



LESSON #12 - “THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST”

Introduction

An image is a **likeness**. What was the first beast like? She **united church and state** and used the power of the **state to punish dissenters**. This will be a **repetition** of what happened with Jesus and what happened with **John Hus** during the **Middle Ages**.

In order to know what the image is like we must first find out what the **original was like** because the image **is a replica** of the first beast. **What characterized the Roman Catholic papacy during its heyday?**

We have interpreted the **two horns like a lamb** (one nation composed of **two separate kingdoms**—church and state) but what is meant by the **voice of the dragon**?

The Identity of the Dragon

An important question is this: What is meant by the fact that the beast with lamblike horns speaks like a dragon? In order to answer this question we must understand **what the dragon represents**.

In the book of Revelation the dragon primarily represents **Satan (Revelation 12:7-9)** but it also symbolizes **Rome** in its various stages.

It was Satan who stood next to the woman to **devour her child** as soon as he was born but Satan operated through the instrumentality of Herod, a ruler of the Roman Empire (**Revelation 12:3 [Daniel 7:23] Matthew 2:16**).

When Imperial Rome disintegrated, we are told that it gave its seat, its **power and its great authority to the beast (Revelation 13:2)**. That is to say, the papacy continued to exercise the powers of the dragon—Satan and Rome.

Thus when we are told in **Revelation 13:11** that the beast from the earth will speak like a dragon it must mean that this beast will not only be a spokesman for Satan but also for Rome. And so, the **dragon**, the **sea beast** and the **land beast** are all agents of Satan who operates through Rome.

This phenomenon of Satan operating through Rome can be clearly discerned in **Revelation 12**. It was the dragon—Satan through pagan Rome—who **attempted to kill the child (Revelation 12:1-5)**. It was the dragon—Satan through papal Rome—who **persecuted the woman for 1260 years (Revelation 12:6, 13-15)** and it **will be the dragon**—Satan through resurrected papal Rome with the aid of apostate Protestantism—who will persecute the remnant of the woman's seed when the deadly wound is healed (**Revelation 12:17**). This is the reason why **Revelation 13:4** says that the world will not only **worship the beast** but it will also **worship the dragon** from whom the beast received its power, its throne and great authority!

A Unique Beast

In Bible prophecy each successive beast **conquered and destroyed** the previous one. But this lamb horned beast is different. It is the **only beast in prophecy** that actually **helps the previous beast** to recover its lost power. Furthermore, this is the only time in Bible prophecy where we are explicitly told **what kind of horns** a beast had on its head—lamblike horns.

What two kingdoms did Jesus sanction? Matthew 22:15-21

Much is being said today in Evangelical circles about the need for Americans to be **patriotic** and **Christian**. It is assumed that in order to be both, the United States **government must support religion** through things like **vouchers, school prayer, federal funds for charitable choice, religious displays on public property** and the like.

But as we have already seen, to separate the affairs of the church and the state is **Christian** because it is what Christ taught. It is also **patriotic** because it is in **harmony with the founding documents** of the nation. To join church and state would thus be **antichristian** (against what Christ taught) and **unpatriotic** (against what the founding fathers of America taught).

The Establishment Clause in Daniel 3

The **background to Revelation 13:11-18** is found in **Daniel 3**—**beast, image, worship, kill dissenters**.

Review the **first amendment** and how it separates church and state.

Daniel 3 and 6 are vivid illustrations of what happens when the **first two clauses** of the First Amendment are violated—the result is persecution and the risk of losing the ultimate civil right, life itself.

Jeremiah 27:4-8: God expected everyone to obey the king and if not God would punish them.

“And command them to say to their masters, "Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel — thus you shall say to your masters: ⁵ 'I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are on the

ground, by My great power and by My outstretched arm, and have given it to whom it seemed proper to Me. ⁶ And now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant; and the beasts of the field I have also given him to serve him. ⁷ So all nations shall serve him and his son and his son's son, until the time of his land comes; and then many nations and great kings shall make him serve them. ⁸ And it shall be, that the nation and kingdom which will not serve Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and which will not put its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation I will punish,' says the Lord, 'with the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand.'"

