

IDENTIFYING THE BEASTS OF THE REVELATION

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Table of Contents

Part 1	
The Great Red Dragon	1
Part 2	
Papal Rome	7
Part 3	
The Rise of Protestantism	13
Part 4	
The Eighth Beast	18

Part One

The Great Red Dragon

Jesus taught in Matthew 11:25 that Truth is "hid . . . from the wise and prudent, and . . . revealed unto babes"; in other words, it is revealed to those who have experienced the spiritual birth, or have been born again. However, because of the insistence of those whom Jesus termed "wise and prudent" in attempting to deal in realms closed to them, much confusion has been generated in the realms of religion. When natural men, who "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God" (1 Corinthians 2:14), attempt to interpret the Scriptures, many theories, teachings, and suppositions come forth and cause great confusion to many who do not have an understanding of the Truth. One of the most misconstrued and misrepresented portions of the Scriptures is the Book of Revelation.

The Apostle Paul penned in 1 Corinthians 14:33 that "God is not the author of confusion." He wrote in 1 Timothy 2:4 that the desire of the Deity is that "all men . . . be saved, and . . . come unto the knowledge of the truth." Therefore, it is the Lord's desire that every person be saved, first and foremost, and then that every saint has a "knowledge of the truth." By the help of God, we want to dispel the confusion concerning the beasts incorporated in the Revelation and enable each heart who desires "truth in the inward parts" (Psalm 51:6) to receive biblical understanding concerning these truths.

These texts of Scripture contain many truths, but we must confine this study merely to identifying what they represent. As you turn your mind to the Revelation, you must first understand the nature of its language. In the opening verse of the Revelation, John introduced the nature of this language. In Revelation 1:1 he declared that it was "signified." This word means that it is revealed by signs. Webster's New World Dictionary gives a definition of signs as "symbols." Therefore, the nature of the language of the Revelation is symbolic.

Symbolic language is common in the Scriptures. Throughout the Scriptures, it is employed repeatedly. Hosea 10:1 says, "Israel is an empty vine." Was Israel literally a

vine? Certainly not. This figure of speech, or symbol, was used to convey a truth. Jesus repeatedly spoke in symbolic expressions. In Luke 13:32 He said, speaking of Herod, "Go ye, and tell that fox. . . ." Was Herod a literal fox? No. Jesus was depicting the cunning, crafty nature of Herod as a political leader. Matthew 23:33 records Jesus speaking of the scribes and the Pharisees as "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers" and asked, "How can ye escape the damnation of hell?" We must conclude that He was speaking in symbolic language, for literal serpents and vipers do not go to hell. Again, as you begin to view the Revelation, you must always keep in mind that the nature of the language is symbolic.

The next truth you need to understand is the scope of the Revelation. Revelation 1:19 says, "Write the things which thou hast seen [past tense], and the things which are [present tense], and the things which shall be hereafter [future tense]." The scope of the Revelation is designed to incorporate the entire Gospel Day.

Consider the first hideous representation in this study. The Revelation consists of seven series, each of which starts approximately at the commencement of the Gospel Day and continues through to the consummation. Revelation, Chapter 12, begins series number five, so it commences with the portrayal of the morning time. Verse 1 portrays the morning-time church in all her radiant, pristine glory. When the church appeared on the scene, with her inception on the Day of Pentecost, immediately a foe appeared to contest her.

Revelation 12:3 declares, "And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads." We know this "great red dragon" was a foe, or an opposing force, because when he appeared on the scene, "there was war in heaven" (Revelation 12:7). Verse 3 begins with the statement, "And there appeared another wonder in heaven. . . ." The word another reverts to verse 1, where the Revelator declared, "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven. . . ."

What is this heaven? It is vital that we establish this because these verses show that both the "woman clothed with the sun" (verse 1) and the "great red dragon" (verse 3)

were in this particular heaven and that this is where the war takes place (verse 7).

Immediately, when you read the word "heaven," no doubt your mind runs to the thought of God's Heaven, but if this were God's Heaven, it would pose some very difficult questions. In verse 1 this "woman clothed with the sun" was in heaven, yet verse 2 says she was "with child." However, Jesus said in Mark 12:25 that those who are in Heaven "neither marry, nor are given in marriage." Therefore, in Heaven there is no marriage, and if this woman were "with child" (verse 2) without the benefit of marriage, she would be a fornicator. First Corinthians 6:9 clearly states, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators. . . ." We can see that a literal approach to this text presents several serious difficulties. Also, Revelation 12:9 says that "the great dragon was cast out," yet verse 13 says, "And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman." If this were literal, it would imply that either the woman was cast out as well or the dragon got back into Heaven. Again, we can see that trying to view this text literally is fraught with difficulties.

