

The Events after World War III - Revelation 13:4

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A War Over Worship

The book of Revelation indicates a coming war over worship which no one expects, but which will affect everyone. I call this war *World War IV* because it will begin after World War III has ended. Currently, this war seems impossible, but other events like the four trumpets and the formation of a seven-headed beast also seem impossible. A very different world order will emerge shortly after God's judgments begin. The seven-headed beast in Revelation 13:1 will immediately enact laws to appease God's wrath and stop His judgments. Ironically, the seven-headed beast and law enforcement officials in every nation will become oppressors and attack anyone who resists the new laws. World War IV will last 42 miserable months.

Revelation 13 describes the war over worship with the following words: **"The whole world was astonished** [by the sudden creation of the seven-headed beast] **and** [at first, the survivors] **followed** [along with] **the** [mission of the seven-headed] **beast**. [In worshipping the seven-headed beast,] **Men worshiped the** [great red] **dragon** [who is that ancient serpent, the devil] **because he had given authority to the** [seven-headed] **beast, and they also worshiped the** [seven-headed] **beast and asked, "Who is like the** [seven-headed] **beast?** [Who can resist its authority and succeed?] **Who can make war against him** [without being killed or severely punished]? **The** [seven-headed] **beast was given a mouth to utter proud words** [vain, arrogant boasting] **and blasphemies** [words and declarations that are insulting to God] **and to exercise his authority for forty-two months . . . He** [the seven-headed beast] **was given power to make war against *the saints* and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation** [including the United States]. ***All inhabitants of the Earth* will worship the** [seven-headed] **beast -- all whose names have not been written in the Book of Life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world."** (Revelation 13:3-8, insertions and italics mine)

By the end of the 42 months, everyone will be worshipping (Greek: *proskuneo*) the seven-headed beast except the saints who either will be dead or in hiding. *Proskuneo* means to kiss, surrender, or voluntarily submit. The idea stems from ancient times when people showed voluntary submission by bowing and kissing the rings of kings, queens, and popes. A display of humble submission seems a brilliant choice when approaching people that have power over life and death. Unfortunately, for all the good the seven-headed beast intends to do, it will ultimately become the devil's hand-puppet. The devil will overtake the seven-headed beast when he gives it his power, throne, and great authority. This will be an amazing thing to witness, but only those who have spiritual eyesight will understand what is really taking place. The wicked will not recognize the devil's control of the seven-headed beast or sense his deadly goal of destroying the saints until the war ends.

Tensions are building around the world and eventually, World War III will become inevitable.

During this war, millions of innocent people will die; many from nuclear exchanges. As the carnage unfolds, the United Nations will sound like a broken record, pleading for peace and safety. The saints will be praying, asking God to intervene to stop the madness. (Revelation 8:3,4) While Earth is roiling from the violence of war, Jesus will select and seal 144,000 people (Revelation 7:1-4) and when they are ready for their mission, Jesus will declare, **“There will be no more delay.”** (Revelation 10:6) The angel ministering at the Altar of Incense in Heaven’s temple will terminate the intercession that transpires each day by throwing down his golden censer. (Revelation 8:5) Dramatic signs such as sheets of lightning, deafening thunder, and voices coming out of the Earth will follow. Then, a global earthquake will cause the whole world to tremble, and God will direct His wrath toward Earth. I believe the 144,000 will announce the date for each of the first four trumpet judgments (Revelation 8:6-12) and the disasters will occur over a 30 to 60-day period.

Sudden Destruction Ends World War III

Although WWIII will be horrific, very few people anticipate the “sudden destruction” that will halt it. Paul wrote, **“While people are saying, ‘Peace and safety,’ destruction [from God] will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.”** (1 Thessalonians 5:3, insertion mine) The sudden destruction that Paul predicts is God’s wrath. The first four trumpets will cause much greater devastation than mankind’s nuclear destruction. After God has burned up one third of the Earth and two billion people are dead or missing from the first four trumpets, the leaders of the world will assemble during the darkness of the fourth trumpet. They will attempt to appease God’s anger by creating a seven-headed government that will devour everyone who resists its authority. This beast (or government), called Babylon, has the mouth of a lion and the claws of a bear. It will issue laws and severely punish anyone who refuses to obey them. Initially, the religious and political leaders of the world will be on a mission to save the world from God’s wrath, and their solution will be to stop all behavior that is offensive to God. Anyone caught offending the Almighty will be immediately arrested and punished.

The religious leaders of the world will not anticipate the dreadful consequence of creating the seven-headed beast. Governments rarely consider the negative consequences of their good intentions. Before we examine this consequence, consider this short story. Before Jesus created the Earth, God cast Lucifer and his angels out of Heaven, because they refused to worship Jesus. After Jesus created Earth, Lucifer lied to Eve in the Garden of Eden, and she ate the forbidden fruit. Adam willfully sinned because he loved Eve. After Adam and Eve sinned, the devil claimed the world as his kingdom and Heaven recognized him as “the prince of this world.” (John 12:31) Four thousand years later, the devil knew that when Jesus was born, He came into the world for three reasons. First, Jesus came to redeem every sinner who loves God, obeys the voice of the Holy Spirit, and lives by faith. Second, Jesus came to prove to Heaven’s angels that Lucifer had become a liar, predator, and murderer. Third, Jesus came to Earth to take this kingdom away from Lucifer’s dominion. Remember that Lucifer tempted Jesus with ownership of the world. (Matthew 4:8,9) Jesus accomplished everything the Father wanted Him to do so Lucifer and his angels know that God will legitimately destroy them at the end of the thousand years. (Revelation 20:9,10) All the saints and holy angels will agree that for justice to be served, Lucifer and his angels must be annihilated. Knowing that Jesus was on a

