

The Book of Revelation

By

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE POLITICAL SITUATION

This book is a "prophecy." It is history written ahead of time; Men have past knowledge; GOD has foreknowledge. Men have partial knowledge; GOD has full knowledge. Here are recorded events that are to transpire many centuries after they are written.

The world is in darkness. They know not what is ahead. **"But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief"** (I Thessalonians 5:4). Christians have prophecy **"as unto a light that shineth in a dark place"** (II Peter 1:19). We have an outline of future events and are not discouraged or surprised that the world is getting worse and civilization is nearing its collapse

"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" (vs. 1).

Let us remember that Revelation is written in signified language. Find the meaning of the picture and we have the meaning intended. Here we turn to chapter seventeen for the answer to these puzzles.

- The sea represents **"peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."**
- The beast is the antichrist or the revived Roman empire.

It is little difference which we take, the king or his kingdom, for both are so closely identified.

- The ten horns are **"ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet"** (Revelation 17:12, 15).
- The word **"beast"** is a fitting name for this monster of iniquity. Here we see him rising out of the sea of humanity; from among the living nations. **"Sea"** is a fitting symbol of the troubled, ever restless element of society in general.

The Great Counterfeit

"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" (vs. 2).

Satan is a great counterfeiter. He feign would be "**like the most High.**" GOD is a trinity, so Satan sets before us his counterfeit trinity.

- There is GOD the Father; and here is the dragon, the antifather.
- There is the true CHRIST; and here is the antichrist.
- There is the HOLY SPIRIT; and here is the false prophet or anti-holy spirit.

This beast, or revived Rome, has all the qualities of Daniel's vision (Daniel 7). This emperor will be a superman. He is a composite of all the excellencies of all that has gone before. The people worshipped Caesar as a god, and now it will be easy for them to fall to the feet of a man embodying all the irresistible qualities of the grace and elegance of Greece (the leopard); the strength and power of Media Persia (the bear), and the kingly qualities of Babylon (the lion).

The Father gave the Son "**power over all flesh**" (John 17:2). So here in the counterfeit, the anti-father gives the anti-son his power.

GOD's Use of Evil Men

Satan is a spirit and can operate on the earth best as he finds a human body that will yield fully to him. Once Satan offered CHRIST "**all the kingdoms of the world**" (Matthew 4:8). CHRIST rejected the offer but Satan will yet find a man who will take them from his hand.

It may be a mystery to some as to why GOD permits evil men to sway politics and rule the world, yea even GOD Himself "**setteth up over it the basest of men**" (Daniel 4:17). GOD uses these evil rulers to punish sinful men.

"**O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation.**" GOD wanted to chasten Israel so He put His staff in the hand of Assyria; not because Assyria was more righteous, or aimed to serve GOD, for "**he meaneth not so... but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few.**" Assyria was out to tear up nations, so GOD used them to chasten Israel. When that was done, GOD would then punish the "**stout heart of the king of Assyria**" (Isaiah 10).

So here, GOD will permit Satan to organize his forces so he can punish evil men; then He will turn and punish Satan, for it is not in Satan's heart to serve the Lord.

A Resurrection

"**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**" (vs. 3).

When the Jews asked CHRIST for a sign, He gave but one - the sign of Jonah and the resurrection. So here we have a resurrection.

CHRIST was crucified but GOD the Father "**raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead**" (Romans 4:24). Now men are called upon to believe and receive Him. So here, it seems they

stage a resurrection. Someone may shoot the antichrist, or at any rate he receives a "**wound by a sword, and did live**" (vs. 14).

The news is flashed to the entire world, "The emperor is dead." Excitement will run high for his name has been on every lip. It was he who made "**craft to prosper**" and set the wheels of industry to moving.

It was he who brought in a time of "**peace and safety**." Now he is dead and the whole world mourns.

But suddenly all radio programs will cease; the world will stand aghast as a news flash will announce a resurrection. "**His deadly wound was healed**." The effect will be electric. Business will be at a standstill; men will go wild with joy and all the world will wonder "**after the beast**."

The Great Beast

The beast has seven heads (or kings, ch. 17). This last king is the seventh, but he is put to death and resurrected. Thus although he is the seventh, yet in fact "**he is the eighth, and is of the seven**" (ch. 17:11). That is, since he was killed the seventh king has passed, but when he is resurrected he is really the eighth although he is the same man as the seventh.

The effect of his resurrection is to turn men to him and the world will worship "**the dragon**" which gave power unto the beast (vs. 4).

This is during the time of the two witnesses. As they point to the true and living GOD who raised up CHRIST from the dead; the world will turn from them and worship "**the beast, saying, who is like unto the beast**" (vs. 4). The two witnesses prophesy for twelve hundred sixty days, and the beast is given power to "**continue forty and two months**," or the same length of time (vs. 5). Here are several things "given" to him. He can only go so far as he has permission.

