

Understanding Revelation – Topic 20

When religious persecution returns

The ominous future of America

An exposition of Revelation Chapter 13:11-18

Contents

Introduction	2
The second beast - ten identifiers	2
1. Timing of its rise	2
2. Remote location.....	3
3. Unobtrusive rise.....	3
4. Lamb-like.....	4
5. Has two symbols of power.....	4
6. A Protestant power.....	6
7. Enforces Roman Catholic policy	7
Rome's strategy	8
Key goals	8
An independent perspective.....	9
The Catholic perspective	10
8. Facilitator of Spiritism.....	11
9. Promotes formation of an image to the beast	12
Steps in the formation of the beast.....	13
Features of the image to the beast.....	14
Steps in the formation of the image to the beast.....	14
10. Enforces submission to the image to the beast	18
Two symbols of submission	18
Appendices.....	20
Appendix A – The challenge to separation of Church and State	20
Appendix B –The number 6 in Scripture.....	21
In the Book of Genesis	21
In the Book of Daniel.....	21
In the Book of Revelation	21
Bibliography	22

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Introduction

In Revelation Chapter 13 two beasts are brought to view. These represent two kingdoms. The first beast, as previously shown, represents the Papacy.¹ Verses 1-3 describe its rise and appearance, its deadly wound, the healing of this wound, and finally its restoration to world power.

Verses 11-17 explain how Rome's power would be restored. Another beast or kingdom rises and compels the world to worship and obey the first beast, which is the Papacy. Verses 13-14 describe how the second beast will accomplish this. Miracles will be performed which will seduce people and persuade them to form an *image to the beast*. We need to discover what this means.

There are many people in the world who could never be persuaded to embrace Roman Catholicism. While not bigoted, they could never accept the Pope, its priests, the mass, the worship of Mary and other aspects of Catholicism. Therefore, in order to capture their support, deception will be employed. Another organization will be formed. This will not be a Catholic organization but a replica of the Papacy which supports Papal policy. In this way non-catholic groups will be led into submission to the Papacy.

The second beast - ten identifiers

There are ten very clear identifiers associated with the second beast which clarify what this power is.

1. Timing of its rise

The second beast rises to power when the Papacy receives a deadly wound.

He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints. Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth ... Revelation 13:10

Verse 10 above is a repetition or explanation of v3²

And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded; and his deadly wound was healed... v3

The Papacy received its deadly wound in 1798.

It is informative to notice the great Methodist John Wesley's conclusion regarding this prediction. When he wrote his New Testament Notes in 1754, he applied the first beast to the Papacy. He declared:

Another beast, but he is not yet come, though he cannot be far off, for he is to appear at the end of the forty-two months of the first beast (that is 1798) and he had two horns like a lamb. A mild, innocent appearance.³

¹ A.P. Cooke, *Antichrist 666*, 2nd ed.(Sydney: Self-published, 1985).

² Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*(Mountain View, CA.: Pacific Press Publishing Assn., 1898), 439.

³ John Wesley, *The New Testament with Explanatory Notes* (London: W. Bower, 1754), 427.

In 1754 Wesley understood that this power was not yet in existence. However in 1798, a few decades after Wesley wrote his notes, the United States of America (USA) was emerging as an independent nation. On July 4, 1776 the Declaration of Independence had been ratified by eleven of the thirteen states, by a population of 4 million people scattered over a territory of one million square miles. At the time appointed in prophecy, the USA rose to power.

2. Remote location

Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth...

This power was to rise *out of the earth* – in a sparsely populated area - in contrast to other beasts symbolized as rising out of the sea, that is out of densely populated areas (Revelation 17:15). At the time people from other nations began to migrate to North America, its population consisted of around one million indigenous Indians occupying about three million square miles. It was consequently a sparsely populated area.

3. Unobtrusive rise

...coming up out of the earth...

The second beast rises silently like a plant growing out of the earth. The Greek expression used – *anabainon* - is translated *coming up*, and means *to grow up perfectly like a plant*. It was not to rise by military conquest, as did most of the European and other nations. No nation was overturned in order to make room for the USA. It rose through peaceful migration. It grew as a result of the development of its natural resources. Historians are very clear in regard to this. George Townsend declared:

Like a silent seed we grew into empire...⁴

This is exactly what the prophecy indicated. Another author wrote:

...the United States...a wonderful empire which was...emerging...amid the silence of the earth, daily adding to its power and pride.⁵

Again:

Behold the mighty regions over which, in peaceful conquest 'Victoria sine clade' (victory without strife) – they have borne the banners of the cross.⁶

A French writer in his study of the founding of America declared:

In that land the great experiment was to be made, by civilized man, of the attempt to construct society on a new basis; and it was there, for the first time, that theories hitherto unknown or deemed impracticable, were to exhibit a spectacle for which the world had not been prepared by the history of the past.⁷

⁴ George Alfred Townsend, *The New World Compared to the Old* (Hartford CN: SM Betts & Co, 1869), 635.

⁵ Uriah Smith, *Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation* (Battle Creek, MI.: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1881).

⁶ "Oration at Plymouth" 22 December, 1824, in Edward Everett, ed. *Orations and Speeches* (Boston: American Stationers Company, 1836), 42.

⁷ Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (New York: George Adlard, 1839), 1:25.