The Scriptures teach that there are at least three heavens. In the account of Creation, Genesis 1:8 states, "And God called the firmament Heaven." So, the first heaven in the Scriptures is the firmamental heaven. In Ecclesiastes 5:2 the Wise Man declared, "God is in heaven," speaking of the celestial Heaven where God dwells. Then, the Apostle Paul penned in 2 Corinthians 12:2 of being "caught up to the third heaven." What is the third heaven? He said in verse 1, "I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord." It is an ecclesiastical heaven, a place where revelations of truth are received. In the Ephesian letter he called it "heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6). The Emphatic Greek Diaglott renders it the "heavenlies." The third heaven is the exalted spiritual position in which the church dwells, or an ecclesiastical heaven, and this is the heaven where the Revelation takes place and speaks of. As soon as the morning-time church came on the scene, immediately "there appeared another wonder in heaven" (Revelation 12:3), which

was an opposing force to contest the exalted spiritual position that the church and the saints were ordained to occupy.

What is the nature of this system portrayed by the great red dragon? Revelation 12:7 says that "the dragon fought and his angels." The thought of angels brings up spiritual beings; it has a religious connotation. The thought of this "great red dragon, having seven heads . . . and seven crowns upon his heads" (verse 3) brings up the thought of political power. What we see symbolically portrayed is a politico-ecclesiastical system, a system vested with both civil and religious power.

Let us identify this dragon. Since this is the beginning of a series, it is a portrayal of the morning time; so this is the first opposition that the morning-time church faced. It was its first opposing force. Why did He employ the symbol of a "dragon," or as verse 9 calls him, "that old serpent"? There are various reasons, which we will study, but one reason was that this was the first opposing force the morning-time church (or the second Adam's bride) faced. In the dawn of time, the first opposing force that Eve (the first Adam's bride) faced was also a serpent (Genesis 3:1).

The Revelator gives us several very clear identifying factors of this force. Verse 3 calls it "a great red dragon." The system that this figure represents was reckoned as "great," and indeed it was. It was great in size, great in power, great in its place in history, and great in its outreach. It controlled all of the then-known world. The system represented by this symbolic expression was the great, pagan Roman Empire. We will verify this claim as we examine these symbols employed in our text. Luke 2:1 declares that "there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed." Pagan Rome had great size and power.

Next, the writer said it was red. What does red represent in the Scriptures? Isaiah 1:18 reads, "Though your sins be as scarlet . . . though they be red like crimson. . . ." Red symbolizes sin. What was the besetting sin that doomed pagan Rome? John 16:8 declares, "And when he [the Comforter] is come, he will reprove the world of sin." What sin? Verse 9 tells us, "Of sin, because they believe not on me." Pagan Rome's sin was unbelief. The type (the serpent) in the Genesis account also worked through unbelief (Genesis

3:4).

What was another reason it was portrayed as a dragon? Because of the hideous, vicious, cruel nature of the spirit that dominated pagan Rome. One way we can know of a certainty that this "great red dragon" symbolizes the pagan Roman Empire is that there are very clear, verifiable historical symbols given. Notice particularly that John described this dragon as "having seven heads." What do the "heads" symbolize? Ephesians 1:22, speaking of Christ (verse 20), says God "gave him to be the head over all things to the church." Colossians 1:18 says, "And he [Christ] is the head of the body, the church." What does being the head denote? Look at the words of the Prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 9:6: "And the government shall be upon his shoulder."

What is upon His shoulder? The head. He said the government would be upon His shoulder; therefore, the head represents the government. This dragon had seven heads. Why? Because Rome had seven different, distinct heads, or types of government. These "seven heads," or forms of government, were as follows:

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| (1) Regal Power | (5) Triumvirate |
| (2) Consular | (6) Imperial |
| (3) Decemvirate | (7) Patrician |
| (4) Military Tribune | |

When John received the Revelation in A.D. 96, he was told that "five are fallen"—the first five had already passed off the stage of action; "and one is [present tense]"—they were right then, at that point in history, under the imperial caesars; "and the other is not yet come"—speaking of the patrician form, which was yet to rise (Revelation 17:10). These "seven heads" clearly identify the dragon as Roman. How do we know that it is pagan Rome? Notice where the crowns are found: "seven crowns upon his heads." Crowns denote the power of rule (2 Kings 11:12), and the crowns were upon the "heads." These various forms (heads) of government were the ruling powers during the days of the pagan Roman Empire.

Can we prove further that this was the Roman Empire? Our text also states that the dragon had "ten horns." At this

juncture (A.D. 96), Revelation 17:12 tells us "the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet." These horns were given as identifying factors. The horns symbolize power, and in this instance (as is often true prophetically), political power. For example, Daniel 8:20 tells us, "The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings [one rendering says kingdoms] of Media and Persia." Therefore, the horns represent kingdoms, and the Roman Empire was comprised of ten minor kingdoms. At the time of the pagan rule of Rome, they "received no kingdom as yet" (Revelation 17:12), but when pagan Rome began to decline and divide, these were the political entities that received power. The famed historian, Machiardi, gives us a reckoning of these ten minor kingdoms. They were as follows:

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| (1) Anglo-Saxon | (6) Lombards |
| (2) Burgundians | (7) Ostrogoths |
| (3) Franks | (8) Sueves |
| (4) Huns | (9) Vandals |
| (5) Heruli | (10) Visigoths |

These "seven heads and ten horns" were given to establish the identity beyond any doubt. This "great red dragon" is a symbolic representation of the pagan Roman Empire. It was not the devil personified and was never intended to be. These beasts of the Revelation represent systems, or instruments, that the enemy used in various time periods. The Scriptures use these figures to depict their nature, their spirits, and their characteristics. Revelation 12:9 declares that the dragon was "called the devil and Satan," or the Greek says the "accuser and the adversary." This dragon is a symbol. The morning-time church understood it well, for this "great red dragon" (verse 3) was the insignia on the shields of the Roman soldiers. This text is portraying neither a literal devil nor some supposed war in God's Heaven, or a casting out of Satan; but it portrays the spiritual battle that commenced with the institution of the church in this world and the first major foe that she faced—the Pagan Roman Empire, motivated by a spirit of unbelief.

