

20. The unholy trinity & the mark of the beast

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The devil never does original. He always copies, twists and perverts what the Lord our God does to suit his own selfish and devilish purpose.

Up to now, we were studying about the first half of the Great Tribulation that will happen right after the rapture of the all the born-again Christians. But from chapter 13, we are going to see the second half, the second coming of Jesus Christ and much more.

At the junction of two halves of the Tribulation period, we find the terrible event that is known as "the Abomination of desolation." We are going to study it in more detail a little later.

A. THE BEAST FROM THE SEA

Revelation 13:1 Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.

In Revelation 12, John's vision mainly had heaven in view. Now the scene of his vision shifts to the earth, and in his vision he stood on the sand of the seashore.

"The sea" in Bible typology always referring to Gentile nations according to Rev 17:15. The mention of the sea here indicates that antichrist will not come from Israel. But this doesn't necessarily mean antichrist will be a Gentile, because he could be a European Jew. As a matter of fact, I strongly believe that he has to be a Jewish descendent for the Jews to accept him as their Messiah.

From one of the ten crowns which mean nations, satan will bring forth his "super leader," the man we call "antichrist." Up to this point, antichrist has headed a ten-nation European Union. But now he is about to embark on a new career as satan's world dictator.

We need to understand what the title 'antichrist' means. The prefix 'anti' can mean "the opposite of" or "instead of". The antichrist is the "opposite of Jesus". In other words, he is the "instead of" Jesus. Most people have focused on the idea of the "opposite of Jesus". The antichrist will instead be more of an "instead of Jesus". He will look wonderful, be charming and successful. He seems like to be the ultimate winner, and appear as an angel of light. In this sense, the antichrist will be a satanic messiah, instead of the true Messiah Jesus Christ.

The description of "the beast" allows us to learn something about his origin and character. God does not see him as a man, made in God's image, but as a wild beast, under the control of satan. He is a man, but he is completely possessed by satan. Just as Jesus Christ is God in the flesh, so "the beast" will be satan in a human body.

In Biblical typology, again, horns express strength and power.

Revelation 17:9 identifies the seven heads as the seven mountains of Rome. I wouldn't be surprised if antichrist's government will initially be based in the city of Rome.

B. THE HISTORY FROM THE POINT VIEW FROM FUTURE AND PAST

Revelation 13:2 Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.

I am sure you all remember that antichrist began his career as a peacemaker and even "settled" the Arab-Israeli problem by making a covenant with the Jews to protect them for seven years according to Dan. 9:27 at the beginning of the Tribulation. This protection would permit Israel to rebuild the temple and reinstitute their religious rituals.

The three animals named in Revelation 13:2 remind me of the four beasts Daniel saw in his dream in Dan. 7:4-8.

A lion was for Babylon; a bear was Medo-Persia; a leopard was Greece; and a "terrible beast" is the antichrist. Apostle John saw these animals, or kingdoms, in reverse order since he was looking back, while Daniel was looking ahead for the future.

While I was in England and Bulgaria during my Missions trip last month, I have noticed many people proudly display their alliance with the European Union. There are more high income earners in EU than U.S.A. and there are more population in EU than us. They have the military force that the U.S.A. helped them put together as known as NATO. Their financial power now is exceeding America's. Currently, China and Japan have the most amount of U.S. currency reservoirs in the world. So far, they are the ones which are keeping U.S. Dollars in still high value. However, there will be a day they choose to switch from U.S. Dollar to Euro. When that happens, not if that happens, the U.S. Dollar will plunge and the New York Stock Exchange, NASDAQ and S & P will be nothing more than jokes.

Euro used be a lot less powerful a couple decades ago. But now, one Euro is \$1.29. That shows the power of the European Market over the America's.

C. TOO BAD HE IS STILL ALIVE

Revelation 13:3 And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast.

At this point in the Tribulation, Antichrist is mortally wounded. According to Zechariah 11:17, there will be an assassination attempt on antichrist that will evidently cause his eye to be poked out and his right arm to be paralyzed. Because the Greek text can either be rendered "wounded to death" or "wounded to the appearance of death," there are those who believe antichrist will only appear to be dead as a result of this wound.

Zechariah 11:17 "Woe to the worthless shepherd, who leaves the flock! A sword shall be against his arm and against his right eye; His arm shall completely wither, And his right eye shall be totally blinded."

This is truly the antichrist, who even imitates Jesus in His death and resurrection. The world will believe this, and it will add tremendously to his fame and power.

D. THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION

Revelation 13:4-6 So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" 5 And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. 6 Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.

The abomination of desolation literally means "the abomination that makes desolated." This prophecy comes from Daniel, specifically Dan. 9:27, 11:31 and 12:11. Daniel 11:31 refers to Antiochus IV, a king of Syria, who desecrated the temple and set up an idol Zeus in it. His actions were a prelude to what the ultimate "man of perdition" will do according to 2 Thess 2:3-4.

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

Until the antichrist set up his image in the middle of the Holy of holies of the Holy Temple, the majority of Jewish people would think that the antichrist is their Messiah. All of sudden, they realize that they have been had. This would be the turning point for the Jewish people to admit that Jesus Christ who came 2000 years ago was the real Messiah. Of course, this increases the persecution against the Jews from the antichrist.