4. Lamb-like

...and he had two horns like a lamb...

The second beast is innocent, harmless and gentle in its appearance: just like a lamb. A lamb is not fully grown, implying that this power is recently established.

The term *lamb* is mentioned twenty-nine times in Revelation and generally it represents Jesus Christ. According to Deuteronomy 33:17, *horns* in Scripture denote power. This beast has *horns like a lamb* indicating that its power would be Christ-like. It is an accurate description of the form of government instituted by the founding fathers of the USA.

5. Has two symbols of power

...and he had two horns...

The second beast has two horns, symbols of power, and these are lamb-like or Christ-like. Christ-like principles of power or government are laid down in Scripture. In the New Testament Jesus Christ presents at least two of these.

The first principle is the separation of Church and State.

Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God, the things that are God's. Luke 20:25

To keep Caesar and Christ separate means to separate Church and State: not to give to Caesar the things belonging to God, nor to God the things that belong to Caesar. It is the principle of keeping politics out of religion and keeping religion out of politics. This is the great principle behind the separation of Church and State.

The second great principle is that of religious liberty. Jesus declared:

And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. John 12:47, Matthew 7:1

We are not to judge our fellow human beings in matters of conscience or religion. On earth Jesus Christ did not set Himself up as Judge. God does not judge men now. The judgment is future. *Judge not that you be not judged* (Matthew 7:1).

These two important principles were laid down in the American Constitution.

Article IV: *The United States shall guarantee to every state in this Union a republican form of government.*

Article VI: *No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States.*

This was a remarkable achievement which had never before been specified clearly in a nation's constitution. It was an example of a marvelous advance for civilization. It is important for people to realize the significance of this event. We need to safeguard our religious liberties.

It is the lack of application of these principles in human history that has brought about so much suffering and bloodshed. Over the last five thousand years mankind has seldom learned the lesson of religious liberty, revealing both its underlying intolerance and arrogance. In this we see the outworking of the principles of Satan, the *prince of this world*, a sad testimony to humanity's sinful nature.

History reveals that only a few minor groups or individuals have understood the importance of religious liberty. Among these were the evangelical Anabaptists who were sorely persecuted at the time of the Protestant Reformation.⁸

William of Orange, called *William the Silent* (1533-1584), stood out a century before his time in that he was a lover and upholder of religious liberty.⁹ Some German Protestant princes also promoted religious liberty around the same time. Among them was Phillip of Hess, known as *Phillip the Magnanimous*.¹⁰ Then there were the English Baptists who in 1612 formed themselves into a religious body. They were the first church to establish a declaration of faith that embodied religious liberty.

*This is the first known expression of absolute liberty of conscience in any profession of faith. It was from their little dingy meeting house...that there flashed out first in England, the absolute doctrine of religious liberty.*¹¹

It is amazing that it took so long for leaders to learn that this principle is essential for the happiness and well-being of society. After the English Baptists, Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658) was also was a great advocate of religious liberty. He abhorred the persecution of people for their religious opinions.¹² Roger Williams, a friend of Cromwell, Milton and other Puritans, founded Rhode Island Province

...upon the basis of complete religious toleration...a shelter for persons distressed for conscience.

Williams was baptized by the Anabaptists and formed the first Baptist church in America.

*He was uniformly tolerant and he occupies a high place...for complete liberty of conscience. He was the first and foremost exponent in America of the theory for absolute freedom of the individual in matters of religion.... Rhode Island...was the first colony consistently to apply this principle in practice.*¹³

The USA was the first nation to legislate religious freedom, and to have a church without a pope and a state without a king. The timing of its rise was providential. It is recognized that had the USA been founded at a different period in history, these vital principles may never have been included in the Constitution.

⁸ W.L. Emerson, *The Reformation and the Advent Movement* (Washington: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1983).11-67.

⁹ Ibid.11-67.

¹⁰ History of USA, Colonial Revolt, , in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Cambridge: University Press, 1910). 27:672-674.

¹¹ W.L. Emerson, 84-86.

¹² Cromwell refused religious liberty to the Anglicans and Roman Catholics because they used their freedom to undermine the state and to restore Roman Catholicism.

¹³ Ibid. 28: 682-683.

Historians are also clear that the timing of the formation of the USA was providential¹⁴. The refugees who established its government came primarily from Britain, Holland and Germany. These peoples had passed through extreme periods of persecution and intolerance by both church and state in their countries. They had learned through bitter experience the need for religious and political tolerance. This cemented their resolve to have a church without a pope, and a state without a king.

The hand of God was present. Divine prophecy had foretold that

...the earth would help the woman (God's true church) and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the flood (of persecution) which the dragon cast out of his mouth. Revelation 12:16

Scholars are convinced that America fulfilled this prediction to a great degree, for she opened her arms and her vast empty territories. *The wilderness* became a refuge for the oppressed of Europe. Historians have clearly emphasized this fact.¹⁵ A nation after a new order was established. In forming their constitution Americans adopted as the motto on the great seal of their government the words *Novus Ordo Seclorum*, which means *A new order of the Ages*. The establishment of a government upon such principles had a profound effect in many other parts of the world. George Townsend wrote:

*Since America was discovered she has been a subject of revolutionary thought in Europe... out of her discovery grew the European reformation in religion: out of our revolutionary war, grew the revolutionary period of Europe.*¹⁶

6. A Protestant power

The principles mentioned above are contrary to the published principles and policies of the Church of Rome.¹⁷ However they are basic Biblical, Protestant principles. Therefore this lamb-like power would be a non-Catholic power. From its inception the USA has been a strongly Protestant country.

