

The Four Beasts of Revelation

“A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head.”

(Revelation 12:1)

We will examine two prophecies in this study. The first prophecy is a short story about Lucifer’s hatred for Jesus and the second prophecy is a longer story about Lucifer’s hatred for those who follow the teachings of Jesus. The first prophecy is found in Revelation 12:1-6 and the second prophecy immediately follows in Revelation 12:7-14:5. According to Rule One of Apocalyptic Prophecy, Revelation 12:1-14:5 consists of two different prophecies because chronological order is broken between verses 6 and 7. These two prophecies are intimately related, so we should examine both in this study. The two prophecies identify four beasts we need to consider. They are:

1. A lamb with seven horns and seven eyes (Revelation 5:6; 12:11; 13:8,11; 14:1,4)
2. A great red dragon with seven heads and ten horns (Revelation 12:3)
3. A leopard-like beast with seven heads and ten horns (Revelation 13:1,2)
4. A beast with two horns like the lamb, but speaks like the dragon (Revelation 13:11,17)

What Do the Four Beasts Represent?

1. The Lamb represents Jesus, the Lamb of God, who was slain for our sins. (John 1:29)

2. The great red dragon with seven heads and ten horns represents the fallen angel, Lucifer, who is also called Satan or the devil. (Revelation 12:9)
3. The leopard-like beast with seven heads and ten horns represents Babylon (Revelation 14:8; 18:2-4). Babylon will form during the first four trumpets and rule over the world as a church-state government.
4. The beast with two horns like *the* Lamb, but speaks like *the* dragon, represents Lucifer in human form. The devil and his angels will be released from the Abyss (the spirit realm) at the fifth trumpet. (Revelation 9:1-11) These evil beings will be given physical bodies so the inhabitants of Earth can see them, touch them, and freely talk with them.

Now that we have identified the four beasts, we need to investigate each of them.

The Lamb

Ever since the day that Adam and Eve sinned, a flawless lamb has been used to represent the sinless life of Jesus Christ. Although the Bible does not explicitly say the first burnt offering was a lamb, the Bible does say, “**The Lord God made garments of *skin* for Adam and his wife and clothed them.**” (Genesis 3:21, italics mine) Since the Bible does not elaborate further on the first sin offering, we can deduct two things. First, the use of skin for clothing indicates an animal died. Second, when we assemble everything God has said in the Bible about sin offerings, it is safe to assume that Adam sorrowfully killed the first lamb because “. . .**sin entered the world through one man and death through sin . . .**” (Romans 5:12)

When Jesus began His ministry on Earth, John the Baptist announced the mission of Jesus with a single sentence: **“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, ‘Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!’ ”** (John 1:29) I am sure that God chose a lamb to represent Jesus for several reasons. First, what are more adorable than baby lambs? They are loving, gentle, and easily bond to human beings. Second, in terms survival, sheep were valuable animals in Bible times, providing a source of food and clothing. They are hearty creatures and they reproduce often. Sheep often have multiple births, and since gestation is only five months, a herd of sheep can quickly double in size. Symbolically, Jesus is to eternal life what a lamb was to earthly life in Bible times. Last, sheep are social creatures. They are typically meek and gentle. Consider the words of Isaiah concerning Jesus: **“He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter [e.g., without resistance], and as a sheep before her shearers is silent [submissive], so he did not open his mouth.”** (Isaiah 53:7, insertions mine) When we put these features together, a lamb symbolizes the life of Christ very well.

Notice John’s description of Jesus in Revelation 5: **“Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the [24] elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes which are the seven spirits [the seven angels] of God sent out into all the earth. He came and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne.”** (Revelation 5:6,7, insertions mine) Three fascinating aspects about Jesus are highlighted in this passage. First, John saw a “resurrected Lamb” standing in the center of God’s throne. This indicates the scene occurs after the cross. Second, John saw seven

horns on the Lamb. This means the Lamb has sovereign power (the number seven represents completion and horns represent authority). Third, the Lamb has seven eyes. These eyes represent the seven angels that stand (notice their posture) before the throne of God. (Revelation 1:4) These eyes are the seven angels that receive the seven trumpets. (Revelation 8:2) They are also called “seven spirits” (as in seven ghosts) because they are highly exalted beings that can appear and disappear on command. (Revelation 1:4, 3:1, 4:5, 5:6) Notice Paul’s words: **“Are not all angels ministering *spirits* sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?”** (Hebrews 1:14, italics mine) The seven eyes of the Lamb are the seven angels of the seven churches, the seven angels who receive the seven trumpets, and the seven angels who pour out the seven bowls. (Revelation 1:20; 8:2; 15:6) These seven angels are servants of Jesus. They are sent from the throne and they report back to Him whatever they see. The beauty of understanding the seven eyes is that they serve an omnipotent Lamb who had been slain.

The Great Red Dragon

“Then another sign appeared in heaven: an *enormous red dragon* with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads. His tail swept a third of the stars* out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth [to Jesus], so that he might devour her child the moment it was born.” (Revelation 12:3,4, italics and insertion mine)

(***Note:** Before Jesus created Earth, Lucifer caused one third of Heaven’s angels (the stars) to

join him in open rebellion against God. They were thrown out of Heaven. See Isaiah 14:12-17 and Ezekiel 28:12-17.)

The great red dragon symbolizes Lucifer. We know this is true because the Bible interprets the symbol with a relevant text: **“And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down – *that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.*”** (Revelation 12:7-9, italics mine) The great red dragon is the devil. He is God’s adversary and man’s accuser. (Revelation 12:10)

Please consider two points that will prove useful later on:

1. The great red dragon and the Lamb are not governments or nations. I emphasize this distinction because some people insist that beasts in Bible prophecy always represent nations or governments. This assertion is not valid. The four beasts in Daniel 7 do represent four world empires because Daniel 7:17 says the four beasts are world empires, but Daniel 7:17 does not force the four beasts in Revelation to be four world empires. The Bible is not internally conflicted. If we allow the Bible to define symbols with texts that point to the symbol, we will find that the Lamb in Revelation 5 represents Jesus and the great red dragon in Revelation 12 represents His adversary, the devil. These two beasts are caricatures of two supernatural beings – Jesus and Satan.

2. The great red dragon has seven heads and ten horns when he is introduced in Revelation 12:3. Later, we will learn that these seventeen features represent future extensions of Satan's authority over mankind. In other words, when the story begins in Revelation 12 (at the birth of Jesus), the seven heads and ten horns on the great red dragon are not functioning, but they will "come alive" and function when their appointed time comes. This technique is not unusual in apocalyptic prophecy. When the fourth beast (Rome) rises out of the sea in Daniel 7:7, it has ten horns. History says that Rome began to function as a world empire in 168 B.C., but the ten horns did not begin functioning until six hundred years later. The beasts in Daniel and Revelation may have various parts when they are introduced in a story, but these parts may not have any function when the beast is first introduced.

The Devil's Name

The devil was an exalted angel before he was cast out of Heaven. Please consider three different translations of the same verse:

KJV

"How art thou fallen from heaven, *O Lucifer*, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!" (Isaiah 14:12, italics mine)

NIV

"How you have fallen from heaven, *O morning star*, son of the dawn! You have been cast

down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations!” (Isaiah 14:12, italics mine)

NASB

“How you have fallen from heaven, *O star of the morning*, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations!” (Isaiah 14:12, italics mine)

The translators of the KJV chose to translate the Hebrew word *heylel* with the Latin name “Lucifer,” whereas the translators of the NIV and NASB chose to translate *heylel* as “morning star” or “star of the morning.” The difference between the KJV and later translations stems from an ancient practice. Venus was a prominent morning star during the first century A.D. Pliny the Elder (A.D. 23-79) lived during the time of Christ and he wrote, “The star called Venus [has two names] ... when it rises in the morning it is given the name ‘Lucifer’ [means ‘light bringer’]... but when it [Venus] shines at sunset it is called ‘Vesper.’” (Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, Book 2, par. 36, insertions mine) Early translators of the Bible, as far back as Jerome’s fifth century Latin Vulgate, preferred to use the Latin name “Lucifer” for *heylel* rather than translating the Hebrew word as the “morning star.” This is how the name Lucifer found its way into the KJV because Lucifer’s given name is unknown. It is ironic that Venus shone brighter than any of the other stars each morning and in a spiritual sense, Lucifer allowed his surpassing glory to bring about his downfall. “. . . . **You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were**

prepared. You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you.” (Ezekiel 28:12-15)

A review of Isaiah 14:12-17 and Ezekiel 28:12-18 reveals that Lucifer was once an anointed cherub in Heaven. Eventually, he became arrogant and self seeking. He became dissatisfied with God and His government. He coveted the worship and adoration that belonged to Michael, the archangel.* When Lucifer became jealous of the archangel, Michael, Lucifer did not know Michael was God living “in the feathers.” Let me explain what I mean. The Bible indicates that Jesus, the Creator, lived among the angels. This seems to be Jesus’ pattern. Jesus created the angels and lived among them (as Michael) – He also created man and lived among us. Michael lived among the angels, but Lucifer did not recognize that Michael was God. This mistake led to his undoing. Lucifer’s experience in Heaven is similar to what happened when Jesus lived as a man on Earth. The Jews did not know that Jesus was God living “in the flesh.” Our Creator (whether of angels or men) so closely identifies with His creation that no one can know that He is God unless there is a revelation of this truth! (This is the essential reason for the upcoming revelation of Jesus Christ!) Through malicious lies and deceptive innuendo, Lucifer persuaded one-third of Heaven’s angels to join him in rebellion against Michael and this is how *Lucifer became the Antichrist*. The Godhead loved Lucifer and his followers. They did everything possible to change the feelings and attitudes of their subjects, but there was no repentance. When it became evident that extended mercy would bring no change and have no redeeming effect, God’s forbearance ended. God cast Lucifer and his angels out of Heaven. Jesus told His

disciples, **“I saw Satan fall like lightning from Heaven.”** (Luke 10:18)

(***Note:** For further study on the topic of Michael/Jesus, please see Chapters 1-3 in my book, *Jesus: The Alpha and The Omega.*)

When Lucifer and his angels were cast out of Heaven, their anger and bitterness toward the Godhead turned into a roaring rage. To get even, they focused their wrath on the Jesus’ handiwork – the creation of Earth. The devil studied Adam and Eve for several years before he developed his subtle and deadly approach. The devil led Eve to disobey God and Eve led Adam into disobedience. Of course, the devil did not stop there. Cain, the firstborn of Adam and Eve, became a murderer. Astoundingly, within 10 generations of creating Adam, human beings became so degenerate that God grieved that He had even made man! (Genesis 6) Consequently, God washed Earth with a flood of water, sparing just eight people – Noah and his family. The flood may have slowed the devil’s efforts to destroy mankind, but Peter reminds us the devil is relentless. He goes around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour! (1 Peter 5:8, 9)

Satan Allowed to Live

Many people have asked the question: Why did God allow the devil to live after casting him out of Heaven? Why didn’t God exterminate the devil and his angels right away and protect the universe from Lucifer’s rebellion? These are great questions and the answers are just as important. Consider the following:

1. Before Lucifer rebelled, the universe, with all its created beings, did not understand the nature or impact of sin. If God had immediately annihilated Lucifer and third of the angels, He would have been unable to justify His actions. If God had destroyed Lucifer as soon as he had sinned, surviving angels would have concluded, “Whoa! God does not tolerate angels having views that are contrary to His.” If God had immediately annihilated His opposition before the knowledge of good and evil had a chance to mature, reasoning and highly intelligent angels would not have loved and trusted God. Angels (and mankind) should love God because He is fair, reasonable, generous, and forgiving, not because sudden death is a consequence for disagreement. If God had killed Lucifer and his followers before the outcome of their rebellion matured, the remaining angels would have concluded that God was a bully. He may claim to be a God of love, but His actions just proved that its His way or death.

2. God has infinite wisdom and perfect foreknowledge. His ways are perfect. He foreknew that sin needed a few thousand years to mature so that all the universe could understand its deadly and horrible consequences. By allowing the devil and his angels to live, God gave the universe two contrasting governments to study – one in Heaven (free of rebellion, full of joy, happiness, and peace) and one on Earth (full of sin, decadence, depravity, selfishness, and death). By permitting two governments to simultaneously exist, intelligent beings can see the difference for themselves. God does not have to defend Himself.

3. God gives the power of choice to each created being. This means that His subjects *do not* have to obey Him, love Him, or respond to His goodness or generosity. Lucifer and his angels

have proven that free will actually exists. They *chose* to rebel against God and His law. God gave Adam and Eve the power of choice and they also *chose* to disobey. For 6,000 years, sin has flourished on Earth. History has proven over and over again (with the rise and fall of numerous civilizations) that human beings *always* suffer in direct proportion to our departure from the laws of God. Sin may offer some temporary pleasure and excitement, but it always extracts a price that is far greater than its benefits. Sin takes us farther than we want to go and sin costs more than we want to pay. No matter how well Satan disguises sin, **“the wages of sin is death.”** (Romans 6:23) God foreknew that lawlessness would end in death and His Kingdom is established on laws that prevent sorrow and death. Created beings who rebel against God’s laws are not really arguing with God’s authority because created beings do not have omnipotence. The argument with God is over wisdom. Who knows best what the endless corridors of eternity require – the Creator or the created?

4. The Father certainly foreknew the consequences of allowing Satan and his angels to live, so He created a plan to save everyone who would live on Earth. He loved the people of the world so much that He gave us Jesus as our atonement for sin. For no other reason than love, Jesus was willing to become a man and die in our place so the penalty for our sin could be paid! The Godhead has suffered more and paid a higher price for the existence of sin than any human being will ever know! Incidentally, and this is an important point, God did not create a plan of salvation for Lucifer and his angels because they were confronted with the truth many times yet remained willful and defiant, and chose to reject God’s counsel. Without question, Lucifer and his angels committed the unpardonable sin. (Matthew 12:31,32)

When these four issues are synthesized, we can see why God did not immediately destroy Lucifer and his rebellious followers. The conflict between Christ and Lucifer over mankind has been ongoing for thousands of years. Today, Jesus and Lucifer are striving to win the affections of people. Look around. Good is being overcome with evil and this contest will reach a climax during the Great Tribulation.

A Demon with Many Titles

The devil is called by a variety of names in the Bible. Daniel calls him a stern-faced king. (Daniel 8:23) Ezekiel calls him the ruler of Tyre. (Ezekiel 28:2) Isaiah calls him the king of Babylon. (Isaiah 14:4) Paul calls him the man of lawlessness. (2 Thessalonians 2:3) John calls him an enormous red dragon (Revelation 12:3), the beast that comes up from the abyss (Revelation 11:7), a beast having two horns (Revelation 13:11), the false prophet (Revelation 16:13), and the angel king of the abyss (Revelation 9:11).

God gave Lucifer various titles for several reasons. Here are two: First, the devil is invisible and different titles help us understand his vast capabilities. Second, God gives the devil various titles to undercut the devil's deceptions! For example, when the devil physically appears on Earth, he will gloriously masquerade as Almighty God. His deception will be so convincing that it could deceive the "very elect" if that were possible. Notice how the title, "the man of lawlessness," describes the behavior of Lucifer after he appears. Lucifer will do as he pleases and no one can stop him. The laws of mankind will mean nothing to him. The devil will create and enforce

many laws that will have no purpose but angst and destruction. God gave Bible writers each title and each description speaks volumes about Lucifer's character, power and ways.

Babylon, the Leopard-like Beast

“And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The [great red] dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority. One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound *had been healed*. The *whole* world was astonished and followed the beast.” (Revelation 13:1-3, italics and insertion mine)

Ever since the book of Revelation was written, there has been a great deal of speculation about the identity of the leopard-like beast. This beast has numerous specifications and resolving each one takes more than time and effort. Valid results require a valid set of rules. If a person just accepts an interpretation that seems reasonable, there are many interpretations to choose from. However, there is only one solution to the problem of identifying this beast and to get to the truth, we need to address and correctly resolve each specification.

To make this presentation as simple as possible, I have decided to identify the leopard-like beast first so you can see how each specification contributes to the conclusion as we proceed. The leopard-like beast will be **a religious authority, a crisis government** that religious and political leaders of the world will create shortly after the Great Tribulation begins. The leaders will create this beast of a government to mediate between God and man.

When the censer in Revelation 8:5 is cast down and the first four trumpets fall on the world in rapid succession, it is a gross understatement to say that the survivors will be overwhelmed and terrified. The destruction of thousands of cities and 1.75 billion people is unimaginable – incomprehensible. As the survivors survey the damage, almost everyone will concede that God is angry with this world because mankind is far more degenerate and decadent than we should be. We live on a degenerate and decadent planet, but most people do not know that God's wrath has been overdue since 1994 when the Jubilee Calendar ended. We have been living on borrowed time. God's wrath is stirred when he sees children abused, women raped, people robbed, elderly cheated out of their savings, addicts agonizing for more drugs, endless violence, and bloodshed.

The chapter on the seven trumpets showed that God has many objectives for His judgments. God wants everyone to know about Jesus and His salvation. God will judge the living and terminate the sin problem. God will wipe the universe clean and start over. His plans are written in the books of Daniel and Revelation. Unfortunately, few people really want to understand the ways of God. The mysteries of apocalyptic prophecy are often ignored because they take too much work and many people think "they do not pertain to salvation." Nevertheless, once the

world sees the awesome destruction caused by God's wrath (the first four trumpets), everyone on Earth will be traumatized. What does it say about man's degeneracy when a God of love has to destroy a third of the planet and twenty-five percent of its inhabitants to get the undivided attention of the survivors?

God's wrath will bring the religious and the political leaders of the world together and for the first time since the flood in Noah's day, this gathering will be a humble meeting. God's judgments will embarrass them because these events force the leaders of the world to recognize the higher power and reality of a living God who holds everyone accountable for his actions. Together, the leaders of the world work out a solution to appease God's anger. Their solution will be to create the leopard-like beast. The leopard-like beast will be a religious authority, designed to carry out a global mandate: Appease God so that His wrath will cease. While the idea of appeasing God's wrath may sound appropriate, the process will be impossible from the start because our world is so religiously diverse. Nevertheless, religious leaders will conclude that God's anger can be stopped if decadence and corruption can be eliminated. The leopard-like beast will have the authority to determine for each nation the best process for outlawing decadence and corruption and the political leaders of the world will voluntarily submit to the demands of the beast. At first, almost everyone will cooperate with the leopard-like beast because no one wants to experience more of God's wrath, but this is only the beginning of the story and a lot of tribulation. . . .

Several years ago, I had the opportunity to visit an automobile manufacturing plant in Dayton,

Ohio. It was an unforgettable experience. I was like a kid in a candy store. As I walked through the huge building that covered about thirty acres, I saw all kinds of interesting parts and pieces that would eventually come together to make up an automobile. I was overwhelmed. But the one thing that most astonished me was the amount of coordination and communication that goes into the construction of each vehicle. Items of all kinds – tires, engines, seats, horns, carpets, tail pipes, and headlights were moving around on tracks and as each moving chassis reached another assembly station, the necessary parts for that vehicle also arrived at that station. It was so interesting how the right items arrived just in time to put that item on the chassis! I have shared this experience with you because I want you to consider a parallel. At the end of the tour, our tour guide told us that enough parts were in the building at any given time to build approximately one hundred vehicles, even though there was only *one* completed vehicle in the building at any given time. Similarly, all of the parts necessary to create the leopard-like beast exist on Earth today, but the beast itself has not been assembled. The appointed time for assembly does not arrive until after the fourth trumpet.

