

## 15 -- THE ADVERSARY OF THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY (Identifying the Power that Opposes the Heavenly Sanctuary)

So far we have learned that the sanctuary on earth points us to the one in heaven where Jesus is working out the plan of salvation for repentant sinners. Jesus is the “*new and living Way*” into the presence of God (Hebrews 10:19-22). He is the “*one Mediator*” between God and men (1 Timothy 2:5). All our prayers ascend to God through Him, and all divine gifts and grace flow from God to us through Him, for He has substituted Himself as the only “*Way*” of saving access to God (John 14:6).

So vital is this truth concerning the saving ministry of Jesus that to remove it would be disastrous. All this being true, what attitude would we expect the devil to take towards the heavenly ministry of Jesus? An attitude of ruthless opposition! A settled determination to pervert, counterfeit, or obscure this truth, so as to render it powerless for the majority of mankind. God forewarned us against this opposition;

*Revelation 13:6* Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.

*Daniel 8:11, 12* “He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down...to oppose the daily sacrifices; and he cast truth down to the ground.”

In this lesson we will look at the devil’s counterfeit to the heavenly ministry of Jesus. Today we will be dealing with a very sensitive, yet important subject. We will let the Bible identify for us this great apostate system. Please remember, there is no malice intended toward anyone belonging to any religious system. God is not speaking about individuals in this system itself. God loves every individual who may have become entangled in false teachings. It is only because of God’s great love and concern for us that He has warned us so explicitly. God does not want us to be deceived. Truth can be painful at times, but deception is even more painful in the end. With eternity at stake, our only safety is to rely not on what man says, but on what God says in His Word, the Bible.

### 1. What is God’s last warning message ever to be given to our fallen world?

*Revelation 14:7* ...Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.

*Revelation 14:8* ...Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

*Revelation 14:9, 10* ...If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God...

**Note:** The Bible tells us in Revelation 14:6-14 that in the last days, this awesome three-point message of hope and warning will go to the entire world to prepare people for Jesus’ return. One of these messages warns against worshipping the beast and receiving its mark. In this lesson, we will identify the beast. In our next lesson we will identify the mark. Eternal life itself may be at stake, so pray earnestly for God’s guidance and understanding as you study.

### 2. What does a beast represent in Bible prophecies?

*Daniel 7:23* ... The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on earth,...

*Daniel 7:17* Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings which arise out of the earth.

*Daniel 8:21* And the male goat is the kingdom of Greece. ...

**Note:** In Bible prophecy, a beast represents a government, kingdom, or political power. God uses beasts to symbolize governments, as we do today--an eagle (the United States of America), a bear (Russia), etc. In the Bible, "beast" is not a disrespectful term. It does not suggest beastly characteristics. The beast that has the mark is pictured in Revelation 13:1-10, 15-18. Chapter 13 of Revelation reveals the final crisis that God’s end time people will face prior to the return of Jesus. Please take time to read these verses before proceeding.

### 3. How is the first beast of Revelation 13 identified?

*Revelation 13:1* Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.

**Note:** In Revelation 13:1-10, 15-18, God gives 10 clues to help us identify the beast. He gives us a long list of characteristics so that we can be absolutely certain of the beast's identity.

- Point 1 - Rises up out of the sea (verse 1)
- Point 2 - Receives its power, seat, and authority from the dragon (verse 2)
- Point 3 - Becomes a worldwide power (verses 3, 7)
- Point 4 - Is guilty of blasphemy (verses 1, 5, 6)
- Point 5 - Rules for 42 prophetic months (verse 5)
- Point 6 - Receives a deadly wound that heals (verse 3)
- Point 7 - Is a religious power that receives worship (verses 4, 8)
- Point 8 - Persecutes God's saints (verse 7)
- Point 9 - Is led by one supreme man (verse 18)
- Point 10- Has the mysterious number 666 (verse 18)

One can examine the record of history and find that only one power fits all 10 of these identifying marks and that power is the papacy. But in order to be certain of this identification, we will carefully consider each identifying mark one at a time.