While some scholars of the past have been skeptical about the identification of the US in this prediction the facts are now indisputable. It should be noted that since the 1840's Seventh-day Adventists have consistently taught that the two-horned beast of Revelation 13:11-17 represents the USA. For more than one hundred and fifty years they have had no cause to alter one detail of this interpretation. America has fulfilled, is fulfilling and will continue to fulfill the remaining points of this prediction.

This Protestant power would also ultimately possess world-wide influence. The USA is amply fulfilling this aspect of the prophecy.

¹⁴ Charles William Eliot, *American Contributions to Civilisation* (New York: T F Unwin, 1897),18.

Charles Beard, *The Rise of American Civilisation* (New York: Macmillan, 1947),30.

¹⁵ David Masson, *The Life of John Milton* (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1859),1:379.

Sir William Monson, *Naval Tracts* (London: A and J Churchill, 1703).

¹⁶ Geo Alfred Townsend, *The New World Compared with the Old* (Hartford, CON: SM Betts and Company, 1869), 462-463.

¹⁷ Christian Edwardson, *Facts of Faith* (Nashville TN: Southern Publishing Assn, 1943),256-272.

7. Enforces Roman Catholic policy

...and spoke like a dragon. And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth...to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. Revelation 13:11, 12

For this part of the prediction to be fulfilled means that major changes would need to take place in the USA:

- It would need to change its attitude to the Roman Catholic Church. Instead of being anti-Catholic it would become pro-Catholic in its outlook.
- It would need to change, or bypass, its constitution so that church and state would no longer be separate. Religious liberty would disappear and religious oppression would be legalized.

These changes portend an ominous future for America.

It is significant that more than 100 years ago the Church of Rome planned the conquest of the USA. In 1890 at the Centennial conference of Catholics in Baltimore, Archbishop Ireland made this statement:

Catholics of the USA are called... to make America Catholic... Catholic truth will travel on the wings of American influence and with it encircle the universe.¹⁸

This prediction is now in process of fulfillment. Again in 1894:

The USA, it can be said without exaggeration, are the chief thought of Leo XIII... a few days ago, on receiving an eminent American, Leo XIII said, 'The United States of America are the future, we think of them incessantly' ... that is why Leo XIII turns all his soul, full of ideality, to what is improperly called his American policy. It should be called his Catholic universal policy.¹⁹

The report of the third Washington conference of Roman Catholics in 1909 stated

Our purpose is to make America dominantly Catholic.²⁰

Notice this statement made in 1910

It seems to me that the main support of Protestantism comes from the USA and England... If we put an end to this effort in the USA. and England, by making these nations predominantly Catholic, we will have removed the chief obstacle to the conversion of the world to the true faith... a vigorous effort in the United States at this time, will reduce the opposition to an insignificant condition... In the course of another century the (Protestant) sects will be a study for the historian and antiquarian, along with Arianism.²¹

¹⁸ Archbishop Ireland recorded in William Thomas Stead, *The Pope and the New Era* (London: Cassell, 1890), 222-223.

¹⁹ *Catholic Standard and Times* (Philadelphia), November 3, 1894; quoted in "Protestant Magazine," October, 1918, 44.

²⁰ *The Mission Movement in America*, (Washington DC: Catholic University, June 1909).

²¹ *The Missionary* (Catholic), Washington DC, May 1910.

Rome's strategy

About ninety years ago, *Catholic Action* was established. It focused on America in particular, not in an antagonistic way, but as a quiet, wisely-planned strategy in order to gain favor for Catholics among Protestants. How remarkably successful it has been. Dr E. Boyd Barrett, for many years a Jesuit, made the following statement in 1935 in regard to the plans of the Roman Catholic Church

In theory, Catholic action is the work and service of lay Catholics in the cause of religion, under the guidance of the bishops. In practice it is the Catholic group fighting their way to control America.

The effort, the fight, may be drawn out. It may last for five or ten years. Even if it lasts for twenty – what is twenty years in the life of Rome? The fight must be fought to a finish – opposition must be worn down, if it cannot be swept away. Rome's immortal destiny hangs on the outcome. That destiny overshadows the land.

And in the fight, as she has ever fought when battles were most desperate in the past, Rome will use steel and gold and silvery lies. Rome will stoop to conquer.²²

This is a startling admission, but true to the Papacy's *modus operandi*. A communication from Vatican City, published in the St. Paul Pioneer Press of November 1936, stated:

Pope Pius feels that the United States is the ideal base for Catholicism's great drive... The Catholic movement, Rome's militant organization numbering millions all over the world, will be marshaled direct from Rome, by Monsignor Pizzardo – next to Pacelli the Holy See's shrewdest diplomat and politician.²³

Here we have a glimpse of the tremendous organization and effort that the Catholic Church has been making during the last 100 years to capture America.

