

Revelation 13 And 17. The Beast From The Sea, Etc. The Lamb-like Beast. The Image Of The Beast.



Revelation 17:7 ¶And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

This is the continuation of [The Last Prophecy: An Abridgment of Elliott's Horae Apocalypticae.](#)

Supplemental History Of The Adversaries Of The Church Continued. The Papacy. The Papal Hierarchy The Papal Councils.

Please read Revelation chapters 13 and 17 from your Bible.

THE PRECEDING CHAPTER represented Satan, the animating spirit of old Paganism, as in great wrath, plotting the destruction of Christ's Church. Though he had failed in a direct attack upon the divinity of the Lord Jesus, he had indirectly, by means of superstition, succeeded in driving the true and primitive Church into banishment. This furnished him with a new plan of attack, which we shall find developed in the figurations of this 13th chapter, and also in the further description given in chap. 17. This latter vision we have also prefixed to this lecture, though it forms rather the subject of unfulfilled prophecy.

[I] The symbol of the "Wild Beast rising out of the flood" is one of the most important predictions of the Apocalypse. We shall endeavor, in the first place, to treat of the prophetic symbol itself, and then to set forth its historical fulfillment.

The description of this Beast, with its "seven heads and ten horns," would seem to mark a certain resemblance with that of the Dragon in the twelfth chapter. And having in our last lecture explained this Dragon to be the monster under its seventh head, we would view the present figuration as depicting the same monster in a yet further development, under a new and eighth head, or the seventh head restored from its deadly wound." Identifying

it, as there is evident reason to do, with the scarlet-colored Beast from the abyss, mentioned afterwards in the seventeenth chapter, we treat of the two visions together; and we behold in them the same persecuting heathenlike power which we have already seen described in Rev. 11:7 as making war upon and killing the two witnesses. This Beast then, the same with the little horn of Daniel's fourth beast, (Dan. 7:8, 20) and with St. Paul's man of sin, (2 Thess. 2:1-12) we hold to signify that masterpiece of Satanic craft and enmity, THE ANTICHRIST that was to come: who (according to the strict meaning of the word Antichrist), while assuming the character, occupying the place, and fulfilling the functions of the Saviour as a Vice-Christ, was to do more than any other adversary toward injuring the cause, and practically denying God, as to all real spiritual effect, and as to the very essence of the Christian system. As the Dragon symbolized the Pagan imperial dominion of Rome to the time of its overthrow by Constantine, so in the present symbol of the Wild Beast we have depicted the ROMAN PAPACY; to which the Dragon gave up "his power, and his seat, and great authority." As the seventeenth chapter describes the Beast as emanating from the abyss or "bottomless pit," thereby showing the true infernal origin from which it took its rise; so here the monster is regarded in respect of the apparent circumstance which conduced to the establishment of its dominion, viz., "the sea," or the Arian and Gothic flood, which history proves to have mainly contributed to the confirmation and support of the Papal supremacy.

There is a second mystical signification assigned to the "seven heads" of the Beast by the interpreting angel in Rev. 17, viz., the seven hills on which the woman carried by the Beast was seated. And since the woman is there designated as "the city which at that time ruled over the kings of the earth," these hills could only mean the far-famed seven hills of Rome. In this we have consequently a corroboration of the sense in which we apply this symbol of the Beast to the Pontificate of Rome.

But a further point which we have to notice in the description is the mention of "the ten horns" of the Beast, representing, as we are taught in chap. 17:12, certain kings or kingdoms of the Western Roman territory, which were to be established about the same time that the Beast should enter on his dominion. Looking at the state of Roman Christendom – after that the Western Empire had been extinguished by Odoacer, and when, in the subsidence of the Gothic flood, there began the reappearance of order and settled government, ere the irruption of the Greek imperial army had again unsettled that arrangement by the setting up the Greek Exarchate of Ravenna, – we observe ten distinct kingdoms, into which the Western Roman Empire had been resolved about the period A.D. 532. These ten kingdoms were the Anglo-Saxons, the Franks, the Allemans, the Burgundians, the Visigoths, the Suevi, the Vandals, the Ostrogoths, the Bavarians, and the Lombards. These Gothic kingdoms were governed by their own several kings, who, in token of distinct sovereignty, had assumed the diadem, with which each of the ten horns appear crowned in the Apocalyptic vision. But while each claimed a distinct political independence, they were all avowedly subservient to one Head, which henceforth continued to arrogate universal supremacy, – the POPE OF ROME. Such is Müller's testimony: – "With the exception of the Papacy they had no point of union." Thus, as we see the deadly wounding of the last Pagan head

of the old Roman monster begun by Constantine and perfected by Theodosius, – when the latter had in full senate proposed, “Whether the worship of Jupiter or that of Christ should be the religion of the Romans; and on a regular division Jupiter was condemned and degraded by a large majority;” – and further, when the old imperial headship of the seven-billed city was extinguished by the Gothic sword, – so do we also see the “deadly wound healed,” and the “vital principle restored,” when “in the Pontificate Rome received a second birth, and all nations venerated the Pope as they before obeyed the Emperors.”

