

The Book of Revelation

Satan and His Allies

Lesson #9 for March 2, 2019

Scriptures: Revelation 12:14-16; 13; 17:8; Daniel 7:24; 2 Thessalonians 2:2-12; 1 Kings 18:38.

1. Last week we studied Revelation 12, the center of the chiasm in the book of Revelation. There are three sections in Revelation 12: (1) Revelation 12:1-6 talks about how Christ came to this earth to resolve the problems that had arisen; (2) Revelation 12:7-12 explains how the problem began—not on this earth but in heaven; and (3) Revelation 12:13-18 talks about how the conflict will continue to the end of this earth's history.
2. In this week's lesson, we will see more details about the section in Revelation 12:13-18. The area of emphasis here is from A.D. 538-1798, the 1260 day/42 month/3½ year period of Roman and papal domination of the Western world. During that time, Satan used two allies—which are called *beasts* and who unite to oppose God's activities in every way possible—and delay what even Satan himself knows will be the final end and his destruction.
3. We have now moved into the portion of Revelation dealing with the future. God does not give us detailed accounts of future events. The purpose of these prophecies is for us to understand that God is still in control; He knows what is coming, and we need to trust Him.
4. Read Revelation 13:1-4,8, which describes a sea beast, and Revelation 17:8. Beasts in the Bible represent governments which emphasize their religion as a dominant characteristic.
5. In Revelation 12:3-4, the Devil himself is described; but, he tries to hide behind a human organization which in its initial stages was pagan Rome.

The line of prophecy in which these symbols are found begins with Revelation 12, with the dragon that sought to destroy Christ at His birth. **The dragon is said to be Satan (Revelation 12:9); he it was that moved upon Herod to put the Saviour to death. But the chief agent of Satan in making war upon Christ and His people during the first centuries of the Christian Era was the Roman Empire, in which paganism was the prevailing religion. Thus while the dragon, primarily, represents Satan, it is, in a secondary sense, a symbol of pagan Rome.**—Ellen G. White. (1911). *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan** 438.2. Pacific Press Publishing Association. [Bold type is added.]

6. It is important to compare Revelation 13:1-4 with Revelation 12:3-4. Notice how similar these two beasts appear. The beast in Revelation 13 is almost a twin of the beast in Revelation 12. But, notice that the beast in Revelation 12:1-4 is scarlet or red. Compare Revelation 17:3.
7. Following the downfall of pagan Rome, a number of different invasions of the Roman Empire took place.

The successive invasions of the Roman Empire by numerous Germanic tribes, and the replacement of the empire by a number of separate states or monarchies, are well established facts of history. Owing to the fact that a score or more barbarian tribes invaded the Roman Empire, commentators have compiled various lists of the kingdoms that were founded. The following

list is representative: Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Franks, Vandals, Suevi, Alamanni, Anglo-Saxons, Heruli, Lombards, Burgundians. Some prefer to list the Huns in place of the Alamanni, however the Huns disappeared early without leaving a settled kingdom.—Nichol, F. D. (Ed.). (1977). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*,* vol. 4, 826. Review and Herald Publishing Association.