Blaspheming the Saints

During the church age, the HOLY SPIRIT who indwells the Christian, restrained the work of Satan. But when the church was raptured, the hindering element was removed and he goes the limit of his power. He even opens "**his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven**" (vs. 6).

The rapture was a great event. Many of those living at that time can well remember those loved ones who were snatched away when the Lord came. It is still fresh in their minds and the beast speaks evil of them and blasphemes them to settle the people's mind.

Worship of a Man

"**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**" (vs. 8).

It is common for men to worship kings. When Herod gave an oration to the men of Tyre, they

"gave a shout, saying, it is the voice of a god, and not of a man" (Acts 12:22).

The beast will be exceeding attractive to earth dwellers. He embodies all the excellencies of Daniel's beasts. He has been dead and now enters life again as though he had never died. Similar language is used of CHRIST who died and rose again.

This will be a time of false CHRISTs and false prophets. There will be **"great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect"** (Matthew 24:24). Far back in eternity past there was a council among the Godhead. Man would be created; he would sin; the Son would die for the sin of man and would be brought again from the dead **"through the blood of the everlasting covenant"** (Hebrews 13:20).

God, through His unerring foreknowledge, looked down through the ages of the future and predestinated those **"whom he did foreknow"** to be **"conformed to the image of his Son"** (Romans 8:29). The sin of Adam was no surprise to GOD; neither was the Cross a surprise to CHRIST for He was the **"Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."**

"If any man have an ear, let him hear" (vs. 9). Over and again, GOD's people are urged to read and hear the message of this book. There is a tendency to neglect and ignore it. But GOD has given it for our warning, our comfort and our admonition. No one can tell how vitally his own joy and security is bound up in this very thing.

The Second Beast

"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" (vs. 11).

This beast comes up out of the earth. Somewhere on the earth is the mouth of the bottomless pit (ch. 9).

This is probably either an evil spirit who takes possession of a man; or is a person resurrected and energized by Satan. It is not an ordinary person for he would not come from thence.

The first beast comes up from among the living nations, dies and is resurrected. This one has probably died before. At any rate both beasts are immortal; they never die again, but are **"cast alive"** into a lake of fire burning with **"brimstone"** (Revelation 19:20).

Just who this beast may be we do not know. Some think it may be Judas who will be resurrected and energized for this purpose. Elijah, who has been off the earth for centuries, will be brought back to witness for his GOD and it may be that Judas will also be brought back to fulfill this evil purpose.

Is it Judas? (****BBB believes this may be the case****)

The beast has horns as a lamb and a voice as a dragon. Judas kissed CHRIST (Lamb), and said **"Hold him fast"** (dragon).

There are some striking things said about Judas.

"It had been good for that man if he had not been born" (Matthew 26:24). **"Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil"** (John 6:70). Many were possessed of demons in CHRIST's time but of only one man is it written that he "is" a devil.

The man of sin is called **"the son of perdition"** (II Thessalonians 2:3) and CHRIST calls Judas **"the son of perdition"** (John 17:12). When Judas died he went **"to his own place"** (Acts 1:25). There is a spirit world so near to this world of ours, that only a very thin veil separates between them.

The Religious Element

"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" (vs. 12).

The religious element is one of the most powerful forces in the world. Kings must recognize it and order their lives accordingly. Religion cannot be ignored, but it can be misdirected. So here the antichrist must have a religion and seek to counterfeit GOD as much as possible.

There has always been a false religion to withstand the truth. Against Moses and Aaron, there was Jannes and Jambres; against Israel, there was Balaam; Jeroboam must have his calves and priests; the tribe of Dan needed an image and a Levite; Absalom must have Ahithophel. And so with the antichrist, he must have his false prophet.

The dragon gives the antichrist his power; the antichrist is killed and resurrected. And now comes a third to bear witness to the second and cause the earth dwellers to worship him **"whose deadly wound was healed."** The great subject is the resurrection.

The HOLY SPIRIT **"shall not speak of himself... He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you"** (John 16:13-14). So here, the anti-holy spirit bears witness to the antichrist.

Mount Carmel Again

"And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men" (vs. 13).

For three and one-half years the heavens had given no rain. A great crowd surged on Mount Carmel.

The king was there; four hundred prophets of Baal were there; Elijah was there. There was a buzz of excitement - who is the true GOD; Baal or Jehovah?

There were four hundred men to build an altar; four hundred prophets to call for fire. But there was no fire and no response - Baal had failed.

