

Preparation for the End Time America and Babylon

Lesson #10 for June 9, 2018

Scriptures: Revelation 13:1-12; 14:9-11; 16:22; 18:1-4; 19:20; 20:4; Jeremiah 51:6-7,53,57; Daniel 12:1.

1. This lesson focuses on Revelation 13. In Revelation 13 we see two strange beasts with a power—the Devil himself—behind them. Revelation 13:1-10, describing the sea beast, says that the characteristics of this sea beast include many of the characteristics of the dragon/Satan described in Revelation 12:3,9 and the four beasts in Daniel 7:4-7, i.e., a total of seven heads and ten horns with body parts from a leopard, a bear, and a lion, and including the head and the horns from the nondescript beast. That final beast has two phases—not only its original phase as the nondescript beast but also a second phase as the blasphemous little horn.
2. However, we note in Revelation 13:3 that this composite beast receives a deadly wound. Amazingly, that wound somehow heals. Is this dragon-like beast trying to claim that it has reenacted the crucifixion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ?
3. What do we know about this beast in Revelation 13:1-10? Notice some of its characteristics:
 1. **This beast arose in heavily-populated areas. (Revelation 13:1)**
 2. **It ruled over the world using power that resulted from an amalgamation of the powers of the three previous empires: Babylon, Media-Persia, and Greece. (Revelation 13:2)**
 3. **It speaks blasphemies against God, claiming to exercise the authority of God. (Revelation 13:1)**
 4. **It gets its powers from Satan himself. It is a religious power. (Revelation 13:2)**
 5. **It receives a mortal wound, but the wound is healed. (Compare the story of Jesus's death and resurrection.) (Revelation 13:3)**
 6. **It amazes and rules over the whole world. It causes the whole world to worship the dragon (Satan). (Revelation 13:4)**
 7. **It will rule with authority for 3½ years (42 months or 1260 days). (Revelation 13:5)**
 8. **“It began to curse God, his name, the place where he lives, and all those who live in heaven.” (Revelation 13:6, *GNB**)**
 9. **It will fight against God's people and defeat them, exercising authority over the whole world. (Revelation 13:7)**
 10. **It will be worshiped by the whole world except for God's faithful, chosen people. (Revelation 13:8)**
4. In any case, we then discover that Rome, as the blasphemous little horn, is not alone in its activities. For 1260 years, the Roman Catholic Church boasted of its power to control the civilized world. Gregory VII, angered by the Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV caused Henry to go to the Canossa Castle in northern Italy and wait in the cold in the outer court of his palace for three days before the pope granted him entrance. Gregory boasted of his power to bring down kings. But, as a result of the Reformation, the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, and also the rise of America where many of Rome's enemies escaped to establish a new nation, Rome's political and religious powers waned to the point that Pope Pius VI was taken captive by the French army under General Berthier in 1798 and later died in exile in 1799.

5. But, God was not taken by surprise. He described that deadly wound as being healed. Today, Catholic popes are described by news media as the most powerful people in the world. Popes in our day are invited to speak to the United States Congress, to make pronouncements about political issues, etc.
6. In light of all this, will we go along with this “political correctness” and show respect to the pope? Or, will we carefully but graciously present the message of Revelation 13? How can we make that message meaningful and understandable to the masses?
7. Read Revelation 13:11-12. It turns out that the Roman Catholic Church will eventually have a powerful ally—another beast described as having two horns like a lamb’s horns but speaking like a dragon and forcing the whole world to worship the first beast.
8. About the time of the end of Rome’s power during the 1260-year prophecy, i.e., 1798, a new nation arose in an area not heavily populated. (Revelation 13:11; 11:1; Daniel 7:2-3; Revelation 17:15)
9. So, how are we going to determine what that new beast represents? There is only one nation that fits all the descriptors.

What nation of the New World was in 1798 rising into power, giving promise of strength and greatness, and attracting the attention of the world? The application of the symbol admits of no question. One nation, and only one, meets the specifications of this prophecy; it points unmistakably to the United States of America.—Ellen G. White, *Great Controversy** 440.2.

