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WAKE UP! MONTHLY

PROCLAIMING THE REVELATION OF JESUS



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America
Seminars

P.O. Box 273
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800-475-0876
wuas@wake-up.org
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The Dragon and the Dreadful Beasts

Dear Wake Up Family,

This month's article is part five of a six-part series about four significant prophetic beasts found in the books of Daniel and Revelation. To get us started this month, here is a brief review of information from the previous four articles. In part one, we learned about the four major paradigms of preterism, idealism, historicism, and futurism. We also learned that historicists and futurists believe events in apocalyptic prophecies occur in sequential order. Part two covered parallels between the unique prophecies given in Daniel and Revelation and applied the rules of apocalyptic prophecy to identify the relationships and timing of these prophecies. Larry Wilson used the rules to establish a consistent flow of prophecies extending from historical to future events. Part three identified three prophecies (Daniel 7, Revelation 12:1–6, and Revelation 12:7–14:5) and incorporated comparable events that linked the prophecies. These linkages required a specific order and established a consolidated flow of events in the three prophecies. Then, based on the foundation in the first three parts, part four evaluated descriptions of four beasts found in Daniel and Revelation. We learned that the horns of the beasts often represent kings, but there must be information available in a prophecy or related texts that explains the symbology. The heads represent religious systems that have existed before John described them in Revelation 17 and will exist during the end times.

Progression of Elements

We will apply what we have learned from prophecies in Daniel 7, Revelation 12, and Revelation 13 to help us understand the beast of Revelation 17. The next step is to explore if we can identify patterns of repetition, enlargement, and progressions of elements with the terrible beast (Daniel 7), dragon (Revelation 12:1–17), sea beast (Revelation 13:1–10), and earth beast (Revelation 13:11–18). A key parallel among all the entities is their extensive power and authority over the people of earth. This power, initially wielded by Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon—the first beast in Daniel 7—continues to expand through subsequent beasts, ultimately culminating with

the prostitute riding a beast in Revelation 17. As the time of Jesus' second coming draws near, the Devil will exercise increasing levels of power over humanity. Observing the progression of these beasts, we can see Satan's trend of expanding geographic scope and control over earth.

The Terrible Beast—Daniel 7

Traditionally, Bible students have identified the terrible beast as the Roman Empire, which was dominant as a secular and religious power from 168 BC to AD 476. This beast is described as coming from the sea, yet it also rises from the earth (Daniel 7:3, 17). Daniel's description highlights three elements—the king, the subjects of the king (the sea), and the entity from the earth. This suggests that Rome had a king, either an emperor during its secular rule or a pope during its religious dominance. The four beasts in Daniel 7 came out of the sea, each with a king ruling over a group of people. While God ultimately controlled the empires, Satan, rising from the Abyss or earth, was the hidden force—Babylon—behind the rulers of these four empires. The beasts in Daniel 7 increased in power and geographic reach until the emergence of the terrible beast. Although the four world empires exhibited significant power over their subjects, their influence did not extend globally, as some regimes remained outside their borders and control. The Devil influenced rulers who sought to kill Jesus at His birth and persecuted the Christians during the Dark Ages. According to Daniel 7:11, 26, Satan, the terrible beast, will regain power. Ultimately, God will strip Satan of his power; consuming him with fire and destroying him forever.

The terrible beast had a single head. The first two beasts in Daniel 7 also had one head each, while the third beast had four heads. Remember, we learned in the previous article that the heads on beasts represent religious systems. This suggests that the rulers of the kingdoms in Daniel 7 wielded spiritual power over their subjects. They claimed authority over worship and expected to be treated as deities by their subjects. Each head symbolized spiritual power, while the entire beast represented political power concentrated in a single ruler. In its early stages, Rome, the terrible beast, had emperors who claimed both religious and political authority, expecting to be revered

as divine by their subjects. Later, Rome developed ten horns that represented ten kingdoms (Daniel 7:24). However, the terrible beast continued to have only one head, indicating that Rome functioned as a universal religious power during the reign of the fourth beast. The beasts in Daniel 7 lacked crowns on their heads or horns, signifying that while they held religious and political power over their subjects, Satan's influence was limited to external *coercive* power. We will further consider the significance of the crown's locations later when we study the Revelation beasts.

