

## The Great Controversy Series

### Sermon 40: An Image to the Beast

Last time we saw two beasts in Revelation 13. One of them came out of the sea.

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.

This beast would reign 42 months. This time frame is the same as the 1260 days and the “time, times and half a time” in Daniel. For 1260 years the papacy reigned in Europe. The pope claims to be the substitute of Jesus on earth and the papacy persecuted the saints.

This is certainly not your every-day kingdom because worship is a matter of issue.

Revelation 13:8 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.

One of his heads was wounded unto death. In 1798 a French general captured the pope and during the French Revolution it appeared as if the papacy had ended. But the Bible says that the deadly wound would be healed. In 1929 Italy recognized the papacy as an autonomous state. The Catholic Church is an enormous organization existing in nearly all countries and with 1.2 billion members. It is not just a church. Nations send ambassadors to her and their leaders go to the pope.

Revelation 13:3 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.**

John saw another beast:

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.<sup>12</sup> 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.

We established that this beast is the United States of America. In 1798 it came up “out of the earth,” that is, it came up from an uninhabited area. The two horns like a lamb represent the qualities of republicanism and Protestantism. But America speaks like a dragon. We definitely

do not say all Americans and Catholics are evil. But the Bible points to these two powers as evildoers. This is no surprise to you. It is enough to look at history and the newspaper.

The second beast which is the United States of America, will do something in honor of the papacy:

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.

In this verse, the word translated as image is “icon” in the Greek. In Daniel 3 in the Septuagint which is the Greek translation, the exact same word is used. In both scenarios the same situation is brought forth: forced worship.

Revelation 13:15 He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

The Bible talks about an image to the beast and an image of the beast. To understand what the image of the beast is, we must study the beast.

You remember that in the first three hundred years of Christianity that Christians were persecuted and the church remained relatively pure. But when Christianity became a recognized religion everything changed. To gain converts, pagan rites and institutions were accepted and Christianity lost the Spirit of God and its power. To control the conscience, the church sought the civil power. The result: The papacy which controlled the state to punish especially those who were deemed heretics. The Protestants did like the papacy and also restricted liberty of conscience by making alliance with worldly powers. As an example, the Church of England in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries threw many nonconformists of both pastor and laity into prison, fined and tortured them and put them to death.

Apostasy opened the way for the church seeking the power of the state and the formation of the papacy.

2 Thessalonians 2:3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,

Before Jesus comes this kind of apostasy will take place in the churches:

2 Timothy 3:1-5 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:<sup>2</sup> For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,<sup>3</sup> unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good,<sup>4</sup> traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than

lovers of God,<sup>5</sup> having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

1 Timothy 4:1-3 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,<sup>2</sup> speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,<sup>3</sup> forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

2 Thessalonians 2:9-11 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,<sup>10</sup> and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.<sup>11</sup> And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie,

When the church reaches this condition the same results will be seen as in Christian history.

Some people can say, “The Protestant churches are so different from each other it is not possible to establish uniformity.” But now even in Turkey, various churches are forming a union based on common doctrine. To do this, controversial doctrines are not spoken about, they are ignored, no matter how important they may be in the Bible. The important thing is unity. To completely secure this they will resort to force.

Perhaps you are in a Protestant church and you love your denomination and the believers. That is good. We wish it well. But be careful. If leaders are ignoring important doctrines for the sake of unity, you can see where it is heading. You do not have to compromise Bible doctrines. You can hold your ground for the truth.

When the leading churches of the United States of America come together on united points of doctrine and influence the state to enforce her decrees and support her institutions then America will have formed an image to the beast. The next action will be persecution by the state.

Thus before Jesus comes, the final crisis in the world will be about worship and liberty of conscience. Are you ready? Now is the time to learn lessons of faith. Are you remaining faithful to Jesus or are you compromising? Jesus said:

Luke 16:10 "He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.

If there is need for reform in your life, why don't you make that commitment today?

Next time we will talk about the mark of the beast.