10. Revelation 13:11-17 go on to describe in symbols how Rome will rise again to exert incredible power through the assistance of the United States of America.
11. So, what will be the issue? Since the beginning of the great controversy, Lucifer—now Satan—has wanted more than anything else to be worshiped. Somehow, he even thought he could convince Jesus Christ to worship him! (Matthew 4:8-10) So, what should we expect to happen in fulfillment of this prophecy? Will the whole world actually become religious again? Or, will false religion take on a whole new aspect? In lesson number 2 in this series, we talked about how the three young men in Daniel’s day refused to worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. They were threatened with being burned alive if they did not worship that image. But, God preserved them. Could Nebuchadnezzar’s threats be a precursor to what the second beast in Revelation 13 will do in our day? (Revelation 13:15)
12. Read Revelation 13:15; 14:9-11; 16:2; 19:20; and 20:4. What seems to be the major issue in these verses? Why is worship such an issue?
 1. Those who **do not worship** the dragon will be threatened with death.
 2. Those who **worship** the dragon will be destroyed by God’s wrath.
 3. The land beast will try to force everyone to receive the mark of the beast. Without the mark, one cannot buy or sell.
 4. People will be deceived into receiving the mark of the beast. (Revelation 19:20)
 5. One day, those who refuse to worship the dragon or the beast or to receive their mark will rule on thrones in heaven.
13. Babel, or later, Babylon has always been a center of false worship. The original word, *bab-el*, meant “gateway to the gods.” Like Lucifer in heaven, (Isaiah 14:14) those original tower builders in Babel thought that they could defeat God’s plans! (Genesis 9:8-11)
14. Later, in the second great Babylonian Empire, Nebuchadnezzar boasted of “this great Babylon, that I have built,” (Daniel 4:30) once again, boasting of human might and power. Later, his grandson Belshazzar used the golden utensils from Solomon’s Temple to serve intoxicating

wine to his guests on the night Babylon was destroyed. Thus, we see that Satan will do almost anything to abuse or misuse even utensils intended for the worship of the true God.

15. If a form of false worship is going to return to our world, what form might it take?

Multitude[s] have a wrong conception of God and His attributes, and are as truly serving a false god as were the worshipers of Baal. Many even of those who claim to be Christians have allied themselves with influences that are unalterably opposed to God and [178] His truth. Thus they are led to turn away from the divine and to exalt the human.—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings** 177.1. [Bold type and content in brackets are added. However, content in brackets is present in the printed version of *Prophets and Kings*.]

16. Think of the incredible implications of this statement. Why aren't we preaching it from our pulpits frequently? Could people in our day "worship" fame? Riches? Political and military power through business or the stock market? Or, even Hollywood?
17. Read Jeremiah 51:6-7,53; Zechariah 2:7; Revelation 17:5-6; 18:2-3. From these passages we learn that ancient Babylon, and by implication modern antitypical Babylon, was full of immoral lust. One day, God will treat her as she deserves. And His warning is to all who will hear and obey: "Get out of her, and run for your lives!"
18. Compare the dragon, the sea beast, and the scarlet beast as described in Revelation 12:3; 13:1-3; and 17:3. What similarities and/or differences do you see?

All three beasts have seven heads and ten horns, which represent the sum total of heads and horns of the beasts of Daniel 7. Each successive empire was built upon those that went before. Similarly, the scarlet beast combines elements of the dragon and the sea beast (symbolizing pagan and papal Rome, respectively), as well as of the land beast (Rev. 13:11-14), grouping "all three powers—all of God's enemies—into a real coalition."—Jacques B. Doukhan, *Secrets of Revelation: The Apocalypse Through Hebrew Eyes* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald® Publishing Association, 2002), p. 162.—[as quoted in *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Wednesday, June 6].

19. Something else is interesting in or about the woman depicted in Revelation 17. She is described as riding on a red or scarlet beast. Who was that woman? Where did she come from? Read Revelation 12:14 and Revelation 17:3-8. It is very fascinating to note that the pure woman in Revelation 12:14 that fled to the desert for fear of the dragon is not heard from again until John is shown the desert and a woman who is then riding on the dragon's surrogate, the scarlet beast, with seven heads and ten horns? If so, what happened to that pure woman? Look at the interesting parallels between these two women. Did the dragon corrupt the woman?

Pure Woman (Rev. 12)

In heaven

Clothed with the sun

Crown of twelve stars

Attacked by the dragon

Mother of the remnant

Harlot (Rev. 17)

On the waters

Clothed in purple and scarlet

Adorned with gold, gems, pearls

Supported by the dragon

Mother of harlots

—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Wednesday, June 6.

20. As we look around the world in our day, it is very clear that this "mother of harlots" has been busy reproducing herself. How many churches in our world are now basically copying most of the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church? Revelation 14:8-11 warn us to get all of God's people out of Babylon and these false, apostate daughters of Babylon as quickly as possible because those who remain will receive the mark of the beast. And those who receive the mark

of the beast will eventually be totally annihilated. That warning is first given in Revelation 14 and is repeated with even greater power in Revelation 18:1-4.

