophecy from the Book of Isaiah. The concept of Christ ruling the nations now is not acknowledged by Futurists, who believe the prophecies showing Christ as King will not be fulfilled until a future Millennial reign. We believe that Christ rides His kingly *white horse* now, conquering and ruling the people of the world. He is *the [ruler] of the kings of the earth* (1:5) and *the head over all things* (Eph 1:22). Jesus told Pilate that He had indeed come into the world to be a king, though His Kingdom was not an earthly one (John 18:36-37). Christ is reigning from His spiritual Throne, a far loftier position than a limited physical throne. In fact, He *is set on the right hand of the Throne of the Majesty in the heavens* (Heb 8:1), the greatest position of power imaginable.

Even here in Revelation 12 there is strong evidence for the present reign of Christ, for the casting out of Satan at the Cross brings in Christ's Kingdom on earth (v9-10), and this Kingdom cannot be heaven or a future blissful Millennium because Satan is said to be there, having *great wrath* and persecuting the woman and her seed (v12). The OT overflows with prophetic pictures of the Messiah ruling as King over His people and the nations, and we believe this is speaking of the spiritual Kingdom of Christ on this earth.

WAR IN HEAVEN

When the *Manchild* is caught up into heaven (v5), a great angelic battle between the forces of God and Satan takes place. That *old serpent* is thrown out of heaven along with all his unholy angels, for their place is not *found any more in heaven*. There is great rejoicing in heaven when Satan is cast out, but a pronouncement of woe falls on the inhabitants of the earth, for now Satan will torment them until the time that his final judgment sentence is executed. The picture is clearly describing the spiritual defeat of Satan, but we must be careful in determining when this *war in heaven* takes place.

There is only one event which fulfills the particulars of the vision, and that is the greatest episode the universe has ever seen: the death and resurrection of the Son of God. We do not know, nor can we comprehend what all happened in the spirit world when Jesus conquered death and ascended to the Throne of the Father. The darkest human hour became the greatest beacon of hope and triumph for mankind when a sinless Person, the only possible propitiation, died to redeem man from his sins, to be forever reconciled again with his Creator. After His victory over death Jesus ascended into heaven, taking with Him the souls of the OT saints held in Sheol, and they now experience the joys of Paradise since the way there has been opened for them (Eph 4:8).

That is only the human side of the work of Christ. He also conquered the spirit world, and became its chief ruler, seen in that He *spoiled principalities and powers, triumphing over them* and openly displaying them as His conquests (Col 2:15). The judgment of the *prince of this world* took place at the Cross (John 12:31-32), when *Satan as lightning [fell] from heaven* (Luke 10:18). Though the conviction was successful, the judgment made, and the sentence set, God did not immediately confine Satan in Hell. The *mystery of God* and man will continue until man's disobedience, disinterest, and rebellion will bring it to an end.

Satan's power and authority were severely restricted at the triumph of Christ; his right to be in heaven was taken away and he was "hurled out of God's presence" (see the Greek). He still has right to the earth, for it is under the curse as long as sin and death remains. Satan's final day of reckoning is still ahead, a fact that he and his angels know and fear (James 2:19). Christ has defeated them and their fate has been judicially decided in heaven. The sentence will be carried out in due time.

The war in heaven is between *Michael* and *the Dragon*. Is Michael a symbolic reference to the ascending Christ, leading the freed captives of the Devil into heaven with Him? Or is he a super-angel, leading the myriads of heavenly beings against the wicked angels of Satan? We cannot certainly know, and debate is valueless. The point is that Satan is defeated and cast out of heaven, though how it is possible for him to be there in the first place is inconceivable. More on that later. *Michael* is a Hebrew name that signifies, "Who is like God?" It implies humility and reverence, exactly the opposite of Satan,

whose sin was pride and rebellion against God. In Jude, *Michael* is called *the Archangel*, which is literally translated “the ruling angel,” meaning that he is the leader of the angelic host of heaven. And in Daniel 10:13 he is called *one of the chief princes*.

In light of the fact that Jesus Christ is never directly named in the prophecies of the Revelation (see pages 150 and 222), I believe *Michael* is a symbol for Jesus, the third member of the Godhead. Who else is powerful enough to defeat Satan?

Daniel 11 is a long and accurate prophecy of the inter-testament period of the Jewish nation. The king of Daniel 11:36 is the wicked line of Herodian kings that ruled Israel during the time of Christ. As the prophecy unfolds, glimpses of the war raging in the spiritual realm between the good and wicked angels can be seen. Most interesting is the statement that *at that time* [of the Herods] *shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people...and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt* (Dan 12:1-2). This must be describing the same event of *war in heaven* that we read about in Revelation 12, for it takes place at the very same time. The outcome of that war was the freedom of the OT souls from Sheol, whose names were written in the *book of life*. This act of Christ is likened to the plundering of a strong man’s house in Matthew 12:29.

Matthew 27:52-53 confirms that Daniel 12:1-2 did take place after Jesus’ death and resurrection: *and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many*. Isaiah wrote concerning the work of the Messiah that He would *proclaim liberty to the captives*, and that He would *bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house* (Is 61:1, 42:7). While these undoubtedly have a fulfillment in a figurative sense, they also foretold the day that Jesus would free the spiritual captives of Sheol (see page 112). Zechariah probably said it most clearly: *by the blood of Thy covenant I have sent forth Thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water* (Zec 9:11). What a wonderful day that was for millions of OT saints. Remember the picture in Chapter 5 as the Lamb took the book

from the hand of God? When the Lion of Judah prevailed, all heaven immediately rejoiced with harps and odors, and the 24 elders sang a *new song*, praising and glorifying the Lamb who had *redeemed* them. Every creature celebrated the Lamb's crushing defeat of Satan, and said, *Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever* (5:13). Compare their exultation and praise with the rejoicing of the saints in 12:10-11.

The redemption of man at Calvary was an incredible event with immeasurable importance for man. Those souls rightfully belonging to Satan because of their sin were acquired by Christ, who purchased them with His own blood. When Jesus died a sinless Man, He alone possessed the proper funds acceptable to buy back the souls that Satan claimed as his because of the fact that he had corrupted them with sin. Praise Him for that great redemptive act of sacrifice! *Having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross* (Col 2:14, NASB) Only Jesus can write "paid in full" on the *certificate of debt* that every man owes on account of his own sin. Only Jesus' sinless death gave Him the authority to do so, and now He owns every soul that He chooses to save.

SATAN CAST OUT OF HEAVEN

How does one visualize war in the spirit world? How can you kill or destroy a spirit which never dies? We must remember that Chapter 12 is an allegory, written for us in humanly understandable terms in order to describe things impossible for men to comprehend now. Perhaps this is also how we should explain the fact that Satan evidently was permitted to be in heaven even after his rebellion against God (v7-9). In the Book of Job we read that the angels *came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them* (Job 2:1, 1:6), and Zechariah 3:1-2 indicates Satan's power was substantial before the death of Christ.

When Jesus ascended victorious to His heavenly Throne, Satan's place in heaven *was not found*—he was no longer permitted to be there. His defeat was complete and thoroughly righteous in its execution. Satan is still *prince of the*

power of the air (Eph 2:2), and we war against his *spiritual wickedness in high* [Gk-heavenly] *places* (Eph 6:12), but his fate is certain—the *Lake of fire* of which he is aware. He is *wroth*, and knows he has *but a short time*. Christians must be alert and *not ignorant of his devices* for he wants to send them to Hell. When Satan is cast out of heaven, John hears a loud voice in heaven announcing the event: *Now is come salvation, and strength, and the Kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. Therefore rejoice ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them!* (v10, 12). The Scriptures call Satan a liar, a deceiver, a murderer, the tempter, and the wicked one. In verse 10 he is called *the accuser of the brethren*, and there are deeper implications to this title. Strong's Greek Dictionary defines an *accuser* (*kategoreo*) as the plaintiff in a court of law, bringing a charge of wrongdoing against someone. Satan as *the accuser* brings a legitimate charge against every man who has ever lived because not one person has successfully eluded his corrupting devices—all *have sinned* (Rom 3:23). But the day came when a new Witness came to this allegorical court of law, and presented Himself as a rightful, sinless *Advocate* before the Father Judge (I John 2:1), who righteously ruled in favor of the One who had prevailed on earth over every attempt to corrupt Him. *The accuser's* case was hopelessly lost, and he was cast out of heaven, his legal right to accuse no longer valid.

The rejoicing in heaven at this victory is beyond description, but the joy of the living is no less wonderful, for now they have full access to the Throne of God through the Redeemer who has bought them and to whom they belong. Now when Satan comes to accuse any Christian of sin before God, *Jesus Christ, the righteous* stands in our defense and raises His nail-scarred hands, "Satan, you have no right to this person, he is Mine. I have fulfilled the necessary requirements to redeem him, and I claim that right." Oh, what a mortal defeat Satan suffered at the victory of Christ, and what glorious victory was afforded the saints of the Kingdom! Truly we may say, *if God be for us who can be against us? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Who is he that condemneth?* Nobody can, for *it is Christ that died, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us* (Rom 8:31-34). Satan has been defeated and the power of sin has been broken. The saints of

the entire Kingdom—in heaven and earth—now reign in victory with Christ. Satan has been defeated and the power of sin has been broken.

We may wonder why Satan crucified the Messiah if it led so dramatically to his destruction. Firstly, it was his only hope of winning. Satan can win only by corrupting and killing, and that was his only chance of overcoming Christ. Secondly, Satan did not know that God would raise Jesus bodily from the dead. He did not think far enough ahead to realize that a perfect, voluntary sacrifice could over-rule the certificates of death he held against every man. A greater power was invoked, an authority *foreordained before the foundation of the world* (I Peter 1:20), before Satan existed. That authority could be given to a sinless Man who would voluntarily die in the place of sinful man, and exercise his right to buy them. Christ was the one and only person suitable to be that sacrifice, and we are ever grateful that He was willing to do so.

The casting out of Satan from heaven is a powerful picture of triumph. Notice that it is *Michael and his angels* that do the attacking. Satan had been accusing the brethren before God *day and night*, which means that he was endlessly and evilly pointing out every flaw and sin. But Jesus, first *bind[ing] the strong man*, proceeded to thoroughly *spoil his house* (Mt 12:29). The power of sin was broken, and the mystery of Christ and the new birth was revealed.

SATAN CAST ONTO THE EARTH

The casting out of Satan from heaven is the first part of the picture. Unfortunately for those who are alive on the earth, Satan will concentrate his efforts fully on them, determined to corrupt and destroy the Kingdom of God at his last battleground—earth. Satan's chief enemy is God, but he cannot attack Him directly, and so he turns his attention to those who confess Christ, doing all within his allowed authority to corrupt and devour the remnant of the woman's seed. His anger is vicious and relentless, but God has set bounds to his power. Chapter 9 described the rise of Satan's kingdom of evil, and we saw there that he is not permitted to kill, only to torment; and even then he is not allowed to touch the Christian. He is, however, extremely resourceful and devious, and always seems able to find plenty of humans willing to help him in his wicked plans.

Nevertheless, at the casting out of Satan this joyful announcement is made: *Now is come salvation, and strength, and the Kingdom of our God and the power of His Christ* (v10). *Salvation* comes because the payment for sin has been made, *strength* because the accuser has been cast out, and *the Kingdom* because now Christ reigns victorious in His spiritual Kingdom. This is the *Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of heaven, the Gospel of the Kingdom*, or simply *the Kingdom*, and these synonymous terms occur some 130 times in the NT. According to verse 10, the *Kingdom of God* came upon the earth with the triumph of Christ, a fact corroborated by other Scriptures listed below. Some prophecy scholars try to separate the *Kingdom of heaven* and *the Kingdom of God* in an attempt to mute the obvious Biblical implication that the Kingdom reign of Christ has been in progress since His resurrection. It is impossible to give the two phrases different meanings (cross-reference Mt 19:14 and Mark 10:14), though it is true that sometimes they properly indicate heaven (Mt 13:43; Mt 25:34) rather than the earth-bound Church.

The *Kingdom of God* in the context of the NT applies to the “universal, eternal Church of Christ,” which we define as the OT and NT saints in heaven now plus the NT Christians living on the earth. There is no change in kingdoms when a Christian dies; he remains in the Kingdom of God forever. This Kingdom began to be preached by John the Baptist, whose message was, *Repent ye: for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand* (Mt 3:2; Mark 1:15). Then Jesus came, speaking many parables concerning the Kingdom (see Mt 13), and declaring, *there be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in His Kingdom* (Mt 16:28; Mark 9:1). The chief problem then (and even now) was that the Jews misunderstood the concept of the Kingdom. They thought it meant Jesus would physically deliver them from the Romans, rule from an earthly throne, *thresh the nations*, and again make Israel a world power. That is why when *He was demanded of the Pharisees when the Kingdom of God should come. He answered them and said, The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the Kingdom of God is within you* (Luke 17:20-21). It is a Kingdom *not of this world*, but spiritual and in the heart. It is *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost* (Rom 14:17). A whole book could be written about the Kingdom of God in the Bible, beginning with the OT

prophets and continuing through the Revelation. Where there is a Kingdom there must be a King, and people over which He may rule. We are those people, now *delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the Kingdom of his dear Son* (Col 1:13).

What is the difference between the Church and the Kingdom? Biblically speaking, the Kingdom is defined as Christ's redeemed possession of the past, present, and future, both in heaven and on the earth (Rev 5:13, 7:9). The Church is the assembly of believers on earth, the human part of the Kingdom. The word *church* (Gk—*ekklesia*) is far more often used of individual assemblies than of the world-wide Church. Usually "church" is capitalized by writers to indicate its general meaning, and left un-capitalized when applied to a church in a specific locality. Churches are earthly "castles" in the Kingdom, places of refuge, safety, comfort, and happiness. In its ideal state, a church body prefigures the *Father's Kingdom* (Mt 13:43, 25:34, 26:29; I Cor 15:24). Entrance into this Kingdom is *by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony* (v11).

They loved not their lives unto the death (v11). In other words, they did not concern themselves with their own physical lives, even when it meant their death. Can Western Christianity at all identify with this verse? Hardly, though many Christians in foreign countries can.