We have now to observe how fully the character ascribed in vision to this Apocalyptic Beast has been exhibited in the pretensions and actions of the Papal Antichrist.

[1] “There was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies.” This was surely fulfilled when the Pope assumed the title of Christ’s Vicar on earth. For let us see what it involved. Could he who represented the Judge of all be amenable to man’s judgment? No, he was above all law. And this privilege was claimed from an early date. At a Council convened by Theodoric at Rome, A.D. 501, to consider certain charges against Pope Symmachus, it was ruled that the Council was incompetent, the accused being above all jurisdiction. Another synod, soon after, at which Symmachus presided, solemnly adopted the assertion that “the Pope was JUDGE IN PLACE OF GOD, and could himself be judged by no one.” The claim was maintained by the Popes of succeeding ages.

Again, could he regard the kings of the earth as his equals? Was he not head over all, – supreme? It was his to make and unmake kings. So Zachary proceeded to depose the race of Clovis of France, and Gregory VII. took the Empire from Henry and gave it to Rodolphus. The Pope’s exaltation above all royal majesty was said to be “as the sun above the moon;” and princes were expressly required to kiss his feet. Perhaps the most remarkable instance of arrogance was that of Celestine III., A.D. 1191, at the coronation of the Emperor, Henry VI. “The Lord Pope sat in the pontifical chair, holding the golden imperial crown between his feet, and the Emperor bending his head received the crown, and the Empress likewise, from the feet of the Lord Pope. But the Lord Pope instantly struck with his foot the Emperor’s crown, and cast it upon the ground.” Nor was our own country exempt from like assumption. “Is not the king of England my bond-slave?” was the demand of Innocent IV. And in this spirit one Pope pronounced the deposition of King John, and another Pope fulminated his bull against Elizabeth, declaring, “God hath set me as prince over all nations, to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to build.” The very promises of millennial glory made to Christ were cited as made to this king of kings, – “All kings shall fall down before him, all nations do him service.”

As the impersonator of Christ, every prerogative, office, and title of the Lord was appropriated by the Pope. Julius, in his bull to the fifth Lateran Council, styles himself the good shepherd. Paschal II. is named the door of the sheep. Was Christ “the Truth”? The canon law asserts the Pontiff’s power of deciding contrary to both New and Old Testament decisions, “Holy-Scriptures deriving their authority from him.” Was Christ “the Holy One”? so

was his Holiness pronounced by the Council of Rome to be "pure from all sin." Was Christ the "Husband of the Church"? The marriage-ring of his inauguration declared him the same, even, as Bellarmine explains, "to the exclusion of Christ." As "the Lamb of God," he "takes away sin" by the efficacy of his Papal indulgence; even, as was asserted by Tetzels, "surpassing Christ in the range of his mercy." As with the power of "all judgment committed to him," he by his anathema doomed rebels to hell. Angels were by Clement VI. "commanded" to do his bidding; and saints, canonized at his will, were made objects for living men to "venerate and adore."

Nor did these "great things and blasphemies" stop here. The sacred name of God must be adopted by this Antichrist. Not only were men taught to style him "our Lord God the Pope," – not only was an inscription permitted to be graven on the gate of Tolentino, "To Paul III., the best and greatest God on earth;" but Papal decrees expressly argued his right to be called God, – "God, as being the vicar of God." And so the Papal casuists, – "The honor which is due to Christ, inasmuch as he is God, is due to the Pope." Repeatedly did the Roman Pontiff suffer himself to be addressed by the name of the Lord's Christ; and men were specially required to "bow at his name, as at the name of Jesus;" while the canon law enacted, and Pope Sixtus distinctly affirmed, that "to bring an accusation against the Pope was to sin against the Holy Ghost." Such was, and such still is, the arrogant claims of the Roman Antichrist. Behold him on the day of his consecration sitting upon the high altar of St. Peter's to receive the adoration of mankind, – "sitting in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." Verily, great was the mystery of godliness, – GOD HUMBLING HIMSELF TO BE MAN! Great, too, is the mystery of iniquity, – MAN, SINFUL MAN, EXALTING HIMSELF TO BE AS GOD!