mission to destroy his dominion, the devil tried to kill Jesus when He was born. When that effort failed, Lucifer came up with another plan. He led the leaders of Israel to kill Jesus, but the Father resurrected Jesus. Jesus ascended to the Father resurrection Sunday morning to receive Earth as His possession. However, Lucifer would not give up his claim, so there was war in Heaven and Lucifer and his angels were cast out. Never again would the Father allow the devil to represent Earth in His administrative councils. (Job 1:6-12)

Furious over his eviction from Heaven, the devil focused his efforts on the tiny Church that Jesus established. For four hundred years, the devil attempted to use the Romans to destroy the early Christian Church. When that failed, Lucifer saw Justinian establish the Holy Roman Empire. For 1,260 years he used the Roman Catholic Church to chase the woman (those who love God, obey the voice of the Holy Spirit, and live by faith) into the wilderness. (Revelation 12:6) However, God had prepared a place for her, and the woman survived. Lucifer has been defeated fairly several times, and he is furious. He knows that he will lose the war over worship, but he will have one last opportunity to make life unbearable for God's people. This is the best outcome he can anticipate. He hates God and by killing and torturing God's children (the objects of God's affection), he can exert his last revenge. When the power of the papacy was broken in 1798, the Bible says, **"Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off [took a time out so that he could lay careful plans] to make war against the rest [the remnant, the last] of her offspring--those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus."** (Revelation 12:17, insertions mine)

The Devil Will Take over the Beast

The devil has one last opportunity to spit in God's eye. The devil knows that God's wrath is coming. He also knows the seven-headed beast will be created and it will be his last opportunity to torture, persecute, and destroy God's people. The devil is worse than divorced parents fighting over custody of their children with a husband who kills the babies rather than allow his ex-wife to have them. The devil knows that God will allow him to conquer the saints—at least for a while. The devil also knows that God allows the seven-headed beast to function a mere 42 months. Initially, men will rush to create the seven-headed beast for one purpose, but the devil will quickly usurp the beast and use it for his evil purposes. His control of the seven-headed beast will be the unintended consequence.

In the devil's plan to take over the beast, he is as sneaky as he is experienced. He knows he is invisible to the sinful nature, but visible to the spiritual nature! He gained control over the world in Noah's day by leading people deeper and deeper into sin. He is a master at gradualism. He has gained control of every nation since Noah's flood. He gained control of the early Christian church, then the Catholic Church, and then every church within Protestantism. He has also gained control of every religious system on Earth; this is why a blasphemous name is written on each of the seven heads. Therefore, given his skills and experience, gaining control of the seven-headed beast will be easy. In fact, he is working on the very people who will someday be its leaders!

Consider the devil's handiwork: Over time, King Herod fell under demonic control by knowingly and willfully violating his conscience. When a person like King Herod chooses to do wrong, the

Holy Spirit steps back and permits the demons to insert their depraved thoughts into his/her mind. As a person slides down the greasy flagpole of sin, demons lead their victim deeper into wrong doing so the victim has no conscience or sense of guilt. His only concern is saving self, doing "whatever it takes" to survive. A person in this state becomes separated from God, because the Holy Spirit stops speaking if we insist on defiance (blasphemy) and demons will take over. According to the Bible, when King Herod learned that a child had been born who would someday rule the nations with a scepter of iron, the devil made Herod very afraid that he would lose his throne. As king, Herod had the power of life and death over his subjects. In a state of fear, Herod did what he had to do, and he commanded that all baby boys in Bethlehem who were under the age of two years be killed. Lucifer prompted Herod's actions, because it was Lucifer who wanted Baby Jesus dead!

Perhaps the devil did not know an angel had appeared to Joseph telling him to flee to Egypt with Mary and Baby Jesus. Historians may describe Herod's despicable crime, but there is more to the story. Revelation 12 lifts the veil so that we can see Lucifer's predatory role. Lucifer was the Master of Ceremonies on the night all baby boys in Bethlehem were slain, and Lucifer will become the Master of Ceremonies shortly after the seven-headed beast is created.

The devil understands Bible prophecy better than any human. He has garbled up apocalyptic prophecy so no one can make heads or tails out of it, because he does not want people to know his plans. The devil knows a window of opportunity is coming. Right now, He is secretly gaining control over the religious and political leaders of the world (2 Thessalonians 2:7), and after the seven-headed beast appears, it will not take him long to transform man's efforts for appeasing God into his hand-puppet for destroying the saints. The devil often hides behind human faces. Lucifer will cause the leaders of Babylon to say outrageous things against God, and to do all kinds of cruel things that people trying to please God would never consider doing. This will be a powerful sign that the seven-headed beast cannot fulfill the mission which it originally intended. Demons can cause people to do things that are so evil, depraved, and disgusting that they go beyond imagination. Those who have spiritual eyesight can see the increasing power that demons are gaining over people and organizations every day. Meanwhile, those who do not have spiritual eyesight will literally remain in the dark.