Part Two

Papal Rome

The scope of the Revelation, according to Revelation 1:19, is past, present, and future tense and designed to cover the entirety of the Gospel Day. When the Apostle John received the Revelation in A.D. 96, some things had already occurred; for instance, the church had already been instituted. Other things were then occurring, such as opposition against the church by pagan Rome. Certainly the attempted martyrdom of the Apostle John and his ultimate exile to the Isle of Patmos by the Roman Emperor Domitian is evidence that the dragon was a present reality in the time in which John lived. Other events and the rise of other systems were yet future at the time the Revelator penned his writings.

We showed you in Part One that the first foe to arise was the "great red dragon" (Revelation 12:3), but Revelation 12:11 tells us that the saints "overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." "The great red dragon was cast out" (Revelation 12:9) and defeated by the morning-time church.

This was not the end of opposition, however. The enemy merely changed tactics and resurfaced using a different system, or dressed in other garb. In Revelation 13:1 the Revelator declared, "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."

John saw visions in the Revelation; he never literally went anywhere. Revelation 9:17 declares that the things he saw were "in the vision." Notice where John was in this vision. He said, "I stood upon the sand of the sea." In other words, he was on a seashore, or a beach. Why is this important? Verse 1 says, "And I saw a beast rise up out of the sea." John was carried there in the vision so that he could see where this "beast" originated. He said he saw it "rise up out of the sea." It is crucial that you understand what this "sea" is and what was in it so that you can properly see what gave rise to this

beast. First, you need to see that something was in the sea before this beast arose. Revelation 8:8 says that "a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea."

What was this "great mountain"? In Revelation 21:9 the vial angel said to John, "Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." Verse 10 declares, "And he carried me away . . . to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem." Where was the city? On that "great and high mountain." What was he told that he would see? "The bride, the Lamb's wife," or the church. Therefore, the "great and high mountain" was the church. (Revelation 8:8 has reference, particularly, to the morning-time church.) Notice that the mountain was "burning with fire." It was on fire with the Holy Ghost. Acts 2:3 says, "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire." What did those represent? Verse 4 says "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." This "great mountain" is a symbolic picture of the morning-time Church of God that had been on fire with the Holy Ghost.

John wrote that this great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea. Everyone knows what happens to fire when it goes into water; it is extinguished. So we see a picture of something that extinguished the fire of the morning-time church. Also, when something goes "into the sea," it vanishes from public view. What caused the church in that era to vanish from public view? There has always been a people of God, but the predominant condition was that as a visible, working body of Christ, it passed out of public view. Apostasy caused this. Does this text teach this? Look where that which had been the church went "into the sea."

What is the sea? Isaiah 57:20 says that "the wicked are like the troubled sea." The sea represents the wicked. Scripturally, what is the height of wickedness? Psalm 50:16-17 tells us: "But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee."

Through these verses of Scripture, we can gain keen insight into what constitutes the most despicable wickedness in God's sight. This was not an ignorant people, but rather a

rebellious people who had cast God's words behind them. They had had an opportunity, and they had heard and knew the Word; nevertheless, they refused to accept it and be guided by its precepts. They had the benefit of instruction but hated it. Yet, in the face of this refusal and rejection, they continued to profess and were even so brazen as to continue to teach and preach, for God said, "What hast thou to do to declare my statutes?" These were people who had refused to continue to take Truth and had apostatized, which means "to defect from truth"; yet, they continued all their religious professions and practices.

This "sea" in Revelation 8:8 represents apostasy. Much of what had been the morning-time church fell away from the hands of God and into the hands of men. Out of the minds of those apostate religious men arose a system that John "saw . . . rise up out of the sea" (Revelation 13:1). Why did he use the symbol of the "sea"? Because a sea is a mass of water, and the seas cover two-thirds of the earth's surface. This portrays that the apostasy and the subsequent rise of this beast was a massive move.

Let us examine this beast that arose. Verse 1 of our text says that John "saw a beast." The word beast here in the original Greek is the word *therion*, which means "a wild beast," or a vicious one. This is not to be confused with the word translated beast in Revelation 4:6-8, where the Greek word is *zoon* and means "living creature." This *therion* beast is depicted as wild, most vicious, and ferocious. Again, this is symbolic. This is not a literal beast, but it depicts the system produced by the men of the morning-time apostasy.