21. So, who should be responsible for giving that last great appeal to come out of Babylon? How will they actually do it?

Over the years, students of Bible prophecy have been following world events with great interest, particularly as they seem to relate to the end time. Think, for instance, about the role of the United States. As far back as 1851, some Adventists [*sic* should be adventists] were identifying America as the second beast power (*Rev 13:11-15*), which was a very remarkable identification given the status of the United States then. In the mid-1800s, the big powers were still the Old World ones: Prussia, France, Austria-Hungary, and England. At that time America had a peacetime army of about twenty thousand men, about one-tenth the number of combatants at the Battle of Waterloo (1815) alone. In 1814, just forty years earlier, the British invaded and burned Washington, D.C. In 1876, Sitting Bull's braves wiped out General Custer's Seventh U.S. Cavalry Regiment. Thus, even after some commentators identified the United States as the power that would one day enforce the "mark of the beast" on the world, the nation was still fighting Native Americans on its own soil, and not always winning either!—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Thursday, June 7. [Content in brackets is added.]

22. So, how does it look to you? Is the history of our world unfolding as God predicted?
23. Read again Revelation 18:1-4. What do these verses suggest will be the mission of God's faithful people at the end of time? The picture suggests that the Devil will be more or less in charge of everything that occurs on planet Earth. It will be a dreadful, fearful time for God's faithful people. But, even in the midst of those terrible times, God will still be calling some of those in Babylon, "My people." How will these people eventually come out of Babylon and be recognized as God's faithful people? Will others around them know that is what has happened?
24. In these final horrific days of this earth's history, Satan is going to do everything he possibly can to accomplish his original purpose of getting as many people as possible to worship him.

From the very beginning of the great controversy in heaven it has been Satan's purpose to overthrow the law of God. It was to accomplish this that he entered upon his rebellion against the Creator, and though he was cast out of heaven he has continued the same warfare upon the earth. To deceive men, and thus lead them to transgress God's law, is the object which he has steadfastly pursued. Whether this he accomplished by casting aside the law altogether, or by rejecting one of its precepts, the result will be ultimately the same. He that offends "in one point," manifests contempt for the whole law: his influence and example are on the side of transgression; he becomes "guilty of all." James 2:10.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 582.1.

25. As we look around us, do we see the events predicted in the book of Revelation being fulfilled? Why does Revelation suggest that the final issue will be an issue of worship? What does that imply? Clearly, God still has faithful people in all churches/communions. No one yet has received the mark of the beast. We need to remember also that, somehow, in the midst of all of this, the latter rain or the outpouring of the Holy Spirit's power will come. How will that be manifest? Are we preparing ourselves to receive the latter rain?
26. After studying this lesson and discussing with your friends, do you think you can clearly identify the sea beast as the Roman Catholic Church? Can you clearly identify the land beast as the United States of America? How can we be sure that we are always correctly worshiping the true God of heaven? What is the most common characteristic of false worship? What happens in

false worship? *To practice false worship* means to worship something that is not “worth” it—anything that is not true to God’s character and His government.

27. Is there anything else we need to call the world to do besides coming out of Babylon? There is a call for endurance and faith on the part of God’s people. Compare Revelation 13:10 and Revelation 14:12. This will not be an easy time to be faithful to the true God of heaven. We must give up on self-worship and choose instead a faithful, God-centered worship. And how will God’s faithful people do that? What did Daniel’s three friends do when tempted?
28. In the great prophetic timetables which we see in Scripture, what events are still to take place? Only those events directly connected with the second and third comings of Jesus and heaven!
29. Is it possible that Protestants and other religious groups will come to respect and even reverence the Roman Catholic Church again?

The Roman Catholic Church is pleading with all protestant churches to come back to the “mother church.” The Lutheran Church and the Anglican Church have already signed agreements of cooperation with the Roman Catholic Church. Notice the following headlines.

“US Lutherans approve document recognizing agreement with Catholic church”—<https://www.ncronline.org/news/theology/us-lutherans-approve-document-recognizing-agreement-catholic-church> (Accessed March 11, 2018).

“Reformed churches endorse Catholic-Lutheran accord on key Reformation dispute”—<https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2017/07/07/reformed-churches-endorse-catholic-lutheran-accord-key-reformation-dispute> (Accessed March 11, 2018).