There is a potential point of conflict that should be discussed and resolved regarding the fall of Satan. Revelation 12 pictures Satan thrown out of heaven at the victory of Christ and *cast out into the earth* where he will do all in his power to corrupt the creation of God until the Age of Grace is completed (v12). Chapter 9 agrees, for we saw Satan as a *star* fall from heaven and then *open the bottomless pit*, releasing his demons upon wicked men. Chapter 20, however, shows Satan *bound* and *cast* into the *bottomless pit*, where he will remain until shortly before the end of the world, when he must be released for a *little season*. The question is this: why does Chapter 20 say Satan is bound, but Chapters 9 and 12 indicate he is loose upon the earth? We believe the answer is evident when one keeps in mind the overall picture given in each passage, without over-emphasizing one word or phrase. The subject of all three chapters remains unified: Jesus has *bound*, restricted, *destroyed*, and defeated Satan at the Cross. But each passage presents different aspects of that

event—how Satan’s defeat affects the Kingdom of Christ and how Satan will come to his end and be punished forever in the *Lake of Fire*. During His time on earth, Jesus said *the prince of this world cometh* (John 14:30), but also that *the prince of this world is judged* (John 16:11), and that *now shall the prince of this world be cast out* (John 12:31). (For more study, see Isaiah 14 and 27.)

13. *And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.*

14. *And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.*

15. *And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.*

16. *And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.*

17. *And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

PERSECUTION OF THE WOMAN

The Dragon’s first reaction upon being cast onto the earth is to persecute the *woman which brought forth the manchild* (v13). We understand this to refer to the great tribulation and scattering of the Jewish people, an event which took place during the generation following Jesus’ resurrection. Extreme judgments and afflictions fell upon those who rejected the very Messiah that they had been taught for so long would come. Even the exact year of the coming of *Messiah the prince* had been foretold (Dan 9:25), and though the Jewish chronologies had been neglected and the date of Daniel’s prophecy may have been known only to within a few decades, certainly the scribes and rabbis knew His arrival was very near.

It should not be forgotten that thousands and thousands of Jews did not miss His coming. Peter's vision and opening of salvation to the Gentiles did not take place until eight years after Pentecost,¹ and by then the Jewish Church had spread rapidly throughout the whole region, reaching from Egypt to Rome. For the most part, Jewish Christians escaped the death and tribulation that their fellow Jews endured at the destruction of Jerusalem. They had been warned by Christ exactly how it would happen and what they should do: *And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled* (Luke 21:20-24; cf Mark 13:14-23; Mt 24:15-21). History records that the cities of Judea were terribly ravaged by the Roman legions: 20,000 Jews were killed in Caesarea; 30,000 in Scythopolis; 50,000 in Alexandria; 30,000 in Jotapata; 10,000 in Damascus; 13,000 in the Gadarenes; and on and on. It is estimated that three million Jews were in the city of Jerusalem at the time its siege began. Most perished (Ussher, pa6998).

The atrocities and wickedness at this *time of Jacob's trouble* are almost unimaginable. Mothers roasted their own children to satisfy their hunger. The dead lay everywhere in heaps and in the streets. People banded together and fought in robber bands against each other for any food they could get. If someone tried to escape, he was sure to be caught and crucified by the surrounding Roman army. One quote from Josephus sums up the awfulness of that time: "It is therefore impossible to go distinctly over every instance of these men's iniquity. I shall therefore speak my mind here at once briefly: that neither did any other city suffer such miseries, nor did any age ever breed a generation more fruitful in wickedness than this was, from the beginning of

1 According to James Ussher, Annals of the World, see pa6657. The actual time-period is not stated in Scripture, and is in question.

the world.” (The Wars of the Jews, page 442). (Read more on this subject at page 240.)

Though the Dragon tries, he is unable to completely destroy the woman. She is *given two wings of a great eagle that she might fly into the wilderness* (v12). (For the symbolism of an eagle see the glossary.) It is truly an act of God that the Jewish people have survived the centuries of persecution and castigation brought against them. Without question, no ethnic group has experienced such endless suffering, no matter where they attempt a new beginning. But does their existence mean that God is with them more earnestly than other tribes and nations? We cannot see it that way. The hand of every man has been set against them, and in spite of their hardships they remain rebellious toward God. The ominous prophecies of Deuteronomy 28-32 concerning their future continue to be fulfilled.

The *wilderness* in its Biblical context is a place of persecution and tribulation. The children of Israel were made to *wander in the wilderness forty years* until that generation was consumed because of their iniquity (Num 32:13); David lived in the wilderness while hiding from Saul; Jesus was tempted for 40 days in the wilderness. Remember too that the yearly sacrifice of the scapegoat (Lev 16), which typified the affliction of Christ in atoning for our sin, required the animal to be presented to the Lord and then sent out into the *wilderness*, bearing the sins of the people.

The woman is *nourished* in the wilderness, away from the *face of the serpent*, for a time, and times, and half a time (v14, compare with v6). We have already shown that this symbolic time period represents the NT Age of Grace, the last dispensation of time (see page 250). The 3 ½ times comes from Daniel 7:25 and 12:7. If the *woman* represents physical Israel, the implication is that the Jewish race will remain until Christ's return (see Mt 24:34). If the *woman* represents the Church, the implication is that she will be *nourished* by God and protected from the *serpent* until Christ returns. It is only at verses 13-16 that there is any difference between the two possible meanings for the symbolic *woman* of Chapter 12 (see page 275). Note that the symbolic meaning of the 3 ½ times remains unaffected, for either application fits well with the symbolic meaning of the 3 ½ times we have been given.

The serpent is not permitted to directly attack and kill the woman, but he is able to send a flood of water out of his mouth in an attempt to drown her (v15). Here we have an accurate description of the scattering of the Jews into the world by the Roman armies of Titus and later emperors. A *flood* is a common symbol for armies of the enemy (see glossary) and is the same symbol that Daniel used in foretelling the coming destruction of Jerusalem: *the people of the prince [Titus] that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined* (Dan 9:26).

The earth helps the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing up the flood before it can reach the woman. We should understand *earth* to mean the people of the earth rather than strictly the physical earth (see glossary). History agrees with this symbolic picture. The Jewish culture did not entirely disappear with the dissolution of the commonwealth of Israel, for though they were scattered far and wide, the Jews did not mix well with other ethnic groups. Their attitudes of superiority and stubbornness brought discrimination and contempt, and made them targets for persecution and rejection. But as they fled farther into the earth's wilderness a measure of safety was found.

In the mid-1900's the country of Israel was created by Great Britain and the United States because of the atrocities committed against the Jews living in Europe and Russia during the German-inflicted Holocaust. And yet, peace remains only a hope. Terrorism and continued world wide animosity against Israel leaves her dependent on the U.S. for military and political aid. Surrounded by enemy nations, you would think Israel would look to God for refuge—but you would be wrong. A majority of Israel's Jewish citizens are secular; a large proportion is atheistic. Israel's present political and intellectual leaders are mostly humanists, believing the power of man is sufficient to solve the problems of the world.

This is the last time we will see physical Israel in the Book of Revelation. We believe the prophecies show the Jewish people as a weak and afflicted community until the *times of the Gentiles*, the NT Age of Grace, has ended at the Second Coming of Christ. Though it is an unpopular idea in modern Christianity, we believe Israel as a nation has no hope of receiving God's

blessing. Individual Jews may turn to their (and our) Messiah as their only chance of salvation. God's OT Kingdom consisted of the nation of Israel. His NT Kingdom is a spiritual one—the Church of Jews and Gentiles making up one olive tree in the Lord (Rom 11:24).

The last recorded speech that Moses gave to the children of Israel is a sad one: *I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days; because ye will do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands* (Deut 31:29). Just two chapters earlier Moses had warned them: *Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God...the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought...He will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses...And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou wouldest not obey the voice of the Lord thy God... Moreover all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee...and they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever* (excerpts from Deut 28:46-63). The Jews are a minority group, hated and terrorized by most of the world. The Church offers Jews true peace and stability, but few of them accept the Head as their personal Saviour and King.

The last verse of Chapter 12 shows the Dragon changing the object of his wrath. He goes to *make war with the remnant of [the woman's] seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ*. The next chapter will show in detail exactly how the Dragon attacks the people of the New Covenant. The *remnant* has reference to the spiritually alert Jews who did acknowledge and follow Christ as their Messiah. This *remnant of Jacob* (Micah 5:7) grew into a mighty Kingdom including Gentile believers as well. Why does the Dragon turn his attack upon the Christians? Because he realizes that these are now the true people of his great enemy, God. We are warned of this in verse 12, "Woe to the earth, for the Devil is coming down to you having great wrath, because he knows he has but a short time."

REVELATION CHAPTER THIRTEEN



THE TWO KINGDOMS

The previous chapter introduced the Dragon and described his fall to the earth. The Dragon is not permitted to directly attack the Church, so he formulates a new plan, and that is the topic of Chapter 13. It shows how the Dragon gives his influence and power to human authorities of the earthly realm in his continued attempt to corrupt the Church and wreck the plan of God. While the Dragon cannot be seen with physical eyes, the Beast and False Prophet can; they are visible human elements that have aligned themselves under the authority of the Devil. These will *make war with the saints, and overcome them* for a time (13:7). However, he that kills with a sword will end up being killed himself, and in this the saints of the ages must be patient (13:10). At the return of Christ the two Beasts of Chapter 13 will be slain by the sword of Christ and cast into the Lake of Fire (19:19-20).

Though the two beasts look very different, they are closely related. The first beast, a vicious-looking creature, arises early in Christianity and oppresses the

people of God. The second beast, which looks like a lamb, works his deception of miracles and signs in the presence of the first beast (v14). Together they oppose the Kingdom of Christ in all its endeavors, persecuting and afflicting the saints at every opportunity.

Since the time of the early Church many interpretations and speculations have been written about the two beasts. We will continue to apply the rules of interpretation laid out in the introduction in seeking to understand these symbolic pictures within their Biblical contexts. All schools of prophecy agree that the beasts are not literal ones, but are symbolic representations. They widely diverge however, as to what they represent. Almost all commentators believe that the *man of sin*, the *Antichrist*, is symbolized by one of the two beasts, though they do not agree on which one. Probably the single biggest wedge which forces differences of interpretation is again the time element. In general, Historicists believe the beasts apply to the entire age of the Gospel, while Futurists place this vision (and all of Chapters 4-22) after the Church has been removed from the earth by the Rapture.

One of the chief themes of section four becomes especially evident in Chapter 13, and that is the concept of the two kingdoms. Satan is the *prince of this world*, the unseen leader of the kingdoms of the world. Jesus Christ reigns over His Kingdom on this earth too, a Kingdom without boundaries and without end, a Kingdom of spiritual constituents and heavenly citizenship. These two kingdoms are diametrically opposed, sworn enemies locked in a battle to the death. Satan knows his time is short and that he cannot win, nevertheless, he is determined to wreck every good thing that he can. Over and over Satan corrupts and counterfeits God's plan, undermining His rule and His commands. The theme and purpose of the vision of the two beasts is to warn the Church of the many deceptions and devices of the Devil. The rise of the Beast and False Prophet in Chapter 13 is a matter that has grave implications for the Church, and understanding them will help her prepare for the trials and deceptions to come.

1. *And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.*

2. *And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.*
3. *And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.*
4. *And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?*
5. *And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.*
6. *And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.*
7. *And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.*
8. *And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*
9. *If any man have an ear, let him hear.*
10. *He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.*

THE BEAST THAT RISES OUT OF THE SEA

In this vision, John is standing on the seashore. Suddenly he sees a huge and horrible beast rise out of the sea and walk up onto the beach. The beast is a terrible, vicious, satanic creature. It directly opposes God, slandering His name and all things related to Him. It makes war against the saints living on

the earth and outwardly appears to be winning that war. The beast is formidable, and the people of the earth admire him and bow to his great power. He thrives for 42 months, to the very end of the world (see page 250) before he is finally killed by the sword of the returning Christ (19:19).

Our first task is to identify this beast, and we must do so carefully to make sure the interpretation will not conflict with later prophecies that fill in the particulars of his infamous career. There are many details and allusions later in the Revelation concerning the beast, and a full study of each of their meanings and implications would require a book in itself. We will try to be concise and yet thorough.

Following the first rule of interpreting prophecy (page 16), we inquire whether *beast* is used symbolically elsewhere in Scripture, and if so, establish its figurative meaning. Remember that there are two different Greek words translated *beast* in the KJV of the Revelation, and they therefore have different meanings. The *beasts* (Gk—*zoon*) of Chapter 4 are *living creatures*, while the two beasts of Chapter 13 (Gk—*therion*) are wild, dangerous animals.

A word study reveals a clear symbolic meaning for *therion* in the Bible, and Daniel 7 is our primary proof text. In the broadest sense, a *beast* is an earthly entity that opposes the Kingdom of Christ. Paul said that he *fought with beasts at Ephesus* (I Cor 15:32), a figure of speech in which he likens the hostility he faced in Ephesus to a gladiator fight with wild animals (Acts 19:21-41, II Cor 11:23-27). In the OT, the enemies of Israel are likened to beasts, though usually they are named beasts like lions, bears, and dragons. Assyria and Babylon, for example, are two *lions* that scattered Israel (Jer 50:17, see also Pro 28:15; Jer 5:6; Eze 29:3, 34:25; Hosea 13:8; Micah 5:8; Hab 1:8). A *beast* in the Revelation appears to be a powerful human force controlled by the Dragon to war against the Church of Christ.

There are too many similarities between Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 to be coincidence—the two must have a common, or at least related, purpose. A condensed account of Daniel 7 is given below. All Bible students agree that the *four great beasts* of Daniel each represent an earthly kingdom: the lion-like beast symbolizes Babylon; the bear-like beast, Medo-Persia, the leopard-like beast, Greece; and the vicious beast, Rome. Notice that the beast of 13:2 has features from the same symbolic beasts of Daniel—leopard, bear, lion,

and terrible beast. Both passages show the beasts coming up out of the *sea*, a symbol of the ungodly nations of the world (see glossary). We will refer back to Daniel 7 throughout the exposition of Revelation 13, for it is the key to understanding the two beasts. It holds a privileged position as a source text because the angel also provided Daniel with the divine meaning that the symbolic picture represented.

Daniel saw as four great beasts came up from the sea...the first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings...another beast, a second, [was] like to a bear...and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads...and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns...I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things...he made war with the saints, and prevailed against them...the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time. [An angel then interprets the vision] These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth...the fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it

unto the end. And the Kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him (Daniel 7).