In 1 Corinthians 15:32 the Apostle Paul said, "I have fought with beasts at Ephesus." What type of beasts was he speaking of? The Apostle Peter told about "false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies" (2 Peter 2:1). In verse 12 he styled them as "natural brute beasts," speaking of the false religious teachers as operating on the natural, unregenerate, human, beastly level. Jude spoke of these apostates in his writings as well and said in Jude 10, "But these speak evil [literal beasts cannot speak] of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts. . . ." You need to banish the

thought that this "beast" of Revelation 13:1 is literal, because it is not. It is symbolic and portrays an apostate people who defected from Truth yet continued to practice religion. Because of their defection and backsliding, they became a carnal, beastly people. Because of leaving the true church, they had to develop a system to accommodate their teachings and lives. Hence, out of the minds of these apostate men arose this system, or "beast."

Notice the nature of this system. It had "horns" and "crowns," denoting that it had political power. Verse 4 says "they worshipped," portraying that it was a religious entity. Again, we see a politico-ecclesiastical power. Let us identify it. Notice that, as did the dragon, it had seven heads and ten horns (verse 1). The heads represent the forms of government that Rome had in her pagan form and the horns show the ten minor kingdoms that the Roman Empire consisted of and that she went to after her decline and fall. These factors clearly identify this beast as something Roman, but notice that in this passage it declares "upon his horns ten crowns." The crowns had moved from the "seven heads" in Revelation 12:3 to the "ten horns" in Revelation 13:1. This tells us that the political power, or the civil power, had moved from the heads of government that Rome had in its pagan form to the ten political powers, or minor kingdoms, that ruled after the demise of the pagan Roman empire. At the time John received the Revelation, this was a future event yet to occur, but this beast began to rise as early as A.D. 270.

How can we clearly identify this beast? We know it was something Roman, but what and in what form? Notice two outstanding factors of this beast. First, it was religious, because verse 4 says "they worshipped." Verse 6 says, "And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven." Therefore, its nature was extremely religious.

Second, it was described with human attributes. Verse 5 says that "there was given unto him a mouth." This phrase reverts to Daniel's prophecy where he spoke of the same system. Daniel said in Daniel 7:20, "That horn . . . had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows." Here again, human

characteristics were ascribed to this beast, or system.

How can we identify it beyond any doubt? Revelation 13:18 says, "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man." Here the Revelator teaches that this beast was best exemplified by "a man," that there was "a man" who bore this number, and this number was the number of the beast. This number, he tells us, was "six hundred threescore and six," or 666. There are many false teachings concerning this number. This "number of the beast," verse 18 says, was "his number," not some number that anyone else was to receive. It was given to reveal and identify this beast, or system. Also, this "number" was not the "mark" of the beast. Revelation 13:17 says, "And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or [a clear distinction] the name of the beast, or [here is something different] the number of his name." These are three separate, distinct things. The mark is not the number, contrary to what many religious teachers advocate. This number was "his number," the number of "a man" (verse 18). A specific man wore this number, and still does. If we can identify the man who wears this number, then we can identify who this beast was and is.

The number is "six hundred threescore and six," or 666, and on the mitre worn by the popes of Rome is the Latin inscription, Vicarius Filii Dei. There was not a separate numeric system until the tenth century A.D., so the letters not only served as an alphabet but also had numerical values. In the case of Latin letters, a system known as Roman numerals was devised, a system where I equals one, V equals five, and so on. Giving Roman numerical values to the phrase, Vicarius Filii Dei, arrives at a numerical value of 666. The breakdown is as follows:

V= 5	F= 0
I= 1	I= 1
C=100	L= 50
A= 0	1= 1
R= 0	1= 1
I = 1	D =500
U= 5	E= 0

S= 0	1= 1
112	554

112 + 554 = 666

This comes to 666, so here, clearly, is the number. What does it mean? This inscription literally means "Vicar of the Son of God," and Webster's Dictionary tells us that a vicar is "one who acts in the place of another," meaning that the pope of Rome acts in the place of Christ. He claims to be the head of the church. What is this? It is just what verse 1 denotes: "the name of blasphemy." If "six hundred threescore and six" is the number that the man wears who occupies the office of the pope of Rome and is also "the number of the beast," then the beast must be that system that the pope heads and accepts "the name of blasphemy" (verse 1). It must be the religious system of Roman Catholicism; and, indeed, it is. This is the system that arose out of the midst of men as a result of the morning-time apostasy. This beast is a symbolic expression of papal Rome, and this system made "war with the saints" (verse 7) who refused to accept their claims and regard them as the true church.

This beast dominated the landscape for "forty and two months" (verse 5). Forty-two months times thirty days (to a Jewish calendar month) equal 1,260 days. Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6 give us the reckoning of prophetic time by saying "each day for a year," and reveals that the 1,260 days were 1,260 years, or that period of time from A.D. 270 to A.D. 1530. It was that period known as the Dark Ages. It was during this period of time that Rome, in her papal form, held the world in spiritual darkness. The pagan Roman empire, was a predominant opposing force to the morning-time church from her inception on the Day of Pentecost in A.D. 33 to her decline and division, which occurred in A.D. 270, according to Wickersham's *A History of the Church*. Then papal Rome ruled from A.D. 270 to A.D. 1530. I trust that you can clearly see the identity of this first beast. It is not a hideous literal monster that will rise on some literal shore at a future time, but it is a system that arose centuries ago as a civil and religious power and made "war with the saints" (verse 7).

