

## The Great Controversy Series

### Sermon 39 The United States in Bible Prophecy

Last time we saw the unchangeable Ten Commandments in the heavenly sanctuary in the Most Holy Place in the ark of the covenant. In the last days, just before Jesus comes a group appears:

Revelation 14:12 Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

This group keeps the commandments of God including the Sabbath day.

In contrast to this, the third angel points to another group:

Revelation 14:9 Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand,<sup>10</sup> "he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

In the last days there will be two groups: one keeps the commandments of God but the other worships the beast and his image or receives the mark of the beast in his forehead or in his hand. Which group will you be in?

To understand these verses we must understand the symbols in them. What is the beast, his image and his mark? This line of prophecy begins in Revelation 12.

Revelation 12:1 Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars.<sup>2</sup> Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.<sup>3</sup> And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.<sup>4</sup> His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.<sup>5</sup> She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne.

Who is the woman? That is right, in prophecy a woman represents God's people. We demonstrated this before. Who is the dragon? That is right. This is Satan.

Revelation 12:9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

O.K., who is the child? Yes, only Jesus Christ will rule all nations and when Christ was resurrected He went to God's side. When Jesus was born, who was about to devour Him? The verse tells us that the dragon was about to devour Him. But who was Satan's agent? Yes, King Herod, commanded that all children two years and under to be killed. Herod was a Roman king. In the first three centuries of Christianity it was mostly pagan Rome that persecuted Christians. Therefore the dragon primarily represents Satan but in a secondary sense it represents pagan Rome.

The prophecy continues in Revelation 13.

Revelation 13:1 Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.<sup>2</sup> Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.<sup>3</sup> And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast.<sup>4</sup> So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"<sup>5</sup> And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months.<sup>6</sup> Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.<sup>7</sup> It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.<sup>8</sup> All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.<sup>9</sup> If anyone has an ear, let him hear.<sup>10</sup> He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

Who is this beast? This beast is the papacy. The papacy took the authority and power and place of pagan Rome. The papacy blasphemes God by forgiving sins and appropriating other authority that belongs to God alone. The papacy made war with the saints and overcame them by persecuting and killing the Waldenses, Huss, Jerome, and millions of other nameless people. This prophecy and the description of the little horn in Daniel 7 is almost exactly the same and they point to the papacy.

"He was given authority to continue for forty-two months." We have looked at this time-frame before. Forty two months and time, times and half a time and 1260 days are the same time frame, that is 1260 years. Beginning in 538 and extending until 1798 the papacy reigned supreme in Europe and all who did recognize her authority were persecuted. In 1798 the French army took the pope captive and thus the papacy received a "deadly wound." The one that lead into captivity was taken captive and the one that killed with the sword was killed with the sword. But the Bible says:

Revelation 13:3 "... and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast.

In 1929 Italy recognized the Vatican as an independent state. The deadly wound was healed.

At this point the prophet John saw another symbol.

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

This beast's appearance and uprising is different from the beasts that are in Daniel 7. In Daniel 7 the nations of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Roma are symbolized by animals of prey. They come up in an environment like this:

Daniel 7:2 Daniel spoke, saying, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea.<sup>3</sup> "And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other.

Revelation 17:15 shows us that the waters represent people:

Revelation 17:15 Then he said to me, "The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.

Winds represent strife:

Jeremiah 49:36 Against Elam I will bring the four winds From the four quarters of heaven, And scatter them toward all those winds; There shall be no nations where the outcasts of Elam will not go.<sup>37</sup> For I will cause Elam to be dismayed before their enemies And before those who seek their life. I will bring disaster upon them, My fierce anger,' says the LORD; 'And I will send the sword after them Until I have consumed them.

Winds represent the terrible conquests and revolutions with which kingdoms have come to power. Did you notice the method that we used to understand the symbols of the Scriptures? We combed the Scriptures and compared symbols. We didn't do this from our own opinions. Many people come to strange interpretations because they do not let the Bible interpret its own symbols but add their own ideas.

The beast with the lamb-like horns comes out of the earth. In order to establish itself it did not have to conquer another nation. It came up in an isolated area, slowly and peacefully. Thus it did not come up in the old world, but in the west.

Which nation was coming up in 1798 and attracting the world's attention with great expectation? Without doubt this power is the United States.

The beast had two horns like a lamb. The lamb-like horns represent youth, innocence and gentleness. At first, in 1798 when it was coming up, these symbols were appropriate. Among the people who were escaping from the oppression of kings and intolerance of priests were those who desired to set up a state based on civil and religious freedom. In the Declaration of Independence we find the ideas that “all men are created equal” and they have the inalienable right to “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” The constitution guarantees to the people the right of self-governance. It provides that elected officials shall create and laws and apply them. It recognizes religious freedom. Everyone can worship according to the dictates of their own conscience. Freedom of conscience and belief are Protestant concepts. Thus Republicanism and Protestantism form the basis of the nation’s principles. These principles are the secret of her power and wealth. As America turns her back on these principles she loses her power because God blesses nations according to these principles. He who has an ear, let him hear.

Unfortunately America didn’t remain as such. The Bible says:

Revelation 13:11 ...and spoke like a dragon.

This nation’s “speaking” is the action of her legislative and judicial authorities.

Revelation 13:12 And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.<sup>13</sup> He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.<sup>14</sup> And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.

Using “the authority of the first beast” and speaking “like a dragon” this second beast will persecute and exhibit the intolerance of the nations represented by first beast the dragon.

You say to me, “The United States exhibits imperialism. It uses its power to exploit petroleum and other natural resources.” That is right, but the Bible is not talking mostly about those things. It is pointing specifically about speaking like a dragon on one subject. The subject of religion. It “causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast.” The first beast is the papacy. In some way the United States will enforce an action in honor of the papacy. This will contradict its Declaration of Independence and constitution. To control people it will use its money, military and influence.

The founders of the United States did not want religion to be able to use the power of the state. The inevitable result is intolerance and persecution. The constitution says:

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," and that "no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States."

Only by trampling on these concepts can the United States enforce and religious observance. But this inconsistency is seen in the symbol. It has two horns like a lamb but speaks like a dragon.

Revelation 13:14 And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling **those** who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.

When the text says, "those", we understand that the government spoken of here is one in which the legislative power rests with the people. This also points to the United States.

Let's talk a minute. In these last 38 sermons we shared a lot of things that are negative about the Catholic Church. These are facts of history. Some people may say, "You hate Catholics" but it is not true. Nearly all the reformers were Catholic. Jesus tells us to love everyone including our enemies. We love Catholics. Without doubt there are good people in that system.

Revelation 18:4 And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.

The Lord says to them, "my people." We aren't against this. But Bible shows us that the first beast of Revelation 13 is the papacy and we must preach accordingly.

I am an American. Do I hate Americans? No. I love them. There are good people there. Do I hate my homeland? No. But the Bible shows us that the second beast of Revelation 13 is the United States and we have to preach accordingly. In the last days the United States and the papacy will unite to enforce a religious observance that is against God. In the next sermon we will go into this in more detail. These subjects interest everyone in the world because in the last days there will be only two groups: 1. Those that worship the beast and his image or receive the mark of the beast in his forehead or in his hand. 2. Those that keep the commandments of God.

The choice is yours.