

# SALVATION IN SYMBOLS & SIGNS

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Corresponds to Program 55

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the NKJV and KJV.

## THE BEASTS OF REVELATION 13 STUDY GUIDE

**Question** – Can the devil actually raise the dead? Is the devil able to personate the dead?

**Answer:** The devil cannot resurrect the dead. He has no power to do this, yet he and his fallen angels are able to come in the guise of people. The Bible says that they turn up on earth in the guise of ministers of righteousness and the devil will come as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). So, when we encounter people who have died and seem to be alive, we are actually encountering a masterpiece of deception. If the devil and his angels can manifest themselves as ministers, and even an angel of light, they can impersonate anyone. The best way for us to identify the counterfeit is to study the genuine: The Bible is the source of the genuine.

We talked in our last program on Revelation 16 about the sixth plague and the river Euphrates being dried up. This symbolism is borrowed from the Old Testament story of the fall of Babylon. God anointed Cyrus as a type of Christ and led him to dry up the literal river Euphrates in order to capture literal Babylon, setting God's people free in accordance with the 70 years of captivity (Isaiah 45:1; Jeremiah 25:11, 12). Jesus, God's anointed, will be drying up the waters which represent the peoples and nations that support spiritual Babylon in order to set His people free in the last days (Revelation 16:12; 17:15).

What we see the "three unclean spirits like frogs" doing is counterfeiting the work of Christ with miracles, even seeming to raise the dead, in order to deceive the world (Revelation 16:13,14). Christ says, "Behold, I come as a thief," and

admonishes us to hold on to our garments of His righteousness, and not be deceived by the false miracles (Revelation 16:13-15). The devil will have his fallen angels transformed into ministers of righteousness, working miracles and counterfeiting the very thing that Jesus promises to do when He returns (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17).

### THE BEASTS OF REVELATION 13

#### Revelation 13:1-3

This is not a literal beast. The unique characteristics—the body of a leopard, the mouth of a lion, the feet of a bear—make that obvious. This beast is symbolic.



“There was another horn, a little one...”; “Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth...”

**DANIEL 7:8; REVELATION 13:11**

In order to understand what the beast represents, we need to turn to the Old Testament book of Daniel. Interestingly enough, Daniel and John were given very similar visions, making Daniel and Revelation complementary prophetic books. By comparing their prophecies, we can unravel their meaning. Listen to Daniel: “I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another” (Daniel 7:2, 3).

The sea is symbolic of many nations, a great populace of humanity. Revelation supports this interpretation: “...The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues [languages]” (Revelation 17:15).

The “four winds” stirring up the sea represent war and strife between nations. In Daniel 11:40, a “whirlwind” is associated with “chariots, and horsemen, and with many ships,” all of

### KEY SCRIPTURES

**Revelation 17:15** THE WATERS ARE PEOPLES

**Daniel 7:19** FOURTH BEAST WAS DIFFERENT

**Revelation 13:11** BEAST SPOKE LIKE A DRAGON

**Revelation 13:14** HE DECEIVES THOSE ON EARTH

which signify war. The prophet Jeremiah also saw that “the four winds” symbolize one “nation” warring against another as “enemies” (Jeremiah 49:36, 37; see also Jeremiah 25:31-33).

What, then, are the “four beasts” that arise out of this wind-swept seascape? The answer is crystal clear in Daniel 7:17: “These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth.” Verse 23 says the beasts represent “kingdoms.” So, there we have it—a beast in prophecy represents a kingdom. Now the next logical question is what kingdom does the first beast in Revelation 13 represent? The answer again is tied to Daniel 7 because the first beast pictured in Revelation 13 is like a bear, a lion, and a leopard, fitting the description of the beasts in Daniel 7.

If Babylon is the first beast, Medo-Persia the second, and Greece the third, it follows that whatever empire emerged in history after Greece must be symbolized in the fourth beast. Historical records are unmistakably clear: the Iron Monarchy of Pagan Rome arose to power next in the stream of time.

Then there are ten horns, which represent “ten kings that shall arise” (verse 24). After almost six centuries of universal dominion, repeated invasions into the empire by barbarian Germanic tribes began to take its toll. Western Rome finally crumbled in 476 A.D. Then we find ten separate mini-monarchies established to form what we recognize today as the foundational nations of modern Europe:

1. The Franks (modern France)
2. The Anglo-Saxons (England)
3. The Alemanni (Germany)
4. The Lombards (Italy)
5. The Visigoths (Spain)
6. The Suevi (Portugal)
7. The Burgundians (Switzerland)
8. The Heruli (extinct)
9. The Vandals (extinct)
10. The Ostrogoths (extinct)

The Papal Roman Church-State rose up among these ten nations of Europe. As noted in the prophecy, it came up from the sea and plucked up three horns (kings) in its rise to power. This explains the ten horns. What do the seven heads represent? They are also tied to the previous kingdoms represented by the symbolic beasts making up the powers preceding papal Rome:

- Babylon – 1 head of the lion
- Medo-Persia – 1 head of the bear
- Greece – 4 heads of the leopard
- Imperial Rome – 1 head of the terrible beast

The sea beast is like a lion, bear, and leopard, and receives its seat from the dragon, Imperial Rome. It has seven heads (the full count of the heads on the preceding powers) and ten horns (the ten kings among which the papacy arose).

### Daniel 7:19-25

Here in Daniel 7, Daniel asks for more information, especially about the little horn power, and the angel gives him characteristic and historical data that further identifies the same earthly power of Revelation 13:1-3.