Part Three

The Rise of Protestantism

Now we want to consider the next beast that appeared on the spiritual horizon, which is portrayed in Revelation 13:11. The Apostle John declared, "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." Great depths of truth are contained in this passage of Scripture, but the burden of this study is simply to identify this beast and expose what it represents.

As we consider what John spoke of as "another beast," we must recognize that the language of the Revelation is symbolic. Also, we need to understand that the scope of the Revelation is designed to take us through the entirety of the Gospel Day, or the Christian dispensation. In Revelation 1:19 John was instructed to write "the things which thou hast seen [past tense], and the things which are [present tense], and the things which shall be hereafter [future tense]." Again, the Revelation is comprised of seven distinct series, which began at the commencement of the Gospel Day and goes through to the end of time, or the consummation.

Revelation, Chapter 12, is the beginning of the fifth series and, as such, starts at the beginning of the Christian dispensation. It is necessary that we understand this, for Chapters 12 and 13 portray in direct chronological succession the various systems that have risen to oppose the true cause and the people of God. Revelation 12:7-9 reads: "And there was war in heaven [that ecclesiastical heaven, or 'heavenly places']: . . . the dragon [paganism] fought and his angels, And prevailed not. . . . And the great dragon was cast out. . . ."

When this occurred, the dragon resigned "his power, and his seat, and great authority" to the beast (or papalism; see Revelation 13:2). Revelation 13:5 ascribes a reign of "forty and two months" to this beast, at the end of which he was to "go into captivity" (Revelation 13:10), or in the words of Daniel's prophecy, "they shall take away his dominion" (Daniel 7:26).

In our text, when the Apocalyptic writer declared, "And I beheld another beast . . ." we see the rise of a subsequent system, or another beast. Let us biblically identify this system. First, this system has a dual nature. Revelation 13:12 says that he "causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast." Verse 14 speaks of acts he does that are seemingly "miracles," and verse 15 speaks of his power over those who would not "worship the image." We can see that religious connotations and attributes are ascribed to this beast; therefore, it clearly represents a religious system. Also, we know that it is an evil, corrupt religious system, for Revelation 13:14 says that he "deceiveth." Though this beast is actively engaged in the practice of religion, it is false religion that deceives the souls of men.

Let us examine the second element of its nature. Revelation 13:11 tells us that "he had two horns." This portrays political powers. Daniel was told, "The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings [one rendering says kingdoms] of Media and Persia" (Daniel 8:20). Therefore, horns represent political powers or "kingdoms." Let us consider, then, what religious system succeeded papalism, what caused it to go into "captivity" (Revelation 13:10), what was able to "take away his dominion" (Daniel 7:26), and what had two political powers or kingdoms furnishing civil protection to it? It is the religious system known as Protestantism.

How do we know this? Several factors validate this truth beyond any fear of contradiction, the first being the time element. Papal Rome's power was to be broken after "forty and two months" (Revelation 13:5) or "a thousand two hundred and threescore days" (Revelation 12:6). These are prophetic days, which equal 1,260 years (Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6), the time period from A.D. 270 to A.D. 1530. What occurred in A.D. 1530 to break the exclusive power that papal Rome held? On June 25, 1530, in Augsburg, Germany, a session convened known as the Diet of Augsburg, where men drafted a document known as the "Augsburg Confession." This was the first Protestant creed formulated, and it ended the "dominion," or the exclusive rule, of papal Rome.

Second, the "two horns" symbolized two kingdoms that provided civil protection to Protestantism. These were Germany and England, the two areas where the Protestant system had the greatest impact in breaking the exclusive power of papalism.

Let us examine this system and see how the Scriptures depict it. Revelation 13:11 declares, "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb. . . ." Here it appears that we have conflicting symbols. He described it as a "beast." The Greek word is *therion*, literally meaning "a wild beast," or a vicious beast. Then he spoke of its having attributes "like a lamb." What a startling contrast! Why was there such sharp contrast in symbols? These figures are employed to reveal the extremely deceptive nature of this beast. In this verse we are introduced to a beast, or a religious system, that initially does not appear as hideous as it really is. However, spiritually, it is just as deadly, for Revelation 13:15 says it is responsible for people being spiritually "killed."

What does this "lamb" likeness represent? Consider the words of Jesus in Matthew 7:15 where He said, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." Here Jesus described a ravenous beast that is out to devour and destroy but comes to you in sheep's clothing. Why do these predators come in this manner? To deceive, in order to conceal what they really are and what their nature and purpose are. Jesus used this analogy to represent false prophets, and in the Revelation this second beast that was similar to a lamb in some of its characteristics is referred to repeatedly as "the false prophet" (Revelation 16:13, 19:20, and 20:10).

This second beast is extremely religious. It is actively engaged in the propagation of religion, yet it is described as a beast. Why? Because its teachings and practices deceive (Revelation 13:14). Why are they deceptive? Why are they false? Well, look at the origin of this beast. Revelation 13:11 says John saw it "coming up out of the earth." This system is not of divine origin. It did not "come down from God out of heaven" (Revelation 21:2) as the true church did; instead, it came up "out of the earth." What is this emblematic of? "The earth" represents man, or more particularly, the part of man

that came from the earth—the flesh. In Jeremiah 22:29 the Prophet penned, "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord." We know that he was not speaking to the literal earth, or this terrestrial ball; he was speaking to people.