The Dragon—Revelation 12:1–17

While Satan was directly implementing his goals through earthly kings, he was also operating in the spirit realm to influence evil angels and individuals on earth. Revelation 12:3 introduces us to another entity: a red dragon with ten horns and seven heads. Revelation 12:9 clearly identifies this dragon as the Devil, or Satan. John describes two features that differ from the terrible beast in Daniel 7. The dragon originates from heaven and has seven crowns on its heads. This heavenly origin is significant because it marks the beginning of Satan's rebellion, as depicted in this prophecy.

Before Jesus created the earth, Satan recruited one-third of the angels in heaven to join him in his rebellion against God (Isaiah 14:12–17; Ezekiel 28:12–17). These angels, referred to as stars, were cast out of heaven (Revelation 12:4). Satan has continued to wage war against the woman (Revelation 12:13) and pursue her offspring (Revelation 12:17). From ancient Babylon to the dragon prophecies of Revelation 12, the Devil has persistently worked behind the scenes to influence the growth of Babylon through religious and political entities.

The dragon wears seven *diadems* (crowns of authority) on its seven heads. In Revelation 13, each head of the sea beast bears a blasphemous name (Revelation 13:1). Since the heads of the beasts represent religious systems, this suggests that the dragon pursues the woman and her offspring through false religion. The Devil is constantly attempting to mislead people by imitating God's truth. In John's vision of the dragon, Satan employs *spiritual* power to further Babylon's development and achieve his goals on earth.

The Sea Beast—Revelation 13:1–10

The beast described in Revelation 13 builds upon the characteristics of the earlier beasts, incorporating elements from the lion, leopard, bear, and ten horns of the terrible beast in Daniel 7. It has seven heads and wears crowns similar to the dragon of Revelation 12. However, unlike the dragon, the diadems (crowns of authority) are placed on its horns rather than its heads. Historicist interpreters often conclude that the dragon and the sea beast represent pagan or papal Rome, but they have not addressed why the crowns are found at different locations on the dragon and the sea beast. There remains an unresolved challenge within the historicist perspective regarding the traditional interpretation of the sea beast as a symbol of Rome.

According to the sequence of events in this prophecy, the rise of the sea beast occurs—after the dragon’s pursuit of the woman. Since the sea beast arises after 1798, it cannot be the papacy. Additionally, if the ten horns represent civil or political powers and the heads represent religious powers, the sea beast represents a broader scope than the papacy. Geographically, the papacies’ influence did not extend to many populated areas worldwide. Religiously, while the Roman Church had varying levels of success against Muslim control of Jerusalem during the Crusades, it did not dominate large populations in China, India, or Africa during the Dark Ages. Revelation 13:7 clearly states that the sea beast had “authority over *every* tribe, people, language and nation” and it had the power to conquer God’s holy people. John also noted that unsaved people throughout the world would worship the sea beast and the dragon (Revelation 13:8). Historically, Rome did not possess such widespread power or receive worship from a globally dispersed population.

John describes the sea beast as speaking blasphemies and receiving its power from the dragon. The sea beast wields earthly power surpassing the power previously exercised by the terrible beast or the dragon. While the heads of the beast represent religious entities, the crowns of authority are on the horns, indicating that civil authorities are superior to the religious authorities during the sea beast’s reign, and political entities will persecute God’s people. The rise of the sea beast parallels the description of Babylon in

Revelation 17. The dragon (Satan) will give the sea beast (Babylon) **“his power and his throne and great authority”** (Revelation 13:2). This beast emerges due to man’s reaction to God’s wrath displayed in the first four trumpets. A global church-state theocracy, controlled by the dragon, will implement manmade laws attempting to mitigate “acts of God” and halt the global destruction caused by the trumpets. Like the lion-beast of Daniel 7:4, Babylon will command *all* people—Heathens, Atheists, Eastern Religions, Muslims, Catholics, Christians, and Jews—to worship as it dictates or face death (Daniel 3:4–6; Revelation 13:15). Babylon, composed of seven religious and ten political systems, will exhibit Satan’s expansion of *religio-political* power.