[2] But will men yield submission to pretensions so arrogant and impious? 'Even so; for it was written, "These kings have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast." And again, "All the world wondered after the beast;" and "power was given him over all kindreds and nations." Already in the eighth century this was Gregory II.'s boast to the Greek emperor, "All the kings of the West reverence the Pope as a God on earth." Nor was this boasting vain; for when Pope Stephen entered France, Pepin and his subjects received him, we read, "as a Divinity." Kings and even emperors bound themselves by their coronation oath to "be submissive to the Pope and Roman Church." They took from his hands their crowns, and at his word again resigned them. They hold his stirrup, and lead his palfrey. They prostrate themselves, and kiss the foot he offers. Who has not heard how the Emperor, Henry IV., was driven by Papal interdict to humble himself, barefoot and in sackcloth, three wintry days and nights, without the city gates, till the proud Hildebrand relented? And as with princes so with people. It was ruled by the bull of Boniface VIII., "That it was essential to the salvation of every human being to be subject to the Roman Pontiff." And so men believed. The people, said Gerson, "think of the Pope as the one God, who has all power in heaven and earth." Look at the thronging thousands on pilgrimage to Rome seeking his salvation. See the hard earnings of the poor given in the purchase of his indulgences. Behold the Sicilian ambassadors prostrate at his feet, crying to him, "Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world!"

[3] But what of those excepted from this prostration, – “the remnant of the woman’s seed,” God’s “tabernacle,” “whose names are written in the true Lamb’s book of life”? It was given to the Beast to make war with the saints and to overcome them. How perseveringly, how relentlessly and cruelly, this part of his character he has sustained, the history of the Inquisition, – of the crusades against Christ’s witnesses, – of the murder of French Huguenots on St. Bartholomew’s Day, – of the many martyrdoms too faithfully recorded, may tell in part, for these were done in public; but who can tell the many many heart-rending scenes of sorrow, suffering, and shame which have embittered private life, shut out from human eye and sympathy, but recorded by Him who is and ever has been the grand object of the hatred and wrath of ANTICHRIST? “Shall he not visit for these things?” “Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.” “If any man have an ear, let him hear.” For this is the word of the Lord concerning the Beast and his accomplices: “He that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword.” “He goeth into perdition,” – “cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.”

[II] A second wild beast appears, – a lamb-like beast; subordinate to the former, but exercising his authority, and by force and by fraud causing men to worship the first beast. The symbol was applied by our Lord himself to false teachers. “Beware of them who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravaging wolves.” And it is expressly so termed in this revelation, when the lamb-like beast is also called “the false prophet.” The figuration denotes the PAPAL CLERGY, a body deserving a distinct place in prophecy, as having claimed for themselves a distinction of class from the laity, united under the Pope in a corporate character, and using all their influence toward the support of the Papal Antichrist.

Let us view the ecclesiastical relations of the Pope and the priesthood as these originated. Till the close of the second century the Churches were independent of each other, and under the government of their proper bishops, being of equal rank and authority. But about that time the bishops of each province began to assemble together in councils to discuss matters of doctrine and for the well-ordering of their respective Churches. A president, for the sake of order, was chosen, who was generally the bishop of the metropolis or chief city. This distinction, at first but temporary, became a settled rule in the Church; and a canon was enacted that “nothing should be done without the cognizance of the metropolitan bishop.” Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria were capital cities; and so to their bishops, and specially to that of Rome, superior rank and privileges were attached.

On the union of Church and State taking place in the Roman Empire, their privileges were enlarged and confirmed. These bishops were called patriarchs. The Roman emperors ere long ordained that the clergy should submit to their immediate superiors; but in case of disputes, the Bishop of Rome should decide between the parties (A.D. 398). These encroachments the clergy resisted again and again, but imperial decrees silenced their resistance. At length they became regularly subjected to their own bishops; the bishops to the metropolitan bishop; and the metropolitan to the Pope, or Peter himself – the head, as they assert, of the Romish Church.