The Wise Man penned in Ecclesiastes 12:7, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was. . . ." Man was made from the dust of the earth (Genesis 2:7), so "the earth" represents man. In 2 Corinthians 5:1 the Apostle Paul penned, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved. . . ." In verse 4 he described that earthly house as our mortality. This beast's "coming up out of the earth" merely means that this religious system rose from the minds of men. It was not of divine origin but was something that men devised.

Why does this passage specify "the earth" as opposed to "the sea" from which the first beast arose in Revelation 13:1? Because the sea is more extensive than the land. Two-thirds of the earth's surface is covered by the seas. Likewise, the move of Catholicism was more worldwide in its initial rise than the rise of Protestantism.

Another reason Protestantism was called a beast was to depict its crude, carnal nature. Peter talked about "false prophets," and he spoke of them as "natural brute beasts" because they "walk after the flesh" and are "selfwilled" (2 Peter 2:1, 10-12). This is what gave rise to this system—men's self-will and their following the flesh rather than the Spirit of God.

Second Peter 2:10 says that they "despise government." What type of government was the Apostle speaking of? Isaiah 9:6, speaking of Christ, declares, ". . . and the government shall be upon his shoulder." What is the picture? This question leads us to the third reason that Protestantism is portrayed as a beast. What did this system do? Revelation 13:14 says it made "an image to the beast," the first beast (the papal beast), portrayed in Revelation 13:1. What does this portray? At the time when the exclusive rule of papalism was to be broken, the Lord raised up men to wield the sword of Truth, to "fight against [him] with the sword of my mouth," as Jesus prophesied (Revelation 2:16) and to lay a "deadly wound" to the Roman beast (Revelation 13:12).

Although these men were used of God to break the power of papalism and loose the great sixteenth century reformation, unfortunately something happened. The "deadly wound was healed" (Revelation 13:12). How? They turned around and made "an image to the beast" (Revelation 13:14). They arose with divine fervor and denounced the system of Roman Catholicism and its rule by popes as antichrist and against the teachings of the Scriptures, but then turned around and created a system that was "an image" to it. An image is designed to be "an imitation, representation, or similitude of any person or thing, a copy, a likeness, an effigy." So those who had been used of God as reformers failed to continue to follow divine guidance. They followed "after the flesh" (2 Peter 2:10), and in doing this they despised the divine government of Christ, who is the Head of the church (Colossians 1:18), and formulated human systems that came up "out of the earth," or out of their own human thinking.

Revelation 9:7 says, ". . . on their heads were as it were crowns like gold [not real, pure gold, or not real reigning power, but like gold], and their faces were as the faces of men." Men set up a religious system that at a casual glance looks Christian, "like a lamb"; however, in reality it is not a Christian system at all, but "an image" to the first beast. With its man-made doctrines and teachings, church joining, and human heads and forms of government, it is an imitation, or a likeness, of the beast of Roman Catholicism. Bear in mind that we are speaking of a system of worship, not individuals. In reality, Protestantism is neither a biblical nor a Christian system; it is a beast. It is a system devised by the minds of men that came up "out of the earth," and it is a system that is not what it appears to be. The enemy of souls produced this system, and it operates by the powers of deception. The call to any who may perchance be saints of God but who worship in that system is, "Come out of her, my people" (Revelation 18:4), or as Jeremiah 51:6 declares, "Flee out of the midst of Babylon [religious confusion], and deliver every man his soul."

This "beast" of Revelation 13:11 is the false religious system of Protestantism, a system that was produced by men and not by the Word of God, a system that deceives people and makes them think they are involved in Christianity when,

all the time, they are in a system that is worshipping in a beastly manner. I trust that you can see the truth concerning Protestantism.

Part Four

The Eighth Beast

In this study we have been identifying the beasts of the Revelation. Unfortunately, in today's religious world this subject has become the source of much conjecture and confusion. The Apostle Paul plainly informed us that "God is not the author of confusion" (1 Corinthians 14:33). His desire is that "all men . . . be saved, and . . . come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). The reason it is so vital that men come to the knowledge of the truth is that "truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Truth frees one from falsity and error, and this is essential, for what we believe regulates and governs our actions. We need to understand the truth of the Revelation so that we might act and react appropriately.

Now we want to examine what is commonly referred to as "the eighth beast." There are great depths of truth that need to be considered regarding this beast, but in this study our burden is to merely identify what this symbol represents.

Revelation 17:3 declares, "So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns." As you consider this text, remember that the language of the Revelation, according to Revelation 1:1, is "signified," which means "revealed by signs." Therefore, the language of the Revelation is symbolic. The Revelation is not designed to be viewed literally. Notice how our lesson text commences: "So he carried me away in the spirit. . . ." This tells us that to really see these truths, they must be revealed by the Spirit of God. Ephesians 4:4 tells us, "There is . . . one Spirit." Ephesians 1:17 refers to Him as "the spirit of wisdom and revelation." Our revelation of Truth must come through the avenue of the Holy Spirit of God. The ranks of religion are full of confusion concerning these truths because they are "sensual, having not the Spirit" (Jude 19).