Daniel 7 is a prophecy of the history of God's people from the time of Daniel onward (about 470 B.C.). More attention is given to the *dreadful and terrible* fourth beast than all the others combined. This is the kingdom of Rome, which, beginning about 300 B.C. was the world power for roughly a thousand years. It is said to *devour the whole earth and tread it down, and break it in pieces* (Dan 7:23), and certainly the Roman Empire earned that reputation. The Roman government was terrible in its centuries-long persecution of the Christians. Uncounted thousands were killed in the Coliseum, and millions fled into the catacombs or to the far reaches of the kingdom to escape the commands of the wicked and ruthless Caesars, who deified themselves and made emperor-worship one of the main religions of the Roman Empire.

Tyranny has its limits however, and in the fifth century A.D. the western half of the Roman Empire crumbled, its people unwilling to support the burdensome demands of the government. The invading tribes who ravaged Rome were greeted with joy by the Empire's own citizens, but they quickly overstayed their welcome when they introduced their own barbarous ways.

Into this political turmoil rose a new power in the fallen Roman Empire, the Pope of the Catholic Church, who is credited with rebuilding the city of Rome after the Huns had sacked and burned it in the fifth century. This man steadily grew in political might until all Europe was under his control. The revitalized Roman Empire he empowered continued until the early 1800's, and is called the Holy Roman Empire. The *little horn* of Daniel 7 with eyes like a man *and a mouth speaking great things* is probably a reference to the Papal rulers of the revived Roman Empire. Notice that the Papal *horn* is *diverse from the others*, for the Pope made himself God on earth, changing God-ordained *times and laws* and demanding the worship of the world. This *horn made war with the saints and prevailed against them...and shall wear*

out the saints of the Most High (Dan 7:21, 25). The Papal horn fulfilled this prophecy as well, severely persecuting the true Church of God for over a millennium. But the promise remains sure: *the judgment will sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it unto the end* (Dan 7:26). The sword of the returning Christ will slay the man of sin.

If Daniel's beasts symbolize world kingdoms, what does the Beast that rises out of the sea in 13:1 represent? Notice that John's Beast is a combination of the four beasts of Daniel, but in perfect reverse order. Daniel's beasts progressed: lion, bear, leopard, terrible beast, while John's Beast goes: terrible beast, leopard, bear, lion. The Beast seems to possess all the characteristics of Daniel's beasts, and uses them to *war against the saints*, the Kingdom of Christ (v4). This implies that the Beast of Revelation is not a single nation, but the combined and varied earthly governments throughout the Gospel Age. Controlled by often ruthless men with no regard for God, these political powers are one of the human arms of Satan raised against Christ and His Church. The Beast is the visible, world wide kingdom of Satan—a social and political kingdom of darkness at war with the Kingdom of Christ on earth.

A look at history bears out that governmental authorities have been universally set against the true Christian Church, persecuting her people and undermining her authority. Many examples could be given, beginning with the terrible and long-lived rulers of Rome, and continuing to the present Communist and Islamic countries of the world. Earthly authorities have virtually always antagonized the Kingdom of God. The only real attempt to establish a Christian nation may have been the founding of the United States of America, and in the last 100 years even that government has steadily distanced itself from God and His moral law, discriminating against Christianity and moral accountability.

Nations and empires, kings and generals: the prince of these earthly powers is Satan, and he opposes the Kingdom of Christ. This conflict can be seen in the words of Jesus to His disciples: *Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me* (John 14:30). The kingdoms of this world have always been and will continue to always be at war with the Kingdom of Christ. But there is a hidden part to the story. Though Satan is the spiritual leader of the kingdoms of this world he does

not control the governments unchecked; the power he has is *given* to him (v7). He exercises his authority in that realm as permitted by Christ, who can and does intervene in the events of history for the good of His people. His standards and methods are not always clear to us because we cannot see either the future or what is happening in the spiritual realm.

The spiritual struggle often cannot be detected by the human senses, and yet it is very real! We get a glimpse of the battle in another of Daniel's visions. Daniel had been fasting and praying for three full weeks, seeking knowledge from God. Finally the angel sent to answer Daniel's prayer arrived, explaining that the long delay in his coming was due to his struggle with a dark angel: *the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia...and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come* (Dan 10:13, 20). Exactly what goes on in the spirit world we do not know, but the battle between good and evil rages there even more than in our physical realm. Spiritual powers and authorities were shaken when Jesus defeated Satan at the Cross and yet the invisible battle will continue until the end of the world arrives and the Beast is cast into eternal Hell.

The Beast has *seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns [diadems], and upon his heads the name of blasphemy* (v1). The description of the Beast is very similar to the Dragon in 12:3, who also had seven heads and ten horns, but had his heads crowned instead of the horns. Obviously, the Dragon and Beast are almost one and the same—Satan is their universal name. The Dragon relates specifically to the spiritual realm while the Beast represents the humanly visible arm of Satan—his kingdom of political and social rulers of the earth. Their horns are crowned with high royalty and worldly honor, meaning that they wield great influence on the earth. Though they may be highly regarded by general society, the Christian knows that their ambitions and plans war against the Kingdom of God. Historically, many rulers have been exceptionally cruel and wicked, and their blasphemous ways are often directed against the Church of Christ.

The career of the Beast is more fully described in Chapter 17, and its *seven heads and ten horns* are there interpreted for us. The seven heads *are seven kings:*

five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come... And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings (17:10-12). It is a little unusual to have two different symbols represent the same subject—heads and horns both meaning kings. Reading carefully in Chapter 17, it appears that the seven kings are seven world kingdoms, powerful empires that affect many people for many years, while the horns are individual kings of lesser historical influence. Daniel's vision has a similar characteristic: the four beasts he saw were *kings* (Dan 7:17) but they symbolized Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome—all world empires. Then he saw ten horns on the beast of Rome, and these also represented *kings* (Dan 7:24), but this time they are individual rulers of the Empire, three of which fall before the Papal horn. Heads and horns are both part of the Beast, and we will study these in more detail in Chapter 17.

The Beast symbolizes the kingdoms of the world in conflict with the Kingdom of Christ, but the battle is more than physical persecution and death. The temptations and pleasures of the world are more of the Dragon's methods to get soldiers to defect from the army of God. The influences of society, education, human intellect, material values, etc. are all part of the Beast's battle weapons. In Chapters 17-19 this is more clearly brought out, his last form being more powerful than any previous *head*.

The Beast is the Devil's human hand on earth, the visible side of that kingdom of darkness we first saw in ugly detail back in Chapter 9. There we saw the evil spirit beings supporting that invisible sinful kingdom; here we see the earthly side. Thankfully, Christ's Kingdom is more powerful, and will win the war in the end! He has already defeated Satan and cast him out of heaven. At His coming, the Dragon and his Beasts will be thrown into the ever-burning Lake of Fire.

VERSES IN THE REVELATION ABOUT THE BEAST

The Beast is a major character throughout the rest of the Revelation. Chapter 13 introduces his background and purpose, and focuses especially on the first part of his career. By the time we get to Chapter 17, the Beast is in his end-time form, and Chapter 19 will describe his complete destruction at the Second Coming of Christ. We supply the referenced list below to help

develop an overall picture of the Beast and his strategic plan to advance the Dragon's kingdom on the earth. This list has limited usefulness now, but as new pictures are developed referring back here will help correlate the many details.

- (11:7) The Beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit kills the two witnesses. This is the eighth head of the Beast (17:11), and is really the Dragon on earth at the end-time.
- (13:1) The Beast is from the *sea*, symbolic of tribes and nations (17:15).
- (13:1) Like the Dragon, he has 7 heads and 10 horns (17:3, Dan 7:20).
- (13:2) He has the same features as the four beasts of Daniel 7.
- (13:3) One of his heads, which represent kingdoms (17:9-10), receives a killing blow or plague, but is miraculously healed, causing men to worship him and his ruler, the Dragon.
- (13:5) The Beast endures and prospers during the Church Age (19:20).
- (13:5-6) He directly blasphemes God, His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven (Dan 7:25).
- (13:7) He makes war with the saints and overcomes them (Dan 7:21).
- (13:8) All who dwell on earth and that are not Christians worship him.
- (13:11f) An image is made to the Beast and people must worship it or die.
- (14:9f) All who worship the Beast and his image, and receive his mark shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, and their torment ascends up forever.
- (15:2) Those who have gotten the victory over the Beast and his image, mark, and number, stand on the sea of glass praising God.
- (16:2) The first of the seven last plagues is poured out on the earth, and a noisome, grievous sore falls on those who have taken the mark of the Beast, and worship his image.
- (16:10) The fifth plague is poured out on the throne of the Beast and his kingdom is full of darkness; men gnaw their tongues for pain.

- (16:13) The sixth plague is poured out on the Euphrates, and three frogs come out of the mouths of the Dragon, Beast, and False Prophet. These are spirits of devils, working miracles to deceive the kings of the earth and the whole world to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty—Armageddon.
- (17:3) The Beast, dressed in scarlet, carries the great Harlot—Babylon, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.
- (17:8) The Beast *was and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit*. This scarlet colored Beast is the eighth head (17:11) and is actually the Dragon (20:3) in his end-time form (17:1). The ten horns receive power one hour with the Beast, torturing the Harlot (17:16) and making war against the Lamb (17:14).
- (19:19) The Beast and earthly kings gather to make war with Christ, but are overcome.
- (19:20) The Beast and the False Prophet that deceived many into taking the mark of the Beast and worshipping his image are cast alive into the Lake of Fire.
- (20:4) All those who did not worship the Beast or his image or receive his mark live and reign with Christ 1,000 years.

THE SIXTH HEAD OF THE BEAST

John beholds as one of the Beast's heads is struck a death blow by a *sword* (v3, 14). Amazingly, something heals the mortal wound, and the head does not die. Many people worship the Beast, marveling at his great power and believing that he is invincible, saying, *Who is like unto the Beast?* This contrasts with the Godly question, *Who is like unto the Lord our God?* (Ps 113:5). The implication is that men are relying on the Beast instead of God; they like his sinful, worldly devices and they participate in his blasphemies against God, making *war with the saints* and persecuting them unmercifully.

During the time of John, the Beast was the Roman Empire, the sixth head of the Beast (see 17:9). Read again Daniel's vivid description of the Roman

beast treading down the earth and breaking it in pieces. How incredible that vision must have been to Daniel, and how accurately it has been fulfilled. Rome was a huge empire, controlling the known world of Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. Her influence on history and man is still studied in universities today. In social thinking and philosophy, education and science, art and architecture, military and war strategy, finance and taxation, government, religion, sports and recreation, Rome was the undisputed world leader in every field. Every historian puts the Roman Empire at the head of the list of past world kingdoms.

Rome's power and authority were without peer among the nations. Who could possibly think to defeat her at war, what king could compare his people to hers? And yet eventually Rome did fall, though not at the hands of a superior kingdom or more powerful nation. Historians still argue why Rome fell, but most agree that the apathy of her own people was a key factor. After many years of seeking the maximums in worldly luxury and pleasure, they became lazy and disinterested in preparing for the future.

The Goths, Vandals, and Huns were war-like Germanic tribes of northern Europe who made repeated forays into Roman lands in the fifth century. These tribes weren't coming to conquer the Roman Empire, they just came to plunder and kill and then return to their homes to boast. Rome was a lucrative target, and the continued invasions eventually left the city mostly in ruins. The huge city of grand palaces and temples, public baths, theatres, and stadiums was reduced to a squalid, impoverished city of about 30,000 people. The year 476 is considered the end of the old Roman Empire, because after Romulus Augustulus was deposed, no new emperor took his place. The vast land holdings of the Empire vanished, and without civil government even the city of Rome was in danger of completely disappearing as had the previous major cities of Babylon and Nineveh. The intellectual arts and colleges were gone, commerce almost non-existent; the famous water and sewer systems were ruined and disease was rampant.

The Roman Empire was, by all appearances, dead or almost dead. But the *deadly wound* the Empire received was unexpectedly healed by help from a surprising source: those who only a century earlier had been killed for being enemies of Rome—the “Christian” Church. The emperor Constantine's

conversion to Christianity in the early 300's had been embraced with relief and joy by the long-oppressed followers of Christ, but the persecuted Church was completely unprepared for the sudden freedom to serve God without fear of governmental intervention, and as Christianity became accepted in society, church leaders began to compromise with the world. The *falling away* (II Thes 2:3) that Paul had foretold took place unnoticed by most. The leaders of the churches throughout the Empire began a power struggle that culminated in the ascendancy of the Bishop of Rome to a place of highest prominence in the Church. He came to be called the Pope (the Father), or in his own words, "the Vicar of Christ." It was this man that brought back the city of Rome from ruin and remade it into his own kingdom that has prevailed through the centuries even to our own time.

Many believe that the end of the world will see a revival of the sixth head (the Roman Empire) and we will discuss this in Chapter 17. The Roman Catholic Church however, has already restored the Roman Empire once, as confirmed by this quote:

"For well over a millennium Rome controlled the destiny of all civilization known to Europe, then fell into dissolution and disrepair...[then Rome found] the fountainhead of Christianity and eventually won back its power and wealth and reestablished itself as a place of beauty, a source of learning and a capital of the arts... Twice in the space of a few years he [the Pope] was instrumental in saving Rome, from the Huns in 452, when he achieved their withdrawal to the banks of the Danube, and from the Vandals in 455, when his intercession mitigated their depredations in the city."

Encyclopedia Britannica (2002 CD Edition)

We believe the healing of the Beast's deadly wound (v3) was the revival of the Roman Empire as the Holy Roman Empire by the Papacy. The Popes set up kings and forced them to rule under their imposed guidelines in the restored Empire. Sometimes the kings rebelled, often with disastrous results. Historians date the full length of the Roman Empire from its founding as the Roman Republic in 509 B.C. to its last ruler in 1806, a time-period of

over 2,300 years. The end of the first Empire is generally reckoned to be A.D. 476, when Romulus Augustulus was deposed in Rome by Odoacer. The second Roman Empire began about 300 years later, and Charlemagne is generally accepted to be the first Emperor of the healed head of Rome, which ended with Francis II resigning the crown to Napoleon in 1806. Incidentally, Hitler's Third Reich (third reign) was evidently an attempt to revive the Roman Empire yet again.

The eastern part of the Roman Empire, based at Constantinople, continued after Rome's defeat in 476 and contributed to the great Catholic schism between the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church. Rome, however, became the capital of Catholicism and to this day is the home of the Pope.

Daniel 7 reveals much more about the transformation of the pagan Roman Empire into the papal Roman Catholic Church, and we will study this in later pages as we read about the second beast of Chapter 13, which rises out of the earth and restores the fortunes of the sixth head of the Beast. It is important to understand that the Beast is not the Catholic Church, nor is it the Pope. The Beast symbolizes the world's rulers and governments under the control of the Dragon, and these war against the Kingdom of Christ. The Beast-government at the time of John was Rome, and that is why the details of this passage describe the Roman Empire, the sixth head of the Beast.