And then it was Elijah's time to act. He called the people near. Every eye was riveted on the spot; every motion was watched to see that no fire was hid within, as Elijah builded an altar in the name of the Lord. To still all doubt, twelve barrels of water were poured over the offering. There was but one thing possible; if fire burned that offering it must come from without and not from within.

The critical moment arrived; the people held their breath as Elijah stepped back and called upon the GOD of Abraham. Instantly there was a flash as fire pierced the heavens and darted toward that altar. There was but one result. A mighty shout as Israel turned back to her GOD.

An Open Test

And so again, the scene on Mount Carmel is to be re-enacted. The two witnesses would call men back to the God of Heaven: the false prophet would cause all to worship the beast. Men call for an open test and the test is "fire."

The whole world will be in holiday as thousands gather on a wide open plain and millions gather about the radio. Every detail is flashed to the waiting throngs. To stifle all objections and give no room for deceit, let a mechanic like Ford watch the performance; let an electric wizard like Edison examine the scene, pronounce it genuine and millions will be satisfied. The human heart is fearful of miracles but easily satisfied by an outstanding man.

They hold their breath as the agent of perdition steps forward and calls for fire in the name of the dragon and his infernal trinity. Instantly there is a blinding flash as fire darts out of Heaven **"in the sight of men."**

There is but one result. The world goes mad with excitement and joy. There is nothing they would not do for their emperor. He must be honored as a man was never honored before. Radios call; newspapers announce; subscriptions are taken; gold pours in as they that dwell on the earth **"make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live"** (vs. 14).

GOD permitted false signs in Israel, **"for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God"** (Deuteronomy 13:3). So here, GOD will permit the false prophet to perform miracles to test men. Miracles are an evidence of supernatural power but not always is that power of GOD. There is but one way to test the source, **"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them"** (Isaiah 8:20).

The Three Images

The times of the Gentiles is characterized by three images. It began with an image. Nebuchadnezzar erected an image and demanded worship. Three Hebrews defied the king's command and walked safely through the fiery furnace.

The course of the Gentiles was given to Daniel under the form of an image of four composite metals (Daniel 2). As the times of the Gentiles draws to a close there will be another image and another demand to worship it.

It is common for men to make statues of national heroes and here is a man who embodies all the greatness of all former kings. A man of great valor; eloquence, wisdom, power of statesmanship and all varieties of mental accomplishments. All of this, united with the tremendous emphasis upon resurrection; and we have a man of irresistible power and the world goes mad in their desire to do him honor.

Life to the Image

"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" (vs. 15).

"**Life unto the image.**" Imagine if we can, standing before a great bronze statue of Abraham Lincoln and seeing the cold hard metal come to life.

Here is "life." Not mere motion. The image actually picks out the disloyal ones and causes them to be put to death. The cold hard metal waxes warm and pliable. The arms begin to move; the eyes roll about in their sockets and search the great crowd for enemies. The ponderous head, weighing tons, moves from side to side as the muscles in the neck become taut. The great arm raises and the finger points out the guilty persons. The massive jaws part and a thunderous voice rolls from that mighty throat, a voice like human ears have never heard before.

"To the guillotine," he thunders as the eyes rest on a humble soul. Instantly a thousand hands vie to do his will and down the guilty man.

The Mark of the Beast

"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" (vs. 16).

His success is tremendous and men will go wild to do him honor. When Paul stood before the multitude, they cried "**A way with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live**" (Acts 22:22). Again will there be a like decision. No one must be permitted to live upon the earth who is loyal to the GOD of Heaven - the beast is determined. To ferret out all opposition and bring it to light he devises a mark and calls upon the world to receive it in their hand or forehead.

In a former chapter, one hundred forty-four thousand received the mark of GOD in their forehead. Here men brand themselves with the mark of hell.

"And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark" (vs. 17).

Let a person enter a store; pull back his sleeve and show the mark or he cannot buy a pound of sugar or sell a dozen of eggs. In our present time we cannot drive an automobile without a mark and certain numbers on the plate. Many states also require a sticker on the windshield and a driver's license in the pocket. It is only a step to the time when to buy the gasoline will mean a

mark in the hand or forehead. It is only a twist of events and all license to buy and sell will be in the hands of one man and a mark must be displayed in full view.

A few years ago I was speaking to a congregation in the state of New York. I told of the time coming when no one would be permitted to buy or sell without the mark. Imagine my feeling when just one week later, I drove through a small town in Pennsylvania and saw the "blue eagle" in the window of a grocery store.

Later, I attended a "blue eagle" parade and as I stood on the sidewalk and saw the excitement of the people, and their readiness to follow at any cost. I thanked my GOD as I almost shuddered, that I was only seeing a forerunner of the real time just ahead, when to take my attitude would mean certain death.

~ end of chapter 13 ~

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