In Daniel 3 we find king Nebuchadnezzar attempting to **establish religion**. He **raised an image** and **commanded** all **nations, tongues and peoples** to worship it. Those who refused to comply with this **religious decree enforced by the state** were to be **deprived of the ultimate civil right**—life itself! Thus when the king attempted to **establish** religion this automatically led to **persecution** against those who failed to comply.

The three young men are shown **elsewhere in the book** to be **respectful of the king's legitimate civil commands** but when the king **crossed the line** between civil law and religious duty they drew a **line in the sand**. When the civil power overstepped its legitimate bounds, the three young men **chose to obey God** rather than man and as a result they were condemned to the **fiery furnace**.

In the final instance the three young men had no human court of appeal and it looked like the king had all the cards. In fact the king defiantly raised his hand to heaven and roared: "*And what god will be able to deliver you from my hand?*" **Daniel 3:...15**

But God was actually the final court of appeal and He personally intervened and delivered them in spectacular fashion.

The Free Exercise Clause in Daniel 6

God placed Darius to rule in civil affairs but he gave a religious decree forbidding the free exercise of religion.

The story of **Daniel 6** is similar yet different. In **Daniel 6** we see what happens when the **free exercise** clause of the first amendment is violated. You see, in **Daniel 6** king Darius was **not establishing** a religious observance but rather **forbidding the free exercise** to pray to whomever his subjects wished.

The law forbidding the free exercise of religion led to the **persecution** of Daniel who insisted on worshiping God according to the dictates of his own conscience.

Daniel was **loved by the king** and is seen elsewhere in the book as a **loyal subject** to all the **legitimate civil laws** of the Medes and Persians. He practiced **civil disobedience** only when the king overstepped his legitimate bounds. When the king **crossed the line** between civil and religious matters, Daniel drew a line in the sand and commended his case to God.

On this occasion all the power once again seemed to be in the hands of the **enemies of Daniel**. The law of the Medes and Persians could not be **changed or revoked** so it appeared that Daniel was **doomed to destruction**. But as in the case of Daniel's three friends, **God was the final court of appeal** and He intervened in spectacular fashion to deliver his servant from the lions and from his enemies.

Significantly, neither **Nebuchadnezzar nor Darius** got the point that God was trying to teach them. After God delivered the three young men from the furnace, Nebuchadnezzar **threatened that anyone who said anything against the God of Daniel** would be cut in pieces and their houses razed to the ground. He didn't yet understand that **God does not force** people to embrace true religion any more than the king attempted to force people to practice false worship. And after Daniel was delivered from the lion's den, King Darius made a decree that everyone was obligated to **tremble and fear before the God of Daniel**. The king didn't get the point. People **can't be forced to tremble and fear** before God—this must come from a heart that loves Him.

The First Amendment in the End Time

Someone might ask: What does all this have to do with the end time?

The United States will eventually violate **both the establishment clause and the free exercise clause** of the first amendment. It will not only **compel all to keep Sunday** thus establishing religion but it will also **forbid the observance of the Sabbath** thus forbidding the free exercise thereof.

When this time comes, the apostasy that **was begun** when the papacy **changed the day** of worship from Sabbath to Sunday during the 1260 years (**Daniel 7:25**) will be **completed** by apostate Protestantism at the end of time when it enforces the mark of the beast.

Sadly the process will have come full circle. Just as the **papacy destroyed the apostolic view of church and state**, so apostate Protestantism will **overturn the view of church and state that was established and taught the founding fathers of the United States**.

Aren't Sunday Laws Unconstitutional?

The key question is this: Wouldn't the establishment of **Sunday by Congress** as the **national day of rest** be a **clear violation** of the **establishment clause** of the first amendment and thus unconstitutional?

And a related question: Wouldn't a congressional law **forbidding the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath** also be in violation of the **free exercise clause** of the first amendment and thus also **unconstitutional**? The answer of any rational person to these questions would be yes.

I am quite sure that when that time comes the constitutionality of such laws **will be questioned**. According to Bible prophecy the appeal will fall upon **deaf ears**—there will be no redress of grievances.