Mistaken Identity

Many people mistakenly assume the fourth beast in Daniel 7 and leopard-like beast in Revelation 13 are the same beast. This understanding is incorrect for five reasons:

1. *The leopard-like beast does not exist prior to 1798.* When the leopard-like beast rises from the sea, John saw that one head on the leopard-like beast “**seemed to have had a fatal wound,**

but the fatal wound had been healed.” (Revelation 13:3) For reasons that will be presented later, this head represents the Roman Catholic Church. History records that the Catholic church lost its authority over the kings of Europe during the French Revolution (1789-1799). The pope was exiled to France in 1798 and the authority of the Church was badly wounded. Now notice that when the leopard-like beast rises from the sea, the deadly wound *is healed*. This specification forces the appearing of the leopard-like beast *after* 1798 because the fatal wound cannot be healed before the deadly wound is inflicted!

2. Earlier in this study we learned that various parts of a beast’s anatomy may or may not be functional when a beast is introduced. This feature exists with both the ten horns on the fourth beast in Daniel 7 and the seven heads and ten horns on the great red dragon in Revelation 12. Even though Daniel saw ten horns on the fourth beast in Daniel 7 when it rose out of the sea, history verifies that the ten horns did not function in a prophetic sense until six hundred years later. The leopard-like beast has a similar feature. John describes the leopard-like beast as having seven heads when it rises to power and **“one of its seven heads seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed.”** (Revelation 13:3)

Some people read Revelation 13:3 and conclude that the leopard-like beast must have existed prior to 1798 because one of the heads on the beast was wounded in 1798, but this is not the case. Read the specifications carefully! When the leopard-like beast rises from the sea, it comes up from the sea with a head that “seems to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed.” Did you notice the past perfect tense? The past perfect tense means action completed in

the past. For example, suppose I saw a new automobile roll off the assembly line and I said to you, “The car had a bad tire, but the tire had been repaired by the time it rolled off the assembly line.” Does my statement require the auto to be complete and functioning before the bad tire was discovered or does my statement mean the bad tire was discovered and repaired before the auto rolled off the assembly line? The latter meaning is the intent of my statement.

The papacy existed before 1798, but *the leopard-like beast is not the papacy. The papacy is only one part of the leopard-like beast.* The leopard-like beast has seven heads – seven religious systems, not one! One head is described with precise language and this precision eliminates any wiggle room on its identity. Daniel 7 indicates that the little horn power was empowered for 1,260 years (A.D. 538-1798). Daniel 7:11 states that the little horn power would recover from its wound, and again speak boastfully after 1798. History confirms this prediction and recent history affirms the recovery of the papacy. Today, the Roman Catholic Church is again a respected world power. The Church has diplomatic relations with 170 nations! God used precise language in Revelation 13 for two reasons because God wants everyone to know that the wounded/healed head represents the Roman Catholic Church. If we can identify that one head is a religious system, then the remaining six heads must be religious systems, as well. God also wants everyone to know that the rise of the leopard-like beast has to occur after 1798, because the language specifically states that the wounded head is *healed* when the beast rises from the sea.

3. Notice that the leopard-like beast has body parts that belong to a lion, a bear and a leopard and

it just so happens that the first three beasts in Daniel 7 are a lion, a bear, and a leopard. Furthermore, the fourth beast in Daniel 7 has ten horns when it rises from the sea and so does the leopard-like beast! Many people have noticed these similarities and then make a big mistake. They leap to the conclusion that the fourth beast in Daniel 7 and the leopard-like beast in Revelation 13 are the *same* beast with the addition of seven heads. This leap in logic is not supported by the facts or the specifications. The fourth beast in Daniel 7 and the leopard-like beast in Revelation 13 are very different beasts and even more importantly, they live at different times. Even though they share certain similarities, we have to need them separate and distinct.

Consider the similarities between the two beasts: Both beasts persecute the saints of God for a specific amount of time. The fourth beast in Daniel 7 persecuted the saints for 1,260 years. (Daniel 7:25) The leopard-like beast will persecute God's people for forty-two months during the Great Tribulation. (Revelation 13:5) These two time periods cannot be the same time period. If they are, the leopard-like beast would have to rise to power along with the fourth beast in 168 B.C. Of course, this is not possible because the Bible says when the leopard-like beast rises from the sea the deadly wound had been healed! (Revelation 13:3)

4. The Bible predicts, **“All inhabitants of the Earth will worship the [leopard-like] beast. . . .”** (Revelation 13:8, insertion mine) There has never been a time in history when “*all* inhabitants of the Earth” worshiped the fourth beast of Daniel 7 and there never will be a future time. The fourth beast in Daniel 7 was given power to rule over Europe for 1,260 years. The leopard-like beast will be given power to rule over the *whole world* for a literal period of forty-two months. If

the forty-two months in Revelation 13:5 and the time, times and half a time in Daniel 7:25 represent the same time period, then an insurmountable problem is created. It would mean that both beasts are powerless during the Great Tribulation because their empowerment is limited to the Dark Ages (A.D. 538-1798).

5. Finally, the fourth beast in Daniel 7 and the leopard-like beast in Revelation 13 have ten horns, but they are not the *same* ten horns. The ten horns on the fourth beast in Daniel 7 represent ten tribal nations that divided and conquered Rome by A.D. 476. The ten horns on the leopard-like beast represent ten kings who will be alive at the Second Coming! (Revelation 13:1; 17:12-14; Daniel 2:42)

Consider the math: The Bible predicted that three of the original ten horns on the fourth beast in Daniel 7 would be uprooted and destroyed by A.D. 538.* History affirms the fulfillment of this prediction. Therefore, the fourth beast in Daniel 7 ended up having eight horns for 1,260 years. The little horn (the papacy) became an eighth horn and it ruled over the remaining seven horns until it received a deadly wound in 1798.

Notice the difference. When the leopard-like beast rises to power during the Great Tribulation, it will have seven heads and ten horns – not eight horns! The ten horns on the leopard-like beast represents ten kings who will be alive at the Second Coming! The angel told John, **“The ten horns you saw [on the leopard-like beast] are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but who for one hour will receive authority as kings along with the [great red dragon] beast.**

They have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the [great red dragon] beast [the devil]. They will make war against the Lamb [at the Second Coming – Revelation 16:14-16], but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings – and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers.” (Revelation 17:12-14)

Bottom Line: When we synthesize these five issues, it is impossible for the fourth beast in Daniel 7 and leopard-like beast in Revelation 13 to be the same beast. There may be similarities between them, but they are two different creatures living in two different ages. They may share several parallels, but this helps us understand the future more clearly because the behavior of the leopard-like beast will mirror the behavior of the fourth beast in Daniel 7. For example, consider these parallels between the two beasts: Both beasts persecute God’s saints, both beasts are empowered for a specific amount of time, both beasts will be destroyed with fire at the Second Coming, both beasts are blasphemous, and the papacy has a role with both beasts (that is, the papacy derives its ruling power from each beast). Papal power will soon flourish during the forty-two months granted to the leopard-like beast just like it flourished during the 1,260 years given to the fourth beast.

(***Note:** For further discussion on the fall of the Roman Empire and the identity of the ten horns on the fourth beast in Daniel 7, please see Chapter 3 in my book, *Daniel: Unlocked for the Final Generation.*)

Parallel Babylons – Ancient and Modern

The leopard-like beast is called Babylon six times in the book of Revelation because there are

many parallels between the ancient empire of Babylon and the modern empire of Babylon. Consider these parallels: Ancient Babylon was a world empire* and modern Babylon will be a world empire. Ancient Babylon worshiped false gods and modern Babylon will worship false gods. The prophets and gods of the ancient Babylonians were shown to be grossly inferior to the true prophets of God and the same thing will happen in modern Babylon. Ancient Babylon captured and persecuted God's people. Modern Babylon will capture and persecute God's people. The king of ancient Babylon set up an image which everyone was required to worship. Anyone refusing to worship the image was to be killed. The king of modern Babylon will do the same thing. The king of ancient Babylon did not recognize the sovereign authority of the Most High God. The king of modern Babylon will do the same. Ancient Babylon was defiant and insulting to God and modern Babylon will be the same. Modern Babylon will experience the same fate as ancient Babylon.

(***Note:** Even though ancient Babylon was a great empire (605-538 B.C.), one can factually argue that ancient Babylon (and Medo-Persia, Grecia and Rome) did not rule over the *whole* world. However, ancient Babylon did rule over that part of the world where God's people lived and using this point of reference, one can say that Babylon was a world empire. Starting with ancient Babylon, each succeeding empire became geographically larger and larger until finally, during the time period of the feet, the whole world is represented as "a divided kingdom" made up of many nations that are both strong and weak. (Daniel 2:41) At the end, ten kings will rule the whole world during the final days of Earth's history. Compare Daniel 2:42 with Revelation 17:12-14.))

The king of modern Babylon (Lucifer) will prove to be more blasphemous than the king of ancient Babylon. Remember the ego and vanity of King Nebuchadnezzar. **“He [King Nebuchadnezzar] said, ‘Is not this *the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?*’** The words were still on his lips when a voice came from heaven, **‘This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar: Your royal authority has been taken from you.’**” (Daniel 4:30,31, italics mine) After being warned about his exceeding arrogance and pride (Daniel 4:4-27), Nebuchadnezzar continued to ignore the warning which the Most High God had given him. The king vainly reasoned that Babylon was the product of his genius and his great power. One day, after speaking boastful words (Daniel 4:20,31), God instantly turned Nebuchadnezzar into a raving mad man. The king was driven away from his residence in the city to live among the wild beasts of the field for seven years. (Daniel 4:34) At the end of his sentence, God not only restored the king’s mind, but He also restored the king to his throne. Before he died, Nebuchadnezzar confessed to his empire that indeed, there is a Sovereign God who rules over the kingdoms of man and gives them to anyone He wishes. (Daniel 4:36,37) It is ironic that Nebuchadnezzar could not bring himself to tell his empire that the Sovereign God of the universe, who restored his good fortune, was the God of the Jews. God rarely gets the credit He deserves. Unfortunately, Nebuchadnezzar’s offspring did not learn from his experience or testimony. A few years after Nebuchadnezzar died, Belshazzar became king and after insulting the God of Heaven one too many times, God destroyed him. (Daniel 5) The fate of Belshazzar, king of ancient Babylon and Lucifer, king of modern Babylon, will be the same.

Babylon – A Hand Puppet of the Devil

The great red dragon (the devil) has an anatomy that is similar to the leopard-like beast (Babylon). There is a good reason for this. When the time comes, the great red dragon will enter the leopard-like beast similar to the way a hand is inserted into a latex glove. The Bible says “. . . **The dragon gave the [leopard-like] beast his power and his throne and great authority.**” (Revelation 13:2) Babylon will become a hand puppet of the devil. Remember, Babylon’s mandate will be simple: Appease God so that His judgments will cease. People think the solution will be to eliminate decadent and degenerate behavior. Therefore, Babylon will create many “sin-less” laws which civil authorities will enforce. Notice this profound point: If a person obeys the laws of Babylon, he actually worships the leopard-like beast because the biblical meaning of the word worship is submission. Today, we usually interpret the word worship to mean a religious celebration, a church service or a religious gathering, but the Greek word for worship is *proskuneo* which means to surrender obedience, to prostrate oneself, or to kiss with submission. (Remember Judas’ kiss? Matthew 26:49) When Abel worshiped God, he killed the sacrificial lamb as God demanded. On the other hand, Cain did not worship God, but instead presumed to worship God by putting fruit on the altar. Obeying the laws of Babylon means worshipping the devil. The Bible cannot make it any clearer: **“Men worshiped [obeyed] the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped [obeyed] the [leopard-like] beast and asked, “Who is like the [leopard-like] beast? Who can make war [resist his authority and argue] against him [without being punished]?”** (Revelation 13:4)

Babylon will be a “monster-sized” church-state empowered by the devil. Remember, the devil’s focus is a specific group of people – the remnant of the woman. He tried to kill Jesus at birth and failed. He tried to keep his seat in God’s government, but Jesus cast him out on Resurrection Sunday. He chased the woman for 1,260 years and failed to destroy her in the wilderness. Therefore, this ancient scholar of Scripture knows full well this will be his last chance and he is determined to totally destroy God’s people. **“Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring – those who obey God’s commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.”** (Revelation 12:17) The devil has a plan and Babylon will be the perfect tool for executing it. The devil will manipulate Babylon’s leaders. He will dictate laws through them and the governments of the world will enforce these laws – thinking that they are appeasing God. Ultimately, Lucifer will persecute billions of people through Babylon’s blind leaders. (Luke 6:39)

Given the global diversity of mankind today, it seems foolish to predict that a time is coming when the whole world will *voluntarily* submit to one religious authority. A global church-state is unthinkable and impossible right now, but the Bible predicts it will surely occur. The Bible says, **“... The *whole world was astonished* [by the first four trumpets and recognizing their need to appease the wrath of Almighty God, the political leaders of the world laid aside their objections] and followed the [demands of the leopard-like] *beast.*”** (Revelation 13:3, insertions mine)

The leopard-like beast will be man’s solution to God’s wrath. Babylon’s logic will be simple: Appease God by outlawing decadent behavior. Religious leaders will trample on the inalienable

rights of human beings and the political structures of all nations. If anyone speaks against Babylon, he will be accused of blasphemy and punished accordingly. (This is why we need to spread the word now – before freedom of speech is lost.) To make matters worse, the political leaders of the world will yield to Babylon’s authority and what choice will they have? If they refuse to comply with Babylon’s demands, more wrath from God will surely fall! In short, the nations of Earth will be caught in a no-win situation and the political leaders of Earth will allow Babylon to rule over them. A horrible world order will be established without firing a single bullet. The devil will rejoice! He will energize false religion and paralyze politicians with fear so that he can persecute the saints. The first four trumpets will remove the political leaders of the world from their exalted posts of duty and the religious leaders of the world will take their place for 890 days. During this timeframe, God intends to confront the seven false religions of Earth head on and expose them for what they are. You may recall that God did the same thing with the religious leaders in ancient Babylon. (See Daniel 2.)

The Crowns Are Moved

We have already noticed that the leopard-like beast has seven heads and ten horns just like the great red dragon. However, the crowns are moved from the seven **heads** on the great red dragon in Revelation 12:3 to the ten **horns** of the leopard-like beast in Revelation 13:1. This relocation of the crowns indicate a shift in persecuting authority.

The Greek language has two words that mean “crown.” The first word is *diadema* and the

second is *stephanos*. A *diadema* is a crown of authority (a king's crown), whereas a *stephanos* is a winner's crown (such as the Miss America Pageant's crown). The book of Revelation uses and identifies both types of crowns. The woman in Revelation 12:1 wears a winner's crown (a *stephanos*) that has twelve stars in it, whereas both beasts wear a *diadema* – a crown of authority.

The dragon chases the woman into the wilderness for 1,260 years as Revelation 12 begins. The crowns' placement on the red dragon is important because the *diadema* are on the heads of this beast. In other words, persecution comes from the religious authorities. Religious authorities persecuted Jesus (and His followers) and religious authorities also persecuted Christians during the Dark Ages. However, when Babylon rises from the sea, the *diadema* are located on the ten horns. This means the devil will use civil authorities to persecute God's people. How clever! The devil will speak through Babylon's clergy. They will create many "sin-less" laws designed to appease God. Babylon will then dictate these laws to the nations of Earth and civil authorities in each nation (e.g., national police, security services, armies etc.) will enforce them. Civil authorities will end up doing the devil's dirty work! Very clever.

While the mechanics of demonic possession are complex, the result is rather easy to understand. A demon possessed person has a deranged mind. A demon possessed person cannot control his emotions, thoughts, or impulses, at times. A demon possessed person has moments of no tolerance or compassion, and a demon possessed government is no different. Demon possessed leaders like Herod are not concerned about the welfare of their subjects. They are obsessed with exercising and maintaining absolute power and control. They think nothing of imposing

suffering and torture on their subjects to accomplish their goals.

After Babylon forms, it will quickly become a demon possessed government. Babylon will create laws and these laws will become increasingly oppressive as time passes. Penalties for “civil disobedience” will escalate accordingly. This will be a telltale sign that the devil has gained control of Babylon, for there is nothing that brings Lucifer greater joy than to have human beings inflict horrible suffering upon one another. The devil rejoices every time an injustice is done. He rejoices every time a violent act is committed. The devil rejoices to see innocent victims suffer and die. Make no mistake, he also rejoices when the real perpetrators of crime languish in prison or receive due justice. The devil does not care about anyone – the perpetrator or the victim of crime. The dragon wants human beings to suffer because he wants Christ to suffer. *Lucifer knows that nothing produces more grief in the heart of Jesus than human suffering.*

Who Are the Seven Heads?

“And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads . . . and on each head [was written] a blasphemous name.” (Revelation 13:1, insertion mine) The seven heads are religious in nature, because each head has a “blasphemous” name written on it. The presence of a blasphemous name means that each head is defiantly opposed to God’s will (which is blasphemy). Of course, the seven heads are currently unaware of their blasphemy because each religious system *believes* that it is in perfect conformity with God’s will and truth. During

the Great Tribulation, the Two Witnesses will empower the 144,000 to speak for God and once the gospel of Jesus is presented, man's ignorance, arrogance, and blasphemy will be revealed. As we investigate the identity of the seven heads, it is important to keep in mind there are seven of the *same* thing. Whatever one head represents, the other six must also represent. So, who are the seven heads? Look at these three specifications:

Specification 1. Each head has a blasphemous name written on it (Revelation 13:1)

Specification 2. One head seemed to have received a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed (Revelation 13:3)

Specification 3. The seven heads are seven hills (or mountains) on which the woman sits. (Revelation 17:9)

Comments:

The only religious system on Earth that can meet the wounded/healed head specification is the Roman Catholic Church. Daniel 7 indicates that the power of the little horn power (the papacy) would be terminated at the end of 1,260 years (1798). Daniel 7:11 reveals that the little horn would once again speak boastfully against the Most High God after "the court was seated and the books were opened." In Daniel 8, we learn that the court was seated and the books were opened in 1844. Following the logic of these three texts, we can understand that the wounded/healed head will speak boastfully against God during the Great Tribulation because the deadly wound is healed during the Great Tribulation.

Even though the papacy is only one of the seven heads on the leopard-like beast, it will prove to be the leader of the remaining six heads until the fifth trumpet occurs. Led by the papacy and speaking in unison for all religious systems, the seven heads on the leopard-like beast will speak boastfully against Jesus Christ and His authority. **“The [leopard-like] beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months.”**

To facilitate this study on the seven heads, we will proceed under the assumption that the wounded/healed head is the Roman Catholic Church and that the other six heads are also religious systems. Once you have reviewed all of the specifications for the seven heads, I believe you will find that this conclusion is beyond reasonable argument (no wiggle room).

The Seven Hills

A church may grow in membership until the physical plant is inadequate for worship services. When this happens, a search committee is usually created and empowered to find a piece of property where a larger facility can be built. Today, it is the building that makes church property holy ground. In ancient times, it was the other way around. Holy ground made the building or temple holy. If holy ground was not close by, the ancients worshiped on mountain tops – where it was believed that deity lived or descended. Notice this sampling of Bible texts (there are more than sixty references on this topic in the Bible, but these few should suffice):

Just before he died, Moses prophesied the Lord would select a special place for His temple after

Israel entered the promised land. Moses said: “[After you enter the land which the Lord has given you,] **Then to *the place* the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his Name – *there* you are to bring everything I command you: your burnt offerings and sacrifices, your tithes and special gifts, and all the choice possessions you have vowed to the Lord.**”

(Deuteronomy 12:11, italics and insertion mine)

About 470 years after Moses died, the Lord chose a specific place for His temple: “**Then the angel of the Lord ordered [the prophet] Gad to tell David to go up and *build an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.***” (1 Chronicles 21:18, italics and insertion mine)

About ten years later, “**Then Solomon began to build the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem on *Mount Moriah*, where the Lord had appeared to his father David. *It was on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, the place provided by David.***” (2 Chronicles 3:1, italics mine)

Consider three points. First, God deliberately placed His temple on the threshing floor of Araunah. (This is the spot where God directed Abraham to offer Isaac. Genesis 22:2) Second, God deliberately chose to put His temple on a mountain top (Mount Moriah). Third, after God abandoned Israel and destroyed His temple and the city of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, He eventually put a seal on Mount Moriah to keep Israel from rebuilding the temple. This seal is a mosque called the Dome of the Rock.