8. We need to notice that the beast from the sea has features of a leopard, a bear, and a lion, as well as the nondescript beast described in Daniel 7:2-7. It is a composite of all of them.
9. In Revelation 13:5-7, we note that this beast is the persecuting power for the 1260 days/42 months/3½ years. And this organization which claims to be a Christian church was, in fact, persecuting the *pure woman* who fled to the desert. This period of prophetic time ended in 1798 when “one of his [the beast’s] heads as if it had been mortally wounded” took place. So, what follows that time must be after 1798. And what we are told is that the healing of the deadly wound draws the admiration of the entire world, and they worship both the dragon and the beast. In what sense are people worshipping the Devil in our day?
10. We have noted repeatedly the striking parallels between the prophecies of Daniel 7 and these by John. Look at Revelation 13:5-8; Daniel 7:24-25; and 2 Thessalonians 2:2-12. In these passages we notice at least four prominent features: (1) Satan will oppose God and blaspheme His name. (2) He will try to place himself above God. (3) He will oppose God’s true people and try to change their times and laws. (4) He will deceive everyone except those whose names are written in the book of the Lamb. How should we respond to this?
11. The sea beast’s activities are often described as blasphemous. (See **John 10:33**; **Matthew 26:63-65**; and **Mark 2:7**.) These verses make it clear that the sea beast is trying to negate Christ’s work in the heavenly sanctuary, replacing it with a human priesthood that claims to administer salvation and forgiveness of sins which are the exclusive rights of God Himself. Claiming to be able to do the work which only God can do is the essence of blasphemy. Thus, the first part of Revelation 13 describes a time of major apostasy and decline in Christianity; it was a time we call the Dark Ages.
12. While the first half of Revelation 13 describes the fact that the sea beast receives what appears to be a fatal wound, the second half describes how that wound is healed. A second beast arises (Revelation 13:11) which is largely responsible for this healing. Compare Revelation 12:14-16.
13. Clearly, this next beast in Revelation 13:11 arises under very different circumstances and has very different characteristics than the first beast. This beast arises out of the earth and is, thus, called a *land beast*; it is a world power. At first, it appears almost harmless. It has two horns like a lamb; but, later, it will speak like a dragon.
14. By comparing Revelation 12:14-17 with Revelation 13, we note that this beast arises in a place which formerly provided refuge for the people fleeing from that first beast. This beast arises after the sea beast had received the deadly wound in 1798.

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, *The Great Controversy** 440.2.

15. The United States of America arose because Protestants fleeing from persecution in Europe established a nation where they demanded freedom of religion and freedom of the press.

16. Read Revelation 13:12-13. Compare 1 Kings 18:38 and Acts 2:3. What do you suppose is the meaning of “made fire come down out of heaven to earth” in Revelation 13? Is this going to be a destroying fire like a bolt of lightning out of heaven as in 1 Kings 18:38? Or, is Satan going to pretend to send his “holy spirit” as in Acts 2:3? By the working of apparent miracles—and some will be real miracles—Satan hopes to convince the world that he is God.

Through the agency of spiritualism, miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and many undeniable wonders will be performed.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 588.2.

17. So, the lamblike beast will begin speaking like a dragon, exercising power similar to what the sea beast has already done, becoming intolerant to those who do not agree with it.

Such action would be directly contrary to the principles of this government, to the genius of its free institutions, to the direct and solemn avowals of the Declaration of Independence, and to the Constitution.... But the inconsistency of such action is no greater than is represented in the symbol. It is the beast with lamblike horns—in profession pure, gentle, and harmless—that speaks as a dragon.

“Saying to them that dwell on the earth, that *they* should make an image to the beast.” Here is clearly presented a form of government in which the legislative power rests with the people, a most striking evidence that the United States is the nation denoted in the prophecy.

But what is the “image to the beast”? and how is it to be formed? The image is made by the two-horned beast, and is an image *to* the beast. It is also called an image *of* the beast. Then to learn what the image is like and how it is to be formed we must study the characteristics of the beast itself—the papacy.

When the early church became corrupted by departing from the simplicity of the gospel and accepting heathen rites and customs, she lost the Spirit and power of God; and in order to control the consciences of the people, she sought the support of the secular power. The result was the papacy, a church that controlled the power of the state and employed it to further her own ends, especially for the punishment of “heresy”....

When the leading churches of the United States, uniting upon such points of doctrine as are held by them in common, shall influence the state to enforce their decrees and to sustain their institutions, then Protestant America will have formed an image of the Roman hierarchy, and the infliction of civil penalties upon dissenters will inevitably result.

... The “image to the beast” represents that form of apostate Protestantism which will be developed when the Protestant churches shall seek the aid of the civil power for the enforcement of their dogmas.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 442.2-445.2. [Italic type is in the source.]

18. So, what is the mark of the beast? Read Revelation 13:15-17 and Deuteronomy 6:4-8. Satan is doing everything he possibly can to imitate God’s plan for us. Revelation 7:3-4 and 14:1 mention that God’s final people will have God the Father’s name written on their foreheads. It seems logical that having a mark on the forehead has to do with mental and spiritual complicity while having it on the hand implies going along with his behavior for convenience.