We are not to expect the **eradication of the first amendment** from the Constitution. What will most likely happen is that the **Supreme Court** will declare in a time of dire **national emergency**, that **unconstitutional laws are constitutional**. After all, we are not told that the **two lamblike horns** will be **broken** before the land beast speaks as a dragon. It will **still have the two horns** like a lamb while it speaks **like a dragon**.

Three Branches of Government

Our system of government like many other nations has three branches: The **executive**, the **legislative** and the **judicial**. As we know, the legislative branch **writes the laws**, the executive branch **enforces** the laws and the judicial **interprets** them. I frequently ask people: Which of these three branches is the **most powerful**? The answer is usually, the executive. But actually the most powerful branch of government in the United States is the judicial, **particularly the Supreme Court**. And why is this? The answer is quite simple. Congress **can write a bill and it becomes law**. But if the law is appealed and the Supreme Court declares it unconstitutional the bill will not remain law. The flip side is also true: Congress could draw up a bill that is unconstitutional but if the Supreme Court declares it constitutional it would be enforced.

If you don't think that the Supreme Court is the most powerful branch of government, just remember what happened in the **2000 election**. After many appeals to various courts of the land, the case was taken to the Supreme Court and when the Supreme Court spoke, **George W. Bush** became president and there was no more discussion.

There are now **five Roman Catholics** on the Supreme Court of the United States: Chief Justice **John Roberts** and justices **Antonin Scalia**, **Clarence Thomas**, **Anthony Kennedy** and **Samuel Alito**. There is nothing to indicate that the trend of naming Roman Catholics to the Court will end anytime soon. The more liberal judges on the Court are getting up in years and most likely they will be replaced in the next eight years. Can we fathom what it will be like to have seven or more Roman Catholics on the Supreme Court?

Some Adventists say that this **scenario is alarmist** or sensationalist, that the Supreme Court **justices are patriotic** Americans and that they would never return the United States to the terrors of the dark ages.

Many Protestants today are **fascinated by the papacy**. They point to the papacy's **fight for human rights, for the poor**, for life, **for morality**, for **conventional marriage**. They believe that the papacy **has changed** and therefore there is nothing to fear. Yet the papacy has not repudiated any of its dogmas nor has it laid aside its aspirations to **global political power**. She is harmless when she is helpless:

*“It is a part of her [the papacy’s] policy to assume the character which will best accomplish her purpose; but beneath the variable appearance of the chameleon she conceals the invariable venom of the serpent.” **The Great Controversy**, p. 571*

Then the United States will have formed a **mirror reflection** [image] of the papacy **in its honor**. The sea beast (the papacy) was characterized by a **church that employed the power of the state to punish dissenters** and so it will be with the land beast that makes the image.

*“In order for the United States to form an image of the beast, the religious power must so **control the civil government** that the authority of the state will also be **employed by the church** to accomplish her own ends.” **The Great Controversy**, p. 443*

*“Rome is aiming to **re-establish** her power, to **recover her lost supremacy**. Let the principle once be established in the United States that the **church may employ or control the power of the state**; that religious observances may be **enforced by secular laws**; in short, that the **authority of church and state** is to dominate the conscience and the **triumph of Rome** in this country is assured.” **The Great Controversy**, p. 581*

*“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 Great Controversy**, p. 445*

We are told in **Revelation 13:11** that the land beast will speak **like a dragon, that is, like Rome**.

The question is: **How does the United States speak?** The answer is that it speaks through its **duly elected representatives** in Congress.

The first beast of **Revelation 13** (the papacy) thought to change the law of God by changing the day of worship from Sabbath to Sunday. The second beast will **enforce this change** by using the **sword of the state**. The **whole world** will then be led to follow the example of the United States.

The issue will then be **global survival**. The argument will be used: “It is better for these dissenters to die than for the United States to perish.” This argument will appear **patriotic** and **Christian** but it will prove to be just the opposite. Like the **Jewish nation**, national apostasy will be followed speedily by national ruin.