Before Solomon built the temple, Israel had been worshiping false gods on various mountain

tops (also called “high places”). Even King Solomon offered sacrifices and incense at these places: **“The people, however, were still sacrificing at the *high places*, because a temple had not yet been built for the Name of the Lord. Solomon showed his love for the Lord by walking according to the statutes of his father David, *except that he offered sacrifices and burned incense on the *high places*.*”** (1 Kings 3:2,3, italics mine) After Solomon died, the apostasy of Israel matured into open rebellion against God. Notice what the Lord says of His rebellious people: **“Judah did evil in the sight of the Lord They also set up for themselves *high places*, sacred stones and Asherah poles on every *high hill* and under every spreading tree. There were even male shrine prostitutes in the land; the people engaged in all the *detestable practices* of the nations the Lord had driven out before the Israelites.”** (1 Kings 14:22-24, italics mine)

These references explain how seven heads can be called seven hills or seven mountains. The Greek word *oros* means hills and mountains. Some translators translate *oros* to mean hills and others use the same word to mean mountains. In ancient times, any mountain or “high hill” was regarded as a holy place. The lofty pinnacle of any mountain was regarded as a dwelling place for deity. The seven heads are called seven mountains because each religious system worships on a different mountain top. *Each religious system worships a different God.* You may recall from our study on the seven trumpets, that Babylon will use the enabling lie that everyone worships the same God, even though He is called by different names. The Bible says otherwise. There is one true God and many false gods. The seven religious systems of the world do not “look up” to the same God – they worship seven different false gods on seven different

mountains! This truth will become clear once the 144,000 begin their work.

Consider the devil's sophistry for a moment: Jesus descended to *Mount* Sinai to give the law to Moses. (Exodus 19:18) The devil saw the awesome power of Christ displayed that day and being the devil he is, he decided to counterfeit the idea. The devil led ignorant pagans to believing that various gods descend upon the mountain tops. Therefore, to meet and worship their gods, they dutifully climbed rugged mountains. (I'm sure the devil was amused at making worship such a chore.) Poor ignorant people undertook a horrible hike to appease gods of wood and stone with sacrifices (even human sacrifices) so they would be protected from harm.

False religion is confined to darkness. It is based on fear and superstition and the devil preys on man's ignorance of God to distort man's beliefs about God. When seen in reverse, apostasy is easy to understand, but it is hard to detect in the present because error never stops inching into all religions. Therefore, religion constantly mutates. For example: Israel went from the Mount Sinai experience to complete apostasy on the mountain tops around Jerusalem. The Lord said: **"The people of Judah have done evil in my eyes, declares the Lord. They have set up their detestable idols in the house that bears my Name and have defiled it. They have built *the high places* of Topheth in the Valley of Ben Hinnom to burn their sons and daughters in the fire – something I did not command, nor did it enter my mind."** (Jeremiah 7:30,31, italics mine)

Take a moment and consider God's fiery manifestations on the mountains of Sinai, Carmel and

Moriah. When Jesus descended on Mount Sinai to speak the Ten Commandments, the whole mountain was set on fire! (Exodus 19:18) When Elijah prayed on Mount Carmel, fire came down and consumed the altar! (1 Kings 18:38) Fire came down from Heaven and consumed Solomon's offerings when the temple on Mount Moriah was dedicated. (2 Chronicles 7:1) Given these supernatural examples, it is easy to see why false religions came to believe in "holy mountains," as the dwelling place of gods. The symbolism in Revelation 17:9 is direct and forceful. The seven heads are seven mountains. The seven heads are seven religious systems, each having its own mountain and its own god. Moreover, when people look at a mountain, they always look up to see its peak. Similarly, a religious system is an organization where people look up to their leaders and information about God comes from the leaders. David wrote, **"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills [mountains], from whence cometh my help [from my God]."** (Psalm 121:1, KJV, insertions mine) The true God in Heaven no longer dwells on Mount Moriah. He lives in Heaven, on Mount Zion! (Revelation 14:1)

One last point. Citizens of the United States should easily grasp the concept of describing seven religious systems as seven hills because the principal building in Washington D.C. is called *Capitol Hill*. U.S citizens look up to Capitol Hill as the source of their laws – just like the Jews looked up to Mount Sinai as the source for theirs.

Specification 4. The seven heads are also seven kings. (Revelation 17:10)

A king has subjects and a religious system has subjects. Those who submit to the tenants of a

particular religion become subjects to its teachings, laws, and regulations. This explains how seven mountains and seven heads on the beast can also be seven kings. The seven religious systems of the world have authority over their subjects. If you do not believe this statement is true, consider this: No member can defy church doctrine without being punished for it. When a person is no longer willing to submit to the tenants of any religion, that person will be eliminated from that religious body for heresy. In some countries, elimination means death. In other countries, it means excommunication or expulsion. All seven religious systems are kings. They condemn those who defy their authority and teachings.

Specification 5. **“They are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; but when he does come, he must remain for a little while.”** (Revelation 17:10) This specification is very important because the timing of this statement forces the identity of the seven heads to be seven religious systems. Using a past perfect tense, the angel said, “five [heads] have fallen” to indicate action completed in the past. To determine when the five heads fell, we have to determine the setting for this conversation.

John received this vision while he was on the isle of Patmos (Revelation 1:9,10). Most scholars agree that John was on Patmos between A.D. 95-98. If we put the angel’s statement within the timely context of this conversation, his words will perfectly align with everything John wrote thus far about the seven heads. In other words, five of the seven heads *had fallen* prior to A.D.

95.

According to Webster's Dictionary, the word "fallen" is not limited to "destroyed or collapsed." In a larger sense, "fallen" can mean "brought down" or "demonstrated to be false or corrupt." If I said Jimmy Bakker, former president of the PTL Club, is a *fallen* evangelist, anyone remembering the history of Jimmy Bakker would understand this use of the word "fallen."

Bakker was a popular TV evangelist who was caught up in a sex and money scandal. He was publicly humiliated and disgraced when his corruption leaked out. (Bakker was granted parole from prison in July 1994, after serving almost five years of his original 45 year sentence.)

According to Webster, the word fallen can mean proven false. In fact, when the 144,000 gives the second angel's message, Babylon will not be weak, destroyed, or collapsed. The leopard-like beast will be extremely powerful, but it will be corrupt and blasphemous. **“. . . Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries.”** (Revelation 14:8)

If we put the angel's words *within the context of A.D. 95*, a simple explanation unfolds. When God became flesh and dwelt among men, five religious systems were exposed as false. Think about this: In a world of diverse, but religious equals, who else but God can **declare** a religious system false? Five of the seven heads were proven false before A.D. 95.

A. Heathenism is a religious system that operates in darkness. It does not worship the true God of Heaven. It does not know or have the Word of God. This religious system is huge and

diverse, it is often cruel and hopeless, but man's ignorance does not lessen God's love for human beings living in darkness. Because mankind is inherently rebellious and religious, this religious system creates gods to address its fears, fantasies, and superstitions. The birth and ministry of Jesus proves this religious system is false. **“Jesus answered, ‘I am the way [to eternal life] and the truth [I am telling you the truth about God] and the life [I am showing you how God wants you to live]. No one comes to the Father except through me [through my atoning sacrifice].’ ”** (John 14:6, insertions mine)

Note: It is important to remember that God deals with people corporately and individually. Religious systems are one thing and the members within that system are another. Even though all seven religious systems are false and blasphemous, there are millions of honest-hearted individuals within the seven religious systems of the world. Millions of dead heathen – those who lived down through the ages will be given eternal life on resurrection morning because they stood for everything they knew to be right and true and they submitted to the impressions of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 2:14) These people will be beneficiaries of Christ's atoning sacrifice even though they never had the opportunity to hear about Jesus. (Zechariah 13:6) To demonstrate that their salvation is warranted, millions of heathen will hear the 144,000 during the Great Tribulation and they will embrace the gospel and be saved. The response of the living proves that an honest-hearted person – regardless of his religious background – can be trusted with eternal life. Jesus has paid the price for every honest-hearted sinner. He will grant eternal life to billions of dead Heathens, Atheists, Eastern Mystics, Catholics, Protestants, Moslems, and Jews who lived in harmony with God's law (as far as they understood it) and according to the Spirit

(as far as they understood Him). God is unbelievably generous! Amen!

B. Atheism is a religious system that denies the existence of God. This belief system was proven false the day Jesus was born. King David wrote, “. . . . **The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ They [the fools] are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good. The Lord looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God.**” (Psalm 14:1,2, insertion mine) Jesus said He came from God, so who should we believe? “**Jesus said to them [the Jews], ‘If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me.’**” (John 8:42, insertion mine)

C. Judaism is a religious system that denies that Jesus is God. Judaism believes that salvation comes through obedience. Jesus proved this religious system false when He said, “**I tell you the truth, he who believes [in me] has everlasting life.**” (John 6:47)

D. Eastern Mysticism is a religious system that worships many false gods. Eastern Mysticism believes that self can save self by overcoming cycles of life and death. Eastern Mysticism does not know or worship Jesus. Jesus proved this religious system is false in the same way He rebuked the Jews for putting traditions above the Word of God saying, “**Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that.**” (Mark 7:13)

E. Islam* is a religious system that rejects the divinity of Jesus. Islam does not accept the premise that mankind needs a sinless Savior. Jesus proved this religious system false when He said, **“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.”** (John 3:16-18)

(***Note:** Although Islam today is often associated with the sixth century A.D. influence of Mohammed, the title, Islam, as used here, includes the ancient Arabic faith from which Mohammedism grew. Even though many Christians believe Mohammed was the founder of Islam, it must be emphasized that Mohammed did not invent the Islamic faith. Rather, he united, organized, clarified, and expanded the beliefs of nomadic Arabians. Moslems believe in forced conversions, so Islam spread through the Middle East as a result of Ottoman conquests. Mohammed is considered by Moslems to be the **last**, and therefore the greatest of God's messengers. Moslems trace the origin of their faith back to Abraham, Ishmael, and his twelve sons. Moslems regard Abraham as the father of their faith, not Mohammed. See Genesis 21:13 and Genesis 25:16.)

The Last Two Heads

The angel told John, **“five heads have fallen, one head is [new], and one is yet to come,**

but when he does come, he must remain for a little while.” (Revelation 17:10, insertion mine)

The new head that appeared in John’s day was Christianity. What was called Christianity during the first few centuries is called Catholicism today. The Greek word *katholikos* means universal – or everywhere. In other words, as Rome’s version of Christianity spread throughout Europe and Eurasia, the Church became known as the Catholic (the universal Christian) Church. John was a charter member of the early Church, the religious system which Jesus Himself established during His ministry on Earth (A.D. 27-30).

The verse in Revelation 17:10 is very critical because it involves timing. The angel said (using the past perfect tense: “five heads have fallen” and one head is [new]). If the beginning of Christianity has a birthdate, it would have to be Pentecost, A.D. 30. (Acts 2) By A.D. 95, Christianity had spread through much of the Roman empire, but this was not the end of new religious systems on Earth. The angel said, another head was yet to come and when it does appear, it would remain for a little while. The seventh head is Protestantism. Bible prophecy allows us to trace the history of Christianity and Protestantism. In terms of apostasy*, the history of Christianity is no different than the history of Israel.

(***Note:** After giving Jews, Catholics, and Protestants an opportunity to represent His interests on Earth, God has proven that all religious systems have become blasphemous over time because the carnal nature within man is the same the world over. This also explains why the 144,000 will not come from a single religious body. Jesus will select them from all religious systems because the gospel commission will be completed by honest-hearted individuals instead of one arrogant

religious system.)

After the powers of the papacy were broken in 1798, the Protestant Reformation blossomed for a few years in Europe and the United States and then it fragmented into many pieces. God raised up the United States of America to help the woman in Revelation 12, but Protestantism has quickly turned away from God and fallen into apostasy during the past 100 years. Speaking of Protestantism (the seventh head), the angel said, “. . .**but when he** [the seventh head] **does come, he must remain for a little while.**” (Revelation 17:10, insertion mine) This is very true. In term of religious systems, Protestantism is the “new kid on the block.” It is less than three centuries old while the other six religious systems are more than twenty centuries old.

Summarizing, the seven heads represent the seven religious systems of the world: Heathenism, Atheism, Judaism, Eastern Mysticism, Islam, Catholicism, and Protestantism. Consider this: Currently, every person on Earth is a member of one, or a variant of these seven religious systems. God intends to confront all seven religious systems at the same time; therefore, He will unite these diverse and antagonistic religious systems with His first four judgments. Together, they will form a monster sized church-state called Babylon (the leopard-like beast) and Babylon’s senseless behavior will be a showcase of blasphemy, arrogance, and ignorance. Modern Babylon will be far worse than ancient Babylon. Honest-hearted people will see the evidence with their own eyes. They will discover that all religions are blasphemous and worthless. Jesus said, “**Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.**” (John 8:32)

Specification 6. Notice the relationship between the great red dragon and the seven heads: **“The beast who once was [in Heaven], and now is not [in Heaven], is an eighth king. He belongs to the seven [heads] and is going to his destruction.”** (Revelation 17:11, insertions mine)

Even though we have investigated enough data to determine the identity of the seven heads on the leopard-like beast, there are two more specifications that we need to include. Remember that Daniel 7 predicted a little horn power would uproot three of the original ten horns. Recorded history reveals that with the help of the Roman Catholic Church, the Ostrogoths, Heruli, and Vandals were uprooted and destroyed by A.D. 538. Just as the Bible predicted, after three of the ten horns were uprooted, the Catholic Church became an eighth horn that ruled over the remaining seven horns for 1,260 years. (Daniel 7:25)

Revelation 17:11 uses parallel language to describe a similar situation. Lucifer, the great red dragon who was cast out of Heaven will come up from the Abyss at the fifth trumpet. He will masquerade as Almighty God and reign as an eighth king over the seven heads for a short time (Revelation 12:7-9). Then, during the sixth trumpet, the devil will suddenly abolish the seven religious systems of Earth because there is no room for religious diversity when “god lives among men.” The devil will divide the people of Earth into groups of a thousand and put them to work, building up the “kingdom of God” for a thousand years of peace. Lucifer will appoint ten kings as task masters. **“They [the ten kings] have one purpose [loyalty] and will give their**

power and authority to the [lamb-like] beast.” (Revelation 17:13, insertions mine)

Many wicked people will oppose the devil when he sets up his theocracy, especially when he dissolves the seven religious systems of the world, but no one can stop “the man of lawlessness.”

To silence the opposition, the devil’s forces will kill a third of mankind. (Revelation 9:15)

Notice Paul’s words, **“Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the [great] rebellion [against the gospel] occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will *oppose* [all religions] and will exalt himself over everything that is called God [there will be no God but himself] or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple [displaces God’s supremacy], proclaiming himself to be God.”** (2 Thessalonians 2:3,4, italics and insertions mine) **“And the [devil’s] four angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind.”** (Revelation 9:15)

Spedification 7 – There is one final specification that concerns the seven heads and the ten horns. **“The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but who for one hour will receive authority as kings along with the [leopard-like] beast.”** (Revelation 17:12, insertion mine)

When the leopard-like beast rises to power at the beginning of the Great Tribulation, the seven religious systems of the world (the seven heads) will become more powerful than the world’s political leadership. Because the reality of God will be overwhelming and the evidence of His

wrath overpowering, the world's political leaders will meekly defer to the direction of the world's religious leaders. What else can they do? These religious leaders will create laws for 890 days and the governments of the world will execute Babylon's demands. When the fifth trumpet occurs, Lucifer will physically appear and over the course of 150 days, he will convince many of the wicked that he is "Almighty God." At the sixth trumpet, Lucifer will suddenly modify Babylon by establishing a theocracy with himself as Lord of lords and King of kings. To do this, he will claim that he must abolish the seven religious systems because there is no room for religious diversity when "God" lives and reigns among men. The devil will then appoint ten kings to oversee his newly created theocracy.

The Bible appears to say the ten kings and the lamb-like beast will be given authority for sixty minutes (one hour). We know this is not the case because the sixth trumpet sounds about 295 days before the Second Coming. Actually, the intended idea is not translated properly. The Greek word *mia* can mean one or first – as in one hour or in the first hour. In this case, Lucifer will give authority to ten kings during the first hour of his theocracy. Ten horns will displace seven heads in an hour! Lucifer will abolish the seven heads and empower the ten horns to eliminate religious controversy and to prepare for war with Christ. Lucifer knows that Jesus will soon appear and I believe he wants to have control over Earth's nuclear missiles. **"They [the ten kings] have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the beast."** (Revelation 17:13, insertion mine)

The seven heads and the ten horns do not share power simultaneously. The (ten) toes of Daniel 2

(see verses 42- 44) symbolize Lucifer's ten kings. The Bible does not name or identify the ten kings. In fact, the Bible says very little about them, but we do know this much about the ten kings: **“In the time of those [ten] kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.”** (Daniel 2:44) **“They [the ten kings] have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the [lamb-like] beast. They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings – and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers.”** (Revelation 17:13,14)

About thirty days before the Second Coming, Lucifer will be unmasked. The wicked will recognize the truth. They will realize that Lucifer is the devil and worse, they know they will share his fate. When this revelation occurs, the wicked will not only loathe Lucifer, but they will also loathe themselves and their participation in his theocracy. The Bible says, **“The beast [leopard-like beast, Babylon] and the ten horns [ten kings] you saw will hate the prostitute [Lucifer's theocracy]. They will [turn on the great whore and] bring her to ruin and leave her naked; they will eat her flesh and burn her with fire [their loathing will be so great]. For God has put it into their hearts to accomplish his purpose by agreeing to give the beast their power to rule, until God's words are fulfilled.”** (Revelation 17:16,17, insertions mine)

Summary

When all the specifications concerning the leopard-like beast are assembled, Babylon is not too hard to identify. Babylon will be a monster-sized church-state. Babylon will rule over the nations with deadly power. It will persecute and devour those who oppose it. At first, the seven heads (the seven religious systems of the world) will control the leopard-like beast. I understand that the pope will be selected as the leader of Babylon and he will lead the world in appeasing God (actually blaspheming God) until the devil appears at the fifth trumpet. At the sixth trumpet, the devil will suddenly abolish the seven religions of the world and put ten kings in their place. Lucifer will assign these ten kings the task of rebuilding the infrastructures of Earth. The devil will demand the reconstruction of the world for the pseudo-purpose of establishing the kingdom of God and bringing in a thousand years of peace. Of course, this demand is a big lie. The devil will establish ten kings because he wants these kings to try and destroy Jesus at the Second Coming (perhaps by nuclear arms). It is reasonable to assume that labor camps will be set up and everyone will be forced into hard labor. Slavery will be imposed as a form of punishment. Civil authorities will punish those who refuse to work and obey. The devil will kill most of his opposition (a third of mankind) and rule over the world as “Almighty God” without significant opposition for almost a year. It is easy to see how the leopard-like beast mirrors its ancient namesake, the great city of Babylon – whose temporary splendor was created through years of forced labor and destroyed by God in a single night.

