

The Third Angel's Message. What Is It, as to the Beast and His Image?

WHAT is the Beast? What is the Image of the Beast? These two powers are described in the thirteenth chapter of Revelation. But since the thirteenth chapter is but the complement of the twelfth, the twelfth must be considered in connection with the thirteenth, in order to obtain the best view of what is the Beast and what his Image.

At the opening of the twelfth chapter there is seen a woman clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars, who brings forth "a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne." That "man child" is Jesus Christ. Ps. 2:9; Rev. 19:15, 16; Luke 24:50, 51; Mark 16:9; Acts 7:55; Heb. 8:1.

This woman is nothing else than the church of God, in her beauty "fair as the moon," and "clear as the sun." And there stood before the woman a great red dragon "to devour her child as soon as it was born." This dragon, in his own proper person, is declared to be "that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan." But Satan in this world works through instrumentalities. His instrumentalities are men, and, chiefly, combinations of men in world-powers. What power was it, then, which was Satan's instrument in his endeavors to destroy Christ as soon as he was born?—Herod. But who was Herod?—He was more than simply a person: he was king of the Jews and of Judea. And yet he was more than that; for he became king only by a decree of the Roman Senate, upon the special advocacy of Octavius Cæsar and Mark Anthony. And he could not have been king for a day in Judea, unless he had been supported by the mighty power of Rome. Thus Herod, in his place of power, was only the creature, the representative, of the Roman power. Therefore the Roman power in the world was the instrumentality that Satan used in his endeavors to destroy Christ as soon as he was born.

However, that attempt failed. Yet Satan never rested until he had, so far as possible, and so far as himself and this world were concerned, destroyed the Lord Jesus—until he had crucified him upon the cross, and had buried him out of the world, in a tomb sealed with the Roman seal. And it was by the Roman power that he did all this—through Pilate, the Roman governor. But even in this he failed; because from death and the sealed Roman tomb, the man child "was caught up unto God, and to his throne."

Then Satan turned all his endeavors, through his world instrumentality,—the Roman Empire,—against the woman, which is the church, and "persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child." This he did while that Roman power continued. And all the while that that power did continue, it was so identified with Satan, who is pre-eminently the dragon, and so entirely imbued with his spirit, that this power itself is called the dragon. Rev. 12:3, 4. But Rome in that phase, pagan Rome, fell: that power in that form passed away, and it was succeeded by that which, in the book of Revelation, is called "the beast."

Accordingly, it is written: "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, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. 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. 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. And they worshiped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. 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." Rev. 13:1-8.

Notice that the dragon gave to this beast, which is "*the* beast," his power, and his seat, and great authority. Now it is true that the *power* of pagan Rome; and the *seat* of pagan Rome, which was the city of Rome; and the *authority* of pagan Rome, passed over to this power, which succeeded pagan Rome. And more than this is true: it is true that the dragon pre-eminently is Satan; and in this it is true that Satan gave to the Beast his power, and his seat, and great authority. Another passage in the book of Revelation, referring to Rome, speaks of it as "where Satan's seat is." Rev. 2:13.

And thus the power, the seat, and the authority of the Beast, are all received from Satan; even as the Beast received the power, and the seat, and the authority that had belonged to the phase of Rome that had passed away.

And this new phase of Rome, in its world-wide power, Satan still used in his persecution of the woman. "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent." Rev. 12:14. And the Beast, the great world instrument of that old serpent that is the devil and Satan, made "war with the saints," and overcame them, and "power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations." And this power was given him to continue forty and two months—"a time, and times, and half a time," "a thousand two hundred and threescore days." Rev. 13:7; 12:6, 14.

This period of time began in A.D. 538, and, continuing twelve hundred and sixty years, reached to A.D. 1798. It began in A.D. 538 because in that year was rooted out the last of the three powers that were plucked up by the roots, before the establishment of the papacy, not as a church, but as a world-power; and ended in 1798, when the papacy was led into captivity, by the capture and imprisonment of Pope Pius VI, under order of the French directory.