19. And the final issue will be over *who* we worship, God or the Devil, represented by what day do we worship on. Read Revelation 14:12; Revelation 13:10; and Ezekiel 20:12,20.
20. Thus, we see that the mark of the beast involves the substitution of a human commandment for God's commandment.

The mark of the beast is the papal sabbath.... When the decree shall go forth enforcing the counterfeit sabbath, and the loud cry of the third angel shall warn men against the worship of the beast and his image,... then those who still continue in transgression will receive the mark of the beast.—Ellen G. White, *Manuscript 51*,* 1899; *Evangelism** 234.1-235.0. Compare *Last Day Events** 224.1.

21. This individual with his number of 666 is described by Paul as the man of sin. (2 Thessalonians 2:3) Satan and his evil host will do everything they possibly can at the end of this earth's history to bring human beings into their side against the true God.
22. While we may recognize that Sundaykeeping will end up being the mark of the beast, it is not true yet.

No one has yet received the mark of the beast. The testing time has not yet come. There are true Christians in every church, not excepting the Roman Catholic communion. None are condemned until they have had the light and have seen the obligation of the fourth commandment. But when the decree shall go forth enforcing the counterfeit sabbath, and the loud cry of the third angel shall warn men against the worship of the beast and his image, the line will be clearly drawn between the false and the true. Then those who still continue in transgression will receive the mark of the beast.—Ellen G. White, *Evangelism** 234.2-235.0; *Maranatha** 211.5. Compare *Signs of the Times*,* November 8, 1899, par. 2 [which does not include the initial two sentences].

23. We live in a world with massive changes taking place on a daily basis. People are talking about a *New World Order*. What kind of things do you see around you that seem to be moving us closer to what we are reading about in Revelation 13?

1. Multiple organizations are being formed to create cooperation between churches, to emphasize their similar beliefs, and to minimize their differences. The Roman Catholic Church is reaching out in every way it can to encourage Protestant churches to “come back to the mother church.”
2. The rights of the first amendment of the United States of America are being chipped away on a regular basis.
3. Islam is becoming more and more militant and intolerant of Christianity.
4. People are bringing more and more cases even to the Supreme Court against those who choose to exercise their religious rights.

24. So, how should we relate to ministers and members of other churches?

Our ministers should seek to come near to the ministers of other denominations. Pray for and with these men, for whom Christ is interceding. A solemn responsibility is theirs. As Christ's messengers we should manifest a deep, earnest interest in these shepherds of the flock.—Ellen G. White, *Manuscript 19*,* 1900, 11. (“A Perfect Ministry,” typed March 5, 1900.); *6MR** 70.7; *Australian Union Conference Record*,* June 1, 1900, par. 37;

Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 6, 78.1; *Ev** 562.1.

25. There are several main themes that need to be noted in our historicist interpretation of Revelation 13. Notice that Revelation 13:1-7 and 13:11, describing the early events of these two beasts, are described in past tenses; but, when we come to talking about what they were doing in the times in Revelation 13:8-10,12-18, the tenses are present or future. This supports our giving a historical interpretation of these passages. Revelation 13 then focuses on Revelation 12:13-16 and gives us more details.
26. This sea beast—which is Satan’s human agency acting as a counterfeit christ—has done everything it can to imitate the example of Jesus but in a false way.

One of the most prominent features of the book [Revelation] is the presentation of Satanic counterfeits that oppose God in a spiritual war of cosmic proportions. The beast introduced in Revelation 13:1-10 is a counterfeit of Christ. Note the following parallels:

(a) The beast is **an image of Satan**, whom Satan brought forth (Rev. 13:1), just as **Christ is the exact image of God**, begotten by the Father (Ps. 2:7; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3);

(b) the **beast has ten crowns and blasphemous names** (Rev. 13:1), while **Christ has many crowns and worthy names** (Rev. 19:12);

(c) the dragon gave the beast his power, throne, and great authority (Rev. 13:2), just as Christ has power (Rev. 5:12,13), throne (Rev. 3:21), and authority (Rev. 12:10) from the Father (John 5:21-23);

(d) the beast has a seemingly fatal wound from which he has recovered (13:3), counterfeiting Christ’s resurrection, and the beast’s recovery is one of the principal features that attracts followers (Rev. 13:4), just as the resurrection of Christ is one of the principal points of evangelistic proclamation;