The Earth (Lamb-like) Beast—Revelation 13:11–18

The earth beast described in Revelation 13:11-18 represents the ultimate power that Babylon will yield. Unlike the previous entities discussed, John provides only two clues about this beast: it speaks like the dragon and has two horns like the lamb. Early in the development of the historicist view, J.N. Andrews (1851-1884) stated the two horns of the lamb-like beast symbolized the combination of religious and civil power. This combination indicates a continued expansion of Babylon’s authority, as seen in the previous beasts. The earth beast’s speech, like the dragon’s, further emphasizes its malevolent nature. While this beast shares a common feature with the Daniel 7 beasts in that they both originate from the earth, the beasts of Daniel 7 also emerge from the sea. This distinction implies that the earth beast does not represent a king and his subjects, as the sea component symbolizes groups of people.

Just as Nebuchadnezzar, the lion king/beast, symbolized the first powerful earthly kingdom of Babylon, the earth beast is the physical manifestation of Satan—end-time Babylon—wielding far greater authority and unparalleled global power than during Nebuchadnezzar’s reign. Consider the evidence.

- Lucifer in human form comes from the abyss (earth) as an angel/king (Revelation 9:11).
- The beast will come out of the Abyss, astonishing earth’s

sinful inhabitants, and it will ultimately face destruction (Revelation 17:8).

- Lucifer will possess absolute power, not from nations or people (the sea).
- Isaiah prophesied the Devil would physically appear (Isaiah 14:13–15). Paul described the Devil, calling him “the man of lawlessness” who claims to be God (2 Thessalonians 2:3–9).
- Satan will perform miracles such as calling fire from heaven to assert his divinity (Revelation 13:13).
- Like Nebuchadnezzar, Satan will establish an image (one-world church/state) to end-time Babylon and force people to worship it upon penalty of death (Revelation 13:15).
- Satan will force people to accept his mark in the right hand or forehead to buy or sell (Revelation 13:17).

Lucifer’s theocracy will be the final, updated version of the original Babylon that was also a global church/state. While the sea beast has seven heads and ten horns, the earth beast has a single head, symbolizing the unification of religious and political powers under one “God” reigning on earth. Satan will not tolerate religious diversity or dissenting views, enforcing his blasphemy with miracle-working powers. Those who choose to join Satan’s theocracy will compromise their conscience and abandon their religion to survive. During this time, Satan will exercise *sovereign* power over the world’s inhabitants.

This month, we considered the four beasts that appear before the great red dragon of Revelation 17. The beast in Revelation 17 symbolizes the final power and deception Satan will exercise on earth just before Jesus returns. Next month, we will study elements of the four beasts that reveal more about the prostitute and the red dragon she rides. I hope this study has been interesting and informative for you. If you have questions or comments, don’t hesitate to contact us.

Marty



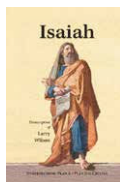
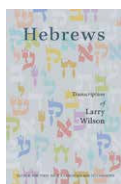
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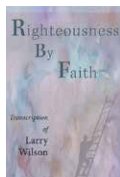
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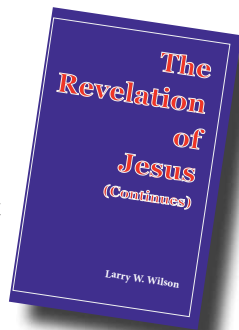
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– Larry Wilson

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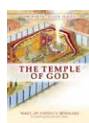
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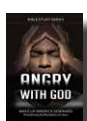
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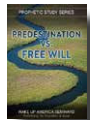
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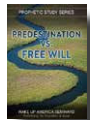
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