Key goals

According to investigators, Rome planned five steps to secure the United States' loyalty:

1. Catholicize public school textbooks
2. Revise reference books
3. Muzzle or control the public press and media.
4. Capture or control the public libraries
5. Censor books that are not friendly to the Roman Catholic Church.

Notice the statement by the scholarly French Cardinal Alfred Baudrillart when he was Director of the Catholic Institute of Paris. After giving a frank statement about the many persecutions of which the Catholic Church is guilty, he stated:

²² E. Boyd Barrett, *Rome Stoops to Conquer* (New York: Julian Messner, 1935), 15, 266-267.

²³ *St Paul Pioneer Press*, November 4, 1936.

Indeed, even among our friends and our brothers we find those who dare not look this problem in the face (that is, the problem of Rome's dark and awful past). They ask permission from the church to ignore or even to deny all those acts and institutions in the past, which have made orthodoxy (Catholicism) compulsory.²⁴

This is a frank Roman Catholic admission that Catholics have sought permission and obtained it, to deny and ignore the facts of history in order to whitewash the Church of Rome.

Senator Thomas E. Watson declared in 1928, before the United States Senate:

In the public schools the Catholics have stealthily introduced textbooks written by Jesuits; and your children are being taught that the Roman church was misunderstood in the past; that its doctrines are not fatal to humanity and gospel religion; that its record is not saturated with the blood of innocent millions, murdered by Papal persecutors, and that there never was such a monstrosity as the alleged sale of papal pardons of sins. Educate youth in this Catholic way, and the consequences are logical.²⁵

This reveals the achievement of the five steps which were needed to capture the USA. The Church of Rome has been highly successful in implementing her strategy.

An independent perspective

Harold Laski was a prominent member of the British government in 1947. He was a professor and an author. He lived for some years in America as a member of the faculty at Harvard University. He contributed a series of articles on world conditions to an American journal. Amongst the dominant forces operating in the USA, in particular forces tending towards reactionism, he lists Roman Catholicism. What he says is both composed and convincing: the more convincing because it is a composed statement.

I add with both hesitation and regret, my feeling that a good deal of what is most reactionary in the political and social life of America today, is directly traceable to the influence of a militant Roman Catholic Church, which is as much the expression of the purposes of a foreign power as any influence exerted by the Communist Party. No other body has devoted itself so consistently to poisoning the relations between the U.S.A and Russia. It protects child labor, it is building from infant school to university, its own educational emperium in emperio (empire within an empire). It has immense influence over the movie industry, not least where films of a political complexion are concerned. It plays a major part in the repression of freedom of speech. It is attempting with subtlety and skill to establish a concealed control of trade unions in cities where there is a large Catholic population. I doubt whether there are three Americans today whose authority direct and indirect counts for more than that of the Cardinal-Archbishop of the New York.

²⁴ Alfred Baudrillart, *The Catholic Church, the Renaissance and Protestantism* (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. Ltd., 1908),183-184.

²⁵ Thomas E Watson, *Roman Catholics in America Falsifying History* (Watson GA: Tom Watson Book Company, 1928),5.

And to this must be added the curious and significant fact that the members of the Roman Catholic Church seem able, like their co-religious in Great Britain, to obtain pivotal posts in the foreign service, exercising a power of infiltration which must make members of the Communist party feel that they are infants at the game.

Anyone who measures Roman Catholic strength in the United States today with what it was a generation ago cannot fail to be impressed by its growth, as well as perturbed by its direction. Spain apart, I doubt whether there is any country in the world today in which its authority is greater than in America.²⁶

Roman Catholic policy has been astonishingly effective in the United States through the last one hundred years. Most Americans today are favourably disposed towards the Catholic Church. Catholicism is accepted as a Christian organization, whereas in truth it is not even though there are many Catholic Christians under its influence.

The Catholic Church is the largest church in the USA today. The largest religious group of congressmen is made up of Roman Catholics. The Vatican's financial income from the USA outstrips that of all other nations of the world combined. When an American ambassador was finally appointed to the Vatican it was done with hardly a murmur from the American people. Americans have been thoroughly blinded to the character and aims of the Papacy.

The Catholic perspective

Notice this admission in a letter written by Father Patrick Henry O'Brien to the Protestant Reverend A. Dominica, former Catholic priest, of Philadelphia. This may reflect the thoughts of the Roman Catholic hierarchy.

We, the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church expect all loyal children of the church to assist the president (of the USA) with all our strength to see the individuals comprising the USA Supreme Court shall obey the President's injunctions. And if necessary, we shall change, mend or blot the present constitution so that the president may enforce his, or rather our, humanitarian program and all phases of human rights as laid down by our saintly popes and the Holy Mother Church.

We elected our worthy president by the greatest majority ever recorded in history. We are going to have our laws made and enforced according to the Holy See, and the popes and the canon law of the Papal throne. Our entire social structure must be rebuilt on that basis. Our educational laws must be constructed to the end – that atheism, the red peril of totalitarianism, Protestantism (author's emphasis), communism, socialism and all other like ilk and stamp, be driven from this fair land.

The cross was planted on our shores by a staunch Roman Catholic (Columbus). This land belongs to us by every right. Long enough have we compromised on every important question. Now we demand what is really ours, and we are going to have it. We will support our president in every way to obtain it, peacefully, honestly if we may. If necessary we are ready to fight and die for it.