About the close of the sixth century the rule was further enforced that no

metropolitan bishop might exercise his functions without the Pope's license; and at the beginning of the eighth, the German and Frank clergy were induced to make a vow of implicit obedience to the Sec of Rome. The custom of making this vow soon became general amongst the Western clergy, insomuch that, up to the Reformation, the common style of a bishop was bishop by the grace (not of God, but) of the Apostolic See. The subordinate priesthood thenceforth acted as his agents for evil, – whether in spreading false doctrines, “having horns, harmless apparently, like a lamb;” or in persecuting the Church, “speaking like a dragon.” All the Papal injuries done to the children of God were inflicted by their influence or agency. By them were conducted the lying miracles of Popery, such as transubstantiation, and the many marvelous cures professed to be wrought by relics, etc. By them were evoked the judgments of Heaven against such as were bold enough to gainsay or oppose them. In all “the deceivableness of unrighteousness” they were helpers – “deceiving and being deceived.”

The language of the prophecy – their “making fire to descend from heaven,” is adapted from Judaic precedents; and as the circumstance of old indicated either the divine favor or wrath, according as it fell upon the sacrifice or upon the persons of men, so does it imply the assertion by the Romish priesthood of a power both of conciliating the Majesty of heaven by a propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead, and of hurling into eternal punishment by their excommunications. Never was there seen a more extraordinary instance of the latter than when the Papal interdict fell upon a whole kingdom; and when the entire body of clergy united to give effect to the sentence by causing the churches to be closed, the services to be stopped, the sacraments unadministered, and the dead unburied!

The second Beast, it is written, “caused that the inhabitants of the earth should worship the first Beast.” “The monks,” writes Mosheim, “who, from their supposed sanctity, had the greatest influence with the multitude, held up the Pope to their veneration even as a God.” “The Jesuits,” says he again, “have turned the Roman Pontiff into a terrestrial deity, and put him almost on an equal footing with the Saviour.” All ecclesiastical history testifies to the same.

[III] A third prophetic symbol introduced is that of “the image of the Beast;” which, taking the word image in the signification of a representation of any person or thing, we may properly apply to the PAPAL GENERAL COUNCILS – the professed representatives of Roman Christendom. These, in a figurative sense, fulfilled the several things stated in the vision. Originating with the Pope as the head of the clergy, they were summoned by the instrumentality and at the call of the priesthood (the Lamb-like Beast); who thus gave effect to the Papal orders, making the Council to or for him. It was from the priesthood also that the Council derived its voice – the Laity, though present, not being allowed to vote. And what the Councils decided in their canons they were said to speak; and for their decisions they required the strictest obedience and reiteration. from the Christian world. Though decreeing oftentimes contrary to the Word and will of God, they anathematized all who refused implicit submission. The extirpation of heretics was a professed object for which they were usually assembled, and the sentence of

death. was often directly pronounced and enforced by them. Thus the third Lateran Council proceeded against the Publicani; and the fourth and fifth stirred up crusades against similar alleged heretics. Thus also the Councils of Constance and of Basle pronounced sentence on the martyrs Huss and Jerome; and even in that of Trent in the sixteenth century, the same power was asserted, and all heresy similarly denounced. Distinctly also was it enacted by these Councils – especially by the Lateran – that no man should harbor or traffic with such as were judged guilty of heresy. The Synod of Tours in the like prohibition applies the very words buying and selling; the Papal mark of subjection being required in order to the interchange of the commonest acts of social kindness. How rigidly the Romish clergy have urged the execution of this system of exclusive dealing whenever they have deemed it requisite or found the opportunity is notorious. Ireland, even in our own day, presents many a sad illustration.

Two points only remain to be noticed – the “number” of the Beast, and the commencement of the 1260 years of his foretold duration. Of the many solutions proposed for “the number 666,” that which (following Irenaeus) applies it to the word Lateinos (the Latin man), expressed in Greek numerals, appears the true one. And when we remember how the Romanists “Latinize everything, mass, prayers, hymns, litanies, canons, bulls, yea, even the Scriptures,” we shall see a peculiar appropriateness in the use of the word to characterize the Beast – the Papal Man of Sin.

With respect to the other point, we adopt the principle of taking “days” in prophetic language to denote years: and we would mark as the primary commencement of the Papal Beast’s years of supremacy the date A.D. 529 and three following years, wherein we have combined the historic facts, – 1st, of Christendom emerging from the Gothic flood in the form often kingdoms; secondly, of the Roman Pontiff’s assumption of the blasphemous title of Christ’s Vicar, or Antichrist; thirdly, of the imperial confirmation to the fullest extent of the Pope’s supremacy. A secondary commencement may be found, A.D. 604-608, in the decree of the Emperor Phocas acknowledging the Papal primacy; in the gift by him of the Pantheon for the worship of the Virgin Mary and all the martyrs; in the completion of the tenth or Lombard kingdom. We need scarcely say that the consideration of a primary and a secondary commencement will involve that of similar double termination to this predicted period of 1260 years.

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