Then comes in the rise and the description of the Image of the Beast, as it is written: "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. 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. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. 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. 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: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." Rev. 13:11-17.

And this power which is here called "the image of the beast," speaking as a dragon, and using all the power of the first beast, is, in its turn and place, used by Satan, "the great dragon," still in persecuting the church; as it is written: "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Rev. 12:17.

And this brings us definitely to the Third Angel's Message; because the Image of the Beast compels all to worship the Beast, and to receive his mark. And the Third Angel's Message warns all against worshipping the Beast and his Image, and against receiving his mark. Satan uses these powers in his wrath against the remnant of the church, which particularly stirs his wrath by *keeping the commandments of God*, and having *the testimony of Jesus Christ*. And the Third Angel's Message, in saving men from the worship of the Beast and his Image, calls them all to the *keeping of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus*. This is all done in the time of the remnant of the church, which is the last of the church. And the Third Angel's Message closes with the coming of the Lord, and the victory over the Beast and his Image by those who have received the Third Angel's Message.

Now, from the description given in the Word, anyone can see that the Beast is the Papacy; and, in the nature of things, the Image of the Beast is the Image of the Papacy. What, then, in a word, is the Papacy?—It is a union of the church and the state, with the church supreme, and using the power of the state for her despotic and persecuting purposes. And the Beast was formed by the union of the fallen church with the mighty world-power of Rome. In the nature of things, therefore, the *Image* of the Beast would be another great and notable instance of the fallen church uniting with a mighty world-power, and using that power of the state in the likeness of the Papacy.

Where, then, in the world must the Image of the Beast be found? Notice that the Image of the Beast must be "made;" for it was said "to them that dwell on the earth, that they should *make* an image to the beast." And the only place where such a thing could

be *made*, would have to be in a nation where, at first, there was no such thing. And since the Beast is the union of church and state, and the Image of the Beast must be "made" in a nation where, to begin with, there was no such thing, it is perfectly plain that the Image of the Beast must arise—must be "made"—in a nation where, to begin with, there was no union of church and state. And this order of things out of which comes the Image of the Beast, was seen "coming up" at the end of the twelve hundred and sixty years, at the time when the Beast was led into "captivity."

Where, then, in 1798, could there be found on the earth any nation coming up, in which there was no union of church and state? Indeed, where at any time in the history of the world in the Christian era has there been a nation planted, in which there was no union of church and state?—In the United States, and in this alone, of all places on the earth. In 1789 this nation was fully formed and established, in order, under its Constitution. On March 4, 1797, ended the second administration of the nation's first president, and occurred the inauguration of its second president. Thus, in 1798, this nation could be seen "coming up" to its place among the powers of the earth, since, by that time, it had become firmly established, and was moving quietly, safely, and steadily forward, in a national career.

And it was *without a union of church and state*. The total separation of religion and the state was one of the fundamental principles in the establishment of the nation, and was the just pride of the nation before the world. And this was the only nation on the earth at that time, or in all history since the book of Revelation was written, that did so begin, and that had no union of church and state.

Accordingly, this nation is the place, and the only one in the world, where it could be properly be said "to them that dwell on the earth" that they should "make" a union of church and state—"an Image of the Beast." Consequently, in the United States, in connection with this power as a nation, is *the place* where the Image of the Beast *must be found*. This is so certain that in no other nation are the specifications of this scripture met at all, while in this nation they are fully met. For though this can not be further dwelt upon just now, *it is the truth*, as will abundantly appear, that *the Image of the Beast is already nearly, full-formed in this nation*.

Thus, the twelfth chapter of Revelation is a sketch of the powers used by Satan against the church of God, from the first advent of Christ unto his second. These powers are three: the Dragon, the Beast, and the Image of the Beast. And these three are pagan Rome, papal Rome, and American Rome.

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