²⁶ Harold Laski in *The Christian Century*, December 31, 1947.

We want as cabinet members, children of the Holy Mother Church, holding important positions in the entire structure of our government.

We control America and we do not propose to stop, until America, or Americans are genuinely Roman Catholic and remain so. God help us.²⁷

This is a bold and arrogant assertion. If it is accurate then it indicates that Rome is well nigh in control of the USA. Her objectives, it appears, are soon to be reached. Rome is confident that her 100 year old plan is on the verge of fulfillment.

8. Facilitator of Spiritism

While Papal Rome may believe that she will make America Catholic, the prediction of Revelation 13 informs us that the method used may not succeed in the way Rome has planned. While many of the millions of Protestants in the USA are not anti-Catholic, they will not be bullied into submission to a Roman Catholic hierarchy. The method used to bring the USA into line will have to be much more subtle. Notice what the prediction says:

He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast....

Revelation 13:13, 14

Remarkable miracles will be performed that will delude the population. Bringing of fire down from heaven is prophesied in particular. It could refer to control of the lightning. Whatever it is, it will convince the people. No doubt these miracles will be performed by the powers of the occult, by spirit forces or demons. Other Scriptures make this very clear.

For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Revelation 16:14

This passage is speaking of the final climax of history, which could be very close. The spirits of devils working miracles will delude the world. Again:

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons. I Timothy 4:1

Scripture is very clear as to what is coming. Spiritism – the work of evil spirits or demons - is going to exercise wonder-working power to delude the population of the world. It will commence in the USA. As Jesus said in speaking of the last days:

For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. Matthew 24:24

If even the *elect* - not the Jews as many believe, but God's own people - are almost deceived, the rest of mankind won't have a chance. They will not be able to withstand the deception but will be swept up by the great delusion. In this way the population of the

²⁷ Quoted from a letter written by Father Patrick O'Brien to Rev A. Di Domenico, a former Roman Catholic of Philadelphia PA. Published by the Baptist Association of America.

USA will be brought into line with Catholic policy. It is interesting to notice how Ellen G. White describes all this:

Fearful sights of a supernatural character will soon be revealed in the heavens, in token of the power of miracle-working demons. The spirits of devils will go forth to the kings of the earth and to the whole world, to fasten them in deception, and urge them on to unite with Satan in his last struggle against the government of Heaven. By these agencies, rulers and subjects will be alike deceived. Persons will arise pretending to be Christ himself, and claiming the title and worship which belong to the world's Redeemer. They will perform wonderful miracles of healing, and will profess to have revelations from Heaven contradicting the testimony of the Scriptures.²⁸

We should be wary of miracles. We must know the Word of God so well that we can discern between good and evil, between truth and error.

The powers of the occult are to have extensive influence in USA affairs. In the past we have seen evidence of this with respect to individual leaders of the US government. Many are aware of the confessions of Jean Dixon, once a leading spirit medium in the USA. She tells how, during World War II, she conducted séances with Franklin D. Roosevelt and his war chiefs in order to provide guidance in the conduct of the war. This situation can occur again, and may already be happening.

Today, witchcraft is taking hold of vast numbers of people and millions in America are involved in the occult. In 1973 it was reported that there were 100,000 avowed witches in the USA which implies that there would be thousands more who had not identified themselves publicly as witches. The Church of Satan has organized groups in most of the big cities of America. In its various forms, such as astrology, the use of the Ouija board, séances, spiritual healing, glossolalia, etc these occult forces are influencing an increasing number of organizations, movements and individuals in the USA. Among these is the New Age (Eastern) movement, which is widely adhered to in many Western societies, particularly in the USA, and is deeply involved with the occult. The press reveals that currently the phenomenon called channeling involves thousands, including many movie stars. Channeling is nothing more than Spiritualism, demonstrating that evil spirits are influencing an increasing proportion of Americans.

9. Promotes formation of an image to the beast

Under these deceptions, the prediction declares, the USA will move to form *an image to the beast*.

...telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast... Revelation 13:14,15

This passage suggests that the form of government in the USA is democratic - not autocratic – and this is correct. It is dependant upon the support of the people. Thus, backed by miraculous power, the United States government will persuade its legislators and urge its people to form an image to the beast. The passage says *an image to not of*

²⁸ Ellen G. White, 624.

the beast (v15). It also states that the image has life which indicates that it is not a literal image, but rather a symbolic image.

To understand what the *image to the beast* is, we first need to understand what the beast is. Recall that in Scripture a beast represents a political power and in this case the beast represents the Papacy. The Papacy is not simply a church. The Papacy is a religio-political organization - a combination of church and state. Therefore an image to, or of, the beast, would be a replica, a likeness of that organization. And this image will be formed in the USA. It will be a union of church and state.