**Geographic Location:** Daniel is told that the “little horn” comes to power “among” the ten horns that existed before it. As we have already noted, the Pagan Roman Empire fragmented into ten European kingdoms. Here, then, we have the geographic location for the emergence of the little horn. It would arise out of the rubble of divided Rome, among the Western European nations. This first characteristic fits the Roman Church perfectly. She did indeed ascend to dominance in Western Europe as the successor to Imperial Rome.

**Time of Ascendancy:** The second characteristic is the logical counterpart to geographic location. Since the little horn arose out of the crumbling Pagan Roman Empire, it follows that it would emerge “after” (Daniel 7:24) Pagan Rome falls. This gives us not only geography but also time. Imperial Rome reigned from about 168 B.C. to 476 A.D. By 538 A.D., the Roman church was established as the uncontested new empire of dominance.

**Destroys Three Kingdoms as it Rises to Power:** Daniel was shown that “three” of the ten horns were “plucked up by the roots” as the little horn amassed its empire. Later in chapter 7, Daniel says the angel told him this means that the little horn “shall subdue three kings” (verse 24). Previously in this study we listed the ten horns by name. You may want to check that list again at this juncture. Notice that while seven are still in existence to this day, three of them are identified as extinct. The Heruli, Vandals, and Ostrogoths were indeed “plucked up by the roots.” They are extinct due to the fact that they vehemently, unsuccessfully, opposed the church’s rule. They were relentlessly overthrown until there was no trace of them left for posterity.

**A Human Authority to Dictate its Belief System:** “In this horn,” Daniel says, “were eyes like the eyes of man” (Daniel 7:8). In the Bible, eyes symbolize understanding. Paul prayed that “the eyes of your understanding” might be “enlightened” (Ephesians 1:18). The little horn is not divinely led with heavenly understanding of truth. Rather, this power is under human guidance apart from God. A human figure occupies a very lofty position as arbiter of truth. This characteristic is accurately fulfilled in the more-than-human status conferred upon the popes.

**A Mouth Speaking Great Things Against God:** Verses 8 and 25 warn that the little horn will use its authority to speak

shocking words against God Himself. The claims of the Papal Church certainly do fit this characteristic. For starters, the church claims infallibility. This alone is an incredibly bold rival claim against God. But the Papal system doesn't stop there. She claims the power to forgive sins through her priesthood, apart from which there is no pardon from God. She claims to stand as mediator between God and mankind, and unabashedly exalts her human leader, the pope, to the status of deity. He is, as it were, God on earth.

**A Persecuting Power:** Daniel was shown this powerful kingdom employing its influence as it “made war with the saints and prevailed against them” (Daniel 7:21). It is estimated that the Papal Church of the dark ages put to death millions of men, women, and children who chose to worship God according to conscience.

**A Different Kind of Power:** The little horn kingdom would be “diverse” or different from those that reigned before it (Daniel 7:24). All the previous powers brought to view were primarily political kingdoms worshiping pagan gods. The Papacy arose as a primarily religious power—a church—professing to worship the true God and claiming the name of Christ. Then, as a church, she employed the military might of various political kingdoms to fight her wars and persecute any who refused to worship God according to her dictates.

**Attempts to Change God's Law:** The most shocking characteristic of the little horn is its audacious effort to tamper with the very laws of God. Verse 25 reads: “He shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws...”

The contextual setting clearly links the “times and laws” here specified to “the Most High” God. It goes without saying that ruling authorities routinely change human laws. Daniel is dealing with spiritually significant issues that affect God and His people. To say the little horn will think to change human laws would mean nothing. To say that this anti-Christian power will think to change laws established by God means a great deal. And this is exactly what we discover as the historical evidence is considered.

Daniel chapter 7 lays out a number of key characteristics identifying the papacy and making the connection between Revelation chapter 13 and Daniel chapter 7.

Now let's turn our attention to the second beast or earthly kingdom, pointed out in the prophecy of Revelation 13.

## THE EARTH BEAST

### Revelation 13:11

### *Some Identifying Historical Characteristics of this Second Earthly Power:*

There are several characteristics noted in the context of this prophetic verse that will help us to identify this second beast of Revelation 13. The first characteristic is the timing. As noted in Revelation 13:8-10, this second earthly power arises as the previous power is going into captivity. In a previous study, we learned that Papal Rome went into captivity in the year 1798. That would suggest that this second earthly kingdom would rise out of this power shift in the closing years of the 1700s.

A second identifying marker is that it is called “another beast,” meaning a new power, different and unconnected with the previous power, and having none of the characteristics of that power (e.g.: the bear, lion, etc.).

A third characteristic is that this new power has lamb-like horns. This would suggest an association with Christian principles, as the lamb is a symbol of Christ. At the same time, this new earthly power would speak like a dragon. This suggests that in spite of its Christian principles, it also manifests a dragon voice.

If we look at the evidence we have so far—a new nation rising up in the late 1700s, professing to be Christian, yet speaking at times like a dragon—it is not difficult to identify. This second earth beast is a prophetic representation of America in prophecy. We will look into this further in our next study.

### Summary

The final chapters of Revelation identify two earthly powers. These powers will work together to lead the entire world into false worship through the deceptive power of the devil. The first power is a revived papacy, once mortally wounded but soon to be completely healed. The second power is America—professedly a Christian nation with the dragon-like voice that will eventually over-rule the principles of the Lamb. There is still much more for us to understand in relation to these two earthly powers and their final economic enforcement of the mark of their authority.

As we continue to study Bible prophecy, the Holy Spirit will lead us to understand better the history of nations past, present, and future so that we can be better prepared for what's ahead. Amen. ★