Recent decades have seen a **growing intimacy** between the **Protestant churches** in America and the Roman Catholic papacy. Enthusiastic cooperation on **social issues** such as **abortion, gay marriage and judicial activism** has given them a **common agenda**. Cooperation in the **election of conservative candidates** has given them a **common cause**. Prominent Catholic and Evangelical leaders signed the document, **Evangelicals and Catholics Together** and Lutherans and Catholics signed the **Joint Declaration on Righteousness by Faith**. Most Protestants are

oblivious to the dangers presented by the papacy because they have **forgotten history**. And those who fail to learn from the **mistakes of history** are bound to repeat them.

And on a **state level**, the United States government has shown a **growing infatuation** with the papacy. From **Ronald Reagan and John Paul II** teaming up to overthrow the former **Soviet Union**, to establishing **diplomatic relations** with the **Holy See**, to Congress giving John Paul II the **Congressional Medal of Freedom**, to **three presidents, a president's wife and a Secretary of State** bowing before the casket of John Paul II in Rome, to the **pope visiting the White House**, there has been an **incredible miasma of historical amnesia** about the dangers presented by the papacy.

A Repetition of History

We have been warned that **unscrupulous and self-serving legislators, like Pilate**, in order to **retain their political influence**, will give in to the popular demand for a national Sunday law and will condemn God's faithful children to death

When Pilate offered to release **Jesus in place of Barabbas** the populace clamored for Pilate rather to release Barabbas. And who instigated the multitudes to clamor for the release of Barabbas? Notice the answer in **Mark 15:11**:

*"But the **chief priests stirred up the crowd**, so that he should rather release Barabbas to them."*

It was the ministers of that day and age who instigated the **multitudes to cry out for the blood of Jesus**. The initiative came from the **religious leaders, not from the state or from the populace**. Are we to expect anything less in the end time?

*"Those who honor the Bible Sabbath will be denounced as **enemies of law and order**, as breaking down the moral restraints of society, causing anarchy and corruption, and calling down the judgments of God upon the earth. Their conscientious scruples will be pronounced obstinacy, stubbornness, and **contempt of authority**. They will be accused of **disaffection toward the government**. Ministers who deny the obligation of the divine law will present from the pulpit the duty of **yielding obedience to the civil authorities as ordained of God**. In legislative halls and **courts of justice**, commandment keepers will be misrepresented and condemned. A false coloring will be given to their words; the worst construction will be put upon their motives."*
The Great Controversy, p. 592

Lessons from the Earliest Church

When the early church lost the Spirit and power of the true gospel, the **moral condition of the empire quickly deteriorated**. The church leaders seeing that morality was at such a low point linked up with **the state to force people** to be moral and the result was the papacy which used the **sword of the civil power to punish dissenters**.

The prophecy of **Revelation 13:11-18** indicates that **Protestantism in the United States** will make an **image of this**. Protestantism has **lost the Spirit and power of the true gospel**; it has preached for so long that we **not under law but under grace** that people have come to believe that Christians are not required to keep the law.

Protestantism's Power Failure

As Protestants have seen things going from **bad to worse** in the United States they have appealed to the **arm of civil power to fix what they themselves have created**. They blame what they call a secular humanist government for the steady decline in morality.

Protestants have come to believe that by having "*In God we Trust*" on our currency, or by reciting "*one nation under God*" in the Pledge of Allegiance, or by **mandating prayer in public schools**, or by **posting the Ten Commandments** in our courtrooms or by putting **Christmas displays** on public property, or by **enacting a constitutional amendment against gay marriage**, the nation will be **brought back to God**.

But Protestantism has forgotten that its **real source of power is found in preaching the unadulterated Word of God through the ministration of the Holy Spirit**. Instead, Protestantism has emphasized a **prosperity gospel, a gospel of signs and wonders, a gospel of psychological self-help** and a gospel of **political involvement**. It has thus lost its power and sees **government as the way to solve the problem** they themselves have created.

When church and state are fully joined together in unholy matrimony, and I believe this is transpiring before our very eyes, then the only and final court of appeal for the saints will be God.