The world wide evil devices of the Dragon-controlled Beast should not be limited to the Roman Empire. *All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life* (v8). In every nation the Beast blasphemes God and persecutes His saints, and he will continue to do so for the full *forty-two months*, the length of the Church Age. However, *he that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword*, and when the end-time armies of the Beast surround the camp of the saints, Christ will return and utterly destroy him and his followers, casting them into the Lake of Fire (19:19-20). In this *is the patience and the faith of the saints* (v10). Justice and punishment are sure and coming at the end of the Age, but we do not know the times and seasons of God.

If any man have an ear, let him hear (v6). The appearance of this phrase at the end of the prophecy describing the Beast intimates that understanding

this prophecy is difficult, but also of great importance. Jesus often closed His parables with a similar statement. For instance, after giving some very hard to accept statements in Luke 14:25-35, He concludes with: *whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple...he that hath ears to hear, let him hear* (see also Mt 11:15, 13:9; Mark 4:9; Luke 8:8). A similar phrase appears at the end of each of the seven letters to the churches.

11. *And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.*
12. *And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.*
13. *And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,*
14. *And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.*
15. *And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.*
16. *And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:*
17. *And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.*
18. *Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.*

THE ANTICHRIST

John sees a second beast arise, and this one is even more remarkable than the first. It has *two horns like a lamb*, but it speaks *like a dragon*—an odd picture, for lambs do not have horns and dragons cannot talk. The implication of this symbol is that the beast appears to be innocent, gentle, and sympathetic, but that his speech and actions betray his true character. The second beast is a master of deception, and has amazing spiritual powers so that many are deceived into following him. He works in close association with the first beast, doing *miracles* (Gk—*semeion*, or signs) in his presence and telling men to make an image to the first Beast and worship it. This shows that the actions of the lamb-like beast are anything but lamb-like. He seems to be able to control the commerce of rich and poor, and does not hesitate to put to death anyone who dares to disobey him. He is a *man*, and his name has a number—666—that helps the people of God identify him. This is the literal overall picture of the passage, and to understand its meaning we will again study how the symbols are used elsewhere in the Scriptures.

Later in the Revelation this second beast is called the *False Prophet* (19:20), and we will also call him that for the rest of this book. It is an appropriate title, for first and foremost the lamb-like beast is a spiritual deceiver, a false teacher giving poisonous water to the world (8:11). The fact that the word *lamb* occurs at least 25 times in the Revelation, and except for here always refers to Jesus Christ, also hints that this beast is a religious deceiver, a false Christ who pretends to have the power of God.

Almost all commentators, Futurist or Historical, see that *man of sin*, the *Antichrist*, somewhere in Chapter 13, and we believe that the lamb-like beast is this very *son of perdition* (II Thes 2:3). There has been too much hype and hysteria about the Antichrist from the Futurist camp. People are warned about accepting social security numbers, credit cards, computer chips, etc. because of this very passage. But these cannot be what Christ is warning His people about, for they are a-moral things. Taking the *mark of the Beast* and worshipping the *image of the Beast* are moral choices that will send one to Hell. It is inconsistent with the Scriptures to teach that accepting a physical, non-sinful, earthly number or mark will condemn one to eternal damnation. No, it is sin and only sin that has such authority over a man.

Another problem with the Futurist's warning that computer chips or infrared marking devices should be viewed with suspicion is that according to their format, all Christians will have been raptured off the earth before the events foretold by Chapter 13 take place. Futurists have no reason to fear the mark of the Beast or his image, for according to their interpretation they will not affect the people of the God! Only those who miss the Rapture and live in the seven-year space between Rapture and Millennium will see these events, so unless one believes in a second chance of salvation the Beast is entirely and emphatically irrelevant to the Christian! On the other hand, if you happen to be a Historicist, fear the Beast! Fear his mark, his image, the False Prophet, and especially the Dragon who controls all of them, for we believe that these all apply to the Christian in this Gospel dispensation, and not to a future one.

What does the Bible say about this sinister Antichrist? Only two verses mention him by name, both in John's first epistle. *Little children it is the last time: and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists...they went out from us, but they were not of us* (I John 2:18f). *And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God, and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world* (I John 4:3). It is clear from these verses that the Antichrist is a false teacher who once knew Christ. The basis of his erroneous teaching is denying an aspect of Christ: His divine nature, His substitutionary death, His resurrection, His authority, etc. There are many antichrists in the world, and the False Prophet represents their combined efforts to corrupt the people of the Kingdom. But one antichrist has been especially deceptive, and Paul the Apostle warned about his coming in II Thessalonians 2:

1. *Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the Day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man*

of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let [restrain], until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.

Paul taught that before the *Day of Christ* (His Second Coming), there would be a great *falling away* in the Church. A *man of sin* would lead this apostasy, exalting himself to be God, and sitting in Christ's place in the *naos of God* (see page 242). The *man of sin* is called *the son of perdition* (II Thes 2:3). The only other place we read this phrase concerns Judas Iscariot, who also once knew Christ (John 17:12). He comes with *all power, signs, and lying wonders*, and he will continue until the Second Coming, when Christ will destroy him with the *spirit of His mouth*. Paul warned that this *mystery of iniquity* was already at work, but that he would not appear until the "restrainer" *was taken out of the way*. Who is this Antichrist? We agree with many before us, like Wycliffe, Luther, Hess, Menno Simons, Sir Isaac Newton, Tyndale, Finney, Moody, and Spurgeon, that this *man of sin* is the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church, who sits in the supposed church of God, *shewing himself that he is God*.

In support of this interpretation, we should review again Daniel 7, which is quoted on page 301. Notice the *horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things* (v20). This horn rose after the ten kings of this kingdom (divinely interpreted as Rome) and was *diverse* from them (v24). *He shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High,*

and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time (v25). This is precisely what happened with the rise of the Roman apostasy of the Papacy as we shall see. Notice also that Daniel's timeframe is consistent with Revelation 13—*forty and two months*, or 3 ½ times (see page 250). Futurists count the *times* as years, and place them during the last half of the seven year tribulation following the Rapture of the Church, but the text requires more time—much more time. The horn will wear out the saints, the word is used for clothes, shoes, the earth, and heavens growing old (Is 51:6; Neh 9:21; Joshua 9:13), and the Roman church satisfies this thought. This system has warred against true Kingdom saints physically and ideologically for over fifteen hundred years now, and by the prophetic Word will not stop until the Lord returns with His saints.

Daniel's horn is *diverse* from the other horns (Dan 7:24), and this is true with respect to the rule of the Pope, who purposes to rule over the hearts and minds of men². He wants the worship of man and the political power to force them to obey him. He blasphemes the name of God, sits in the place of God, and even asks that men call him “the Holy Father!” This is sacrilege of the highest order possible; making himself to be God on earth (II Thes 2:3).

The horn *thinks to change times and laws* (Dan 7:25), another Papal characteristic. We follow the Gregorian calendar today because of the Pope, who instituted it centuries ago. The date for Easter was established by the Pope, as was Christmas—the “Holy Father” decided on December 25 because it happened to be the same day the pagans celebrated the winter solstice with feasts and rituals to their various gods. As far as laws are concerned, the Catholic Church holds all records. Councils, treaties, papal bulls, etc. fill entire libraries in the Vatican. And according to Papal doctrine, every one is infallible and everlasting, even though they often contradict each other and disagree with the clear teaching of Scripture.

2 The king of Daniel 11:36 has been set forth by some to refer to the Antichrist, but we do not agree. Daniel 11 is a prophecy of the end of the Jewish people and God's covenant with them. Scholars of all camps agree that the passage up to verse 36 is an astonishingly detailed description of the struggles of the nations with respect to Israel up to the time of Christ. Why should the prophecy suddenly jump 2000 years and completely ignore the turmoil of the nation at the destruction of Jerusalem? We therefore understand the God-defying king of verse 36 to be the Herodian line of rulers who presided over the end of the Jewish transgression, and researching the historical details of the passage supports this interpretation very well.

It is true that the current Roman Catholic Church has lost much of her earthly influence and power, and is not nearly as oppressive to the Kingdom of Christ as it was during the Dark Ages. Though the Catholic Church still has immense wealth and influence in the world, it is not able to affect politics and society nearly as much as it did years ago. However, if any doubt the influence that the Roman church continues to have, consider this quote:

“As both its critics and its champions would probably agree, Roman Catholicism has been the decisive spiritual force in the history of Western civilization. There are more Roman Catholics in the world than there are believers of any other religious tradition—not merely more Roman Catholics than all Christians combined, but more Roman Catholics than all Muslims or Buddhists, or Hindus. The papacy is the oldest continuing absolute monarchy in the world. To millions, [latest estimate one billion, or one-sixth of the world’s population] the pope is the infallible interpreter of divine revelation and the vicar of Christ.”

Encyclopedia Britannica (2002 CD Edition)

Think about some of the false teachings of the Roman church: Mary worship, the supernatural transformation of the communion bread and wine to the actual body and blood of Christ, forbidding priests to marry, prayers to saints rather than Christ, worship of relics and idols, Purgatory, confession of sins to a human priest and then forgiveness granted by giving money. And the worst one of all—the doctrine that the Pope is God on earth. All prayer must go through him to God and all revelation from God comes only to him. Here is what one Pope said: “I am all in all and above all, so that God Himself, and I, the Vicar of God, have both one consistory, and I am able to do almost all that God can do...wherefore, if those things that I do be said not to be done of man, but of God, what can you make me but God? No marvel then if it be in my power to dispense with all things, yea, with the precepts of Christ.”³ What blasphemy! Yes, he *speaks like a Dragon* (v11). Was not this Satan’s initial

3 Pope Nicholas (Decret. Par. Distinct 96. Ch. 7 Edit. Lugd. 1661).

sin, to make himself God? And yet this man seats himself in the supposed church of God and demands that man worship him! How is it possible that so many billions have been deceived by him, and even today blindly follow him? According to Paul's account of the Antichrist it is *because they received not the love of the truth...and for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie* (II Thes 2:10-11).

Into a vacuum left by the decline of the Roman Empire stepped the deceiver. Less than 500 years after Christ the Popish heresy was in control of the organized Church. A major factor in this was the decline of education and literacy. The Roman church did not permit lay men to read the Scriptures, but even if they had, few were able to read. Latin as a spoken language soon died out completely, but the priests continued to read it on Sundays to the people. Nobody understood it, and that is exactly the way the leaders of the Roman church wanted it to be. In fact, it was illegal for any person other than a priest to preach or read the Bible. The Waldensians were killed by the thousands, not because they denounced the Pope, but only because they read and taught from the Scriptures and would not stop doing so even when the Pope demanded it.

The Roman church has certainly worn out the saints. For centuries they put to death millions of "heretics" and any who dared conflict with Romanist doctrine. The Pope's definition of a heretic is someone who does not accept his teaching and authority, for he has also redefined the meaning of faith. Christians define faith as believing in and following Christ. Catholicism says faith is the acceptance that revealed truth is given to the Pope, and therefore doing what he commands is the work of faith! Catholics have forced Christ out of His own Church and set up an image in His place.

Anabaptists have long known the persecutions and atrocities their ancestors endured during the Reformation, and we will offer one quote that sums up the Roman Catholic Church's answer for heretics:

"As some Emperors of Rome exhausted the art of pleasure, so have Romanish persecutors exhausted the art of pain, so that it will now be difficult to discover or invent a new kind of it, which they have not already practiced upon heretics. They have been shot, stabbed,

stoned, drowned, beheaded, hanged, drawn, quartered, impaled, burnt, or buried alive, roasted on spits, baked in ovens, thrown into furnaces, tumbled over precipices, cast from towers, sunk in mire and pits, starved, hung on tenter hooks, suspended by the hair, hands, or feet, stuffed and blown up with gunpowder, ripped with swords and sickles, tied to the tails of horses, dragged over streets and sharp flints, broken on the wheel, beaten on anvils with hammers, blown with bellows, bored with hot irons, torn piecemeal by red-hot pincers, slashed with knives, hacked with axes, hewn with chisels, pricked with forks, stuck from head to foot with pins; choked with water, lime rags, urine, or mangled pieces of their own bodies, shut up in caves and dungeons, tied to stakes, nailed to trees, tormented with lighted matches, scalding oil, burning pitch, melted lead, etc. They have been flayed alive, had their flesh scalped and torn from their bones; they have been trampled and danced upon till their bowels have been forced out; their entrails have been tied to trees and pulled forth by degrees, their heads twisted with cords till the blood or even the eyes started out; eyes, ears, lips, tongues, arms have been cut off as ordinary sport.”

(Grattan Guinness, 1890)

Millions and millions of men, women, and children have been killed by the relentless inquisition of that apostate, the Roman Catholic Church. And the spiritual death toll is an even greater atrocity.

It is very true that we do not see the Roman church doing these things today. The second Vatican council in the 1960's radically changed many church doctrines. They have officially abandoned the “one true church” idea, and have entered into ecumenical discussions with Protestantism, Islam, and Judaism. They have even made friendly gestures to Hinduism and Buddhism, and the Pope has had documented meetings with Communist governments. There has been an increased involvement in international affairs (Encyclopedia Britannica). They no longer force people to worship and support only the Catholic image. Perhaps this is part of that last deception in the world which we will read more about in Chapters 19 and 20.

THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST

Returning to a closer look at Revelation's account of the Antichrist, we are made to see the extreme power of deception that he possesses. He does *great wonders*, and can make fire come down from heaven. These signs give him credibility in the eyes of the people, and empower him to exercise all the authority of the first Beast in his presence. The two phrases, *before him* in verse 12, and *in his sight* in verses 13-14, are identical in the Greek (*enopion*) and are better translated *in his presence*. This means that the two Beasts are not successive but concurrent, and they work together under the authority of Satan to deceive and corrupt the people of the earth.

The False Prophet tells men to set up an image to the first Beast, and he is given (so the Greek) the power to give a spirit (Gk—*pneuma*) to that image, so that men fall down and worship the image of the Beast. Everyone is made to receive a mark on their right hand or forehead that identifies them and allows them to buy and sell in the Beast's kingdom. Christians refuse to worship the image and so do not receive the mark the False Prophet attempts to impose on every person, small or great. These are killed by the image which has received a spirit from the Antichrist.