The Lamb-like Beast

Thus far, we have examined the identity of three beasts: The Lamb is Jesus, the great red dragon is Lucifer, and the leopard-like beast is Babylon. John does not give a physical description of the fourth beast in Revelation other than this: **“Then I saw another beast, coming out of the earth.**

He had two horns like a [the] lamb, but he spoke like a [the] dragon.” (Revelation 13:11)

Notice that I crossed out the indefinite article “a” and inserted the definite article “the” in the previous sentence. I did this to direct your attention to an interesting point. A literal reading of the Greek text says: **“It [the beast coming up out of the Earth] had horns two like lamb and spoke as dragon.”** Sometimes, in the Greek language, when a noun does not have an article, the noun is said to be anarthrous.

The Greek language uses anarthrous nouns for emphasis. This grammatical technique is sometimes used to refer to a specific element or character that has been previously introduced. Since *the* Lamb and *the* Dragon were previously introduced in Revelation’s story and since they do not have articles in Revelation 13:11 – their presence in Revelation 13 is emphasized through the use of anarthrous nouns. Well meaning English translators supplied the indefinite article “a” in both cases to make the sentence read better, but they should have used definite articles since they are supplied.

John does not describe the second beast in Revelation 13:11. The only thing we know about its appearance is that it has two horns like the Lamb (who had seven horns – Revelation 5:6) and it speaks like the dragon (because it is the devil in sheep’s clothing).

Two Horns

The two horns on this beast indicate the devil will be two kings in one! He will rule over church and state. The seven heads represent the seven religious systems of the world and the ten horns represent the ten kings which the devil appoints during the sixth trumpet. The devil will pretend to be the king of kings and the lord of lords, but we have to remember that Jesus has seven horns! Jesus is omnipotent. Even though Lucifer will appear to be invincible for a season, the Bible assures us that God will destroy Lucifer, his angels, and his government at the proper time.

(Daniel 8:25, Revelation 19:19-21)

Lamb-likeness

I call the nondescript beast in Revelation 13:11 the “lamb-like beast” for two reasons: First, this beast speaks like the dragon. This is a strange specification because there is no record of the dragon speaking in the book of Revelation. However, we do know that the devil is deceitful. He is a liar and I think this was John’s reason for saying the lamb-like beast speaks like the dragon. Jesus said of Lucifer, “. . . **When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.**” (John 8:44) The devil will masquerade as God, but his words and actions will be lies – carefully calculated to deceive billions of people. Just as Michael/Jesus, the archangel, put aside “his feathers” to become a man, so Lucifer will be permitted to put aside “his feathers” to become a man. Michael/Jesus came to save the world. (John 3:16) Lucifer will come to destroy the world. (Revelation 9:11)

The second and most obvious reason for calling this beast the “lamb-like beast” is that he will be an imposter of the Lamb. The lamb-like beast will deceive the whole world through his mighty miracles. (2 Thessalonians 2:9,10; Revelation 13:14) In other words, this beast will people of all religions into thinking that he is “God.” He will declare himself to be “God” and he will *prove* his assumed deity by calling fire down out of Heaven at will. (2 Thessalonians 2:4, Revelation 13:13) Since his success depends on clever deception, I think the title, “lamb-like” is a perfect fit.

The fifth trumpet only lasts five months. During this time, the devil has to quickly deceive the whole world into thinking that he is Almighty God. (Revelation 9:5) To win the confidence of world leaders, the devil will support the laws of Babylon and the efforts of Babylon’s leaders to reduce immoral behavior. The devil will heal the sick, speak wonderful words of hope and comfort, and perform amazing signs and wonders. Working around the clock and constantly traveling around the world with his angels, Lucifer will conduct a glorious campaign that has no equal in Earth’s history. Billions of people who refused to accept the gospel of Christ will embrace the devil on the basis of his counterfeit miracles, signs, and wonders. The old adage, “seeing is believing” will work very well for the devil. (Matthew 24:23)

When the five months are completed, a large majority of the wicked will believe that Lucifer is “God.” At this point, Lucifer will suddenly change character. His charade as a benevolent and loving god will disappear. He will turn into a stern-faced king overnight, worse than Pharaoh, and the leaders of Babylon will be dethroned overnight. Lucifer will appoint ten kings to impose

and enforce his harsh laws on the world. Loving every minute of his despotic plot, the devil will torture the wicked with outrageous religious laws and he will kill anyone who quibbles against his authority. In fact, four of his angels will kill a third of mankind (Revelation 9:15) and his ten puppet kings will use military force to ensure that rebellion is not tolerated.

The Origin of the Lamb-like Beast

John was given two different views of the devil's appearing. The first view is described in Revelation 9 and the second is described in Revelation 13. In Revelation 9, the devil and his angels imitate the Second Coming. In Revelation 13, the lamb-like beast rises out of the ground as a miracle working world leader.

John wrote, **“Then I saw another beast, coming out of the earth. . . .”** (Revelation 13:11) There is no geographical difference between the devil being released from the Abyss and the devil coming up out of the earth because the Abyss was a hole in the Earth. In John's day, the Abyss or the bottomless pit (KJV) was thought to be a bottomless hole that went through the basin of the Earth. If John had said that he saw the lamb-like beast coming up from *the Abyss* in Revelation 13:11, this would have linked up with the release of Lucifer, the angel king, from the Abyss in Revelation 9:1-11 and made the identity of the lamb-like beast much easier to determine. Nevertheless, here is a fascinating point: John mentions “the beast from the Abyss” twice in Revelation (Revelation 11:7 and 17:8), but *the only beast* that can come out of the Abyss is the lamb-like beast because there are only four beasts in the book of Revelation and only one is

cast *into* the Earth! Here are three reasons (and there may be more) why God obscured the fact that the lamb-like beast is the beast from the Abyss:

1. When we compare the origins of the two beasts in Revelation 13, we find that the leopard-like beast (Babylon) will rise up out of the sea whereas the lamb-like beast will rise up out of the Earth. During the vision of the Two Witnesses, John saw Jesus *plant* one foot on the sea and the other on the Earth*. (Revelation 10:2) This stance reveals Jesus' sovereign authority over the sea (the origin of Babylon), as well as the land (the origin of the lamb-like beast). Consider Christ's authority: He limits Babylon's power to forty-two months (Revelation 13:5) and the devil is only released from the Abyss (a hole in the Earth) when Jesus permits. (Revelation 9:1,2; 13:11) Ultimately, God still is in control.

(***Note:** The Greek word for Earth is *ge* and it is translated "land" about fifty times in the New Testament.)

Even John wrote the book of Revelation about thirty years after Paul's death, the apostle Paul knew the devil would be allowed to physically appear before mankind. Paul also knew that Jesus would determine the timing of the devil's appearing, not the devil. Consider Paul's words to the church at Thessalonica: **"Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? And now you know what is holding him [the devil, the man of lawlessness] back, so that he may be revealed *at the proper time*. For the secret [hidden] power of lawlessness [an invisible devil] is already at work; but the one [Jesus] who now holds it back**

[the appearing of the devil] **will continue to do so till he** [Jesus] **is taken out of the way** [who presently intercedes between the law of God and a rebellious world].” (2 Thessalonians 2:5-7, italics and insertions mine)

2. A second statement about origins is necessary. The leopard-like beast comes out of the sea and the lamb-like beast comes out of a hole in the ground. The contrast between origins could not be clearer. The leopard-like beast rises up out of the sea and the sea represents nations, peoples, and languages. (Revelation 17:15) In other words, Babylon rises up from within the nations of Earth whereas the lamb-like beast comes out of a hole in the ground. The lamb-like beast does not derive his power and authority from nations, peoples, and languages. Moreover, the origin of the lamb-like beast aligns with Daniel 8 where the devil’s appearing is described as coming out of one of the four winds or “out of thin air.” **“Out of one of them** [the four winds] **came another horn** [this horn represents Lucifer, the stern-faced king], **which started small** [not widely known or in a position to overtake the world at first] **but grew in power to the south and to the east and toward the Beautiful Land** [west. In other words, this is a king that comes out of the north*].” (Daniel 8:9, insertions mine)

(***Note:** For a discussion on the importance of “the north,” please see Chapter 4 in my book, *Daniel: Unlocked for the Final Generation.*)

Lucifer Will Inhabit the Form of a Man

Isaiah knew the devil would be permitted to physically appear before the human race. Notice his words: **“How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’ But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit. *Those who see you stare at you, they ponder your fate: ‘Is this *the man* who shook the earth and made kingdoms tremble, *the man* who made the world a desert, who overthrew its cities and would not let his captives go home?’ ”*** (Isaiah 14:12-17, italics mine)

Ezekiel knew that God would permit the devil to physically appear before the human race. Notice his words: **“In the pride of your heart you say, ‘I am a god; I sit on the throne of a god in the heart of the seas.’ But *you are a man and not a god*, though you think you are as wise as a god. . . Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says: ‘Because you think you are wise, as wise as a god, I am going to bring foreigners against you, the most ruthless of nations; they will draw their swords against your beauty and wisdom and pierce your shining splendor. They will bring you down to the pit, and you will die a violent death in the heart of the seas.’ Will you then say, ‘I am a god,’ in the presence of those who kill you? *You will be but a man, not a god, in the hands of those who slay you.*’ ”** (Ezekiel 28:2,6-9, italics mine)

Paul knew the devil would be permitted to physically appear before the human race. He also knew the devil would proclaim himself to be God. This is why Paul calls the devil, “the man of lawlessness” (not subject to human laws). **“He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God. . . . The coming of the lawless one** [the physical appearing of the devil masquerading as God] **will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They** [the wicked] **perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.”** (2 Thessalonians 2:4,9-12, italics and insertions mine)

The appearing of the devil will come as an overwhelming surprise to the wicked. **“ . . . The inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will be *astonished* when they see the [lamb-like] beast, because he once was [visible], now is not [visible], and yet will come [out of the earth and be visible].”** (Revelation 17:8, italics and insertions mine)

Because the devil will be permitted to inhabit the form of a man (as Michael/Jesus assumed the form of a man), Lucifer is called a man by Isaiah, Ezekiel, Paul, and John. The devil will come with an army of demons who will look like human beings as well, **“ . . . On their heads they wore something like crowns of gold, and their faces resembled human faces. . . . The**

number of the mounted troops was two hundred million. I heard their number.”

(Revelation 9:7,16) Thus, the devil and his demons will physically appear – a huge army of extraterrestrial beings, superior to mankind in every way. They will rise silently from the Abyss and *descend to Earth*, literally, out the air. (Revelation 9:3)

3. Here is a third reason explaining why the lamb-like beast rises from the Earth in Revelation 13 instead of the Abyss as in Revelation 9. God gave the Revelation vision to John about A.D. 95. To keep the contents of this vision a mystery for nearly two thousand years, God put the story together in a cryptic way. Through the centuries, many honest-hearted people have tried to make sense of Revelation’s story, but it was not the right time. With God, timing is everything. We know the book of Daniel was sealed up until the time of the end and now that Daniel has been unsealed, we understand the four rules that govern apocalyptic interpretation. Using valid rules of interpretation helps put the pieces together, so the careful Bible student can learn the intended meaning of Revelation.

Study the following verses and notice that Lucifer and his angels are cast into the Earth; therefore, their release from the Abyss is synonymous with coming up out of the Earth.

“And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down – that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to [Greek: *into*] the earth, and his angels with him.” (Revelation 12:7-9, insertion and underlines mine)

Comment: The Bible says, “he was hurled [into] the Earth.” The Greek preposition *eis* is sometimes translated “in” or “into.” The idea here is that Lucifer and his angels were hurled *into* the Earth “as a stone is hurled *into* a pond.” The stone becomes invisible as a result of being cast into the water. After the devil was hurled into the Earth, he will be permitted (at the appointed time) to come out of the Earth!

“Then I saw another beast, *coming out of the earth*. He had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon.” (Revelation 13:11, italics mine)

“The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star [a holy angel] that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss. When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss. And out of the smoke locusts [a swarm of angels] came *down upon the earth* and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth. They had *as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon.*” (Revelation 9:1-3,11, italics and insertions mine)

“[The angel said to John,] The [great red dragon] beast, which you saw [cast out of Heaven], once was [visible], now is not [visible because he and his angels were cast into the earth], and will come up out of the Abyss [when they are permitted to come up out of Earth and be visible] and [regardless of his invincible powers, Lucifer will] go to his destruction. The inhabitants of

the earth whose names have not been written in the Book of Life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they see the [lamb-like] beast [with their own eyes], because he once was [visible], now is not [visible], and yet will come [up out of Earth and be visible].”

(Revelation 17:8, insertions mine)

Comment: The glorious appearing of Lucifer will totally shock the wicked. They do not expect to see a majestic “being” standing fifteen to seventeen feet tall who has the kind of power and glory that will attend Lucifer. Even more, they cannot imagine that this gentle and miracle working being would actually be the Antichrist! Revelation 17:8 eliminates a lot of wiggle room because the angel told John, **“The beast which you saw, once was [in Heaven], now is not [in Heaven], and will come up out of the Abyss. . . .”** The only beast that John saw cast *into* the Earth was the great red dragon. (Revelation 12:9) Since there is only one beast in Revelation that comes up out of the Earth, (Revelation 13:11), Revelation 17:8 forces us to admit that the great red dragon is the lamb-like beast which is released from the Abyss at the fifth trumpet. Review these verses:

“Then I saw another beast, coming out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon. . . .And he performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men. Because of the signs he was given power to do on behalf of the first beast, he deceived the inhabitants of the earth. . . .”

(Revelation 13:11, 13,14)

Comment: The lamb-like beast will be Lucifer masquerading as God. He will call fire down out of Heaven *to prove* to the wicked that he is truly God. His two horns indicate that he will eventually rule the world as lord of lords (control over the religions of the world) and king of kings (control over the nations of the world). The devil will eventually kill the work and influence of the Two Witnesses with his superior miracles. He will become an eighth king, that is, he will rule over the seven heads for a short time and he will lead the world into open rebellion against God's covenant, His Ten Commandments.

Summary: Lucifer is the angel king from the Abyss. Lucifer is the lamb-like beast that will rise out of the Earth. His title in Hebrew and Greek (for Jews and Gentiles alike) means destroyer. The devil will be released on mankind to destroy the world. He will rise to a position of absolute power, but his power will not come from nations or people. He will deceive the world and lead it to destruction. The release of the devil on the wicked is consistent with the full cup principle. When a majority of people in a group reach a point where extended mercy has no redeeming effect, God always sends a destroyer. “. . . **They** [the wicked] **perish because *they refused to love the truth* and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.**” (2 Thessalonians 2:8-10, italics mine)

Now that we have carefully examined and determined the identity of the four beasts in the book of Revelation, we can proceed through the following two prophecies rather quickly:

Prophecy I

Revelation 12:1-6

“A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth.” (Revelation 12:1,2)

Comment: This short prophecy is six verses long. It consists of three characters: A pregnant woman standing on the moon, a great red dragon, and a male child who does not remain on Earth. If I could give this prophecy a title, it would be titled, “ Lucifer’s Hatred for Jesus.” Even though this prophecy begins at the time of Christ’s birth, the conflict between Christ and Satan predates the creation of Earth. For thousands of years* the Godhead did everything possible to resolve Lucifer’s disaffection in Heaven, but Lucifer and his followers would not cooperate. Finally, Lucifer led a third of the angels into open rebellion and Jesus kicked them out of Heaven. Because Jesus and his angels triumphed over Lucifer and his angels, Satan’s desire for revenge has been insatiable ever since. He loathes Jesus and this hatred explains, in part, why the devil was prepared and determined to kill Jesus “the moment He was born.”

(***Note:** The Bible does not indicate the length of time that the Godhead spent trying to resolve Lucifer's feelings and behavior. I am speculating that it was thousands of years because the Godhead has spent thousands of years resolving the sin problem with human beings. I am sure that God loves His angels as much as He loves us, therefore He gave them every opportunity to repent.)

This prophecy has a cosmic setting. God used objects from the sky such as the Sun, moon, and stars to frame this story because elements in this story go beyond events that have transpired on Earth. This story covers thousands of years and involves millions of angels and human beings. John saw a pregnant woman clothed with the Sun, who was also wearing a crown of twelve stars and was standing on the moon. The book of Revelation does not treat the Sun, moon and stars as symbols in this passage. *This statement is true because there are no relevant texts defining the Sun, moon and stars* as symbols.* God used a cosmic setting for this story because He wants us to understand the feelings, the actions and the loathing that Lucifer has for Christ. Who else but God could explain something so huge in eight sentences?

(***Note:** Rule Three of Apocalyptic Prophecy indicates there are three types of language in apocalyptic prophecy: analogous, literal and symbolic. If an element is thought to be symbolic, the Bible will interpret the symbol with a *relevant* text. In other words, if something is to be treated as a symbol, the Bible will define the symbol so that everyone who reads the Bible will have the same conclusion. The Bible is its own interpreter. For example, the woman wears a crown of twelve stars. The twelve stars are not symbols of twelve angels. Look at this text: “**In**

his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. . . .” (Revelation 1:16) Then, Revelation 1:20 says, “. . . **The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches. . .**” We see here that the seven stars in Revelation 1:16 are seven angels because Revelation 1:20 defines the symbol. In other words, Revelation 1:20 is *relevant* to Revelation 1:16. Now, look at this text: **“I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind.”** (Revelation 6:12,13) Are the Sun, moon, and stars in this passage literal or symbolic? The answer is literal because there is no *relevant* text that defines them as symbols. In summary, the Bible must speak for itself. When it does not define a symbol with a relevant text, no one has the authority to make the element symbolic.)

The woman standing on the moon is not the virgin Mary. This woman has been persecuted from the beginning. This woman has existed ever since sin began and she was chased into the desert for 1,260 years. This woman represents the people of God, His church, a group of people who are the bride of Christ. (Revelation 19:7) Her position, “standing on the moon,” indicates that she is not of this world. (John 18:36, 1 John 2:15-17) God’s church is not a specific denomination nor does it have buildings of brick and mortar. God’s church consists of honest-hearted people from all ages and they are found in every religious system. This woman is in love with God and God loves her (His people). She is pregnant with his Son. She (His church) loves God with all her (their) heart, mind and soul and her (their) neighbor as herself (themselves). (Matthew 22: 36-40; Ephesians 5:23-27) Jesus came from a long line of people who loved God,

people like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David. This may sound strange, but the Great Tribulation will prove that there are far more people in God's church today than all Christian denominations combined!

Jesus used a woman to symbolize His affection for His people the very day that sin began. Jesus told Lucifer, Adam and Eve, **“And I will put enmity [hatred, conflict] between you [Lucifer] and the woman [my people], and between your offspring and hers; he [a male child coming through her] will crush your head [someday], and you [Lucifer] will strike his heel [so that He will die].”** (Genesis 3:15, insertions mine)

The pregnant woman wears a *stephanos* (a winner's crown) with twelve stars in it. The twelve stars represent the twelve tribes* of Israel. (Revelation 7:5-8) Her brilliant, shining garment represents the wedding garment (Matthew 22:11,12) which is the righteousness of Christ. (Romans 1:17) This garment is freely given to every repentant sinner. (Ephesians 2:8,9)

(***Note:** Please read Chapters 7 and 8 in my book, *Jesus: The Alpha and The Omega*, for a discussion on who constitutes Israel in the book of Revelation.)

“Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads. His tail [pun: tale] swept a third of the stars [angels] out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child *the moment* it was born. She

gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter

[indicating His reign on the throne cannot be broken]. **And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne.**" (Revelation 12:3-5, italics and insertions mine)

Comment: We know that the red dragon is the devil. (Revelation 12:9) We know that Lucifer tried to kill Jesus "the moment He was born." (Matthew 2:16) We know that Jesus was taken to Heaven after His death on the cross. (Acts 1:11) We know that Jesus sits on God's throne. (Acts 7:55,56; Colossians 3:1) We know that Jesus will eventually rule all nations with an iron scepter. (An iron scepter means that His rule cannot be broken. Revelation 19:15) When the devil saw that He could not kill baby Jesus, when the devil saw that He could not keep Jesus in the tomb, when the devil saw that Jesus had returned to Heaven and was out of his reach, he directed his hatred for God at the woman.