The Perspective of Revelation 17

Revelation 17 presents a vivid portrayal of the time when the prophecy of **Revelation 13:11-18** will be fulfilled. The chapter portrays a **harlot woman** who sits on **many waters**, that is, she rules over **nations, multitudes, tongues and people (vs.17:1, 15)**. She fornicates with the **kings of the earth (vs.17:2)**. She is garbed in **purple and scarlet** and is decked with **gold, precious stones and pearls (vs.17:4)**. The kings of the world **gladly drink her fermented wine** of false doctrine (**vs.17:2**). She has **daughters** that were born from her at some point because she is called the 'mother of harlots' (**vs.17:5**). Along with her daughters **she sheds the blood** of the saints and the martyrs of Jesus (**vs.17:6**).

For a while the kings of the earth will do the bidding of the mother and her daughters. But at the **climactic moment** when God's faithful people are about to be slain, the kings of the earth will turn on her for we are told that they "will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire." (**Revelation 7:16, 17**). Thus, the sword of the kings that she used to slay the saints will be used by the kings to slay her.

Ellen White describes this **climactic moment** when the **political rulers and the multitudes** will withdraw their support from their religious leaders:

*"The people see that they have been deluded. They accuse one another of having led them to destruction; but all unite in heaping their **bitterest condemnation upon the ministers. Unfaithful pastors** have prophesied smooth things; they have led their hearers to make void the law of God and to persecute those who would keep it holy. Now, in their despair, these teachers confess before the world their work of deception. **The multitudes are filled with fury.** "We are lost!" they cry, "and you are the cause of our ruin;" and they turn upon the **false shepherds**. The very ones that once admired them most will pronounce the most dreadful curses upon them. The very hands that once crowned them with laurels will be raised for their destruction. **The swords** which were to slay God's people are now employed to destroy their enemies. Everywhere there is strife and bloodshed." **The Great Controversy**, p. 655*

Another French Revolution

When the pope was taken captive in **1798** the **handcuffs that had fallen off** the papacy in **508** were **slapped on again** and the sword was removed from her hand; thus she could **no longer use the political powers** and the masses to accomplish her purposes.

But the **United States will be the power to unlock the cuffs** and give the papacy her **freedom again**. And the United States will **put the sword of civil power in her hand** once more.

For a while the papacy allied with Protestants will seem to have the **upper hand**. But in the end Jesus will deliver His faithful people as he did the three young Hebrews and Daniel.

Daniel 12:1-3: *"At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, every one who is found written in the book. ² And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt ³ Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever."*

Impressive will be the moment when the **kings of the earth** and their subjects **will turn on the Mother of harlots**. A French Revolution of **global proportions** will ensue and this time the deadly wound will never heal again!

The Story of Esther

The ancient story of **Esther** is a vivid illustration of what will soon transpire with God's faithful and obedient remnant on a global scale.

In the story of Esther we are told that the **civil ruler, king Ahasuerus**, gave a **decree that all should bow and pay homage to Haman (Esther 3:2)**. When **Mordecai refused** to do so (**Esther 3:2**) Haman was **filled with wrath** to such a degree that he was able to **persuade the king** to write a **death decree** against Mordecai and all the Jews. **Haman's wife** even suggested that he build a **gallows** for Mordecai to hang in. The reasons Haman gave for the decree are fascinating:

*"Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus: 'There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of your kingdom; **their laws are different** from all other peoples and they **do not keep the king's laws**. Therefore it is **not fitting** for the king to let them remain.' (Esther 3:8)*

Haman argued before the king that for the **survival of the nation** Mordecai and the Jews had to be **eradicated**. After all, **disobedience to the laws of a nation will lead only to anarchy**. A **death decree** was written by Haman and **enforced by the authority of the king**.

All seemed to be going according to plan until the plot was unmasked by **Queen Esther**. By the providence of God the evil **triumvirate was broken up** and the king turned on **Haman and his wife and the very gallows** that were raised to slay Mordecai were used to slay Haman and his wife.

- King turned on the **enemies of Daniel**
- Haman and his wife used the king and the **king turned on Haman**
- Jews used the Romans to kill Jesus and the **Romans turned on them**
- Papacy used the power of the state and the state turned against the papacy in the **French Revolution**
- Kings of the earth at the end will **hate the harlot** who has used them to slay the saints of the most high.