What is this *image of the Beast*? We should first study the Biblical definition of the phrase, and determine whether it is meant to be understood literally or figuratively. According to Strong's Greek Dictionary, *image* (Gk—*eikon*) has both a literal and figurative meaning. Literally it is defined as a statue or profile; figuratively it is a likeness, resemblance, representation, or copy. The Greek word *eikon* is not the word for idol (*eidolon*), though they are fairly close in meaning; rather, think of the English word "icon." Examples of the figurative usage of *eikon* in Scripture include II Corinthians 4:4, *Christ, who is the image of God*, and Romans 8:29, where we are told that our goal is to be *conformed to the image of His Son*. Another symbolic usage of *image* can be found in Daniel 2-3, when Nebuchadnezzar had a dream of a huge image of gold, silver, brass, and iron clay. The image was interpreted by Daniel to represent the next four kingdoms of the world, and Nebuchadnezzar was so impressed that the gold head represented his Babylonian empire that he had an immense golden statue made and forced men to worship it.

Literally, an *image* is an idol worshipped instead of God. Throughout the OT this was Israel's chief sin—setting up idols or images to man-made gods, and forsaking the God of heaven. Sometimes these images were placed in the very temple of God (see II Chr 33:7), even though the first of the Ten Commandments says, *thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image* (Ex 20:4). Idolatry was not just an OT problem. The False Prophet continues to use the idols of the world to get Christians away from worshipping the true God. Materialism, wealth, recreation, laziness in spiritual life, and worldly values are just some of the images that the False Prophet tries to entice men to set up and worship instead of seeking first the Kingdom of God.

Taking Strong's figurative meaning to verses 14-15, we believe the *image of the Beast* is a likeness or copy of the first Beast that has been crafted by the arts of the False Prophet. The *image* is set up to make men worship it instead of God. It is specifically stated that the image or likeness was of the *Beast which had the wound by a sword, and did live* (13:14). We have already shown that the wounded head of the first Beast was the Roman Empire, and thus the *image* or likeness should be of Rome. History records how the False Prophet (the Papacy) conspired to make a new Roman Empire and that incident is the fulfillment of this vivid prophecy. With the fall of Rome in A.D. 476, the Papacy became the political, social, and governmental power of Europe. Kings and princes still governed the city-states and regions of the kingdoms, but the Papacy worked in close association with them, forming alliances between rival kings, crowning new ones, and coercing them to defend the immense Papal land holdings.

Though the Roman church had great power, it never had a formidable army of its own. The Pope's claim to be the Vicar of God and the huge influence he held over the common man was enough to get kings to honor and protect him. Occasionally a ruler would refuse to acknowledge the power of the Pope, but in the end, the Pope seemed to always come out on top. The Papacy sustained fallen Rome by its own power for several centuries (400's-700's), but increased military pressure from the Byzantine Empire and Germanic barbarians forced the Papacy to act decisively. Realizing that he could not adequately defend himself, the Pope solicited the help of a Frankish king, Pippin the Short, who invaded Italy, conquered it, and then gave the

lands to the Papacy (754). With some crafty planning the Pope then elevated his own standing by crowning the first new Roman emperor in over 300 years, in the process making himself out to be the greater authority in that he had invested the temporal king with his own power. This restoration of the Roman Empire is reckoned by historians to have begun in the year 800, when Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne “emperor of the Romans” on Christmas day. This loose confederation of ethnic groups controlled by the Pope came to be called the Holy Roman Empire.

The theory of the Papacy was that “the empire was the secular arm of the church, set up by the papacy for its own purposes and therefore answerable to the Pope and, in the last resort, to be disposed of by him” ([Encyclopedia Britannica](#)). Obviously, the reason the Pope needed the Holy Roman Empire was to promote and protect himself. The Popes were not the emperors; they crowned temporal rulers to be Emperor. These rulers were German, French, Italian, whatever power was strongest in Europe at the time, and for over a thousand years the Papacy and the Holy Roman Empire were together the most important institution of Western Europe. Napoleon and the French Revolution finally ended the Holy Roman Empire, the sixth head of the Beast, but the *image of the Beast* continues.

The Papacy has set up the image of Catholicism as a spiritual deception without rival in all history. The goal of the Pope was to establish a political, social, and religious monarchy that all men would worship, and though he did not fully succeed in his ambition, no religion has claimed more souls than the Catholic Church. More people have bowed to this fraudulent image than to any other, and idolatry is at its very core. The use of idols, shrines, and images began in the fifth century, as many of the pagan Roman idols, shrines, and rituals were adapted by the Catholic Church and simply renamed with Christian themes. Relics of every kind imaginable were “discovered” and worshipped—bones of the Apostles, pieces of the cross by the hundreds, several crowns of thorns worn by Jesus, and countless other falsities. Images of the Virgin Mary and others were seen to shed tears, change expressions, or move. All of these were said to have miraculous powers: healing diseases, protecting the innocent, helping the uncertain, etc. These *lying wonders*, or false miracles, can still be found today, especially in Central and South America.

Verse 15 tells us that the *image of the Beast* would force men to worship it and would kill those who refused to bow to its demands. This is fully accurate, for the Papacy vigorously put down all supposed insurrections under the cloak of punishing “heretics.” The Dark Ages and the various Inquisitions were a terrible time in history, as untold numbers of innocent men, women and children were taken into the dungeons of torture and murdered in unimaginable ways. You may have seen the painting showing a dungeon filled with torture devices. Helpless men are being torn limb from limb on the rack, and a fire is heating iron rods and tongs for dreadful use on human bodies. Empire soldiers are doing the actual work, but the priests and monks are always present, instructing the executioners on what to do next. Whole cities were destroyed to cleanse the land of “heretics.” It is hard to imagine such anti-Christian behavior, and it is unthinkable that it was done in the name of Christ.

The Reformation brought more torture and death, done again in the name of Christ! The Protestant reformers were quick to employ the same evil methods to force men to worship their particular *image*, driving the world finally into what is called the Thirty Years War in the mid 1600’s. At the end of this war, it is estimated that the population of Europe was reduced by two-thirds. At its core, this war was a fight between Roman Catholicism and Lutheran and Calvinist Protestantism, but neither side won. It ended simply because there were not enough people left to continue the battle. Many Kingdom-Christians fled Europe during this time, migrating to Russia, England, and America. Those who remained became increasingly cynical and bitter toward God, and form the cultural background of today’s blatantly atheistic European population.

THE MARK OF THE BEAST

We now come to the *mark* that the False Prophet gives to all those who follow him. Much has been written and promoted about this *mark* which we do not attempt to refute or discuss here, but we wish to set forth some general facts to help us correctly identify what it is.

1. Accepting the mark is sin, for all who receive it are punished eternally (14:9-11).
2. The mark must be consciously received, it cannot be forced upon men against their will (13:16).
3. Worshipping the Beast, worshipping his image, and receiving the *mark of his name* are essentially equivalent expressions, for they are always given together (14:9-11, 15:2, 16:2, 19:20, 20:4).
4. The *servants of God* were also sealed on their foreheads just before final judgment fell on the earth (Rev 7:3). The Beast's mark seems to be an allusion to this seal of God, the *mark of the Beast* being the Devil's counterpart to the *seal of the living God*.
5. The Greek word for *mark* is *charagma*, used only in the Book of Revelation. According to Strong's Greek Dictionary it is "an etching, stamp, or sculptured figure."
6. The mark is applied to the right hand and forehead of all Beast worshippers (13:16).
7. No man may buy or sell unless he accepts the mark upon his person (13:17).

We believe that the *mark of the Beast* symbolizes a person's identification with the kingdom of the Beast, just as the seal of God identifies the saints with the Kingdom of Christ. In Chapter 7, *the seal of the living God* is a symbol for the Holy Spirit, our ticket that gives us entrance into the presence of Christ after death (page 151). Here, the *mark* is just the opposite; it is a stamp of disapproval on a person, the ticket to Hell. As such, it must be received by making a moral choice against God. We therefore should reject ideas that the *mark of the Beast* is some secret number or a-moral policy like social security numbers, credit cards, computer programs, etc. that one could innocently accept with dire results. Taking the *mark of the Beast* is an act of sin, and sin is defined in the NT.

To illustrate the contrast between *the seal of the living God* and *the mark of the Beast*, imagine the souls of men and women who have died arriving at

a train station. A long black train is boarding passengers at one end of the depot while a gleaming white train heading up the track waits at the other. A conductor is checking each ticket and directing the passengers to the appropriate train. All those with the *mark of the Beast* must take the black train to their everlasting abode; those with *the seal of the living God* are awarded seats on the white train to Paradise. Throughout the rest of the Book of Revelation the *mark of the Beast* is a touchstone for wickedness. We will see terrible judgments fall on those who have taken the mark, both in this life and in the eternal one. We will see the sealed saints endure great suffering and persecution on earth, but victory and joy in the age to come.

The mark is put on the *right hand* or the *forehead*. Both of these have deep spiritual significance in the rest of Scripture. The right hand is a place of honor, power, and privilege—Jesus held the seven churches in His right hand (1:16). Several of the OT sacrificial rituals had blood from the offerings placed on the thumb of the right hand. The right hand symbolizes one's actions—the things he loves to do most. Are they righteous and useful to God, or impure and selfish?

The *forehead* symbolizes one's mind, his thoughts and desires. Thus Moses called upon the Israelites to keep the commandments of God always in their hearts, and to *bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes* (Deut 6:8; also Ex 13:9). Though it is doubtful that Moses intended this to be carried out literally, by the time of Jesus the Jews had strict rules on these *phylacteries* (Mt 23:5), or little leather boxes that contained verses from the Law and which were worn on the forehead and right arm. In Chapter 14 we see the saints in heaven with the *Father's name written in their foreheads*, and then in Chapter 17 we read that the great Harlot has an abominable name written on her *forehead*. The right hand and forehead represent the thoughts and actions of man.

No man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the Beast, or the number of his name (v17). The first thought upon reading this verse is probably to take it in a literal sense; that is, buying and selling food and services. But stop and think a moment. Few (if any) take the remainder of this verse in a strictly physical sense, why only the buying and selling? We have several texts that do use these words in a figurative way. *Buy the truth,*

and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding (Pro 23:23). The five virgins that took oil in their lamps refused to give to those who had not, *saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves* (Mt 25:9). Isaiah foretold how that in the New Covenant salvation would be free to all: *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price* (Is 55:1, also Rev 3:18). Figuratively, forbidding men to buy and sell would mean that the False Prophet forces salvation through his counterfeit program. Like a merchant monopolizing the commerce of a commodity, the False Prophet requires people to buy salvation from him only.

This is especially true for the Roman Catholic Church, and was its official position until the 1960's. The only way one could be saved was to be an approved member of the Roman church; all prayer went through the Pope and all revelation came to him alone. Only clergy members were allowed to preach, and any person who dared to follow the clear teaching of the Scripture instead of the Roman Catholic doctrine was put to death. The Pope monopolized the teachings of Christ, the Bible, and even salvation (page 317). Interdicts and ex-communication were greatly feared by her members, but nevertheless, thousands refused to buy from the apostate church and paid with their lives.

THE UNIVERSAL FALSE PROPHET

Though historic Catholicism perfectly fulfills this prophetic passage, we should also note that the entire picture of the lamb-like second beast can be applied in a general way to virtually all those deceived by false teaching. The *mark of the Beast* should not be restricted to Catholicism only. We talk of the Antichrist, but John says there are *many antichrists* (I John 2:18). We talk of the False Prophet, but there are *many false prophets gone out into the world* (I John 4:1; II Peter 2:1). The tactics of false teachers are similar in that they always draw attention to some person, rule, or creed and subtly diminish the simple, Christ-centered truth of the Gospel. False religions demand that men worship their image in order to attain life after death. These religions are real

forces, empowered by the Dragon with the ability to do miracles and signs. It should not be surprising that the Devil loans his power to men, giving them authority to do miracles that lend validity to their false message. Though his power is now limited by God due to his defeat at the Cross, the fact that the False Prophet is able to call down fire from heaven, just like Elijah and the *two witnesses* (11:5), illustrates his extreme deceitfulness.

Jesus warned His disciples that *there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect* (Mt 24:24). There are more false prophets, religions, and cults now than there ever has been. Though they vary greatly in what they say and do, without exception their message secretly undermines the all-sufficiency of Christ, the Son of God. These false teachers will perform miracles or tell of prayers miraculously answered, real or imagined, that will attract the admiration of their followers. Then they will set up the *image* and empower it with exclusive “spiritual life.” Is this not the structure of the false religions of the world? The Catholics, Mormons, Muslims, and JW’s force their members to obey their own man-made teachings, which contradict plain Scripture. Lesser known sects and cults do the same on a smaller scale but with the same effect. The Beast has many images to worship; all bring spiritual death.

The unspoken goal of every false prophet’s message is to lure people into accepting the value system of the world instead of living what the Bible teaches. The Dragon knows that deception works on an individual level just as well as it does on a group level. Men follow their own hearts and imagine that they see sure signs of God’s hand directing their lives, even when it conflicts with the Word of God. They set up their own image and worship it, thinking that they are worshipping God (I Cor 3:18) when all along they are serving a god of self—an imitation that makes them “feel good.” These man-made images are very powerful in the lives of men, and they lead to spiritual death.

THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST IS 666

The False Prophet has a number that helps to identify him: *the number of his name*. It takes special wisdom and understanding, however, to *count* the number of this name. The Greek word for *count* is *psephizo*, which means

to calculate, counting one by one. Calculating the number of a name sounds very strange to us today, but in John's day it was quite commonly done. Before the invention of unique symbols for each numeral (tenth century A.D.), letters of the alphabet were used for numbers. The Greek language did this by assigning the first letter of their alphabet the value of one, the second letter two, and so on up to ten. The eleventh letter was assigned a value of 20, the twelfth 30, etc up to 100. The last letters were assigned 200 to 800 in order, using all 24 letters of the Greek alphabet. To count the number of a word or name, one added up the values of each letter in the name. According to Adam Clarke's commentary, secular writers in the Roman Empire were known to incorporate this device in their literature in various ways.

Before proposing an answer to the problem of the number of the name, a few points should be made. First, the number is six hundred sixty-six: not six-six-six, the number of man repeated three times as some explain it. The Greek writes it *chi xi stigma*—six hundred sixty-six. Six-six-six would be *stigma stigma stigma*⁴.

Second, it is *the number of a man*—not an angel, animal, or machine. Cross reference Revelation 21:17, which uses similar language to show human character.