"The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days." (Revelation 12:6)

Comment: It is ironic that the devil used "the Church" to persecute "the church." This concept is difficult to explain, but it must be understood. When Jesus established His church, you could say that a new religious system was established even though the woman already existed. The new religious system was a visible church. It became an *organized* body of believers. The visible church was defined by creeds and doctrine and human beings directed it as they sought the guidance of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 16:19; Acts 15) The visible church had members,

buildings, and programs. On the other hand, the woman consists of born again individuals, those who supremely love God and their neighbors and uphold God's advancing truth. These individuals follow the leading of the Holy Spirit – wherever He leads. The woman exists only in God's sight. Individuals who make up the woman may worship in a visible church, but the woman and the visible church are two distinct entities and this confuses a lot of people. Man looks on the outer appearance, but God reads the heart. Individuals who have a pure heart, regardless of their religious persuasion, are members of the woman, God's invisible church. God's people may be members of a visible church, but membership in a visible church does not mean anything to God.

This visible/invisible principle is explained in Romans 9. Go over this carefully: “. . . **For not all who are descended from Israel [Jacob] are Israel [belong to Jacob in God's sight]. Nor because they are his [biological] descendants are they all Abraham's children [in terms of salvation, biological heritage is meaningless]. On the contrary,** [God rejected Abraham's plea that Ishamel, his first born son, should be the heir to the covenant. God said, 'No,' Genesis 17:15-22] **'It is through Isaac [the miracle baby] that your offspring will be reckoned.'** **In other words, it is not the natural children [biological offspring] who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise [those who have experienced the miracle of spiritual birth] who are regarded as Abraham's offspring.”** (Romans 9:7,8)

After the first century A.D., the visible church and the invisible church drifted apart. By the fifth century A.D. the visible church in Rome had taken control of doctrine and leadership, and those

who loved truth and followed the Spirit were actually regarded as her enemies. The devil took control of the visible church and used it to persecute the invisible church. This warfare will be repeated. During the Great Tribulation a very visible Babylon will make war against everyone keeping God's commandments and holding to the testimony of Jesus. (Revelation 12:17)

The woman fled to the desert for survival. The desert represents a desolate hiding place and the 1,260 days defines her period of persecution. The time, times and half a time mentioned in Daniel 7:25, Revelation 12:14 and the 1,260 days of Revelation 12:6 are the same time period. (A.D. 538-1798) This can be confusing, I know, but the prophecy in Revelation 12 spans many centuries. Beginning in A.D. 538 and finishing in A.D. 1798, this prophecy covers 2,300 years. The Jubilee Calendar is in operation during this period, therefore the 1,260 days must be translated as 1,260 years (Rule Four of Apocalyptic Prophecy).

Keeping the Identity of the Dragon on Track

Many prophetic expositors violate valid rules of interpretation in Revelation 12 because they want to make the enormous red dragon into something other than the devil. History does affirm that the devil worked through the little horn in Daniel 7 (the Roman Catholic Church) to persecute the saints for 1,260 years, but the enormous red dragon in Revelation 12 *is not* the papacy. If, in our rush to understand apocalyptic prophecy, we ignore or manipulate the specifications which God has given, we will never be able to arrive at the intended meaning of prophecy. Follow the logic: The enormous red dragon tried to kill Jesus at birth *through Herod*.

Then, the great red dragon used the Roman Catholic Church to chase the woman into the desert for 1,260 years. The devil is a determined demon. He is not Herod or is he the Roman Catholic Church. This brings me to the second point, which is also very important.

The leopard-like beast is not the devil even though the devil will controlled the beast!

(Revelation 13:2) When studying the behavior of people or organizations, it is sometimes difficult to determine the extent of control the devil has because generally speaking, adults have the ability to exercise their power of choice. Therefore, we have to ask, “Does the devil really influence people, and by extension, organizations, to do things they would otherwise not do?”

Consider these verses:

“Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. *Resist him*, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.” (1 Peter 5:8,9, italics mine)

“Submit yourselves, then, to God. *Resist the devil*, and he will flee from you.” (James 4:7, italics mine)

The Bible does indicate that the devil and his demons can and must be resisted or they may take control of us. We know demon possession is possible because Jesus cast demons out of many people. See Matthew 8:28-33.

Summary: We have examined Lucifer's hatred for Jesus in this first prophecy. This loathing has not changed. If it were possible, Lucifer would kill Jesus right now. Jesus has demonstrated God's love for mankind in ways that transcend human comprehension. Jesus did not have to go to the cross, but infinite love caused Him to be willing to give up His eternal life so that we might have it. Can you imagine killing the very person who would volunteer to die in your place? Lucifer's hatred for Jesus shows the malevolent and hideous nature of sin. We have also learned that the devil uses demon possessed people and organizations to carry out his evil desires. Lucifer, once the greatest and highest of created beings, has become a senseless beast, a raving destroyer. His human instruments have been diverse – from the Pharisees, the Caesars, and the Church of Rome, to rulers like Herod, Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot, and Hussein. After chasing the woman for 1,260 years, he has one final chance to destroy her. He is waiting for the leopard-like beast to rise.

Prophecy II

Revelation 12:7-14:5

If this second prophecy could be given a title, I would call it, "Lucifer's Hatred for the Woman."

This prophecy shifts our focus from Lucifer's hatred for Jesus to his hatred for the woman – the

followers of Jesus. We have already noticed that the first prophecy began with the birth of Jesus and ended with Lucifer chasing the woman into the desert for 1,260 years. This prophecy begins with a war on Resurrection Sunday (Revelation 12:7) and it ends with the 144,000 standing around the Lamb on Mt. Zion and singing a new song. (Revelation 14:5)

The first scene in this prophecy opens triumphantly! Jesus has kicked Lucifer out of Heaven. The final scene in this prophecy also ends triumphantly! John sees the 144,000 standing with Jesus on Mt. Zion. This final scene is very important to the people who will live during the Great Tribulation because most, if not all, of the 144,000 will be killed in the line of duty and the remnant of the woman will be totally decimated. (Daniel 12:7; Revelation 13:7) But, do not be discouraged, “Victory Day” will come! Even though the remnant of the woman will be crushed beyond recognition and the wicked will temporarily rejoice, the victory over the leopard-like beast, the lamb-like beast, the image of the beast, and the mark of the beast will surely come to God’s saints! “. . . **This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints.**” (Revelation 13:10) “**Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days.**” (Daniel 12:12)

As you study this prophecy, it is important that you see four chronological segments. First, there is war in Heaven and persecution of the woman for 1,260 years. Second, the leopard-like beast rises from the sea. Third, the lamb-like beast rises from the Earth. Finally, the 144,000 are taken to Heaven to gather around Jesus. Right now we are living between segments one and two, Revelation 12:17 and 13:1. At this point in Earth’s history, we have reached an excellent perch.

We can examine the progression of prophecy over the past 2,000 years and we can look “around the corner” and see what is coming in the near future. In other words, this prophecy began on resurrection Sunday and according to my calculations, it has less than ten years to go until it is completed. (**Note:** Please understand that if time should last longer than ten years, this will have no effect on the meaning or the fulfillment of this prophecy. It just means that my calculation on the whereabouts of the 6,000th year of sin is incorrect.)

With these things said, let us begin this study with Revelation 12:7. This is the first verse of a new prophecy because, according to Rule One of Apocalyptic Prophecy, chronological order is broken between verses 6 and 7. In other words, the war in Heaven (verse 7) occurs *before* the dragon chases the woman to the desert (verse 6), therefore a new prophecy begins because chronological order is broken.

Resurrection Sunday

“And there was war in heaven [on Resurrection Sunday]. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down – that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled [in]to the earth, and his angels with him.” (Revelation 12:7-9, insertions mine)

Comment: These verses describe Lucifer’s second and final eviction from Heaven. This

eviction took place on Resurrection Sunday. Because every war has a history of conflict, we have to start at the beginning of this story to understand the the war that took place on Resurrection Sunday.

When God cast Lucifer out of Heaven the first time (Isaiah 14:12-17, Ezekiel 28:12-19), God did not completely sever relations with the devil and his angels. Even though Lucifer was not permitted to live in Heaven, God did permit Lucifer to attend specific meetings in Heaven. (Job 1) God continued to treat Lucifer with utmost respect and kindness because there is no hatred, evil, or fear in God's heart. (Remember, God loves His enemies just as much as He loves His friends and He commands us to do the same. Luke 6:27-36)

After Lucifer led Eve and then Adam into sin, God crowned Lucifer as the "prince of this world." (John 12:31) As the prince of this world, God permitted Lucifer to join with princes from other worlds when administrative meetings were called. At these meetings, it appears the angels discussed matters pertaining to the governance of the universe. (Job 1:6) This information is pertinent for two reasons. First, as "the prince of this world," the devil was granted entrance into God's presence whenever administrative meetings were held. Second, when Jesus died on the cross, with His own blood, Jesus paid a great price to redeem and possess Earth. When Jesus ascended to Heaven on Resurrection Sunday He immediately proceeded to take Lucifer's position away from him. As stubborn and rebellious as he is, "the prince of this world," refused to acknowledge Christ's redemption payment and war broke out in Heaven between Christ and Satan for a second time.

(**Note:** You may recall that Lucifer tempted Jesus in the desert. The devil promised to give the world to Jesus if Jesus would bow down and worship him (Luke 4:7,8), but Jesus knew (a) worshipping anyone other than God is blasphemy, and (b) Lucifer's offer was a lie because the devil had no intention of giving the world to Jesus. Everything in the universe belongs to the Father and Jesus knew the Father would give Him this world if He faithfully carried out the plan of salvation. The Father dethroned Lucifer as "the prince of this world" when He gave the world to Jesus on Resurrection Sunday, but this transaction led to war in Heaven again. Psalm 2:7,8; 24:7-10; John 17:6)

The Bible indicates that the war described in Revelation 12:7-9 occurred on Resurrection Sunday (April 9, A.D. 30). Many Christians erroneously think this war occurred *before* Adam and Eve sinned, but according to Scripture, this is not possible. Here is why:

When Jesus cast Lucifer out of Heaven a powerful declaration was heard throughout Heaven's court: **"Then I [John] heard a loud voice in heaven say: 'Now [that is, at this time] have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ.'**" (Revelation 12:10, Pt. 1. See also Matthew 28:18.) Using His Commander-in-Chief powers as Michael the archangel, Jesus and His angels drove Lucifer and his angels out of Heaven's court and a victorious Jesus took over as Earth's representative in Heaven's court. Jesus was given this honor on the basis of His perfect redemption – much to the delight of the holy angels. Then, the verse continues as an angel proclaimed: **"For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down."** (Revelation 12:10, Pt. 2)

Consider the last sentence again. Lucifer is called the accuser “of our brothers.” The angels call us their brothers! Think about this. If this war occurred *before* Adam and Eve sinned, then sinful people would not have existed and there would be no one for Lucifer to accuse. Lucifer’s accusations began *after* Adam and Eve sinned. Lucifer taunted God with accusations from time to time that God’s government was unfair because He granted grace and forgiveness to human beings and not to angels. These accusations were baseless because God waited patiently for the angels to repent, but they would not. Twice in the Bible, Lucifer is rebuked for promoting baseless arguments. See Zechariah 3:2 and Jude 1:9.

Revelation 12:10 is a punctilliar declaration: “**Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God. . . .**” This declaration could only be made after the price for man’s salvation had been paid. When Jesus walked out of the tomb, the devil and his angels realized their fate and they had no intention of yielding to an honorable defeat. He would not give up his seat in Heaven’s court as the “prince of this world” to someone he loathed. The only way the devil would surrender to Christ was through force, and that is exactly what happened. Jesus forced the devil and his angels out of Heaven!

Consider the next verse and notice that the last word is “short.” This word is significant in this context because Lucifer’s demise is coming. If Lucifer was 100,000 years old when he was cast out of Heaven on Resurrection Sunday, another 3,000 years (counting from the death of Jesus to the end of the thousand years in Revelation 20) is “short” indeed. “**Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them** [because Jesus has prevailed and the devil has been cast

out of here forever]! **But woe to the earth** [land] **and the sea** [people and nations of the whole world], **because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his** [remaining] **time is short.**” (Revelation 12:12)

Devil Cast out of Heaven *after* Jesus Was Born

The Bible says the war in Revelation 12:7-9 took place *after* Jesus was born. Study the chronology that is declared in this text: **“When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who *had given birth to the male child.*”** (Revelation 12:13, italics mine) We can easily chart verse 13.

Revelation 12:13

-----a-----bc-----d----Devil chases woman-----e-->

4 B.C. A.D. 30 A.D. 538

- a. The birth of Jesus
- b. The death of Jesus
- c. The devil cast out of Heaven
- d. The beginning of the 1,260 years

e. Deadly wound inflicted on papacy

Chart 14.1

There is no wiggle room. Verse 13 says that *after* the devil is cast out of Heaven, he chases the woman *who had given birth* to the male child. Therefore, the war in Revelation 12:7 had to occur between 4 B.C. and A.D. 538.

Driven Out of Heaven a Second Time

There is one more passage in Scripture that we need to consider. A few hours before His arrest and death, Jesus went to the temple and said: **“Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!’ Then a voice came from heaven, ‘I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.’ The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him. Jesus said, ‘This voice was for your benefit, not mine. Now [at this time] is the time for judgment on this world [that is, the moment of truth has now come to see who will win the contest for Earth]; now [at this time] the prince of this world will be driven out [of Heaven. He will lose his seat in Heaven’s court as Earth’s representative].’ ”**

(John 12:27-31, insertions mine)

Adding John 12 to our study, we can assemble three facts. First, Revelation 12:10 is a punctiliar announcement, **“... Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our**

God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.” This declaration could only be made after (a) the price for salvation had been paid, and (b) the devil had been permanently cast out. When God clothes a repentant sinner with the perfect life of Jesus, the devil cannot say a word. In theological terms, the angels said, “justification has silenced the accuser of our brothers.”

Second, Revelation 12:13 allows no wiggle room. The war in Revelation 12:7-9 occurred between 4 B.C. and A.D. 538. Third, Jesus predicted in John 12:27-31 that the prince of this world would be driven out [of Heaven]. Putting these three facts together, the following passage makes perfect sense: **“At this, she [Mary] turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. ‘Woman,’ he said, ‘why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?’ Thinking he was the gardener, she said, ‘Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.’ Jesus said to her [in a familiar tone], ‘Mary.’ [Her ears knew that voice.] She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, ‘Rabboni!’ (which means My Teacher). Jesus said, ‘*Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, “I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.”*’ ”** (John 20:14-17, italics and insertions mine)

Jesus was returning to His Father so he could drive Lucifer out of Heaven. The Father had promised to give this world to Jesus and He had to go and receive His inheritance. Even though Jesus gave up His life, even though He perfectly obeyed the will of the Father, Lucifer was unwilling to yield his position to Jesus and step down. His loathing of Christ produced the

second war in Heaven. Once again, Lucifer was thrown out at the speed of lightning, this time for good!

After reviewing the background of the ongoing conflict between Christ and Satan, this warning is easier to understand: “. . . **But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.**” (Revelation 12:12)

Look over Lucifer’s report card:

1. Lucifer and one-third of the angels rebelled against God. Lucifer tried to stay in Heaven. Failed.
2. Lucifer deceived Eve. Adam fell, too. Lucifer became prince of this world. Success.
3. Lucifer led the antediluvians to openly defy God. Success.
4. Lucifer led the Israelites into apostasy over and over. Success.
5. Lucifer tried to kill Jesus at birth. Failed.
6. Lucifer tried to get Jesus (at His weakest moment) to worship him. Failed.
7. Lucifer tried to keep Jesus in the tomb by sealing it with a huge stone. Failed.
8. Lucifer tried to keep his position in Heaven's government. Failed.
9. Lucifer tried to keep the truth about Christ’s resurrection a secret. Failed.
10. Defeated and loathing Christ, Lucifer tried to destroy the woman for 1,260 years. Failed.

The Chase Begins

“The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days. . . . They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.”

(Revelation 12:6, 11)

Comment: After Jesus ascended to Heaven, the devil used the Jews and the Romans to persecute Christians with unbelievable zeal. The Jews hated the Christians because they were tearing down the traditions of Judaism. (Remember the stoning of Stephen and then Saul on the road to Damascus?) The Romans hated the Christians because they thought Christians were another Jewish sect and they hated the Jews. (Remember the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70?) Today, most Christians do not understand or appreciate the decimating persecution that fell upon the early church during the first five centuries after Jesus returned to Heaven. The Romans drove the woman into hiding, but the implosion of the Roman empire forced the devil to take another approach to keep the woman out of sight. He had few options, so the devil joined the Church at Rome! Working through carnal minded church leaders, Lucifer gained control of the visible church. Amazing as it sounds, by A.D. 538, the visible church was actually persecuting the invisible church. The devil was determined to eliminate the woman, but Jesus would not allow him to destroy all of His saints.

The Bible says, **“The woman fled into the desert to a place *prepared for her* by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.”** (Revelation 12:6) God’s wisdom goes beyond human comprehension and His ways never deviate from perfect love and because of this, God

can be very difficult to understand at times. Our understanding of God and His love can be miles away from the truth. The divide between a changeless God and our finite understanding of Him and His plans may remain unknown until a crisis occurs. For example, millions of Christians have been led to believe in a pre-tribulation rapture. They refuse to accept the idea that a God of love would allow His saints to remain on Earth to suffer persecution and harm during the Great Tribulation. I have several objections to the theory of a pre-tribulation rapture which I will share before I address the issue of God permitting His saints to suffer persecution.

Three Rapture Obstacles

The Bible does not support a pre-tribulation rapture for several reasons, here are at least three: First, a pre-tribulation rapture requires a pre-tribulation judgment. For this theory to be true, it means God has to judge the living *before* the Great Tribulation begins to determine who can be raptured and who has to be “left behind.” Moreover, this also means that if God judges a person to be unfit for the rapture, then that sinner will have a second chance at receiving salvation during the Great Tribulation. The Bible refutes both ideas. Second, the Bible says the devil is preparing to make war on the last or the remnant of the woman. **“Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring – those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.”** (Revelation 12:17) The Bible also says the leopard-like beast will make war against *the saints* during the Great Tribulation. **“He was given power to make war against *the saints* and to conquer them. . . .”** (Revelation 13:7, italics mine) How can the devil and leopard-like beast make war on the

remnant of the woman (the saints) if they are in Heaven? Third, Bible history and secular history affirms that God's people have suffered persecution and harm ever since sin began. (Hebrews 11) Abel was slain because he obeyed the Lord. (Hebrews 11:4) Nine of the twelve apostles were martyred for their faith. Jesus was beaten and murdered and He told His disciples, **“Remember the words I spoke to you: ‘No servant is greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. . . . They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God.”** (John 15:20; 16:2)

The rapture concept seems incongruous when we know that God deliberately handed the woman (the saints) over to the Roman Catholic Church for 1,260 years of persecution! Consider this text: **“He [the little horn, the Roman Catholic Church] will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time.”** (Daniel 7:25, italics and insertion mine) Who handed the saints over to the little horn power if not God? God protected the woman from extinction, not persecution. More than fifty million Christians died for their faith during the Dark Ages! If God allowed the woman to suffer persecution for 1,260 years, there is no reason “the rest of the woman” should be protected from persecution during the Great Tribulation. (Revelation 13:5-7) I could go on and on about the shortcomings of the rapture doctrine, but you should understand this point: God does not view persecution as a horrible thing because His grace is more than sufficient for every challenge that His children may face.