Steps in the formation of the beast

History reveals that the Papacy's evolution into *the beast* involved the taking of five significant steps.

i. Apostasy - This first step was taken by the early Christian church. Then, as the decades went by, finally the majority of Christians departed from the original faith of the Scriptures and became apostate. Acts 20:28-31 informs us of this, and 2 Thessalonians 2:1-7 confirms that this would take place. There was a great *falling away* - an apostasy - in the Christian church.

ii. Spiritual decay - As a result of the apostasy, the church lost its spiritual power in its proclamation of the Gospel. In place of the simplicity of the Gospel and the Word of God, formal religion; ritual and ceremony predominated. False teachings were promulgated and controversies began to wrack the church. Pagan philosophies continued to permeate contemporary Christian thinking while the power of love and the power of the gospel were replaced by a love of power and position and a desire to dominate their followers.

iii. Paganism - The apostate church began to amalgamate with the popular pagan religion of the day. That religion was a form of sun-worship called Mithraism. It originated in Babylon and came via Persia. (*Mithra* was the Persian term for the sun). This Mithraism united with the apostate Christianity of the day. The result was that paganism, with its ceremonies and rites, was absorbed into the church's faith. Such festivals as Christmas, Easter, Lent, Sunday sacredness, the celebration of the Mass, purgatory, prayers for the dead, and many other pagan rites, ceremonies and doctrines entered into the orthodox, professedly Christian church of that period.

iv. Ecumenism - The fourth step involved the convening of great ecumenical councils in order to unite the churches of the Mediterranean world. This is where the word *ecumenical* originated. The leaders of the churches came together in these councils in order to settle their differences so that the churches of the Roman Empire might become one. Finally unity was achieved and the Bishop of Rome was accepted by the majority as the head of all churches. The church now spoke with one voice.

v. Church/State Union - The fifth and final step was the union of the super church with the civil power of the state - church and state united. The civil power executed the wishes of the church. The Papacy – the beast power – had now been formed. Religious liberty vanished and persecution began.

In order for the *image to the beast* to be formed in the USA we suggest that these same five steps will need to be taken.

Features of the image to the beast

Revelation 13 reveals that the *image to the beast* has six distinguishing features.

- i. It will originate in the USA.
- ii. The US government will initiate it.
- iii. It is formed after the healing of the wound, that is, after the Papacy's political power is restored. (This occurred in 1929).
- iv. It is to be separate and distinct from the first beast, that is, non-Catholic in its profession.
- v. It will be supported by the majority of the American people.
- vi. It will be similar in its character and form to the Papacy, that is, it will be religious, political and intolerant.

The only entity which fits these criteria is the American Protestant churches. As a generalization, the American Protestant churches have already taken the first three of the five steps which the early church took in forming the *beast*. Let us look at the evidence.

Steps in the formation of the image to the beast

i. Apostasy – The mainstream Protestant churches have departed from the original faith of Christ. They have departed from the Scriptures as the sole guide for mankind and for many years have been sliding deeper into apostasy. This may be a shock to some, but it is a fact that Protestantism has lost its protest. No longer do the Protestant churches protest against the errors of Rome. For over 150 years they have been slipping further away from the truth of God. There has been a retreat from the authority of the Bible.

ii. Spiritual decay - As a result of apostasy Protestantism has lost its spiritual power. This has been the case for a long period of time. Religion for many is a mere form. False teachings permeate the Protestant churches and in particular its clergy. Psychology, evolution, the social gospel and secular standards are espoused. Today many Protestant groups are accepting homosexuals as clergy. If this is not spiritual decay, what is?

iii. Paganism - Instead of rejecting pagan rites and ceremonies, the Protestant churches are increasingly tolerant of these and uphold, practice and promote many of them. These pagan rites and ceremonies include Christmas, Easter and Sunday observance, which have been disguised with a Christian cloak.

iv. Ecumenism - Church councils have convened to bring about church union. The ecumenical movement began in the 1960's and has continued to develop since then. Church union is on the agenda for most Protestants and for some, even a move back to Rome. Powerful forces are bringing the churches together while doctrinal differences are being put aside. Seventh-day Adventists made this prediction more than 130 years ago when such a notion was unthinkable. Originally there was little evidence to support this prediction, but time as usual has confirmed the accuracy of the Seventh-day Adventist interpretation of the Book of Revelation.

It is often claimed by those who advocate church union that the divisions in the church has confused the world and that the church is failing because of its divisions. This is untrue. The correct cause of failure is apostasy, which has resulted in a loss of spiritual power. We reiterate: the power of love is being replaced by a love of power. This is the pattern adopted by both individuals and organizations.

Church union is a backward step, since it leads towards apostasy. Historically, divisions in the church have been essential in order to preserve truth. Take, for example, Luther and the Protestant reformers. Had Luther stayed in the Church of Rome there would never have been the mighty Protestant Reformation. Had the Wesleys stayed in the Anglican Church there would never have been the great Evangelical Revival. Similarly with Seventh-day Adventists: if they had stayed within the Protestant Churches there would never have been this world-wide Advent movement presenting the truth of the Second Coming of Christ.

While many sincere Christians believe that church union is the will of God, it appears that the basic motive for church union is power. Notice some of the statements by leaders of church union:

*The church today faces a life and death struggle in which a totalitarian Christianity, or totalitarian government is the issue. To achieve this goal of Christianity, all minor differences separating the churches must be forgotten.*²⁹

This is an ominous development. The Archbishop of York, who later became the Archbishop of Canterbury, at the opening service of the Edinburgh conference on Faith and Order in 1937 declared:

*We deeply lament the absence from this collaboration of the great Church of Rome - the church, which more than any other has known how to speak to the nations, so that the nations heard.*³⁰

This is a telling admission. The Church of Rome did speak so that the nations heard. The Pope and his emissaries are key players behind the scenes in both national and international politics.³¹ While the Vatican is a major political influence today, historically Rome spoke by anathema, by interdict, by persecution, by martyrdom, by crusade, by dictating to the State. This same spirit is evident in the National Council of Churches today which officially advocates violence for the achievement of certain ends.