### 4. This beast arises from the sea. What does the sea, or water, symbolize?

*Revelation 17:15* ...The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.

**Note:** In prophecy, water represents multitudes of people, or heavily populated areas. Prophecy predicted that the beast would arise from amid the established nations of the then-known world. No other power arose among the ten tribes after the fall of the Roman Empire. The papacy arose in western Europe, so it fits **Point 1**. But what about the other nine identifying points?

### 5. Who gives the beast its power and position?

*Revelation 13:2* Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.

**Note:** The beast--which has a mark that we must avoid--obtained its power, authority, and capital city from the dragon. According to Revelation 12:3-5, the dragon is the power that sought to destroy the child Jesus at the time of His birth. It was Satan who inspired Herod, a king for the pagan Roman empire, to slay all the male babies in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:13, 16). To whom did pagan Rome give her authority and capital city? History is clear that pagan Rome turned over its power and capital city to the church of Rome. When the Roman emperors moved the capital of the failing Roman Empire from Rome to Constantinople, they left the bishop of Rome as the political power in Rome. The power of the Caesars (*pontifex Maximus*) supported the bishop of Rome by elevating him above all the other bishops in Christianity. The following historical quote is typical: "*The Roman church ... pushed itself into the place of the Roman World-Empire, of which it is the actual continuation.... The Pope, who calls himself 'King' and 'Pontifex Maximus,' is Caesar's successor.*" (1) So **Point 2** fits the papacy, as well. ---- (1) Adolph Harnack, *What Is Christianity?* New York:

### 6. How far-reaching is the influence of the beast?

*Revelation 13:3* ...And all the world marveled and followed the beast.

**Note:** No one would question that during the Middle Ages, the papacy was indeed a worldwide power. In fact, the word "catholic" means "universal." We can see that **Point 3** also fits the papacy.

## 7. What comes out of the mouth of the beast?

*Revelation 13:6* Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.

**Note:** Here we see a brazen attack on the Heavenly Sanctuary and God's work for the salvation of man. The Bible defines blasphemy as man claiming to forgive sins (Luke 5:21) and claiming to be God (John 10:33). The papacy boldly claims the power to forgive sins. Notice the following section from a Catholic catechism: "*Does the Priest truly forgive the sins, or does he only declare that they are remitted? The Priest does really and truly forgive the sins in virtue of the power given to him by Christ.*" The papacy also claims that the pope is equal with God. Pope Leo XIII said, "*We [the popes] hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty.*"<sup>1</sup> Here is another startling statement about the pope: "*Thou art another God on earth.*"<sup>2</sup> So **Point 4** also fits the papacy.<sup>3</sup> ---- (1) Joseph Deharbe, S.J., A Complete Catechism of the Catholic Religion (New York: Schwartz, Kirwin & Fauss, 1924), p. 279. (2) Christopher Marcellus, Oration in the Fifth Lateran Council, Session IV (1512), manuscript SC, Vol. 32, col. 761 (Latin). (3) Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter "The Reunion of Christendom," dated June 20, 1894, trans. in The Great Encyclical letters of Pope Leo XIII (New York: Benziger, 1903), p. 304.

## 8. How long would this first beast rule?

*Revelation 13:5* ...And he was given authority to continue for forty-two months.

**Note:** Remember that in prophecy, one prophetic day equals one literal year (Ezekiel 4:6). This time period is repeatedly referred to in prophecy as three and a half years, 42 months, or 1,260 days. Based on the 30-day calendar used by the Jews, all three time periods total the same 1,260 prophetic days, or 1,260 literal years. The worldwide power of papal Rome became official in A.D. 538, when Emperor Justinian's decree making the papacy supreme was no longer opposed. The papacy was dealt what appeared to be a death blow in 1798 when the pope was captured by Napoleon's general, Alexander Berthier. You will notice that the time period between A.D. 538 and 1798 is precisely 1,260 years. **Point 5** also fits the papacy.