Corporately speaking, I believe persecution has a very valuable benefit for God's people or why would God allow it? Please consider the following three statements and keep in mind that God's treatment of the woman – during the Dark Ages and the Great Tribulation – is consistent with His changeless character of love. Keep in mind His wisdom goes beyond comprehension.

1. Persecution for Christ's sake purifies our devotion to God. When people are persecuted for humbly doing the will of God, they have no bitterness or anger toward their predators because they accept *through faith* that it is God's will that they pay the price that His truth demands. When faced with persecution for Christ's sake, the importance of God's Word becomes paramount. The fires of persecution separate the faith-full (the gold) from the faith-less (the dross). When the Great Tribulation begins, everyone (including Christians) who obeys the first angel's message will soon face persecution. Our Creator's demand to worship Him on His Sabbath will stand in direct opposition to Babylon's demand. Many Christians will suddenly discover that they really do not have faith in Christ. They will cry out, "Oh God, how could you let this happen to me?" There is a huge difference between **submission** to the gospel and an **admission** that the gospel is true.

Peter's experience is recorded in the Bible because he perfectly mirrors the difference between admission and submission. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Peter was bold, ready to die for His Jesus. When the mob rushed into the garden to lay hands on Jesus, Peter whipped out his fisherman's knife and a brief scuffle ensued. He managed to cut off the right ear of Malchus, the high priest's servant. (John 18:10) Six hours later, in Pilate's judgment hall, this same

courageous Peter denied that he even knew Jesus. What caused Peter to turn 180 degrees in six hours?

Peter did not know it, but he had no faith in God. Peter *admitted* that Jesus was the Messiah. (Matthew 16:16) Peter expected Jesus to set up His kingdom on Earth. (Matthew 20:21-28)

Peter admitted that he loved Jesus. **“But Peter declared, ‘Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.’ And all the other disciples said the same.”** (Matthew 26:35) When the

mob showed up, Peter proved he was ready to fight and die for Christ, but out of self-defense.

When Peter saw that Jesus was not going to defend Himself and overcome His enemies, Peter denied that He knew Jesus because Peter was not prepared to share in Christ’s condemnation and

death. *It is one thing to die in self defense or the defense of God and country, but it is altogether another matter to suffer death for no other reason than God requires it.* This is the beauty of

Isaac surrendering to his father on Mt. Moriah. Jesus said, **“ . . . If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself [our self interests] and take up his cross [the will of God] and**

follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.” (Matthew 16:24,25) When the rooster crowed a third time, Peter had an epiphany.

When he saw Jesus humbly submitting to inhumane treatment, he began to understand the meaning of submission to the will of God. In that moment, Peter’s head knowledge moved to his

heart. He became ashamed of himself and wept bitterly. Peter realized for the first time that it

was God’s will for Jesus to die. When Peter discovered that faith in God means total submission to God’s will, Peter was transformed – he surrendered himself to God’s will that day.

Persecution purifies the soul of the persecuted and it often changes the hearts of those who

observe such submission. Persecution refines us, it puts self aside and the will of God front and center. Jesus said, **“This third I will bring into the fire [of persecution]; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, ‘They are my people,’ and they will say, ‘The Lord is our God.’”** (Zechariah 13:9, insertion mine)

2. Persecution kept the faith of the woman pure for 1,260 years. When Jesus spoke to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3, the Christian faith was only sixty-five years old. Already, six of the seven churches in Asia Minor had become corrupted by false doctrines. Because religion mutates quickly, God allowed the devil to chase the woman into the desert. God knows the desert is a good place for training people. This is why He took Israel into the desert when they first came out of Egypt. I call God’s use of the desert, “Desert University.” When a person, nation, or church is exiled to the desert, God has to be depended upon for everything. The desert is an unforgiving place, a hostile place, a lonely place, not a place that allows self-indulgence and self-reliance. The carnal nature hates the desert. It seeks pleasure and luxury and it wants the “easy life.” However, joy can be found in the deser because sanctification expands the ability of the heart to love God and man and it redirects our motives from self-seeking to selfless service. “Desert U” teaches discernment and insight. This holistic experience is called “walking with God.” **“This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and *he walked with God.*”** (Genesis 6:9, italics mine) Looking at human nature, and knowing that God’s wisdom is perfect, we have to admit that putting the woman in the desert for 1,260 years had to be the best thing that God could do for her.

Humility is the soil that nurtures faith in God; God's promises are the sunshine and the Holy Spirit is the rain. Living by faith is like putting on a blindfold and after taking hold of Christ's arm, following wherever He leads. When Jesus is leading, there is no way to know where you are going, but your destination is secure! God's people are usually alone in this world. Family and friends rarely understand or appreciate the faith experience. In fact, family and friends are often opposed to the faith experience. Jesus said, "**A man's enemies will be the members of his own household.**" (Matthew 10:36) I have mentioned these matters because there is joy at "Desert U" – if necessary, food falls from the sky and water flows from rocks. "**The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God**" (Revelation 12:6, italics mine)

3. The final benefit that comes from persecution is exclusion. Persecution keeps those who love the world and the things of this world out of the invisible church. When the threshold for being a Christian is suffering, the woman remains healthy. When the threshold for being a Christian is easy, the church suffers. The visible church differs from the invisible church in an interesting way. This visible church exalts unity at the expense of truth. The invisible church exalts advancing truth, social consequences notwithstanding.

The pure in heart are the poor in spirit (ego). These people are willing to make whatever sacrifice is necessary because they seek only to glorify God and to help their neighbor. Jesus said, "**Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your**

reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

(Matthew 5:10-12) God’s people do not serve Him because they want to avoid Hell and achieve Heaven! The woman loves God even if there is nothing beyond this life because she has found peace, joy, and the sustaining grace that comes through total submission to God’s will. This experience is called “overcoming the world.” **“They [the saints] overcame him [the devil] by [their faith in] the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.”** (Revelation 12:11)

The Woman Survives

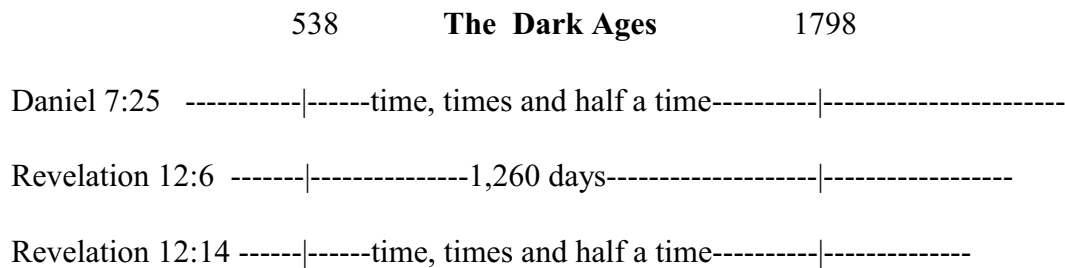
The Bible describes the 1,260 years the saints suffered by saying, **“The woman [the invisible church] was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach.”** (Revelation 12:14, insertion mine)

Comment: The language, “the two wings of a great eagle” indicates a miraculous escape, not from persecution, but from extinction. Some historians estimate that fifty million people were martyred for their faith during the Dark Ages, but miraculously, the invisible church did not perish! No doubt, many Protestants wished for the wings of a great eagle as they languished in filthy dungeons. Even though Prophecy 1 (Revelation 12:1-6) and Prophecy 2 (Revelation 12:7-14:5) are separate and distinct prophecies, the time, times, and half a time in verse 6 is the *same* time period as the 1,260 days mentioned in verse 14. Because the Bible describes the *same* time

period in two different ways, we know that a time, times and half a time equals 1,260 day/years. This information also proves that the time, times, and half a time mentioned in Daniel 7:25 equals 1,260 years. The Bible also predicts that the little horn would persecute the saints for 1,260 day/years (Daniel 7:25) and history confirms the fulfillment of these prophecies. In other words, the 1,260 year (A.D. 538-1798) time period is mentioned three times in the Bible. All three instances must be translated using a day for a year because the Jubilee Calendar is operating during this time.

(**Note:** For reasons presented in the chapter on the Two Witnesses, the time, times, and half a time in Daniel 12:7 and the 1,260 days granted to the Two Witnesses in Revelation 11:3 are the *same* time period. The 1,335 days given in Daniel 12:12 represent the total time allotted to the Great Tribulation. Because these time periods occur after the expiration of the Jubilee Calendar in 1994, these time periods should be considered a literal time of 1,335 days and should not be translated a day for a year.)

Parallel Time Periods



Today

Daniel 12:7 -----X---t,t and ½ t-----

Revelation 11:3 -----|--1,260 days--|-----

Revelation 13:5 -----|---42 months--|---

Daniel 12:11 -----|--1,290 days----|---

Daniel 12:12 -----|--1,335 days-----|--

The Great Tribulation

Chart 14.2

“Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river [a flood, KJV], to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent.” (Revelation 12:15)

Comment: This is a surprising contradiction. John saw the enormous red dragon spew *water* out of his mouth! This is surprising because ancient dragons were believed to be “fire breathing creatures.” God surprises us with an interesting point using a reverse caricature. A torrent of water is one of nature’s most destructive forces. Weighing a little more than sixty-two pounds per cubic foot, a torrent of water traveling at a high rate of speed is a deadly and utterly destructive force, but it is not annihilating. In other words, life resumes after a flash flood, in fact, vegetation often prospers after a flood. The language in this verse indicates the devil did his best to destroy God’s people during the Dark Ages through legislation. The dragon spoke (an

endless torrent of laws) through Church edicts. The devil tried to destroy the woman with wave after wave of persecution, but the blood of martyrs only fueled the growth of the invisible church.

The devil soon realized that perpetual persecution required perpetual darkness. In 1401, the devil moved upon King Henry IV to decree that anyone owning or producing a translation of the Bible would be burned at the stake. In 1409, Archbishop Thomas Arundel imposed punitive measures on anyone who would presume to produce any written material that departed from the Latin Vulgate. (In other words, Bible texts could not be translated into the common language of the people.) These and other vicious threats did not keep the woman from the Bible. Prior to Gutenberg's invention of moveable type for printing presses in 1439, Bibles were very rare. But Gutenberg's invention enabled Bible distribution to flourish, so the devil prompted governmental leaders to outlaw Bible reading! In 1543, England's Parliament passed a law forbidding common women to read the Bible and the penalty was death!

Using the Church as a puppet, the devil made it impossible for anyone to disagree with pope or priest without suffering the harshest of penalties. Open speech against the Church and/or its leaders was considered hate speech or blasphemy and heretics were often condemned to death on the testimony of one witness. When the Church rules over the state, religious freedom becomes a myth. The Church ruled by fear, not love. The devil found a way to torment millions of good-hearted Catholics through false doctrines. For example, Catholics were led to believe that salvation required the receipt of seven sacraments. Consequently, very few parishioners spoke out about the excesses and abuses of the clergy because the cessation of sacraments meant the

loss of eternal life. For 1,260 long, dark years, the devil did everything possible to make life miserable for the people of Europe, whether in the visible church or the invisible church.

“But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth.” (Revelation 12:16)

Comment: After Noah's flood, God divided Earth into continents. (Genesis 10:25) For thousands of years, God reserved a large parcel of Earth that would one day help the woman. Over time, this parcel of land became known as the United States of America. Just twenty-two years before the end of the 1,260 years (1798), God raised up a new nation (1776) to serve His purposes. He gave this nation a form of government that was unlike anything the world ever seen. Today, we call it a “Democracy.” God did not raise up the United States of America for the sole benefit of its citizens; rather, God established the United States for a divine purpose.

God gave Protestants a place where they could freely translate and publish the Bible in hundreds of languages. He also gave Protestants vast resources and much wealth so they could spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. From 1798 onward, the United States has produced more Christian missionaries, published more Bibles, and carried the gospel of Jesus Christ farther than all other nations on Earth combined. The citizens of this wealthy nation have given more money for Christian missions than all other nations combined. These endeavors fulfilled God's plan that Earth would help the woman! Today, approximately 9% of the world's population is Protestant. This is amazing considering that Protestants in 1798 amounted to less than .1% of the world's

population. This phenomenal growth occurred because immigrants came to the United States of America seeking religious freedom. From this Protestant country, Protestantism spread around the globe. Of course, millions of non-Protestants also immigrated to this country because they wanted to live in a land blessed with opportunity and promise. The United States of America has shared more of its wealth with other nations than any other. Earth physically helped the woman, and the United States became a powerful influence for the gospel of Christ in a short period of time.

Unfortunately, the United States has turned away from honoring and serving God. As a nation, it no longer exalts our Creator with its actions. Christians are entertained with sinful behavior that is constantly glamorized on television and in movies. U.S. printing presses produce more filth and garbage than its population can digest. Its radio stations spew hate talk and music that glorifies drugs, sexual immorality, and violence. Occasionally, citizens might hear a political leader say “God bless America,” but how can God bless the United States when corporately speaking, its national behavior is an insult? The United States is in a state of moral and financial decline. Many of the nation’s leaders (both political and religious) are corrupt. Love for money and pleasure has displaced love for God and His Word. Integrity is disappearing. Honesty and transparency in business and government is fading. Sexual immorality is rampant. Clergy have become multimillionaires and priests have sexually abused thousands of children. The United States has offended and lost many of its international friends, it has squandered much of its wealth on selfish indulgence, and if the Lord does not come soon, the country will fall, just like all of the great nations in history. The Earth did help the woman, but that helping hand is gone

and the remnant of the woman is wondering how much longer will God tolerate this planet before casting down the censer.

The Final Assault Will Soon Begin

“[Unable to destroy the woman for 1,260 years] **Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off [to prepare] to make war against the rest [KJV: the remnant] of her offspring – those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.**” (Revelation 12:17, insertions mine)

Comment: When the papacy received a fatal wound in 1798, the devil called off the chase. Even though he had made the woman miserable for 1,260 years, he realized he could not destroy her. Being the devil that he is though, he did not give up. He went off to regroup and make plans for a final assault. Lucifer and his demons know all about the Great Tribulation. They understand every verse in the Bible. They were present when every event written in the Bible took place and they personally knew each Bible writer and person mentioned in the Bible! They understand the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation better than we do and the demons know they will be given one final chance to destroy the saints. Of course, the demons also know that they will be destroyed at the end of sin's drama. Since there is nothing they can do about that, they intend to destroy as many saints as possible before their doom arrives. This is the way hatred works. Lucifer knows that he is going to die just as Jesus knew that He was going to die, their respective actions and attitudes show the enormous gulf between hatred and love, between

selfishness and selflessness.

The devil and his demons have had 200 plus years to prepare for their final war against the woman. The stage is set. The world is consumed with idolatry, greed, sexual immorality, and violence. The devil has carefully studied world conditions. He has strategically placed his demons and human agents (demon possessed people) in highest places. He is delighted that even though hundreds of millions of Christians have Bibles, the vast majority of them are virtually ignorant of his coming ambush. The devil keeps this information hidden from view in various ways. Prejudice and apathy work very well. When someone says that Jesus is coming soon, Christians often respond, “No one knows the day and hour of Christ’s return. Why, people have been saying ‘wolf, wolf’ for two thousand years. Anyone speaking about the imminent return of Jesus is just crying ‘wolf, wolf.’ ” Pastors usually agree. Many churches discourage or even prohibit discussion of new ideas on Bible prophecy because it is seen as being potentially divisive. Too many churches are more concerned about unity than truth. They think it is far better to be united in error than to be divided over truth. The Bible has been put in lock down. It is not allowed to speak for itself. Christians are told the Bible is too complicated to understand on its own merit and must be left to the scholars to decipher. How can the Bible teach Christians things that they do not know and do not want to hear? If we limit what the Bible can say, how can it say something that is new and relevant?

Consider the following text and especially notice the last half of the sentence: **“Then the dragon was enraged at the woman [the invisible church] and went off to make war against the rest**

[the last or the remnant] **of her offspring – those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.**” (Revelation 12:17, insertion mine) During the Great Tribulation, the invisible church will become very visible! The remnant of the woman will be identified by two key features:

1. The saints will obey God’s Commandments – all twelve of them! The two greatest commandments are these: **“Love the Lord with all your heart, mind and soul and your neighbor as yourself.”** (Matthew 22:37-40) Expressions of love for God and man are not defined by human beings! Instead, our Creator has defined what love will do within the Ten Commandments. The first four commandments declare *how* love for God will be expressed and the remaining six commandments define *how* love for our neighbor will be expressed. When we do the things required by the law *out of love for God and man*, we fulfill the law! (Romans 13:10)

Currently, most of God’s people are unaware of their obligation to obey the Ten Commandments, especially the fourth commandment. This will change. When the 144,000 proclaim, “Worship Him who created the Heavens, the Earth, the sea, and the fountains of waters and honor His holy Sabbath day,” people will think God’s servants are fanatics. But when Babylon forms and implements laws mandating the observance of holy days, the issue will become serious and the question will rise, “Which day does God declare sacred?” The 144,000 will boldly address this question and the importance of God’s Sabbath will become widely known. God’s Word clearly states that His people will obey the Ten Commandments because they love God and man. The

fourth commandment declares Saturday, the seventh day of the week, is God's holy day. This commandment will become an inflammatory issue during the Great Tribulation because Babylon will defy and oppose the fourth commandment. In countries where Catholicism and Protestantism are a majority, laws exalting the sacredness of Sunday will be enforced. In countries where Islam is the majority, laws exalting the sacredness of Friday will be enforced. In Israel, laws exalting the sacredness of Saturday* will be enforced. The laws of Babylon will cause the remnant of the woman to stand out like evergreen trees in a snow covered forest.

(*Note: The 144,000 will begin their ministry proclaiming, “. . . **Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. *Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.***” (Revelation 14:7) True worship is prompted by the Holy Spirit and is the natural response of loving obedience. Jesus said, “**If you love me, you will obey what I command.**” (John 14:15) “**Do not be like Cain** [who was offended because God showed no respect for his offerings], **who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother** [because of jealousy]. **And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil** [he presumed to worship God by offering fruit instead of a sacrificial lamb] **and his brother's** [actions] **were righteous** [because he did as God commanded].” (1 John 3:12, insertions mine) Even though laws regarding the sacredness of the seventh day will be implemented in Israel, the Jewish dilemma will be the worship of Jesus Christ. The 144,000 will proclaim: “Worship Jesus Christ on His Sabbath Day! Worship the Creator, the One who made the heavens, Earth, the sea, and everything that exists.” (Colossians 1:16) God's people will not worship the Sabbath. They will worship Jesus Christ on His Sabbath. Remember, the Ten Commandments define how love

is to be expressed. There is no commandment to worship the law of God. The first angel's message will be a demand to worship our Creator who is twice entitled to our love and worship – once through creation and once through redemption.)

2. The remnant of the woman will also obey the testimony of Jesus. The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy. (Revelation 19:10) Notice how this works: Jesus will speak often during the Great Tribulation. The Holy Spirit will speak the words of Jesus through His prophets.

Thus, 144,000 mouthpieces will deliver the words of Jesus in realtime to a listening world and the honest in heart will recognize the voice of Jesus and honor Him by obeying His commands.

“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.” (John 10:27,28)

Think about this: People all over the world will actually hear the words (the testimony) of Jesus coming out of the mouths of His prophets. This rare phenomenon has occurred a few times in history and it will happen again during the Great Tribulation.