The nations today are listening to the Church of Rome. Pope John Paul II was a key adviser to national leaders in the tumultuous events leading to the collapse of Soviet Communism. He consulted weekly, and at times daily, with US President Bush, who relied on Vatican analysis of the European situation. During the Baltic crisis Pope John Paul II was the negotiator between Mikhail Gorbachev and the Baltic States, advising the Baltic leaders not to push Gorbachev too far.³²

²⁹ Dr Emil Brunner, noted German theologian.

³⁰ Dr Ramsay, Archbishop of York.

³¹ US News & World Report, August 13, 1990.

³² Ibid.

The purpose of the Ecumenical Movement is to take the Protestant churches back into union with Rome. Recent statements by the Archbishop of Canterbury confirm that the Anglican Church is moving towards unity with Rome. This implies an acknowledgement that the Pope is the head of the broader Christian church.³³

The ground-swell towards charismatic worship has engulfed most churches, including the Catholic Church. As a force that crosses denominational boundaries, the charismatic movement is an effective agent for fostering the move towards Christian unity with the aim of uniting all churches with the Roman Catholic Church. Today we are witnessing the fourth step toward the formation of the image to the beast.

v. Church/State union - The first three steps have already been taken and we are witnessing a movement toward the fourth step. This means that the fifth step is not far away. The one united super church will accept the support of American civil power. There will then be a union of church and State. The prediction indicates that the USA civil power will *give life to the image of the beast*.

...that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. Revelation 13:15

A government speaks through its laws and policies. This means that the civil power of the USA will put the policies and rules of the one super church into operation. It will enforce them. In doing this, the state civil power will unite with the super church and thus become a part of the image to the beast. Then the lamb-like power *will speak as a dragon*.³⁴

The prediction stated,

Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. Revelation 13:11

Church and State union will result in the enacting of civil laws that will lead to religious intolerance. The dragon always speaks as a persecuting power; therefore we must expect oppressive laws against those who dissent from the wishes of the super church. Finally, because many dissenters refuse to submit, the prediction reveals that capital punishment will be used against religious dissenters.

...and cause that as many as would not worship (or obey) the image of the beast, to be killed. V12

It is informative to notice that this prediction of the image and its worship resonates with events in the Old Testament. As previously stated, the book of Revelation is a mosaic of the Old Testament. The imagery of this prediction is borrowed from Daniel 3 (see table on following page) which gives an account of how Nebuchadnezzar, having conquered the then known world, set up a golden image and demanded its universal worship on

³³ The Guardian|The Observer, 22-22-2009, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2009/nov/22/williams-faces-pope-on-converts>, accessed Sept 2012. Also see Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglican%E2%80%94Roman_Catholic_International_Commission.

³⁴ Currently (2012) in the USA the constitutional separation of church and state is being challenged by a determined group in the Republican Party and influential Roman Catholics (see Appendix A). http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/02/26/santorum-church-and-state_n_1302246.html Accessed 01-10-12).

pain of death. Three Hebrews refused to obey. As a result they were cast into a fiery furnace from which the Son of God publicly delivered them.

The record of that incident is recognized as a picture of the final crisis which occurs during the worship of *the image of the beast* of Revelation 13. As Jamieson, Fausset & Brown have commented: *All this typifies the last apostasy.*³⁵

Parallels between Daniel 3 and Revelation 13

There are 14 significant parallels between Daniel 3 and Revelation 13.

Daniel 3	Revelation 13
1. Literal Babylon	Spiritual Babylon
2. "Great Babylon"	"Babylon the Great"
3. Dominated the world	Will dominate the world
4. Connected with the number 6	Connected with the number 6 (see Appendix A)
5. Fall predicted in Daniel 2:39 and Daniel 5:25-31	Fall predicted in Revelation 18:7-8
6. Erected an image representing Babylon to last forever	Is to erect a spiritual Image representing Babylon to last forever
7. Compels all to worship	Compels all to worship
8. Three literal Jews refuse	Spiritual Jews of Three Angel's Message refuse to worship
9. Hailed before the ruler	Hailed before rulers
10. Wrath against the 3 Jews	Wrath against the spiritual Jews
11. Issue over worship (10 times in Daniel 3)	Issue over worship (7 times in chapter 13-14)
12. Death Decree	Death Decree (Revelation 13:15)
13. A fiery trial	A fiery trial
14. Delivery by Son of God	Delivery by Son of God (Revelation 17:14)

³⁵ Robert Jamieson et al., *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1871) on Revelation Chapter 13.

10. Enforces submission to the image to the beast

The second beast enforces submission to *the image to the beast*. Here we see how this will occur:

He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their forehead, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Revelation 13:16 -17

Two symbols of submission

There are two symbols of submission mentioned:

- i. *A mark on their right hand or on their forehead.* The *right hand* denotes physical submission or compliance, which is possible without mental assent. The *forehead* denotes intellectual assent wherein the individual agrees with the precepts advanced as well as complies with them. The *Mark of the Beast* is the predominant symbol of submission. In the dire warning in Revelation 14:9-11 against receiving the worship of the beast and his image, only the mark is mentioned. The number and the name are omitted. This indicates that the dominant symbol of submission will be the *Mark of the Beast*.