Third, the counting of a name must be done in the standard, historical manner. That is, using the original languages of Hebrew, Greek, or Latin, and using the commonly used letters and values of the day. Some prophecy experts have seriously confused the simple meaning of *the number of the Beast* by proposing all sorts of solutions using a mixed approach that can lead to almost limitless possibilities. An example of this error is the attempt to assign number values to the English alphabet; or worse, Greek letter values to English words.

Fourth, the number is to be found in the name or title of a particular person—the False Prophet as described in Revelation 13.

Finally, we should not let this one characteristic of the lamb-like beast control the rest of the passage. Yes, it must accurately fit the clear intent of the

⁴ *Stigma* was an obsolete letter in John's time that continued to be used only as a symbol for the number six. The fact that one ancient manuscript, Ephraemi Rescriptus (C), reads 616 instead of 666 is inconsequential. The early Church writers universally believed the number to be 666.

overall picture, but it should not over-ride the rest of the symbolic picture. We do not need to see how many names we can find that equal 666 and by process of elimination select one. Using the standard rules of interpretation of prophecy we have already proposed a meaning for the False Prophet and the image he has set up; specifically, the Pope and the Roman Catholic Church. Now, using the criteria above, can the number 666 be shown to connect with *the man of sin*, the Pope?

On this we have a wealth of evidence and agreement by a broad range of interpreters, Dispensationalists excluded. Irenaeus, who wrote only 100 years after John, proposed the Greek word *lateinov*, which translates to “the Latins.” Roman Catholicism of course, is dedicated to Latin, continuing to use it in their worship, liturgical rituals, universities, and communications long after the language had died out in everyday use. Even today there are reminders of the strength of the Latin kingdom. South America is called Latin America because of the dominance of the Catholic Church there. Many mottoes and titles of government and colleges, strangely enough, are also in Latin.

An objection has been made concerning the validity of *lateinov*, though the source, Bellarmin the Catholic Jesuit, certainly had an ulterior motive for this objection—he was defending his Latin church from the charge of being the False Prophet! Bellarmin says the word was misspelled by Irenaeus, and should be *latinov*, which adds up to 661. On the surface this argument seems peculiar, Bellarmin lived in the early 1600’s, well over a millennium after Irenaeus, who wrote and spoke Greek in the ancient dialect. Bellarmin did not know Greek like Irenaeus did.

According to the Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary, “Balaam” adds up to 666 in the Hebrew language, though it does not show the formula for this. We discussed Balaam in the message to the church at Pergamos. As a false teacher he deceived many Israelites into following the value system of the world around them instead of the words of Joshua their leader. Balaam was a prophet who knew God but also wanted the honor and wealth of the world. This is the very sin of the Antichrist.

Perhaps the most eye-opening count of *the number of his name* can be easily calculated even today using the most widely-known, long-enduring numbering system ever: the Roman numerals of the Latin language. School

children are still taught that I = 1; V = 5; X = 10; L = 50; C = 100; D = 500. While Latin is not the language that John used in writing the Revelation, it was a dominant language in his day, and for many centuries afterward. The Roman numerals were the only method of counting in Latin until the Middle Ages. Additionally, Latin was and remains the official language of the Roman Catholic Church.

The current official title of the Pope is “Bishop of Rome, Vicar of Christ, Successor of the Prince of the Apostles, Supreme Pontiff of the Western Church, Patriarch of the West, Primate of Italy, Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Province of Rome, Sovereign of the State of Vatican City” (Encyclopedia Britannica). Through the years this title has been added to and reworded as historical events warranted. Certainly one of the very oldest of these titles is the second one, “Vicar of Christ” (Latin: VICARIUS CHRISTI). Catholic documents contain this title in various forms, one of the most ancient being: “Vicar of the Son of God.” In Latin this is written VICARIVS FILII DEI. Anyone may add the Roman numerals in this title to see that they do indeed total exactly 666.

You may wonder why the spelling is not “VICARIUS.” The letter U is a relatively new letter, added to the Latin alphabet somewhere around A.D. 1000. Before that, letters U and W did not exist; they were written as V’s. Therefore all U’s and W’s have the same value as a V.

Interestingly, the Catholic web site, www.newadvent.com, has a lengthy dissertation as to why the number 666 does not apply to the Pope. First they say that VICARIVS FILII DEI is not the title of the Pope, that really it is VICARIUS CHRISTI. Next they muddy the waters by proposing other solutions to the 666, (using erroneous mixed alphabets and letter values) leading to their main point: there are so many different possibilities for 666 as the number of a name that it is impossible to know for sure which name is correct. One wonders why they stress this point so strongly if they are correct in saying VICARIVS FILII DEI is not a title of the Pope. The reason they need this point so badly is because there were leaders within the Roman Catholic Church in the early 1900’s who admitted that VICARIVS FILII DEI is indeed a Popish title, and even that these exact words are inscribed on one of his many tiaras—a mitre worn for ceremonial appearances.

The Vatican is extremely secretive and is virtually closed to outsiders. Many of its artifacts and documents have been hidden or unseen for years in the famous Vatican Library, and whether the Vatican really does have such a tiara has not been proven beyond a doubt. However, ancient Catholic documents exist that unmistakably show that VICARIVS FILII DEI was a title of the Pope. One of the most famous of these documents is the “Donation of Constantine,” a letter written by Constantine in which he gave most of Italy to the Catholic Church because the Pope had healed him of leprosy. This document was later proven to be a complete fraud. A Pope had forged it sometime around A.D. 750 in an attempt to gain more power—another of the Antichrist’s *lying wonders*. The document is in Latin of course, and was written by someone within the Catholic Church who does ascribe to the Pope the dubious honor of being VICARIVS FILII DEI. The Donation of Constantine can be viewed on the Internet, and these words are clearly visible.

It is surely more than coincidence that the very title of the Pope that Christians find most offensive contains the mystical number 666—“Vicar of the Son of God.” The word “vicar” means to serve in the place of, or instead of. The vicarious death of Christ, for instance, refers to the fact that Christ died in our place. Whether the Pope is titled VICARIUS CHRISTI or VICARIVS FILII DEI, makes no difference—we vehemently deny the right of any human being to take the place of Christ in His Church. This is, in fact, the very thing the Apostle Paul said the Antichrist would do: *he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God* (II Thes 2:4). The Greek prefix “anti” according to [Strong’s Greek Dictionary](#) means “instead of, or because of.”⁵ Antichrist (instead of Christ), and Vicar of Christ (instead of Christ), are absolutely identical! The Roman Catholic Church’s attempt to subvert the 666 has only brought them closer to the Scriptural definition of it. VICARIUS CHRISTI is even worse than VICARIVS FILII DEI.

5 An example that the Greek meaning of *anti* is “instead of, or in the place of” can be seen in Matthew 20:28, which says that Jesus gave *his life a ransom for* (Gk—*anti*) *many*. English uses the prefix “anti” to mean “against,” Greek uses it to mean “instead of.”

THE TWO HORNS OF THE BEAST

There is one characteristic of the False Prophet (symbolized by the lamb-like beast) that we have not discussed, and that is its two horns. Horns represent kings (17:12), but they are also symbolic of power and strength. The two horns of the False Prophet could be showing the dual nature of the Catholic Church, which split into two factions—the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church.

Another possibility is that the second horn represents Protestantism, which began with the Reformation in the 1500's. We have given examples and quotes of how terribly the Catholics persecuted and tormented the true Kingdom saints, but Protestant persecutors were not far behind. Though the Reformation brought some relief from Catholic oppression, the reformers did not go back completely to Bible Christianity. They set up their own images of religion and ordered men to worship under their rules and conditions. Dissenters were forced to move away, imprisoned, or killed. Zwingli, Calvin, Luther, and other famous protestors all advocated a state-enforced church—with themselves at the head.

The Anabaptists and scattered like-minded groups did not agree, and many paid with their lives at the hands of these Protestant reformers. A very insightful commentary on this period of history is a book by David Bercof, [The Kingdom That Turned The World Upside Down](#). Though we may not agree on eschatology, the concept of the two kingdoms—the Kingdom of Christ on earth now, and the antagonistic kingdom of darkness—comes through very clearly in the Book, and we heartily recommend it. One quote especially shows the transition of the Catholic image into a surprisingly similar Protestant image:

“It is commonly thought that the Reformation changed all of that [ritualistic religion teaching cheap grace]. But instead, the Reformation largely replaced one form of cheap grace (sacraments, indulgences, etc.) with another form of cheap grace—easy believism: Just believe that Jesus died for your sins and that your own obedience plays no role in your salvation and—*voilà*—your eternal life

in heaven is assured. The truth is that German Lutherans were little different from German Catholics except as to theology and forms of worship” (page 253).

To illustrate this point Bercot compares Mary-worship in the Catholic Church, which Bible-believing Christians rightly condemn, with the “popular-Jesus” worship promoted by many churches today. Catholics like to pray to Mary because she is never angry, she doesn’t punish people for sins, she doesn’t give commandments to keep, and her grace covers all sins. Doesn’t this sound like the new, popular-Jesus being preached in some Protestant churches? Jesus is simply a catchword invoked to attain happiness and to aid in the pursuit of self. If ever there was a time for caution and sincerity in seeking the truth it is now. Many are deceiving themselves and others into worshipping only an image, a counterfeit, a copy of the true Son of God. What is the key to not being deceived? Love the truth, follow Christ, and seek earnestly the Kingdom of heaven; keep on the narrow and straight path.

SUMMARY OF THE TWO BEASTS

Let’s summarize Revelation 13. The first Beast rises out of the nations, and represents the Dragon-controlled kingdoms of the world. Attention is focused especially on the sixth head of the Beast—the Roman Empire—which was especially cruel to the Kingdom of God, persecuting and afflicting her dreadfully. The head receives a death wound by a sword (war) and is on the verge of disappearing when another beast rises out of the earth. This lamb-like beast is the Antichrist, the *son of perdition* who revives Rome, the first Beast, as the Holy Roman Empire, and then deceives men into worshipping him and his image. This we believe is the historical fulfillment of the two Beasts.

There is, however, a continuing sense to this important prophecy, for there are many persecuting governments, antichrists, and false prophets. Let’s not be deceived into thinking that since we have identified the Beast and the Antichrist that we can relax our vigil. Even though the Pope is the greatest antichrist of all time, he is not the only antichrist (I John 2:18), and any of these false teachers can steal your salvation. Let *no man take thy crown*

(3:11), Jesus warns the church at Philadelphia. The trinity of evil cannot easily be separated into Dragon, Beast, and False Prophet, because they are really one: Satan, the great deceiver. The Beast is Satan, working through ungodly governments and authorities to hurt the Bride of Christ. The False Prophet is Satan, working through so-called churches and religions to deceive people and lead them astray.

The Kingdoms of Christ and the Dragon are at war, and we must choose sides. But the False Prophet has been blurring the lines between the kingdoms, tearing down the warning signs and redefining the borders. Christian be alert, and follow the steps of the One who knows the path. The Dragon uses many false teachers to try to deceive the people of the Kingdom; any one of them can trick a person into Hell. The warning is worth repeating: *Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.*

To some readers familiar with the Historical interpretation, it may be unsatisfying to read our view that the Beast and False Prophet are symbols for general world materialism and religious deception rather than one-time historical enemies of the Church. But this more general interpretation should not be considered a nebulous allegory. It is a prophetic message that is applicable to every Christian and every era. The Beast has raised its historical heads in the form of ruthless dictators, atheistic communism, and anti-God social laws for centuries, and will continue to do so. False prophets will continue to lead many astray and attempt to deceive the very elect. The continuing message for the people of God today is to take heed of these formidable enemies. The writers of the NT constantly warned of the dangers of being deceived by Satan and the *cares of this world*. The trinity of evil works closely throughout the entire Church Age, and knowing ahead of time about their wicked and corrupting traps will help the Christian pilgrim avoid these deadly pitfalls.

As we progress through the Revelation and see the many details of the two Beasts, it is sometimes difficult to discern between the two. Often they are combined, and this is appropriate if they are symbols for deception in religion and politics. The two Beasts are intertwined, twin tools of Satan that work against God's plan for mankind. The first Beast comes openly at war against the Church, a direct attack upon her people. The second comes quietly, surfacing within the Church and deceiving the unwary into losing their souls.

It would be a mistake to limit their significance to single historical events. Today the Beasts of persecuting governments are different than they were 500 years ago. Likewise, the deceptions and temptations of the False Prophet are more numerous and stronger than ever.

Thielman J. Van Braught, author of Martyr's Mirror, wrote the following quote 350 years ago, confirming that the Dragon, Beast, and False Prophet have had a long history of deception and wickedness:

“These are sad times in which we live, truly there is more danger now than in the time of our fathers who suffered death for the testimony of the Lord. Few would believe this for they look on the external and physical, and in this respect it is now better, quieter, and more comfortable. Few look on what is internal and what pertains to the soul and on which everything depends. These times certainly are more dangerous; for then Satan came openly, through his servants at noon-day, as a roaring lion, so that he was known, and it was at times possible to escape him. His chief goal was to kill the body. But now he comes at night, or twilight, in a strange but yet pleasing form to lie in wait to destroy our souls, and to annihilate entirely, if it were possible, true Christian faith and practice. Now the world reveals itself very beautiful and glorious more than at any preceding time in a three-fold pleasing form: The Lust of Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life. Almost all men run after her, to worship her as supreme queen, and all are deceived by her, many who have drunk of the poisoned wine of her lusts and deceptions die a spiritual death.”

(Martyr's Mirror, page 8)

REVELATION CHAPTER FOURTEEN



THE FINAL DAY OF THE LORD

For the faithful saints, Chapter 14 is a beautiful contrast to the dark picture of the Beast and False Prophet we saw in Chapter 13. There is an abrupt and radical change in subject and setting between the last verse of Chapter 13 and 14:1, a common feature of the Book of Revelation. The theme of Chapter 14 is the Second Coming of Christ. It is a time of great rejoicing, singing, and praise for the saints, but a time of terror and torment for all Beast worshippers. Chapter 14 will close the section of “The Woman and the Dragon.” Appropriately, we see the panorama of the Church Age ending in heaven and the kingdom of darkness sent to eternal punishment.

Chapter 14 closely parallels Chapter 7 in both theme and structure, though the subject order is reversed in that Chapter 14 shows the righteous in heaven first, and the judgment of the wicked last. The arrangement is thematic rather than strictly time-ordered, focusing first on the good and then on the bad, whereas Chapter 7 showed the terrible judgments of God on the wicked first and the rejoicing saints in heaven last.