Put yourself in the shoes of those who will see this great leader come back to life after being assassinated, and you will understand why they will give satan what he has desired ever since he was cast out of heaven before the fall: worship.

Antichrist is on a roll. He's on Larry King, Oprah, and Antichrist's favorite friend and anchor man Dan Rather's CBS News declaring that he truly is deity. For the first time, the liberal left-wing commie pinko media will enjoy this world leader who has the same kind heart as theirs since the death of terrorist leader Yasser Arafat.

Satan will make "the beast" a great orator, whose addresses will blaspheme God, His name, His tabernacle and the saints in heaven. Since satan will have recently been cast out of heaven, this blasphemy is to be expected.

Revelation 13:7 It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.

God will permit Antichrist to war against His people and even to defeat some of them. John prophesied that some of the saints will be captured and some will be martyred. But because of their faith, they will have patience, or endurance, and will not deny the Lord in spite of persecution and death.

'Overcome' does not mean that the beast can overcome the faith of the saints, but that he can destroy their physical lives.

Who are these saints who are overcome by the beast? Various views of the timing of the rapture will determine who these persecuted ones are. Those who believe in a pre-tribulation rapture believe that these saints are God's people who come to Christ

after the church has been raptured. Those who believe in a mid or post-tribulation rapture believe that these saints are the body of Christ, the church who are on the earth before the final rapture.

However, Jesus said of the church, that the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it in Matthew 16:18. If this group of saints is overcome by satan, perhaps they are not the same New Testament church that Jesus spoke of.

E. THOSE WHO ARE NOT IN THE BOOK

Revelation 13:8-10 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. 9 If anyone has an ear, let him hear. 10 He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

The Book of Life of the Lamb is the register of those who will receive eternal life, in contrast to those destined for eternal death in the lake of fire. It is God's greatest desire for all men to come to know Jesus as their Savior and Lord and He wants your names to be in there. Do you have a complete assurance that your name is in that Book? You cannot have your name in that book without accepting Jesus as the Savior and Lord.

This deeply meaningful title for Jesus reminds us that God's plan of redemption was set in place before He even created the beings who would be redeemed. God wasn't "surprised" by the fall of Adam or any other evidence of the fallen nature of man. God isn't making it up as He goes along. It is all going according to plan.

*Ephesians 1:4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,
1 Peter 1:20 He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you*

He will reward the persecutors against the saints with persecution of His own.

F. THE DEBUT OF THE FALSE PROPHET

Revelation 13:11-15 Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. 12 And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. 13 He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. 14 And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. 15 He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

The beast from the earth is called "the false prophet." Satan is the counterfeit Father, "the beast" is the counterfeit Christ, and the false prophet is the counterfeit Holy Spirit. This completes the 'unholy trinity'.

One of the ministries of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Christ and lead people to trust and worship Him. The false prophet will point to antichrist and his image and compel people to worship satan through "the beast."

By nature, men have an undeniable religious impulse, and they also have an undeniable rebellion against God. What men want most is not the elimination of religion, but their own religion without the one true God of the Bible.

Whether the image is animated supernaturally or technologically, the result will be impressive.

Jesus said that in the end times, false prophets would emerge and show great signs and wonders to deceive many in Matthew 24:24. Knowing all this, the emphasis on signs and wonders among some Christians is frightening. Some Christians say or think, "You can really know where God is and where His power is by signs and wonders." Thinking this way is to leave yourself wide open to deception. Signs and wonders will be present among Christians, but the real marks of God's work are love and truth.

G. THE MARK OF THE BEAST

Revelation 13:16-18 He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, 17 and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. 18 Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

The technology to give people a mark that enables them to buy and sell in the electronic economy is available. There are many different ways it could happen. One interesting possibility from a company named Applied Digital Solutions in FL, which has developed a product called 'Verichip'. Verichip is a microchip implanted in the body powered by the body's own biomechanical electricity and able to communicate with satellites. This is from a real, legitimate company whose stock is traded on major exchanges.

A month ago, the U.S. F.D.A approved 'Verichip' to be inserted in human arms to carry the entire medical history and more. Some of the Mexican Attorney General officials already have implanted in their arms to access top security areas. In April this year, a top night club in Barcelona, Spain, called Baja Beach Club started to use this Verichip to give special treatment to their VIPs. Their chips contains the info for their favorite drinks, their preferences, credit balance and even automatically opens the door to the VIP lounge.

The scientist who designed this chip was asked what would happen if the rechargeable battery of this chip leaks inside of a human body. He said, "The person will have a sore (or boil)."

Revelation 16:2 So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.

H. APPLICATIONS

1) Just because God doesn't show His wrath unto those who don't follow Him now, it doesn't mean that he is winking at their disobedience.

God doesn't settle the score by the end of each day or month. But when He does, it is clear and just. God's millstone of wrath does not turn fast. But it grinds exceedingly fine.

2) The signs and wonders are the side products of following Jesus, not the main course.

3) Even though an anti-christian system permeates our world, true believers must not be a part of it.

We must shun false worship, that we may be found faithful to the Lord in these last days!