The Spirit of Prophecy

The angel said to John, “. . . **I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers *who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.***” (Revelation 19:10, italics mine) Even the angels obey the testimony of Jesus! There is a good reason why the testimony of Jesus is called the “spirit of prophecy.” The testimony of Jesus comes through a special *gift*, the gift of prophesy. (1 Corinthians 14:1) During the Great

Tribulation, the 144,000 will frequently prophesy. (Revelation 10:7,11) They will expose hidden and secret things. They will have knowledge about matters which will confound their enemies. Remember how the Holy Spirit revealed to Peter that Ananias and Sapphira had lied about the money they received from the sale of their land. (Acts 5) Remember how Jesus knew the thoughts of the Pharisees when He healed the paralytic lying on his mat. (Matthew 9:1-6) Remember how Daniel was enabled to interpret the dream given to Nebuchadnezzar, even though the king could not remember it. (Daniel 2) These are prophetic samples of things to come. The 144,000 will confront the thoughts and hidden sins of their enemies. The 144,000 will perform mighty miracles and their enemies will be astonished and left speechless! The gift of prophecy is not to be confused with the nonsense that goes on today in many churches. Many people are prophesying out of their own imagination and calling it “a word from the Lord.” God hates this. When people claim to have received “a word from the Lord,” they had better be telling the truth or God will destroy them for blasphemy. (See Ezekiel 13.) When Almighty God has something to say, He speaks and there is a revelation of information that is otherwise unknown. Prophets of God encounter God as though He were a real person, as one person speaks to another. (Genesis 32:30; Exodus 33:11; Daniel 10:4-14; Revelation 1:10-19; 2 Corinthians 12:1-9)

Carefully consider this verse: “**I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.**” (Revelation 1:9, italics mine) John was acquainted with suffering for Christ’s sake. He was exiled on the island of Patmos for obeying

the Word of God (instead of the laws of men) and for speaking the words which Jesus gave him to speak. As a prophet of God, John spoke the truth regardless of any consequence. This is why he was on Patmos. The Spirit of prophecy is a powerful sword, an inflammatory testimony, the living word of God. (Hebrews 4:12) When Jesus speaks through His prophets, He speaks with perfect knowledge of any situation. Jesus has divine wisdom and the penetrating power of the Spirit at His disposal. When a prophet speaks the testimony of Jesus, people with rebellious hearts are left defeated, fuming, and speechless! On many occasions Jesus silenced His opposition on Earth with divine wisdom and the ability to read their thoughts. (Luke 9:47) This incredible gift explains why the life span of Israel's prophets was rather short.

When He was on Earth, Jesus lamented the untimely death of the many prophets that He had sent to Israel. He said, **“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.”** (Matthew 23:37) The 144,000 will deliver the testimony of Jesus without deviation (no weasel words) and this will make their enemies furious! As we learned from our study on the Two Witnesses, the 144,000 will remain faithful. They will speak the truth without regard for the consequences. **“No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless.”** (Revelation 14:5) When we see the suffering which the 144,000 will experience for speaking the testimony of Jesus, the words of Revelation 14:5 will become profound.

Synthesis of Revelation 12

Thus far, we have examined each verse in Revelation 12. Even though Prophecy II does not end with verse 17, this is a good place to summarize all that we have learned so far from Revelation 12:

Prophecy I - Revelation 12:1-6

1. John saw a pregnant woman standing on the moon wearing a glorious garment.
2. John saw an enormous red dragon standing before the woman, ready to devour her child the moment He was born.
3. John saw the male child taken to Heaven, to God's throne.
4. John saw the dragon chase the woman to the desert for 1,260 day/years.

Prophecy II - Revelation 12:7-14:5

1. John saw the devil cast out of Heaven on Resurrection Sunday.
2. John saw the devil chase the woman into the desert for a time, times, and half a time.
3. John saw the devil spew a great torrent of water out of his mouth. The metaphor of a flood indicates the devil attempted to sweep her away with waves of persecution.
4. Earth helped the woman. God raised up the United States in 1776. This nation enabled Protestants to translate and distribute the Bible and the gospel of Jesus throughout the world.
5. When the devil saw the authority of the Catholic church broken (1798), he began preparing for a final assault on the remnant of the woman. He is armed and ready.

6. The woman will be easily identified during the Great Tribulation: God's saints will obey all twelve commandments and the testimony of Jesus, which will be spoken through the 144,000.

We Are Living between Revelation 12:17 and 13:1

Consider these two verses and our position between them: **“Then** [after 1,260 years of trying to destroy the woman in the desert] **the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off** [that is, he gave up his efforts against the woman in the desert so that he could prepare] **to make war against the rest** [the last or remnant] **of her offspring – those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus. And the dragon stood on the shore of the sea** [waiting for the first four trumpets to sound. When the wrath of God is released on Earth, the whole world will suddenly become afraid of God. When the world attempts to appease His awful wrath, it will create a church/state monster]. **And I saw a** [leopard-like] **beast coming out of the sea. He** [the leopard-like beast, also called Babylon] **had ten horns** [representing ten future kings] **and seven heads** [representing the seven religious systems of the world], **with ten crowns** [of authority] **on his horns, and on each head** [was written] **a blasphemous name** [that is, each head insults God].” (Revelation 12:17,13:1, insertions mine)

The Rise of Babylon

In the chapter about the Seven Trumpets, we examined the global crisis that will cause Babylon to form. An overwhelming fear of God's wrath during the first four trumpets will bring world

leaders together in ways that are unimaginable now. Earlier in this chapter, we also examined the rise of Babylon and the identity of the seven heads and we learned that they represent the seven religious systems of the world. Before we further investigate the sudden rise of the leopard-like beast, a recent event has occurred that shows how quickly Babylon could rise from a multitude of nations.

As I am writing this chapter, the world is experiencing a sudden financial crisis. Consider this abbreviated report written by CNN correspondent, Kathleen Koch, on October 18, 2008:

WASHINGTON (CNN) -- President Bush announced Saturday that he will host the first of what could be several summits of world leaders to discuss the global response to the financial crisis. President Bush and French President Nicolas Sarkozy discussed the summit Saturday in Maryland. "It is essential that *we work together* because *we're in this crisis together*," Bush said at Camp David, Maryland, with French President Nicolas Sarkozy and European Union President Jose Manuel Barroso. "*Together we will work* to modernize our financial systems," Bush said. "We must resist the temptation of financial isolationism. . . ."

(Italics mine)

If world leaders can quickly come together to repair a broken economy, what will they do when God's wrath breaks out against the whole world? What will world leaders do when our infrastructures are destroyed and 1.75 billion people die because of God's wrath? Desperate circumstances require extreme solutions and this explains how the rise of Babylon will be "astonishing." The whole world will think, at first, that Babylon's rise and efforts to appease God are appropriate, but global approval will soon fade. With these thoughts in mind, please

consider Revelation 13:2-8:

“The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon [Lucifer] gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority [over the world]. One of the heads of the beast [Catholicism] seemed to have had a fatal wound [February 1798], but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was astonished [and overwhelmed at God’s wrath] and [they innocently] followed [the demands of] the beast.” (Revelation 13:2,3, insertions mine) I believe the healing of the fatal wound means the Catholic Church will be elected as the leader of Babylon to facilitate the attempted recovery.

“Men worshiped the dragon [that is, they unknowingly obeyed Lucifer] because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast [they obeyed the laws of Babylon] and asked, ‘Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?’ [Who can resist this global endeavor for appeasing God’s wrath?] The [leopard-like] beast was given a mouth [by the devil] to utter proud words and blasphemies [defying and insulting God’s demands] and to exercise his authority for forty-two months.” (Revelation 13:4,5, insertions mine) The leopard-like beast has no authority over the world other than these forty-two months.

“He [the leopard-like beast] opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his [holy] name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven.” (Revelation 13:6, insertions mine) This phrase means Babylon will declare the Ten Commandments null and void. Babylon will arrogantly claim that it has highest authority in all religious matters and opposition will not

be tolerated.

“He [the leopard-like beast, a hand puppet of the devil] 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.” (Revelation 13:7, italics and insertions mine) This includes the “great” nations of China, India, Russia and the United States of America

“All inhabitants of the earth will worship [obey] the [leopard-like] 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 13:8, insertions mine)

Millions of Christians Asleep Are About to Be Ambushed

Look at Revelation 12:17: **“Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring . . .”** This war is described seven verses later: **“He 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.”** (Revelation 13:7) Lucifer will persecute the saints for forty-two months. The chronological flow from Revelation 12:17 into Revelation 13:1-8 is very clear, but millions of Christians totally ignore this linkage. Religion is so blinding. Christians who believe in a pre-tribulation rapture think they will be in Heaven, even though the Bible clearly says the dragon will make war against the “remnant of the woman.” On the other hand, people who believe the leopard-like beast and the forty-two months

of persecution took place during the Dark Ages are just as misguided. Regardless of which position you take, the devil is armed and ready to make war on God's people, and hundreds of millions of Christians are asleep. They do not have a clue that they are about to be ambushed.

To put this coming ambush in perspective, let us review four items that were examined in the chapter on the Seven Trumpets:

1. The first four trumpet judgments described in Revelation 8:2-13 will produce death and destruction on a biblical scale that exceeds human measurement and calculation. These judgments will occur during the first thirty to sixty days of the Great Tribulation. Because these judgments will be global, most survivors will seriously question whether survival on planet Earth will continue. These judgments will destroy thousands of cities. Earth's infrastructures will be in ruins and twenty-five percent of Earth's seven billion people (1.75 billion people) will die.

2. During the first four trumpets, the inhabitants of Earth will be traumatized by two painful observations: First, they will tremble at the reality of Almighty God and the power and scope of His wrath. Second, they will observe that God's wrath fell on cities and places that were well known for their wickedness. Since very few people understand the book of Revelation now, most survivors will logically think that more judgments from God are imminently forthcoming. This anticipation will induce urgency, and this urgency will move the leaders of the world to rapidly and radically transform the world's governance. Desperate situations require extreme solutions. During the fourth trumpet, darkness will cover the middle third of our planet and

during this darkness, world leaders will quickly agree on the formation of a crisis government whose mission will be to reduce sinful behavior and appease God's wrath. This crisis government is Babylon, the leopard-like beast of Revelation 13.

3. The need for a crisis government will be compelling. Everyone will be afraid of God and no one will argue against appeasing God's anger. Almost everyone will assume that more destruction is forthcoming unless something is done quickly! The religious and political justification to form Babylon will be simple: "Mankind must immediately appease God through repentance and worship or all mankind will perish." This justification and the mayhem of the moment will require martial law. Constitutions will be set aside and religious freedom will become a memory.

4. Jesus will turn the world upside down with the first four trumpet judgments. He will put the religious leaders of the world in positions of power. God's greatest frustration is not with political leaders, but with religious leaders who claim to know Him. Religious leaders will be given positions of higher authority than political leaders because religious leaders will claim (and billions of people will believe) that they know the will and ways of Almighty God! (Of course, their actions will prove otherwise, but their ignorance will take a few months to unfold.) This "fruit basket upset" will enable religious leaders to get what they want. They will insist on the creation of many "sin-less" laws and bewildered politicians will have no choice but to enact and enforce them. As political leaders survey the extent of death and global destruction caused by the first four trumpets, they too, will realize that God targeted places that were well known for

wickedness. This fact will motivate them to do whatever the religious leaders think best. Sinful behaviors of all kinds will be declared “illegal.” Morality will be legislated and offenders will be severely punished – all this to avert more of God's wrath.

Babylon Gets Organized

In a vacuum of darkness, fear, foreboding, and global uncertainty, I anticipate the Roman Catholic Church will step forward with leadership. The pope will invite religious and political leaders from all over the world to a worldwide summit. At a minimum, three amazing decisions will come from this summit that would otherwise be unthinkable. Here is a sample:

- 1.** The council will agree that (a) God is angry because the world’s behavior is degenerate and decadent, and (b) all nations must unite as one family, improve their behavior, and appease Almighty God. Amazingly, everyone will see the problem and agree on the solution. In concrete terms, the solution will consist of legislation producing repentance, reformation, and worship.
- 2.** Everyone at the council will realize that God’s anger was directed at notably wicked places. Therefore, the political leaders of the world will agree to submit to the directives of Babylon because God's wrath could break out against any nation or even the whole world again.
- 3.** The leaders of the world will create an executive committee of religious leaders from the seven religions of the world. (This committee will be something like the Security Council in the

United Nations, except it will be religious in nature and far more dictatorial.) The pope will be selected as the leader of this council for several reasons. First, his selection will be the moment the deadly wound is completely healed. Second, the Roman Catholic Church is uniquely prepared to lead Babylon because it is both a spiritual and a political organization having diplomatic relations with more than 170 nations on Earth. Keep in mind the pope will not be elected for the purpose of promoting or imposing Catholic doctrine on the nations of Earth. The diversity of the world's religions will not permit this. Rather, the mandate the pope and his council will have is to oversee and direct a global effort to appease God.

Actually, for all the good the leopard-like beast intends to do, it will quickly become a hand-puppet of the devil. “. . .**The dragon [the devil] gave the [leopard-like] beast his power and his throne and great authority.**” (Revelation 13:2, insertion mine) Babylon will be a “human glove” which mankind will create to appease God, but the devil will use it to persecute the woman. Consider this illustration: If you put your hand into a glove and then you hit someone with your gloved hand, who or what is responsible for the pain you caused, the glove or your hand? When the world exalts the rule of religion over politics and creates Babylon, the devil will quickly enter through the back door to take control of the world.

The devil is waiting for Babylon to be formed because he has been preparing to make war on the saints for a long time. (Revelation 12:17) Soon, his chance to destroy them will come. Jesus closes this portion of the story by saying, “**He who has an ear, let him hear** [what the Spirit says]. **If anyone is to go into captivity [for his faith in Me], into captivity he will go** [don't

worry because I will give you strength to endure]. **If anyone is to be killed with the sword** [because of his faith in Me], **with the sword he will be killed** [but, don't worry because I will set you free from your fear]. **This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints.**" (Revelation 13:9,10)

The King of Modern Babylon Appears

We have already seen that the enormous red dragon is Lucifer and the lamb-like beast is Lucifer in human form. Lucifer, the coming Antichrist will not be a mere man. He is an extraterrestrial being who has been alive for thousands of years. Lucifer's miracles will dwarf anything that human beings can do. We know from Revelation 9:16 that 200 million angels will accompany the devil – John heard the number! We know from Revelation 9:11, Daniel 8:19, 23, Revelation 17:11 and 2 Thessalonians 2:6, that the devil is an evil king who will be released from the invisible realm at the appointed time. We have learned from Revelation 13:2 that Lucifer will be the power within Babylon. We also know that Lucifer's main objective will be the destruction of the remnant of the woman. (Revelation 12:17, 13:7) Several specifications are presented in Revelation 13:11-18 on the lamb-like beast. Please consider these seven:

1. He has two horns. (These represent his authority over church and state)
2. He will speak. (He will declare law.)
3. He will perform great miracles and signs, even causing fire to fall from Heaven. (He will "prove" his assumed divinity.)

4. He will deceive the world with his miracles.
5. He will eventually demand that an image of Babylon be set up. (The image will be a theocracy, a one-world church-state.)
6. He will demand death for anyone refusing to worship the image.
7. He will impose his mark on the right hand or the forehead of everyone so that no one can buy or sell unless they wear his tattoo.

The only being who can rise out from the Abyss (that is, having no political or military support) and meet all these conditions during the last 445 days of the Great Tribulation is Lucifer.

“Then I saw another beast, coming out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon. He exercised all the authority of the first beast on his behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. And he performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men.” (Revelation 13:11-13)

Comment: John’s use of language confuses a lot of people. Consider this sentence: **“He** [Lucifer] **exercised all the authority of the first beast on his behalf** [that is, Lucifer, masquerading as God, commends the leaders of Babylon for their efforts to appease God with “sin-less” laws. He will tell the world that the leaders of Babylon have acted appropriately], **and** [Lucifer] **made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast** [obey the “sin-less” laws of Babylon], **whose** [sixth head had received a] **fatal wound** [but] **had been healed.”** When

Lucifer first appears, he will flatter the leaders of Babylon with much praise. Masquerading as Almighty God, he wants them to think that he is very pleased with their harsh laws and the persecution they have imposed on God's saints – ostensibly to reduce immoral behavior. To further gain their confidence, the devil will demand that everyone obey the laws of Babylon. Religious leaders will be very pleased.

The Image of the Beast

“Because of the signs he was given power to do on behalf of the first beast, he deceived the inhabitants of the earth. He ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. He was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that it could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed.” (Revelation 13:14,15)

Comment: Jesus releases Lucifer and his angels from the Abyss at the fifth trumpet and He permits Lucifer to use miracle working powers so that people will believe his lies. Jesus sends this powerful delusion because the world has rejected truth. **“ . . .They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.”** (2 Thessalonians 2:10, italics mine) Lucifer and his angels will descend from the sky in various places and he will speak favorably of Babylon's leaders and of their efforts to reduce rebellious and sinful behavior. The devil wants the world to think that Babylon's leaders have been on the right track. The devil will use this tactic for two reasons. First, through flattery and miracles, he wants the leaders of Babylon to believe that he

really is Almighty God and in turn, their endorsement will convince their respective followers to believe the same. This age-old game is called, “Follow the experts, believe your religious leaders.” Second, Lucifer wants the whole world to quickly conclude that he truly is Almighty God. Once the devil has convinced a majority of the world that he really is God, the devil will suddenly betray Babylon’s leaders before the sixth trumpet. He will change course by abolishing the religions of the world. He will appoint ten kings. He will do this for several nasty reasons, but this is the argument he will use: There is one God, one faith, and one baptism.

Here is a scenario to consider: Lucifer will announce to the world that Babylon needs improvement because there is no place for religious diversity when God lives among men. Therefore, Babylon has to be transformed so that Babylon’s highest and purest purpose can be achieved, namely, the establishment of a global church-state. Lucifer will demand the formation of a theocracy – a government where He rules over church and state. John calls Lucifer’s theocracy the “image of the first beast” in Revelation 13:15 and the “great whore” in Revelation 17:1-4.

Lucifer’s theocracy is called the “image of the first beast” because it will be a replica, an updated and improved version of Babylon which was also a global church-state – albeit a conflicted one. Remember, the leopard-like beast is a composite beast that represents an amalgamation of seven opposing religions (the seven heads) under the leadership of the pope. In contrast, Lucifer’s theocracy will not suffer from religious diversity. People will not be allowed to have diverse views about God because “God” reigns on Earth! Internal opposition and diverse views will not

be tolerated because there will be one lord of lords and one king of kings. Do not forget, the devil will have miracle working powers to back up his blasphemous claims. This will be a very impressive delusion!