## 9. What happened to the beast after the 42 months?

*Revelation 13:3* And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast.

**Note:** As already mentioned, the papacy received what appeared to be a deadly wound in 1798 when General Berthier took the pope captive to France, where he died in exile. (1) Half of Europe thought that this event signaled the end of the papacy, but God had said that the wound would be healed and that the papacy's power and influence would be restored until the entire world would follow her leading. Malachi Martin, consummate Vatican insider, reveals the following in his book *The Keys of This Blood*: "*The pope is the best-known person of the 20th century (p. 123), has formed personal relationships with the leaders of 91 countries (p. 490), and is prepared for worldwide rule now*" (p. 143). (2) Even a novice would recognize that today the papacy is, in many ways, the most influential power on earth. And with each trip the pope makes, his power and influence grow. Multiplied millions worldwide look to the papacy as the only hope for world unity, peace, and decency--precisely as God predicted. The papacy clearly fits **Point 6**. ---- (1) Joseph Rickaby, "The Modern Papacy," Lectures on the History of Religion, (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1910), Vol. 3, Lecture 24, p. 1. (2) Malachi Martin, *The Keys of This Blood* (New York:

## 10. Is the beast a religious power?

*Revelation 13:15* "... and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed."

**Note:** It is obvious that this entity would be involved in spiritual matters. The words "worship" or "worshipped" are used five times in Revelation 13 in reference to this power. Surely no one doubts that the papacy fits **Point 7**.

**11. What does the beast do to the saints?**

*Revelation 13:7* And it was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. ...

Note: It is a historical fact that the papacy did persecute and destroy conscientious Christians, especially during the Middle Ages, the peak period of its control. Many historians say that more than 50 million people died for their faith during this period of great tribulation. Apparently the church felt it was doing God a favor by stamping out "heresy." The pope has asked that the church be forgiven for its atrocities, but the fact remains that it did persecute and destroy. The papacy fits **Point 8** also.

**12. What is the mysterious number that identifies the beast?**

*Revelation 13:18* Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

Note: In Revelation 13:18, God says to count the number of the beast's name and that it is the number of a man. When we think of the papacy, the man we naturally think of is the pope **Point 9**.

What is his name? One of the pope's official titles is "Vicar of the Son of God," which is "Vicarious Filii Dei" in Latin (the official language of the church). Newspaper articles, when referring to the pope as "Vicar of Christ," will often enclose the words in quotation marks to show that they are a translation of his title, or name. The book of Revelation is saying that the numeral value of the letters of his name will equal 666. Using the Roman numerical system, let's see whether or not **Point 10** fits the papacy:

V = 5	F = 0	D = 500	TOTALS
I = 1	I = 1	E = 0	112
C = 100	L = 50	I = 1	53
A = 0	I = 1	-----	501
R = 0	I = 1	501	-----
I = 1	-----		666
U = 5	53		
S = 0			
-----			
112			

Dear friend, there should be no doubt remaining. The Bible and history have shown that all 10 characteristics portrayed in Revelation 13:1-8, 15-18 fit the papacy. And this power has a specific mark that we dare not receive.

Now please note that there are many godly, loving Roman Catholic Christians whom God counts as His children. This lesson is not an attack upon our Catholic friends. It is an attack upon the devil, who lures churches away from Bible truth. However, God Himself has told us that this institution has a mark we dare not receive. Sincere Protestants, Catholics, Jews, and non-Christians will all be eager to discover what this mark is so they can avoid receiving it. Let's thank God that in His Word He has exposed the devil's ugly plans to destroy us all.

In our next lesson, we will clearly identify the "mark" of the beast. If you receive the mark of the beast, you will be lost. Many will discover that avoiding the mark will involve a tremendous struggle. But God can give us the faith we need in order to honor Him.

*Your Response to Jesus*

*What a wonderful Savior who has nothing but our eternal best interests in mind (Jeremiahs 29:11)! Are you willing to follow Jesus and heed heaven's warning about this end time power?*

ANSWER: \_\_\_\_\_