1. *And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.*
2. *And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:*
3. *And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.*
4. *These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb.*
5. *And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.*

THE 144,000 REDEEMED ONES

Here is one of the most uplifting and joyful scenes in the Book of Revelation. Like Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, this passage allows us to glimpse from the Delectable Mountains the Celestial City, so far in the distance, and what anticipation and longing it brings! The best this earth has to offer pales in comparison with the delights and rewards of heaven with Christ. John sees the *Lamb* standing on *Mount Sion, and with Him 144,000...redeemed from the earth*. The trials and struggles of life are over for these saints: no more pain, no tears, no sorrow; no more persecution, torture, or temptation. All is peace forevermore. They stand before the Throne of God with harps and singing, joining the angelic host in praise and thanksgiving. This is the same heavenly multitude we saw in Chapter 7 at the end of the seals, and which we will see again in Chapters 15 and 19.

The symbolism is simple and yet conveys a soaring picture. Jesus the *Lamb* leads His people through the *green pastures* and *still waters* of heaven. The redeemed, with the *Father's name in their foreheads*, is a picture that stands

in contrast to those in the previous chapter, who had the *mark of the Beast* in their foreheads. The harps, the *new song* of deliverance and victory, *Mount Sion*, the voices thundering as a tremendous waterfall; all these describe a spectacle of awesome majesty, power, freedom, peace, and joy.

The most overwhelming phrase, however, is that these are said to be *without fault before the Throne of God*. Without fault—who can say it? Someday sin-stained souls of men cleansed by Christ will be raised as incorruptible, pure, and faultless bodies; not by any works or merit of human effort, for all have sinned and are personally guilty before God. Christ, so rich in mercy, has *purchased from the earth* (v4, NASB) with His own blood all who fall upon Him in humility and faith.

It is only by accepting Jesus' substitutionary sacrifice that any man may be considered *without fault*, and even then we cannot completely fathom it. No wonder these *follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth*. They owe Him far beyond what can be repaid, and their love and devotion will ever be for Him only. Jesus said that He was going into heaven to prepare a place for us, and that He would come again and receive us unto Himself where we will live with Him forever (John 14:3). It is *an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you* (I Peter 1:4). What a promise for all those who have forsaken all to follow Christ (see also Eph 1:4, 5:27; Col 1:22; Heb 9:14; I Peter 1:9; Jude 1:24).

The 144,000 in this scene represent the redeemed of all ages rejoicing in heaven. The account is similar to 7:9-17, which should be read in conjunction with this chapter. There we saw the 144,000 sealed for protection before the wrath of God fell upon the world and then immediately an immense multitude was seen, *which no man could number*, rejoicing before the Throne.

It is not clear whether this passage describes eternal heaven after the end of the world, or the intermediate state of the righteous souls *under the altar* waiting for the final glorification of their bodies. The great reaping of the earth is not foretold until later, at the end of this chapter, which would hint that the heavenly scene of the 144,000 is not eternity but Paradise—where Christ and the souls of the saints wait until the final chapter of world history is written. These saints live and reign with Christ in the *first resurrection* (Chapter 20), and are said to be *the firstfruits unto God* (v4).

The term *Mount Zion* has a long and distinguished history in the Bible. The Jebusites controlled Jerusalem and its Mount Zion until David finally defeated them and prepared a place there for the temple. Soon David and the prophets began using Mount Zion figuratively of Jerusalem and Israel. In the NT, a spiritual comparison of Mount Sinai with Mount Zion is given, and Mount Zion is called *the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem...the general assembly and church of the firstborn* (Heb 12:22). Many of the OT prophets foretold great blessings for Mount Zion, and these were fulfilled in the Messianic Age of Grace that we call the Church. The Lamb on Mount Zion with His redeemed ones is a perfect picture of heavenly peace and safety. It suggests ownership and the manifold blessings that come because of belonging to Him.

We have earlier discussed the significance of the 144,000 (Gk—*one hundred forty-four thousands*) sealed and redeemed ones (see page 157). It should be obvious that the number is not to be taken literally, and its symbolic derivation is explained in Chapter 7. Twelve tribes times 12,000 equals 144,000. In Biblical numerology twelve represents God's elect, and 1,000 represents a large number that God alone knows exactly (see glossary).

The 144,000 are said to be *not defiled with women* (v4) and *in their mouth was found no guile* (v5). Immorality and untruthfulness are the ideas of these two figures of speech. This is repeated in standard language in 21:27, *And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life*. Notice that a hyper-literal reading of *not defiled with women; for they are virgins* would contradict the teaching of Jesus and Paul that marriage is honorable and good, and so we are forced to seek the spiritual meaning of the phrase. Paul spoke figuratively to the Corinthians when he said, *For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ* (II Cor 11:2). Purity and honesty are two essential virtues that, if absent from our lives, will keep us from gaining heaven (see also 3:4).

The 144,000 redeemed ones sing *as it were a new song before the Throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders* (v3). The song can only be understood by the redeemed and is a figurative way of saying that they only have received

salvation. You simply have to be there in order to learn this song. Three times in the Revelation we read about the redeemed singing a special new song in heaven. In the next chapter we see the entire multitude of the redeemed standing on *the sea of glass* singing this song, called *the song of Moses...and the song of the Lamb* (15:3). In 5:9 the 24 elders sang a *new song* as they rejoiced at the realization of their redemption. The *song of Moses* refers to the great song of deliverance and victory that Moses composed after God had delivered the children of Israel from the Egyptians by dividing the Red Sea (Exodus 15).

The 144,000 are called *the firstfruits unto God and the Lamb* (v4). This has reference to resurrection, for Christ came out of the grave on the very day that the OT ceremony of offering the firstfruits was to take place. *But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept* (I Cor 15:20). The offering of Firstfruits was an observance giving the first part of the grain harvest to God; the people were allowed to keep the rest. Firstfruits was ordained by God to teach Israel a spiritual lesson that relates to ownership—the setting apart of a certain amount for God. The 144,000 are Firstfruits in that they are pure and set apart, belonging to God. The type was used by Jeremiah: *Israel was holiness unto the Lord, and the firstfruits of His increase* (Jer 2:3).

In the NT, this concept of separation and holiness is applied to the Church of Christ: *Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures* (James 1:18). Out of all God's creation, only those who are of faith are the *firstfruits*. They belong to God in a special way, having been purchased from the earth. The OT offering of Firstfruits illustrates that the whole harvest is His, sanctified and honorable to Him only. Firstfruits and the first resurrection are related concepts which we will discuss in more detail in Chapter 20.

THE SEVEN FEASTS OF ISRAEL

The seven feasts of Israel contain a history in types of God's great plan for the salvation of man. Only a brief overview can be given here of this God-ordained OT figure. Three times a year Jewish males were to appear before the Lord (Ex 23:17; De 16:16) and attend His festivals. These festivals had

detailed Sabbaths and feasts that were to be carefully observed as God had commanded through Moses.

The first festival of the year began with feast of Passover, when each household was to sacrifice a lamb and eat it. Jesus died on this very day, at the same hour that the lamb was killed in the temple and when the *vail* rent in two, allowing people to see directly into the forbidden Holy of Holies. Passover is a type of the initial salvation experience—having the blood of Christ applied to our sins and identifying with Him. Salvation opens the door into the presence of God, and fellowship with Him.

The feast of Unleavened Bread began the day after the Passover, and continued for seven days. No yeast was permitted in Jewish homes during this week, and great care was taken to remove it before the feast began. The feast of Unleavened Bread was designed by God to represent the life-long task of removing and keeping sin out of our lives. When Christ was on the earth, the Israelites used the word Passover to refer to the entire eight-day festival of Passover, Unleavened Bread, and Firstfruits.

The feast of Firstfruits took place on the day after the first Sabbath within the festival of Unleavened Bread. This was the very day Jesus rose from the dead—Sunday, the eighth day. The miraculous Red Sea crossing, when Israel was delivered out of Egypt, also took place on this day. The feast of Firstfruits represents resurrection, and newness of life—being born again and set apart for holiness and service for Christ. Altogether, there were three ceremonial feasts within the first festival: Passover, Unleavened Bread, and Firstfruits.

Seven Sabbaths after the Passover week, the feast of Weeks (Pentecost in the NT) began. It lasted only one day, and featured an elaborate offering of Firstfruits, this time with leavened bread (Leviticus 23:15-17), and a freewill offering. Pentecost is a type of the believer receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and the offering of Firstfruits is a type of the resurrection, but why were there two offerings of Firstfruits separated by seven Sabbaths? Maybe it shows the dual nature of the resurrection, which we will study in depth at Chapter 20: the *first resurrection* takes place at the spiritual quickening of the soul upon salvation, and the second resurrection of a bodily rising again takes place at the end of the world.

The last of the three festivals was the festival of ingathering (Ex 23:16). Like the festival of Unleavened Bread, it had three separate ceremonies. The first ceremony was the feast of Trumpets on the first day of the seventh month. It corresponds to the final day of the Lord and the last trump. The Feast of Atonement took place ten days later, and the blood of the atonement sacrifice being taken into the mercy seat behind the *vail* by the High Priest is a type of the eternal redemption that will be formally completed at the *great white Throne*. Finally, the Feast of Tabernacles, the seventh and last feast (Lev 23:40), was a seven-day camping trip with the whole family: no work was to be done for a whole week—kind of sounds like heaven, doesn't it?

<u>OT Feast</u>	<u>NT Type</u>
Passover	Christ's blood cleanses our sins
Unleavened Bread	Keeping sin out of our lives
Firstfruits	Raised with Him in newness of life
Pentecost	Receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit
Trumpets	Christ returns for His people
Atonement	Christ's blood accepted in our stead
Tabernacles	Eternal rest in heaven with Him

The feasts are not necessary to understand the Revelation, but do illustrate the wisdom of God in His careful plan for mankind. Before the foundation of the world He knew exactly how it would happen, and He designed the details of the OT Covenant to manifest that to us. The meanings of the types listed above were hidden until after Christ came and established the New Covenant. The same could be true for His Second Coming, for what happens when He returns has not been clearly revealed in Scripture. Instead, we have figurative language and imagery to describe it, though we can be sure that, as with the OT types, the events of His return will be true to those Scriptures.

6. And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

7. *Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.*
8. *And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.*
9. *And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,*
10. *The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:*
11. *And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.*

THREE ANGELS OF WARNING

After the scene of the 144,000 saints rejoicing in heaven the vision of Chapter 14 returns to describe the world in its final days and the harvest of souls that follows. Three different warning angels fly through the heavens before the end, each with a special message for the end-time inhabitants of the world. Earlier, in 8:13, John saw an angel flying through the heavens announcing the coming of the three woe-trumpets. The function of both angels is similar; their message is designed to warn of the imminent end of the world and the coming eternal judgment of the wicked.

The first angel is the messenger of evangelism. He has the *everlasting gospel to preach* to every person on earth, and though the message is important in every era, it is more urgent now than ever, *for the hour of [God's] judgment has come* (v7). The day of salvation is all but ended. The clock is striking midnight; time is coming to an end. “*Fear God, worship the Creator,*” he cries. Mankind does not listen. Their ears are closed to the truth, and their eyes,

being spiritually dimmed, cannot see the evidence of apostasy and unbelief within them. Even if *one rose from the dead* they would not be persuaded to acknowledge God and His commandments (Luke 16:31). The spiritual condition of these days is like the time of Noah, and the people are like those of Sodom and Gomorrah. The fields are ripe, and the harvest is ready.

The evangelistic message implores men to *worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters* (v7). These four divisions of nature are mentioned several times in the visions of John. The seven trumpets of Chapter 8 began with four trumpets of judgment upon the sea, earth, fresh waters, and the heavens. And in Chapter 15 John writes about seven vials of wrath being poured out and falling again upon the earth, sea, fresh waters, and sun. Four is the number of the created world, the intricacies of which are an eloquent testimony to a Creator-God.

The call to worship God sounds out over the whole world, but evidently man is not listening. Like the message of the seven thunders (10:1-4), the world in general disregards the Gospel call. The alert Christian will recognize that this is happening before our very eyes in the world today, for evangelism and missionary efforts seem to be less effective than ever before. Is this a sign that Christ's return will be in the very near future, or will God's Spirit bring revival again to the sin-plagued world? It would take some serious judgments and disasters to get man's attention, and we have seen several of those already in the last few years. Unfortunately, the terrorist attacks, hurricanes, earthquakes, and tsunamis have only briefly made man to acknowledge God, and lasting repentance is rare. Will God send another world war to attract man's attention? Or will He send the angels of death this time? God has not allowed us to know that. The Bible implies that the end will be a time of peace (1 Thes 5:3), but it also indicates that there will be last-minute calls to salvation in the form of warnings and judgments (Rev 15-16).

The second angel announces the fall of *Babylon, that great city* (v8). The details of Babylon's destruction will be fully described in Chapter 18, the longest chapter of the Book. As we have seen several times already in the Revelation, a vision that will be presented later in the Book is introduced several chapters earlier (2:11, 11:7). This feature speaks greatly to the single purpose and cohesiveness of the Book. Though the divisions are distinct, the symbolism

is consistently ordered, typologically similar, and repetitious throughout. This is not to say that interpreting the Book is a simple exercise in cross-referencing. For some reason the Holy Spirit purposely had John write in deeply hidden meanings, much as Jesus did when He spoke to the people in parables during His time on earth. One advantage to this feature is that the visions in the Revelation are more applicable to all God's people, as are Jesus' teachings. The profound truths contained in the Revelation apply to Christians of every age, in every land, and in all circumstances of life.

Babylon, that great city is a type of the world, of humanism and the accomplishments of man. It is a system characterized by sinfulness, selfishness, temptation, and idolatry. Figuratively, Babylon and Jerusalem are opposites. Jerusalem is the *holy city* and Babylon is *the habitation of devils* (18:2). The history of this symbolism goes back a long ways. Ever since the tower of Babel was built in Babylon, a corrupt religion existed there and was always at odds with the true God of Israel. When Judah continued in rebellion and wickedness, God allowed Babylon to carry them away into captivity, a real blow to Jewish pride. The lesson of this punishment is clear for the Church of God today. Compromise and sin will result in the complete loss of all members into the world. Babylon was eventually judged by God too, a few centuries before Christ. Its destruction was so thorough that the ruins of the city were not found until the 1800's. Peter used Babylon as a code name for Rome, evidently to hide his true meaning from anti-Christian readers (I Peter 5:13).