Lucifer's "image to the beast" is also called "the great whore" in Revelation 17 because those who participate in his theocracy will have to (a) abandon their religion – the very thing they refused to abandon in order to embrace the gospel of Christ, and (b) the wicked will have to violate their consciences in order to survive, that is, to buy and sell. Millions of people, including people who claim to be Christians, will join a demonic organization to avoid obeying Jesus Christ. How ironic! Moreover, Lucifer will dissolve the imaginary boundaries that currently separate nations and cultures. He will divide Earth into ten geographical sectors and his ten kings will see that no rebellion exists throughout his great empire of Babylon. Everyone refusing to obey Lucifer's laws will be put to death. (Revelation 13:15) Indeed, the Bible reveals that a third of mankind will die. (Revelation 9:15)

The Mark of the Beast

“He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark [The Greek word for “mark” is *charagma*. It means an etching or an engraving, a tattoo] on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the *name* of the beast or the *number* of his name. This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is

666.” (Revelation 13:16-18, italics and insertions mine)

Comment: The Bible says the mark of the beast will consist of two different *etchings* (or tattoos). One tattoo will be the number, 666. For reasons forthcoming, this tattoo will be etched on the right hand of everyone who swears allegiance to “Almighty God” (Lucifer). A second tattoo will be engraved on the foreheads of Lucifer’s lieutenants. This etching will be a show of rank. This tattoo will be the name that Lucifer uses after he is released from the Abyss. (Lucifer’s assumed name is unknown at this time.) Incidentally, Jesus will assume a new name at the Second Coming and Jesus’ new name is also unknown at this time. (Revelation 19:12)

The Bible says there will be two different etchings. One etching is the *name* of the lamb-like beast and the other, the *number* of his name. For 2,000 years, Bible students have tried to determine the identity of the Antichrist by mathematically translating various names into the number 666. For example, early Christians translated the names of different caesars using Roman numerals. (Remember, the Roman caesars severely persecuted the Christians, therefore they reasoned that one caesar might be the “Antichrist.”) The process of translation is simple. Each letter in a name is translated into a Roman numeral. The numerals are added and any name adding up to 666 could be the dreaded Antichrist! (The problem with this process is that there are several specifications in Revelation 13:11-18 that must be fulfilled before the identity of the Antichrist can be accurately determined.) During the Dark Ages, Protestants used the Roman numeral technique on various names and titles of popes. After the fatal wound was inflicted in 1798, Protestants began looking at other names, but I believe these endeavors were totally

misguided. Here is why:

Before the number 666 can be calculated, the identity of the beast has to be determined. At this point in our study, we know that the *beast* that rises out of the bottomless pit in Revelation 13:11 is Lucifer in human form! The devil himself is the Antichrist. He was the first angel to take a position against Jesus before the world was created and he will be the last angel to die when the world is cleansed by fire. When Lucifer appears at the fifth trumpet, he will have power and miracle working abilities that dwarfs human beings. He will descend from the sky with 200 million angels and as needed, he will call down fire from Heaven to prove his assumed divinity. The Bible says he will deceive the inhabitants of Earth. The mark of the *devil*, literally, “the *etching* of Lucifer,” will be a tattoo on the right hand or the forehead!

Four Prerequisites Are Necessary

A proper understanding of the mark of the beast requires four prerequisites. First, understanding that at the sixth trumpet, three groups of people will live on Earth. Second, understanding the meaning of the fifth and sixth trumpets. Third, understanding God’s use of thirds and Fourth, understanding the identity of the lamb-like beast. With these four elements in mind, let us briefly consider these four prerequisites. The first prerequisite is this: Three groups of people will live on Earth when the mark of the beast is implemented. They are:

1. The saints

2. The religious wicked

3. The non-religious wicked

1. The saints: These people have surrendered to the gospel of Jesus and have been sealed.

2. The religious wicked: These people have a form of godliness, but have refused the gospel of Jesus and rather than living by faith, they have submitted to Babylon's authority.

3. The non-religious wicked: These people have refused the gospel of Jesus and the authority of Babylon. They want nothing to do with religion.

The Second Prerequisite

The second prerequisite for understanding the mark of the beast is an understanding of the fifth and sixth trumpets. Since we have examined the seven trumpets in an earlier chapter, two short summary statements about them should suffice:

1. The fifth trumpet occurs when two-thirds of the time allotted for the Great Tribulation ends. At this point in time, the advancement of the gospel of Jesus will come to a stand-still. Almost everyone will have taken a position – for or against the gospel of Jesus. Jesus releases Lucifer from the Abyss to apply pressure on the wicked. The devil will force people into making their final decision. The devil's demons will inflict searing pain on those who refuse to confess that the devil is God. (**Note:** The devil's angels are not allowed to harm those who have the seal of God during the fifth trumpet. Jesus hopes the non-religious wicked will notice this protection

and turn from their rebellion and embrace His gospel.)

2. The sixth trumpet will be a great war lasting approximately seven months and the death toll will be 1.75 billion people (currently a third of mankind). Lucifer will initiate this war when he establishes his theocracy and rules over Earth as Almighty God. The devil will purge his kingdom of “unbelievers.” Millions of saints and most, if not all of the 144,000 will die during this purge. Hundreds of millions of non-religious wicked will also perish because Lucifer’s ultimate purpose for the purge will be to eliminate opposition. He intends to rule as lord of lords and king of kings and no one will be able to resist him.

The Third Prerequisite

The third prerequisite for understanding the mark of the beast involves God’s use of thirds. This is a critical matter. In ancient times, when total destruction was justified, a generous king might spare a third of his enemies if he thought there was redemptive value. Please consider the following examples:

1. **“David also defeated the Moabites. He made them lie down on the ground and measured them off with a length of cord. Every two lengths of them were put to death, and *the third length* was allowed to live. So the Moabites became subject to David and brought tribute.** (2 Samuel 8:2, italics mine) David generously spared one third of the Moabites because he knew the survivors would gladly pay their taxes and as their nation grew, so would the tax revenue.

David spared a third because he saw redemptive value.

2. “Therefore as surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, because you have defiled my sanctuary with all your vile images and detestable practices, I myself will withdraw my favor; I will not look on you with pity or spare you. A third of your people will die of the plague or perish by famine inside you; a third will fall by the sword outside your walls; and a third I will scatter to the winds and pursue with drawn sword.” (Ezekiel 5:11,12) God destroyed two thirds of Israel and spared a third of His people from Nebuchadnezzar because He saw redemptive value!

3. “ ‘In the whole land,’ declares the Lord, ‘two-thirds will be struck down and perish; yet one-third will be left in it. This third I will bring into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, ‘They are my people,’ and they will say, ‘The Lord is our God.’ ’ ” (Zechariah 13:8,9) Again, God destroyed two thirds and spared one third because He saw redemptive value!

4. “His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child the moment it was born.” (Revelation 12:4) This text refers to God’s patience with Lucifer. God cast Lucifer out of Heaven when his deception corrupted a third of Heaven’s angels. God spared two thirds of the angels, but cast out a third.

5. “. . . A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up. . . . A third of the sea turned into blood, a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed. . . . A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the waters that had become bitter.” (Revelation 8:7-9,11) There are twelve instances in Revelation mentioning one third being destroyed and two thirds being spared during the seven trumpets. Did you notice that instead of destroying two thirds, a third is destroyed? The destruction of one-third proves two things. First, Jesus is a double-generous king! Jesus would be justified if He destroyed two-thirds. Second, Jesus is on a mission to save souls even as God’s wrath is being poured out. He sees a great deal of redemptive value in mankind and He spares two-thirds so that He might save as many people as possible.

6. “And the four angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind.” (Revelation 9:15) Jesus will permit Lucifer to kill a third of mankind when he sets up his theocracy. Jesus will not let the devil go one step further. Lucifer will be permitted to purge his kingdom of his opposition. Of course, he will not kill *all* of the saints, but he will kill a definite number. (Revelation 6:9-11)

Synthesis: We have seen in these six passages that God’s use of one third and two thirds is not random. *God is deliberate and purposeful in everything He does.* The number 666 is not a random number. In fact, 666 is precisely two-thirds of 999. Consider this: When the sixth trumpet occurs, I believe Lucifer will divide the people of Earth into groups of 1,000 for

purposes of logistics, rations, and administrative control. This is a common technique used for crowd control in a crisis. Moreover, there is a biblical precedent for dividing people into groups of 1,000. Moses divided the Israelites into groups of 1,000 while in the wilderness: **“Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said. He chose capable men from all Israel and made them leaders of the people, officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. They served as judges for the people at all times. The difficult cases they brought to Moses, but the simple ones they decided themselves.”** (Exodus 18:24-26)

There are several references in the Bible showing that people were commonly grouped into units of 1,000. (See Numbers 31:48-54, Deuteronomy 1:15, 1Samuel 22:7, and 1 Chronicles 27:1.) If this arrangement worked well in ancient times, it will work very well during the primitive circumstances of the Great Tribulation. There will be no computers, telephones or electronic devices with which to manage the needs of people because electricity will not exist. The first four trumpets will have destroyed the world’s infrastructure. Dividing people into small groups of 1,000 has proven to be a simple and effective throughout history and it will prove to be an effective tool when Lucifer establishes his theocracy.

The Fourth Prerequisite

We know at this point in our study that the lamb-like beast is Lucifer in human form. This fact is crucial because **the beast** that owns the mark is Lucifer. Remember, the Greek word for “mark” is *charagma* and it means an etching or engraving. Lucifer will require a *charagma* on the right

hand of every wicked person and this *charagma* must be visibly shown in order to buy and sell. This etching will be a non-removable, non-transferrable, and it cannot be lost. It will be a tattoo on the right hand. (**Note:** A tattoo is a *charagma*. A story that runs parallel to the mark of the beast is told in Ezekiel 9. Although this story did not actually take place, the concept of separating people according to a mark (etching) was presented to Ezekiel in a vision.)

Consider this possible scenario: When Lucifer abolishes the religious systems of the world, he will set up ten kings. These kings will do whatever the devil wants. (Revelation 17:13) The devil will divide the people of Earth into groups of 1,000 and one person from each group of 1,000 will be chosen as the leader. He will report to his respective king. This will leave 999 people in each group. The devil will tell the world that 666 people in each group will be permitted to live and participate in his theocracy. Therefore, if a person wishes to avoid death, he must come forward by such and such a date, swear allegiance and loyalty to the devil and his government, and receive a tattoo on his right hand showing the number 666. Only the first 666 people of each group of 1,000 to come forward and voluntarily receive the mark will be spared. This tattoo will separate Lucifer's opposition from those willing to serve as devoted subjects. Most people will consider this the good news (if there is any in this), because it means that two-thirds of each group will be spared! This decree will force the wicked to make their final decision. Many will rush in to receive the tattoo because they know that each group will be limited to 666 survivors. This process explains why Lucifer's theocracy is called "the great whore" in Revelation 17. People will knowingly and willfully worship the devil to survive and in doing so, will sell their soul to the devil.

People who refuse the mark of the beast will become targets for murder. Millions of saints will be slaughtered. (Revelation 6:9-11; 16:6; 17:6) Most if not all of the 144,000 will perish.

Millions in the non-religious group will also be killed and if necessary, even those who would worship the devil will be killed. The devil is a sociopath. He loves no one. Only 666 people will be allowed to live, the rest will be killed as quickly as they can be found. Jesus said, **“For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.**

What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matthew 16:25,26)

The tattoo on the forehead is easy to understand. It is a simple counterfeit. The Bible says the names of Jesus and the Father will be *engraved* on the foreheads of the 144,000! (See Revelation 14:1, 22:4) This glorious insignia on their foreheads will indicate their high rank wherever they travel throughout eternity. Lucifer will counterfeit this insignia by putting his name, in the form of an engraving (a tattoo) on the forehead of his lieutenant in each group.

Lucifer’s assumed name (unknown at this time) will not be numerically equivalent to 666. The Bible does not indicate or require a Roman numeral translation. Rather, the Bible indicates that the number 666 is the “number [of people] *belonging* to the man [of sin].” The Greek syntax puts this phrase in a genitive of *possession* case, that is, 666 people will belong to Lucifer. Look again at these verses: **“He [the lamb-like beast] also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark [Greek: *charagma* – an etching, an engraving, a tattoo] on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no one could buy or sell unless he had**

the [visible tattoo] mark [to show everyone], which is the [assumed] name of the beast [tattooed on the forehead] or the number [of people who belong to] of his name. This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate [count] the number of [people belonging to] the beast, for it is [the] man's number [that is, the number belonging to the man of sin]. His number [of remaining people] is 666.” (Revelation 13:16-18, italics and insertions mine)

Three Interesting Points

As we close this section, three interesting points should be noticed:

1. The number of people killed by the first four trumpets is 25%. When the fourth seal is opened, a fourth of Earth's population will be killed. (Revelation 6:8) This means 1.75 billion people will die (assuming there is a global population of seven billion people when the Great Tribulation begins). The number killed by Lucifer's forces will be the same! Look at the math:

Fourth Seal

7.00 billion Population
- 1.75 billion 25% killed
5.25 billion survivors

Sixth Trumpet

5.25 billion Population
- 1.75 billion (33%) killed
3.50 billion survivors

It is interesting to notice that Jesus and Lucifer kill the same number of people and together, they reduce the population of Earth by 50% during the Great Tribulation. It is ironic that Jesus

justifiably kills 25% of the people who live on Earth in an effort to save as many survivors as possible, whereas Lucifer kills 33% of the world's population in order to rule over Earth.

2. When the sixth trumpet war is over, the devil will rule the world. The seven religions of the world will be abolished and ten kings will serve the devil as taskmasters. The Antichrist will establish a one-world religion and a one-world government and no ordinary man could possibly accomplish this!

3. The Bible predicts slavery will be implemented during the Great Tribulation. Consider these three texts (italics mine):

a. **“Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every *slave* and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains.”** (Revelation 6:15)

b. **“He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and *slave*, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead.”** (Revelation 13:16)

c. **“And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, ‘Come, gather together for the great supper of God so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and mighty men, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and *slave*, small and great.’ ”** (Revelation 19:17,18)

Indentured slavery will be practiced during the Great Tribulation. People will either (a) fall into slavery because they cannot pay their bills, or (b) they will sell themselves into slavery in order to survive. This practice is as old as mankind. In fact, this is how the children of Israel became enslaved to Pharaoh. (See Genesis 41 and 42.) The devil will convince the world that he has come to establish a thousand years of peace on Earth, and Earth must be rebuilt and repaired. People will have to work for food. Of course, the devil knows there will be no recovery from the destruction of the first four trumpets and he also knows there will not be 1,000 years of peace. (The 1,000 years mentioned in Revelation 20 occur in Heaven after the second coming.) These are lies which he will use to overwork the people of Earth until the seven bowls bring the devil's rule to a grinding halt.

God's Sabbath Rest

As the Great Tribulation unfolds, resting and refraining from work on God's holy day will become increasingly impossible without suffering a harsh or deadly penalty. Thus, conflict over God's holy day will boil down to a question of survival, just as it did at the Exodus. Before ancient Israel could leave Egypt, God commanded that they rest on His holy day. Resting on the Sabbath made Pharaoh furious and his punishment was so severe that Israel's foremen were willing to abandon the Sabbath and remain in Egyptian slavery. **“The Israelite foremen realized they were in trouble when they were told, ‘You are not to reduce the number of bricks required of you for each day.’ When they left Pharaoh, they found Moses and Aaron waiting to meet them, and they said, ‘May the Lord look upon you and judge you!**

You have made us a stench to Pharaoh and his officials and have put a sword in their hand to kill us.’ ” (Exodus 5:19-21)

This scenario will be repeated. Before spiritual Israel can exit this world of slavery to sin, we are going to be tested to see if we will rest from work on God’s holy day. Those who worship God will obey His laws. Those who worship Lucifer will obey his laws. When the laws of two kingdoms are in direct conflict, the allegiance of every citizen will be revealed. Those serving the devil will submit to his authority and receive his tattoo. Those serving Jesus will not be able to buy or sell. Millions will perish, but the saints will live by faith. **“For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: ‘The righteous will live by faith.’ ” (Romans 1:17) “For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.” (1 John 5:4)**

Homecoming for the 144,000

We have come to the last segment in this lengthy prophecy. Just in case you have forgotten, we are still studying Prophecy II, Revelation 12:7-14:5. Since we examined Revelation 14:1-5 and the 144,000 in a chapter dedicated to them, a few closing words about the 144,000 are needed.

For good reason, the end of this prophecy recognizes the incredible service and victory of the 144,000 over Babylon and Lucifer. Even though most, if not all, of the 144,000 will be killed,

they will accomplish everything that Jesus wants them to do. They will faithfully say everything Jesus wants them to say and they will go wherever Jesus sends them – not only during the Great Tribulation, but throughout eternity! Whenever I meditate on the work and ministry of the 144,000, I am always fascinated with their worthlessness and yet, their exceeding great value – worthlessness in the eyes of the wicked, but having the highest value in the eyes of our Creator.

Taken to Heaven

Consider the glorious scene that takes place on the 1,265th day of the Great Tribulation. On that Sunday morning, Jesus will resurrect the 144,000 and take them to Heaven, and the wicked of Earth will witness this phenomenon. Notice how these two passages parallel each other:

“Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, *standing on Mount Zion*, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name *written on their foreheads*. And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of rushing waters and like a loud peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps. And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth.” (Revelation 14:1-3, italics mine)

“And I saw what looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire and, standing beside the sea, those [the 144,000] who had been victorious over the beast and his image and over the

number of his name. They held harps given them by God and sang the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb: ‘Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages. Who will not fear you, O Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.’ ” (Revelation 15:2-4, insertion mine)

The 144,000 will sing the song of Moses and the Lamb and no one else can learn their song because no one but Moses, Jesus, and the 144,000 have endured such horrible experiences!

“These [the 144,000] are those who did not defile themselves with women*, for they kept themselves pure. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes [because they belong to Him]. They were purchased from among men and offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb. No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless.” (Revelation 14:4,5, insertion mine)

Jesus selected and sealed these ordinary people first and He will take them to Heaven first because they are samples of the harvest that will come from every nation, kindred, tribe, and people. They faithfully spoke the testimony of Jesus – without regard for their life.

Summary

Prophecy I and Prophecy II are inspiring because they tell us that Lucifer will ultimately fail. This may not sound very important right now, but it will be very encouraging in days to come. There will be an end to Lucifer’s torment. **“Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the**

end of the 1,335 days.” (Daniel 12:12) We have read about Lucifer’s failures in this study because Jesus wants us to know that evil may prosper for a season, but it will not endure.

Once again, review his failures:

1. Lucifer tried to kill Jesus at birth.
2. Lucifer tried to ruin the plan of salvation by tempting Jesus (at His weakest moment) to worship him.
3. Lucifer tried to keep Jesus in the tomb by sealing it with a huge stone.
4. Lucifer tried to prevent Jesus from taking his position in Heaven's government.
5. Lucifer tried to keep the truth about Christ’s resurrection a secret.
6. Lucifer persecuted the woman for 1,260 years, but he could not destroy her.
7. Lucifer will make war on the remnant of the woman for 42 months, but he cannot destroy her. He will kill most, if not all, of the 144,000, but Jesus resurrects them.

(Note: To make this story complete, I must mention Lucifer’s next two failures.)

8. Lucifer will lead the world into war against Jesus as He appears in the clouds, but he will be soundly defeated and returned to the Abyss for 1,000 years.
9. At the end of the 1,000 years, Lucifer will lead the wicked against the Holy City, but God will strike the Earth with blazing fire from Heaven, and the wicked, including Lucifer and his demons, will be annihilated.

An Invitation to Join the Winning Team!

Anyone who reads this book can join the winning team right now, this very minute, by giving your life to Jesus Christ. Here is the process: First, tell the Lord Jesus you realize that you are a sinner and that you cannot save yourself from the penalty of sin. Then, tell the Lord “thank you” for dying on the cross in your place. Tell Him that you accept His offer: A life for a life. You are giving Him your sinful life and you believe that He will give you His perfect life which brings the assurance of eternal life to you. Tell Him that you love Him for what He has done for you and that you are willing to do whatever He commands. Tell Him you are willing to become all that He wants you to be. Ask Him to show you where He wants you to go so that you may best serve His interests today. Tell Him that you want to bring honor to His holy name through humble behavior and Jesus will warmly embrace you through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. It does not matter how messed up your present situation may be or how disgusting your past might have been. He will joyfully become your God and you will become His child.

Because we have the privilege of owning a Bible, we have the opportunity to see into the future. We know who the winners and the losers are going to be during the Great Tribulation. Many of the winners will be tortured and killed, but Jesus will not reward the winners until the dead in Christ are resurrected! Jesus does not see the first death as the end of life. “. . . **Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and [the grave] Hades.**” (Revelation 1:17,18, insertion mine) If Jesus could give up His eternal life in order to save us from eternal

death, surely we can give up our temporal lives (prompted by our love for Christ and the indwelling strength of the Holy Spirit) as a testimony of our love for Him. In fact, the most telling evidence of a born-again Christian is this:

“...Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” (Luke 23:34) The angel said, **“They overcame him [Lucifer] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.”** (Revelation 12:11)

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