If they attempt to interpret and teach the Scriptures, in reality, they are "teaching for doctrines the commandments [or sayings] of men" (Matthew 15:9). To understand these truths one must first be "in the spirit," or spiritual.

Let us examine this text. Where did the Spirit carry John to reveal this truth to him? He did not literally carry him anywhere. He carried him in his mind, or "in the vision" (Revelation 9:17). John said, ". . . he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness." This gives us an indication of what he was about to see, for when he was carried away to be shown the church, he was carried to a high, exalted place. Revelation 21:10 says, "And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem [the church; see Hebrews 12:22-23], descending out of heaven from God." It takes a move of the Spirit of God for us to truly see the church or Babylon. In our lesson text, however, the Spirit of God took John to "the wilderness," or a low, earthly place.

Notice that verse 3 says he saw "a woman." Revelation 17:1 styles her as "the great whore," whereas in Revelation 21:9 he referred to the church as "the bride, the Lamb's wife," which is a vivid contrast. In our text we see a vile, impure woman, which reveals the nature of that which we are dealing with.

Who is this woman? Revelation 17:9 says, ". . . The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth." Mountains in the Scriptures denote worship. Isaiah 2:2 declares, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains. . . ." In John 4:20 the Samaritan woman said, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." Therefore, "mountains" symbolize worship.

Notice where this woman sits. Verse 3 says, "I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast." Revelation 17:9 says, ". . . seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth." Revelation 17:1 says, "the great whore that sitteth upon many waters." Revelation 17:15 reads, "The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes,

and nations, and tongues."

Initially, this would appear contradictory, but let us put it together. Revelation 17:15 tells us that "The waters. . . are peoples." In verse 1 he tells us that this woman "sitteth upon many waters"; yet, in verse 3 he said she sits "upon a scarlet coloured beast." Therefore, we must conclude that "the water" and "the beast" are the same entity. This symbolic expression tells us that this beast (or system) is comprised of people. He denoted that it is a massive move, or gathering, because water is dense. By employing the term "beast" in verse 3 (the Greek word is *therion*, meaning "a wild beast" or vicious beast), he portrayed the nature or character of this hideous monstrosity. Also, by speaking of "mountains," he revealed that this system is actively engaged in the practice of worship and that it considers itself a spiritual entity.

Revelation 17:1 titles this woman as a "great whore," one who has had the benefits of marriage without ever taking the vows or accepting the headship of the husband. Who is the husband, or the head, ordained to be in spiritual matters? In 2 Corinthians 11:2 the Apostle Paul said, "I have espoused you to one husband . . . to Christ." Ephesians 4:15 says the head is "even Christ." This woman, "the great whore," is not the bride; she did not commit herself to vows or submit to the Husband, or the Head. Revelation 17:5 styles her as "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." This symbol, "the earth," is a reference to Revelation 13:11 and the beast that John saw "coming up out of the earth," which we found is the religious system of Protestantism. In Revelation 17:5 we find that this great whore is the mother of the "abominations of the earth," or the mother of Protestantism, which is none other than Roman Catholicism. The woman riding at the helm of this "scarlet coloured beast" portrays the system of Roman Catholicism.

This is not, as some would claim, merely a repetition of a previous beast or time period, because Revelation 17:1 begins by saying, "And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me. . . ." These truths were revealed by an evening-time ministry, which did not commence until A.D. 1880. This lesson reveals a

"woman" and a "beast" that will be an opposing force to the church in the evening-time. These vial angels represent the evening-time ministry, and they did not commence their work until subsequent to the Protestant era. How do we know? In Revelation 16:2 the very first vial was "poured out . . . upon the earth . . . and upon them which worshiped his image" (Protestantism). So this vial angel was revealing what would occur in this evening time of the Gospel Day.

When John received this vision, the vial angel said in Revelation 17:8, "The beast that thou sawest was [past tense], and is not. . . ." Why? It was "a scarlet coloured beast," a picture of "the great red dragon," or paganism, that had been "cast . . . into the bottomless pit" (Revelation 20:3). Yet, the vial angel (the evening-time ministry) let John know he "shall ascend out of the bottomless pit" (Revelation 17:8). This was not its rise through Protestantism. It had already come on the scene long before this (A.D. 1530). This is a beast that shall arise "out of the bottomless pit" (in other words, it has no Bible foundation), and oppose the church in the evening time. This will be the foe the evening-time church will face till the consummation of the Gospel Day.

What is this "scarlet coloured beast" that is working in this evening time? Revelation 17:11 gives us an insight: "And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition." This tells us that this is the last beast. This is the last foe for the church to face, for after this beast there is "perdition." Also, when he said that "he is the eighth, and is of the seven," that reveals that this beast is a consolidation, or an amalgamation, of all the previous beasts or systems. We must remember that the enemy is a master of counterfeit. In the Exodus account, when Aaron threw down his rod and it became a serpent, "the magicians of Egypt . . . also did in like manner with their enchantments" (Exodus 7:11).