Note - The expression *the name of the beast* is used only once in Scripture, and there are doubts about the authenticity of this. It is not confirmed elsewhere in Scripture. On the other hand the *Mark of the Beast* symbol is mentioned eight times in six chapters. The *image to the beast* is mentioned ten times in six chapters. The *number of the beast* is mentioned five times in two chapters.

- ii. *The number of his (the beast's) name.* In a previous topic where Revelation 13:18 was discussed the initial application of the number 666 was presented and it was shown that it fits perfectly with the official title of the leading principal of the Papacy. However, it appears that the number 666 will also apply to a segment of mankind when religious laws are enforced in the coming crisis.

Many confuse the mark with the number, but Verse 17 makes a clear distinction between the two. The number is 666 but the mark is something that is distinct and different. It appears that while the great majority receives *the mark of the beast*, some receive 666 as well as the sign of submission.

The number 666 is derived from Babylon. It was the secret of the ancient mysteries of that system which in fact was the worship of Lucifer. The number 666 is deeply embedded in Theosophy, the religion of the east, and is also associated with the modern occult.³⁶

In 1994 the Bakersfield-Californian publication *Religion* in its issue of July 2, illustrated America's collaboration with the Vatican by picturing the Pope and an American leader shaking hands over the Atlantic Ocean. In 1888 Ellen G. White forecast that:

³⁶ For an in-depth, documented study on the origin and significance of the number 666, see Murl Vance, *The Trail of the Serpent* (Pune, India: Oriental Watchman Publishing, 1991).

*The Protestants of the United States will be foremost in stretching their hands across the gulf to grasp the hand of spiritualism; they will reach over the abyss to clasp hands with the Roman power.*³⁷

Conclusion

The only power that aligns with all ten identifiers of the second beast is the United States of America.

Revelation 13 contains a dramatic and emotive prediction. To the uninformed it presents a daunting prospect. To the enlightened follower of Christ it calls for a special type of preparation. It also reminds us of our responsibility to warn our fellow human beings.

Topic 23 of *Understanding Revelation* covers a prophecy found in Revelation 14:6-13. This prophecy warns God's people so that they can make full preparation and be delivered when Christ intervenes on behalf of His people.

³⁷ Ellen G. White, 588.

Appendices

Appendix A – The challenge to separation of Church and State

The 2012 election campaign has exposed a significant movement within the US Republican Party to diminish the constitutional prohibition on government legislating in matters of religion. The following are some relevant references accessed on 01/10/2012.

Huffington Post - Politics, posted 26/02/2012.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/02/26/santorum-church-and-state_n_1302246.html

Rick Santorum on Sunday took on separation of church and state.

"I don't believe in an America where the separation of church and state are absolute," he told 'This Week' host George Stephanopoulos. "The idea that the church can have no influence or no involvement in the operation of the state is absolutely antithetical to the objectives and vision of our country...to say that people of faith have no role in the public square? You bet that makes me want to throw up."

The GOP candidate was responding to comments he made last October. He had said that he "almost threw up" after reading JFK's 1960 speech in which he declared his commitment to the separation of church and state.

Theocracy Watch – The rise of the Religious Right in the Republican Party

<http://www.theocracywatch.org/>

Appendix B –The number 6 in Scripture

In the Book of Genesis

- Mankind was created on the sixth day of the week.
- The work of creation concluded on the sixth day of the week, representing secular completeness.
- Six days were given to mankind for labor.
- Six words in Scripture are used for mankind – 4 in Hebrew and 2 in Greek.
- Six represents mankind trusting in and exalting self.
- Cain and his descendents lasted six generations only.
- In the 600th (6x10x10) year of Noah's life, mankind filled up their cup of self-exaltation and was destroyed.

In the Book of Daniel

- The Gematria (ie, the value of each Hebrew letter) of Daniel 3:1 = 4662 (666 x 7).
- The golden image is 60 cubits high x 6 cubits wide (Daniel 3).
- Six musical instruments were employed in Babylon's worship (Daniel 3).
- The expression "worship the golden image" is employed 6 times (Daniel 3).
- The phrase "these three men" or "these men" (referring to the 3 Hebrews) is used 6 times (Daniel 3).
- Belshazzar in praising Babylon's gods, praises six gods (Daniel 5)

In the Book of Revelation

- The number 666 is comprised of 3 sixes. In Scripture the number three represents completeness. Thus 666 refers to the peak of human exaltation
- The number six is associated with Babylon.
- The term "Babylon" is employed six times.
- The term "woman" of Babylon is employed six times.
- The Babylonian woman has six items of attire.
- Six activities characteristic of Babylon will disappear forever (Chapter 18:21-23)
- Babylon's merchants trade in 30 items (6 x 5) commencing with *gold* (the highest value in her sight) and concluding with the *bodies and souls of men* (Chapter 18:12-14) - the item of lowest value in her sight.
- Six major sins are leveled against Babylon.

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