“Anglicans affirm Lutheran-Catholic agreement, endorse Reformation anniversary”—<https://iarccum.org/2016/anglicans-affirm-lutheran-catholic-agreement-endorse-reformation-anniversary/> (Accessed March 11, 2018).

30. These are just a few of the reports of cooperation between the Roman Catholic Church and other church groups.
31. In the midst of this proliferation of churches, is it safe just to return to the more respectable and established churches? Or, would that simply be falling into the Laodicean trap? (Revelation 3:17)
32. Are we—as a relatively small Protestant church—up to the task before us?
33. Read Revelation 13:12 again. We have tried to set out clearly why we believe the sea beast is the same as the little horn of Daniel 7 & 8 and both represent the Roman Catholic Church as an institution. Do you still have questions about that identification?
34. In Revelation 13:3,8 we discovered that this beast has another characteristic not mentioned in Daniel 7 or 8: It receives a deadly wound; but, that wound is healed. Incredible as it may seem, the Roman Catholic Church declared the infallibility of the pope in 1870—only a few decades after receiving that deadly wound.
35. Read Revelation 13:15-17. How could we ever return to the day when a religious entity, even one enforced by the powers of a nation as great as the United States of America, will be able to force people to obey its dictates under penalty of death?
36. What is it that most people in our world actually worship today? Is it fame? Money? Power? Or, influence?
37. Read Revelation 13:12 and Revelation 13:4. What would it take to get the whole world to “worship” the Devil and his surrogate, the Roman Catholic Church? Surely, this cannot be a traditional worship with churches and organizations, etc. Will worship take on a new form? Or, could things become so chaotic world-wide that people will do almost anything to get back to some form of stability? Remember that this will become such an issue that blanket death

decrees will be signed and passed by the United States government, and then, by many, if not all, governments around the world against those who refuse to agree and worship the Devil!

38. Review the story in Daniel 3 and compare Revelation 13:15-17. Are we prepared to stand up like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in defiance of the world's most powerful governments? What form of worship will those governments be promoting?
39. Whatever the form of worship, it will be identified by the receiving of a mark on the hand or on the forehead. (Revelation 13:6) This should remind us of Deuteronomy 6:7-9.
40. So, how will this actually work out? How will people actually receive the mark of the beast?
 1. This power is different from the beast of the sea: it is not religious; it is not worshiped (*Rev. 13:12, 15*). It is only political; it can kill (*Rev. 13:15*) and functions as an economic power; it determines who can buy or sell (*Rev. 13:17*).
 2. This power comes into prominence after the beast of the sea, and it begins to act immediately after the beast of the sea receives its wound (*Rev. 13:12*); hence, by the end of the eighteenth century.
 3. This power has a reassuring character. It looks like the lamb (*Rev. 13:11*) that is the symbol of Jesus Christ in His vulnerability. Yet, it speaks like a dragon; it has tremendous power. Also, it comes from the "land"—a sparsely populated part of the earth, unlike the beast from the sea (*see Rev. 17:15*).
 4. This power exercises an important political and cultural influence on the world; it is a superpower.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 135.
41. It was not God's intention through the apostle John to encourage people living in our day to point fingers and make accusations. It is our task to warn people to clearly and convincingly present the truth that people see why they must get out of Babylon. It should also encourage us to understand all these issues so clearly that we cannot be deceived.
42. How is the mark of the beast related to Sunday worship? Does it have something to do with the differences between the meanings of Sabbath worship and Sunday worship?
43. Incredible as it may seem, the Internet is full of "prophecies"! Why do people depend on horoscopes or fortunetellers in our modern scientific day? How can we protect ourselves against crazy and far-fetched interpretations of the book of Revelation? Why are there many even contradictory interpretations of the book of Revelation even among Adventists?
44. Recently, Pope Francis visited the United States. Look at these comments from *Time Magazine* regarding that visit:

"He came as a shepherd and was everywhere tending his flock, with the human touch that has enthralled even skeptics. . . . We've seen elements of this pageant before: Paul VI was the first Pope to visit the U.S., back in 1965, when Vatican II had just begun. . . . John Paul II made seven U.S. visits during his 27-year tenure. . . . But none of that occurred in the age of Instagram, when every one of the millions who came out to see him could share the experience with millions more. . . . He's the first Pope to do a Google Hangout and the first to amass over 20 million Twitter followers."—*Time* (Oct. 5, 2015, pp. 36, 40.)—[as quoted in *Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 136].

How should we respond to these critical events happening before our eyes? Are we up to the challenge?

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