Our day is a day of the unity of God's people, a "unity of the faith" (Ephesians 4:13), so the enemy is working to concoct a counterfeit unity to distract from and obscure what the Lord is trying to work. Now let us look closely at this beast, and remember, this beast is "peoples" (Revelation 17:15) who are practicing religion and worshiping (as the "mountains"

symbolize), but their worship is not based in Truth. It comes from the bottomless pit and has no Bible foundation. Its nature, or its spirit, is beastly. Rather than desiring Truth, they "make war with the Lamb" (Revelation 17:14). By their lives, their actions, their teachings, and their spirit, they fight against the Truth.

How can we scripturally identify this beast? Revelation 17:11 says, "the eighth . . . is of the seven." What are "the seven" that he referred to? They are the seven previous systems that opposed the people of God. What are these seven beasts? To get understanding we must go back to Daniel's prophecy. There we see the picture of when God's people were in bondage and when Daniel (who was a captive Israelite) saw a vision.

In Daniel 7:2 the Prophet Daniel said he saw "four great beasts." He went on to describe each one as "like a lion" (verse 4), "a bear" (verse 5), "a leopard" (verse 6), and "a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible . . . and it had ten horns" (verse 7). These beasts represented four kingdoms (verse 23). These were the kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Grecia, and preChristian era pagan Rome. Then, in the Revelation we have three beasts that opposed the people of God: "the great red dragon" (Revelation 12:3), which is Christian era pagan Rome; the "beast" (Revelation 13:1), which is papalism; and "the image of the beast" (Revelation 13:15), which is Protestantism. Here we have "the seven" of Revelation 17:11. The eighth beast is the amalgamation of all the opposing forces of the past. In this closing out of time, the enemy is working feverishly to bring every false system and every false spirit together to oppose the church one final time.

The power of this eighth beast is deception, and indeed, this is the most deceptive system and foe of all time. In Revelation 17:6, when John saw her, he said, "I wondered with great admiration." Its power is the power of deception, so much so that even the great Apostle John was initially moved. On the surface it appears other than it is in reality, and that is the reason it is such an effective move. It works through the power of deception.

Can we see the other seven beasts in this system? Certainly so. Revelation 17:3 says it is "a scarlet coloured

beast," and it had "seven heads and ten horns." These serve as identifying factors. This is an allusion back to Revelation 12:3, which tells us of "a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns." This lets us know that the roots of this eighth beast are in paganism. Paganism allowed people of all beliefs to come together to worship the gods they chose, in the manner they chose, and yet not speak against one another. As long as each burned a pinch of incense once a year to Caesar, all was well. Caesar was the Pontifex Maximus of the pagan Roman empire. This eighth beast brings all supposed "faiths" together, yet people are free to worship in the manner they choose; however, one does not speak against the worship of any other. They all will uphold this woman (papal Rome), they all will revere her, and ultimately they all will come together under her direction and her leader (the Pope), the present-day Pontifex Maximus. So we see the dragon in this beast.

Revelation 17:3 says this eighth beast has "names of blasphemy." Here we see papalism portrayed, for Revelation 13:1, speaking of the papal beast, says, ". . . upon his heads the name of blasphemy." When we incorporate papal Rome into this eighth beast, we include the four beasts of Daniel. Revelation 13:2 tells us the papal beast was "like unto a leopard [Grecia], and his feet were as the feet of a bear [Medo-Persia], and his mouth as the mouth of a lion [Babylon]: and the dragon [Rome] gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority." So we have the four beasts of Daniel, and the dragon (paganism), and the beast (papalism). What about Protestantism? Revelation 17:4 says, "And the woman was . . . decked with gold and precious stones and pearls." These are the truths (1 Corinthians 3:12; Matthew 7:6) that were given to the reformers and later incorporated into the system of Protestantism. So "the eighth . . . is of the seven" (verse 11). This beast is an amalgamation of all the false religious systems.

What is this beast? It is the system, or the organization, known as the World Council of Churches. It is trying to create a supposed unity, but it is made up of heathens, pagans, papalists, and Protestants. It is not the true church, but a counterfeit. It is not true unity headed by Christ, but a false

unity that will ultimately be presided over by the supreme imposter and counterfeit of all time—the Pope of Rome.

Notice that there are no crowns on the "heads" and "horns" of this eighth beast as there are in Revelation 12:3 and Revelation 13:1. This beast will not have the civil power as was the case in the Dark Ages, but its power is the power of influence and deception. It is a spiritual foe, and the battle with this beast is a spiritual battle (2 Corinthians 10:4). Papal Rome shall guide and direct this beast by influence. The spirit of this beast is working even now and drawing people away who do not have a love of the Truth. We must recognize it as counterfeit and be "separate . . . and touch not the unclean thing" (2 Corinthians 6:17). We must be faithful to God and Truth, follow the Lamb, be encouraged, and realize that the outcome is that "the Lamb shall overcome them" (Revelation 17:14). We should keep "press[ing] toward the mark for the prize" (Philippians 3:14), for in the end, the true church shall be victorious and will be ushered home in glory.