(e) worship is directed both to the dragon and the beast (Rev. 13:4), just as Christians worship both the Father and the Son (John 5:23);

(f) the beast attracts the worship of the whole world (Rev. 13:7), just as Christ will be worshiped universally;

(g) the beast utters blasphemies (Rev. 13:5), while Christ utters the praises of God (Heb. 2:12);

(h) the beast makes war against the saints (Rev. 13:7), while Christ makes war against the beast (Rev. 19:11-21). The song of praise to the beast in Rev. 13:4 counterfeits the song to God in Ex. 15:11. The striking juxtaposition of Christ and the beast in Rev. 19:11-21 shows that these are the two main warriors in the battle: Christ is the divine warrior, fulfilling the imagery of Ex. 15:3; Is. 59:16-18; 63:1-6; Hab. 3:3-15; Zech. 9:13-15; 14:1-5; and the beast is the unholy, counterfeit warrior, fulfilling the imagery of Dan. 7:1-8.—Whitlock, L. G., Sproul, R. C., Waltke, B. K., & Silva, M. (1995). *The Reformation Study Bible: Bringing the Light of the Reformation to Scripture: New King James Version** (Revelation 1:1). Nashville: T. Nelson. [Bold type and content in brackets are added.]

27. It can be confusing when reading Scriptures to read about the earth. Sometimes, it seems to be an evil place, especially when contrasted with heaven. (Revelation 9:1; 14:3; 6:10; 8:13; 13:8; 17:8) On the other hand, when the earth is contrasted with the raging sea waters or flooding waters, the earth is a positive symbol. (Revelation 13:11; 21:1) This is primarily in contrast with the sea beast.
28. **The identity of the land beast:** There are many reasons to believe that the description *land beast* is referring to the United States of America. Adventists have consistently identified the United States as the land beast of Revelation 13:11.

(1) The history of the land beast in the text (*Rev. 13:11*) is much shorter than the history of the sea beast (*Rev. 13:1-7*), suggesting a relatively new arrival on the scene of history. (2) Coming out of the earth (*Rev. 13:11*) recalls the positive actions of the “earth” in Revelation 12:16. (3) The land beast appears in the context of the captivity of the sea beast (*Rev. 13:10*), which Adventists understand occurred in A.D. 1798. (4) Unlike the sea beast, whose pedigree recalls the empires of Daniel 7, the land beast’s pedigree has no ancient roots. (5) The land beast arises from a different part of the world than the sea beast. (6) In ancient nonbiblical mythology, the land beast (behemoth) lives in an arid, desert space, far from people. (7) The land beast wears no crowns, suggesting it has no king and no pope; instead, it offers political and religious liberty. (8) It speaks like a lamb, at first, wielding a gentler, more Christlike authority. But that gentleness does not last. (9) The land beast eventually becomes dragon-like, like the power that attempted to kill Baby Jesus (*Rev. 12:3-5*). (10) The land beast is described in very religious terms, not just political ones (*Rev. 13:13-15*). It is the religious side of the United States of America that is especially in focus because faith—what we believe and practice—greatly matters.

There is no other power in history able to so completely fulfill the specifications of this prophecy than the United States—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 121-122.

29. It is interesting to compare Revelation 13:14-18 and Daniel 3. What are the parallels? People from all parts of the world are compelled to come to a single place and engage in an act of worship. There is a death decree proclaimed against anyone who refuses to worship; both events are associated with the number 6. Look at the dimensions of the image in Daniel 3—6 by 60 cubits—and the number 666 in Revelation 13. The number 6 represented evil.
30. We need to be very cautious when we approach others with the truths that we have discussed in this lesson. It might be easy to suggest that we are the ones in the right and they are the ones in the wrong. The best approach is to talk to them about what kind of a god would torch and burn people for eternity? What kind of a god would play fast and loose with his own rules? What kind of a god would encourage the church to burn people over doctrinal differences?
31. This lesson covers one of the most important chapters in the Bible for Adventists and all Bible students to understand. Has this lesson helped you? Are you clear about the identities of each of the beasts in this chapter?

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Last Modified: February 23, 2019

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