The reason for the fall of Babylon is because *she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication* (v8). This is a definite prelude to Chapter 18 (see 18:3), but the phrase is still a rather peculiar figure of speech. The *wrath* is probably the wrath of God, provoked because of constant and pervasive wickedness of every kind. The word picture here is one of pleasure-seeking and selfishness, a world in which God is not needed and in which He has been forgotten by those He specially created to glorify Him. The first and second angels agree: the earth is ripe for harvest.

The third angel flies through heaven, and his message is a warning to all those who worship the Beast and his image. Again the message is really one of announcement—all Beast worshippers will be *tormented with fire and brimstone...and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever* (v10).

The words are so clear that we cannot miss their meaning. The description of heaven at the beginning of this chapter was awe-inspiring in its glory, but the description of hell is fear-inspiring in its dreadfulness. Torment, burning, fire, the wrath of God—nothing can compare with the fearfulness of these. But add to it the fact that hell goes on forever and ever and ever, and the judgment becomes unimaginable. There is no end or pause in the punishment, *they have no rest day nor night*; nor is there a decrease in severity, it is undiluted—*poured out without mixture*. They drank the *wine of fornication* on earth (v8) and now they will drink *the wine of the wrath of God* (v10). No person ever wants to end up in hell, and Jesus has made sure that no person needs to go there. Nevertheless, many have thrown away their opportunity, like Esau selling his very soul for a morsel of tasty meat (Heb 12:16).

12. *Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.*

13. *And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.*

THE REWARD OF THE FAITHFUL

Here is the patience of the saints, meaning that this is what the faithful of all ages have been waiting for ever since Jesus first promised that He would return and take them with Him to Heaven. What follows is that momentous event—the coming of the *Son of man*. The saints do not rejoice at the punishment of the wicked, but at the realization that their long-anticipated heavenly reward has arrived. *Here is... here are* (v12). It is like the words, “Here we are,” that a child cannot wait to hear as the family heads for Christmas at Grandma’s house. The wait may seem long, but when the announcement comes it will seem but a minute’s dream compared to eternity with Christ.

Notice the further description of the saints: these are *they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus* (v12). Faith and works: a hard saying for some to accept, but essential to gaining Christ and Heaven.

A voice comes from heaven, *blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth*. The exact meaning of this verse is a little unclear, but the emphasis seems to be on the time element: *henceforth*. The Greek literally reads, “Happy are the dead who in the Lord are dying from this time” (YLT). Obviously, all those who have died in Christ will be blessed, as will all those who die in Christ during the Gospel Dispensation. This is the consistent and global call of Church to world—entrust your souls unto the faithful Creator, who *is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that Day* (I Peter 4:19; II Tim 1:12).

The fact that this verse comes just before the scene of the *Son of man* coming on *a white cloud* indicates a special beatitude is being announced—the day has come in which eternal blessings begin, when it shall be said, *Well done, thou good and faithful servant...enter thou into the joy of thy Lord* (Mt 25:21). We translate verse 13 as follows: “Blessed and happy from this time forever are all those who have died in the Lord.”

One of the greatest of Christian blessings is the weakening of the power of death. For a non-believer, life is everything, but a Christian has an expectation of life beyond the grave, though we know not now exactly what that existence will be like. That death can be called *blessed* gives consolation and encouragement to those whose loved ones have died in Christ. It imparts confidence and strength to those who are being called to give their lives as martyrs for Him who first died for the sins of a wicked world.

These victorious ones will enter their Sabbath rest (Heb 4:9-10) on that day, and they will sit down at *the marriage supper of the Lamb* (Rev 19:9). Earlier the martyrs had been told to *rest* [same Gk word as v13] *yet for a little season until their fellow-servants* were also killed (6:11). Now the wait of the departed saints is over, and all earthly labor and toil for Christ has ended.

Their works do follow them (v13). Heavenly rewards are given based on deeds done in the body (Rom 2:6; II Cor 5:10; Rev 20:12). The only thing we are able to take with us beyond death is our works (Gk *-ergon*). Earthly wealth, fame, and position will be left behind, but personal character and deeds of *pure religion* (James 1:27) will follow every person. Therefore, count the things this earth values as worthless, and lay up treasure in heaven

that will be there for you to enjoy forever. The *patience of the saints*, calmly living sincerely and usefully for Christ, will be rewarded far beyond our imagination.

14. And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.

15. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

16. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

17. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

18. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

19. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

20. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

THE HARVEST OF THE EARTH

The final picture of this fourth section of the Book appropriately shows the coming of Christ—reaping the good for heaven, and gathering the bad to be destroyed. A total of seven angelic beings appear in Chapter 14. Three angels announce the coming of Christ followed by the *Son of man* on the white cloud, and then the three angels involved in the harvesting of the earth.

Each of the angels has his own role, and it takes careful reading to understand the individual functions of the angels.

There are two distinct facets of the harvest presented in this passage. The first draws on the imagery of a grain harvest and concludes with verse 16, *and the earth was reaped*. Immediately following this, another angel comes forward and gathers a grape harvest, *the vine of the earth* which is cast *into the great winepress of the wrath of God*. The two-fold harvest is one, but consistent with other Scripture, the Christian faithful are taken first and are represented by the harvest of grain. Then follows the punishment of the wicked, represented by the harvest of grapes.

This arrangement is consistent with the picture of Chapters 6-7, which described the world coming to an end and the terror of the wicked. But the angels of destruction were told to wait until the *servants of God* were first sealed for protection (7:2-3) before loosing the destroying winds upon the wicked. The third section follows the same pattern: the second woe describes the saints ascending to heaven in a cloud (11:12) and the third woe pictures the destruction of the wicked (11:14f).

THE HARVEST OF GRAIN

John sees the victorious Christ coming on a *white cloud*, wearing a *golden crown* (*stephanos*, a wreath of victory), and holding a *sharp sickle* (*drepanon*, tool for harvesting grain). Jesus is often described as coming with clouds (Mt 24:30; I Thes 4:17; Rev 1:7, 10:1), and on a clear-blue day one can look up and imagine Him coming down on a pure-white cloud with the sun at His back and millions of brilliant angels surrounding Him. It will be a breathtaking sight for those who are ready and waiting for Him. Others will be struck with awful terror, knowing that they have not prepared themselves for this Day, and they will cry out for the rocks to fall on them and hide them from the face of the Lamb (6:16). Verse 14 draws its imagery from one of Daniel's *night visions*, when *one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven* (Dan 7:13). Here we have only a brief introduction to the Second Coming, but Chapter 19 will describe it in detail.

An angel comes out of the Temple in heaven and tells Jesus that the time for the harvest of the earth has come. This may seem out-of-place, an angel telling Christ what to do. But remember that only God the Father knows the time He has fixed for the end of the world (Mt 24:36), and the angel comes from the place that is particularly symbolic of the dwelling place of God, the *naos* in heaven. The angel cries *with a loud voice*, showing the great importance and urgency of his announcement. *Thrust [Gk—Send] in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe* (v15). The Greek word for *ripe* is *xeraino*, which is elsewhere translated *withered* or *dried up* (Mt 13:6, 21:19). Some versions translate it “over-ripe.” The word-choice seems to indicate that the time for harvest has fully come—it is almost spoiled.

The purpose of the twin-vision of harvest involves primarily the wicked at the Second Coming. The figurative grape harvest is entirely devoted to the wicked, and the grain harvest has only one short verse describing the reaping of good grain: *And He that sat on the cloud thrust [Gk—ballo, cast] in His sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped* (v16). In several of His parables, Jesus used the grain harvest as an analogy for His Kingdom of Grace, saying *the harvest truly is great but the labourers are few* (Luke 10:2). He likened the world to a farmer’s field, which *when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come* (Mark 4:29, also Mt 9:37 and John 4:35).

The most detailed of these is the parable of the tares, which shows Christ sowing seed in a field but the Devil coming by night to sow weeds in it. Jesus explains that *the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the Kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one... the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth* (Mt 13:38-42).

There is one small problem with the parable of the tares that should be discussed. Before Jesus gave the above interpretation to the disciples, He

gave the unexplained version to the multitude, which has this verse: *Let both [wheat and tares] grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn* (Mt 13:30). From this it appears that the wicked are to be gathered before the good, opposing many other Scriptures. We do not believe that Christ was intending at all to show the order of events in this parable. He was using a common practice of the day—separating wheat and tares at harvest—to illustrate the character of the Kingdom. Tares are plants virtually indistinguishable from wheat until the grain develops. Farmers would not weed out the tares until just before the harvest when they were able to recognize them because of their lack of good fruit. Here is the significance of the parable: good and bad will live together in the Kingdom until the end. It is notable that in His interpretation Jesus does not say that the wicked are gathered *first*, only that there will be a great separation at the end.

This is a good place to point out that it is easy to over-interpret the parables of Jesus and John's visions too, and we could give numerous examples of that happening. Consider one well-known parable, that of the Good Shepherd leaving the flock to search for one lost lamb. Does Jesus forsake the faithful while seeking the one who has gone astray? Of course not. The lesson Jesus was giving is how earnestly He wants every person to be saved, and the story of a shepherd going out in the cold night to find a single, lost lamb perfectly illustrates the point. The same is true with the parable of the tares. The lesson to the Church is that good and bad will remain in the field of God until the final day separates out the bad. Then the Kingdom continues into the next world spotless, pure, and good.

After Jesus has reaped the good grain of the earth John sees *another angel* come out of the heavenly Temple, and he also has a *sharp sickle* (v17). This angel represents the Lord Jesus' *mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God...who shall be punished with everlasting destruction...when He shall come to be glorified in His saints* (II Thes 1:7-10). This angel waits for the command to begin the distasteful work of cleansing the Kingdom of wickedness. Compare this with the angels of destruction prepared for the end of the world in 7:1 and 9:14.

Another angel, this one with *power over fire*, comes out of the Temple, from the *altar* of incense with its fire that burns continuously before the Throne (6:9, 8:3, 9:13, 16:7). This angel gives the death angels the command to begin reaping the vine of the earth (v18). Events of bloodshed, death, and judgment often begin at this heavenly *altar*, from which the prayers of the saints ascend into the presence of God (8:3). Fire is a symbol for God's holy judgment (see glossary), and the fire-angel has the specific duty of announcing the final outpouring of God's wrath on the wicked earth. The similarity of these two angels of destruction with the imagery of the sixth trumpet angel in 9:13 is worthy of note. The sixth angel was also announced by a voice from the *altar*, upon which the most terrible and deadly army of the universe was described and which killed one-third of mankind.

After the fire-angel's cry, the *angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God* (v19). Whether this description is of Hell, or of some end-time event of destruction and death on a universal scale we cannot tell for certain, but in view of the extreme language we believe it to be a portrayal of the punishments of Hell. The prophet Joel spoke in similar language: *Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the Day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining* (Joel 3:13f). The *Day of the Lord* comes upon every unrepentant person who has ever lived. Those who do not abide in Christ are cast forth as branches into the fire and are burned (John 15:6).

And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles (v20). The treading of the winepress produces an immense gush of blood instead of grape juice. It flows as deep as the bridle of a horse, maybe five feet deep, and flows outward in all directions for *a thousand six hundred furlongs*, about 200 miles. The Greek reads that the blood is up to the horses' bridles at a distance of 200 miles away. Such a huge sea of blood indicates an unbelievable slaughter; it is the *wrath of God*. The language is surely figurative, and shows that the entire earth is affected—nothing escapes. The seemingly out-of-place horse symbolism at a

wine-pressing becomes clear when we read this passage in connection with the more detailed one in Chapter 19, where Jesus is shown coming to earth with *the armies of heaven*, riding on *a white horse* and treading *the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God*. Power and righteous anger are strongly represented here, and should send a fearful message to every person living under the sound of the Gospel message. Isaiah writes poetically of this same event:

Who is this coming from Edom, from Bozrah, with His garments stained crimson? Who is this, robed in splendor, striding forward in the greatness of His strength?

“It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save.”

Why are your garments red, like those of one treading the winepress?

“I have trodden the winepress alone; from the nations no one was with Me. I trampled them in My anger and trod them down in My wrath; their blood spattered My garments, and I stained all My clothing. For the day of vengeance was in My heart, and the year of My redemption has come” (Is 63:1-4, NIV).

THE WINEPRESS OUTSIDE THE CITY

The winepress is *trodden without the city*. What city? If this passage is indeed speaking of Hell, the city would be the heavenly abode of the saints, *New Jerusalem* (21:2). More than fifteen times in the Book of Revelation the final resting place of the saints is referred to as *the beloved city*, *the holy city*, or simply *the city*. Ten times we read about the city of Babylon, but it is always called the *great city*. The statement *without the city* carries the reproach of being not included, cast out, rejected, and unapproved. Jesus *suffered without the gate* (Heb 13:12), rejected and unwanted by His own people. Now those who have rejected Him will earn a fitting punishment. (See also Leviticus 14:40.)

Notice that the *vine* is the chief subject of judgment, being cast into the *winepress of the wrath of God*. The vine in Biblical symbolism represents what should be the living body of God's people. God *brought a vine out of Egypt*—the children of Israel (Ps 80:8). He planted it in a vineyard and watered it, expecting to harvest good fruit from it. But only *wild grapes* came forth, and so God punished the vine (Is 5). For other examples of Israel being likened to a vine or vineyard, see Jeremiah 2:21; Hosea 10:1; Joel 1:7; and Ezekiel 15 and 17:6.

In the NT, the vine is applied to the Church (Mt 20:1; Mark 12:1). Jesus said *I am the vine, ye are the branches* (John 15:5). The unfruitful vine cast into God's winepress is not the true people of God, but a false vine, an imposter who has deceived its branches. Apostate Christianity is the main object of punishment and slaughter, as opposed to the heathen who have never heard of Christ. These are people who know the truth but have rejected it. As Moses wrote, *their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter* (Deut 32:32). The *fruit of the vine* is an emblem of the blood of Jesus. The blood of the guilty will flow on that day, and each man must account for what he has done with the most precious and costly thing ever known: the blood of Jesus. Have we applied it to our sins? Or counted it *an unholy thing* (Heb 10:29)?

Primary Symbols in Section Four

The Woman	Israel (or, The Universal Church)
The Woman's Seed	The Church of Christ
The Dragon	Satan the Serpent
The Manchild	Christ
Michael, the Archangel	Christ
The sea-Beast	Dragon-controlled world-governments
The earth-Beast	The False Prophet, or Antichrist
The Image of the Beast	Dragon-controlled religions
The Mark of the Beast	Satan's mark of ownership
The 144,000	The chosen redeemed ones in heaven
The Winepress	The Final Judgment