

**REV. 13-14 THE SECOND BEAST AS THE FALSE PROPHET; THE 144,000 AGAIN**

In the last study, we covered the first Beast of Rev. 13. Now we come to the second Beast, who will henceforth be called "the False Prophet" (Rev. 16:13; 19:20; 20:10). Thus, these are two men used by Satan to forge his end-time empire and who will end up being thrown into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20).

John writes, "Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. 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. He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. 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. 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" (Rev. 13:11-15).

In contrast with the first Beast, this one disguises himself as a supposed "harmless lamb" but is really a deceitful religious dictator imposing false doctrines through the Dragon's (Satan's) influence. Morris writes, "He spoke *as a dragon*, which...means 'like the dragon.' This beast's speech is *like that of the evil one*. He is formidable. He has *all the power of his predecessor*. But he is in no sense a rival, for he makes men worship [the first beast]" (p. 171).

A lamb is normally white and is a symbol for Christ (Rev. 5:6, 12; 6:16; etc.), yet here is His false religious counterpart. As Ladd points out, "He is the parody [a boorish counterfeit] of Christ – religion *prostituted* for evil ends [Rev. 17:1-2]. The second beast had the appearance of a lamb, but his voice belied this appearance: he spoke like a dragon. That *the second beast* represents *religion* employed in support of the worship of the beast is seen from the fact that hereafter he is called *the false prophet*. The first beast represents *civil power*, satanically inspired; the second beast represents *religious power* employed to support civil power" (p. 183).

*Expositor's* adds, "Since one of the primary characteristics of this second beast is his *deceptive* activities, his appearance *as a lamb* [white clothing?]

would contribute to the *confusion* over the beast's true identity. If he represents satanic false teaching...his evil is *intensified* because of its *deceptive similarity to the truth*. Even though the beast is like the Lamb, he is evil because 'he [speaks] like a dragon,' i.e., *he teaches [Christian] heresy*."

Jesus warned of those falsely imitating Him, "Take heed that no one deceives (Gk. *planao*) you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many...For *false christs and false prophets* will rise and *show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect*" (Mt. 24:4-5, 24). The task of the second Beast is *to deceive* the world!

Paul adds about this religious leader, "Let no one *deceive* you...and the man of sin is revealed who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that *he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God*...The coming of the lawless one is *according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception* among those who perish..." (2 Thes. 2:3-11).

This second Beast or the False Prophet will have a miraculous statue made in the image of the first Beast that through satanic power will be able to talk and sentence to death those who refuse to worship it. The point is made that both Beasts are being "allowed" to do this ("he was *granted power*") only because God permits it during this end-time period.

In fact, claims of talking "Virgin Marys" are found in Catholic countries up to today. As Marina Warner writes, "There have been several authenticated visitations of the Virgin in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and *over two hundred* that have not been officially approved by the [Catholic] Church" (*Alone of All Her Sex*, 1976, p. 309). Perhaps one of these demons will possess the Beast's image as reportedly done with statues of the "Virgin Mary."

John says, "He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666" (Rev. 13:16-18).

Notice first that whatever the number of the Beast is, this is *for the future*, when the False Prophet *will appear*. So here is a *mostly deceived church*—deceived by and used by the Devil and also *deceiving the world*. Notice this church did not kill the martyrs, but caused them to be killed by the civil leaders.

The use of numbers to determine a name is called *gematria* by the Jews and *isopsephia* by the Greeks. *Expositor's* explains, "Ancient languages, including Hebrew and Greek, use standard letters from their alphabets as numerical signs. For example, a (*alpha*) in Gk. can represent the number one, b (*beta*) the number two, etc. A series of letters could form a word and at the same time indicate a number...On the walls of Pompeii, there are some graffiti, dated no later than A.D. 79 (when destroyed) that [shows] the practice. One reads: "Amerimnus thought upon his lady Harmonia for good. The number of her honorable name is 45...Another runs: 'I love her whose number is 545.' In these cases, the number conceals a name, and the mystery is perhaps known for certain only by the two lovers themselves."

Today it is possible, with the digital branding for names and prices, to brand someone with either a visible or an invisible universal product code or a chip that has the identifying name of the Beast.

Our booklet on Revelation notes, "Likewise, the mark of the Beast is evidently *a mark of disobedience* to God. Many...have pointed to God's *seventh day Sabbath* as an *identifying sign* of His people in Ex. 31:12-17. They believe that *observance of Sunday*...could [likely] be involved" (p. 51).

In chapter 14, a note of encouragement is in order after speaking of the mark of the Beast. So God gives John a vision of the final victory over the two Beasts.

John says, "Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb

wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God" (R. 14:1-5).

The 144,000, who have already been introduced in chapter 7 (for they are not 288,000) are now with Jesus Christ *on Mt. Zion*. In Old Testament prophecy, Mt. Zion came to symbolize the Temple Mount and its city, Jerusalem--the place where Christ will dwell after He returns to the earth (Ps. 2:6; Is. 24:23; Joel 2:32; Obad. 17; Mic 4:1; Zec. 14:10; 16; Acts 1:11).

Still, some believe Jesus and the saints are here in a *heavenly Mt. Zion*. Yet, this term is *not equivalent* to heaven, but is *a symbol of the NT Church*, led by Christ *in heaven*. As Beckwith explains, "Mt. Zion, *synonymous with Jerusalem*, is one of the standing terms to designate *the central seat of the eschatological [or end-time] kingdom*...The 'Mt. Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem' in Heb. 12:22; the 'Jerusalem that is above' in Gal. 4:26, denote *the perfect archetype or pattern of the earthly*, which in Heb. thought exists in heaven, and in the end *to descend in full realization*; they are *not designations of heaven [itself], the place of God and His hosts*...It is certain...the term Mount Zion in the sense found everywhere in apocalyptic writings, denotes, *not heaven, but the seat of the Messianic kingdom*...The prophet, *from his position on the earth*, hears the song *sung in the court of heaven*" (*The Apocalypse of John*, 1919, p. 647).

The view Mt. Zion is in heaven is also inconsistent with the teaching Jesus Christ will come down to the earth--to Jerusalem--and in the First Resurrection, which these redeemed are a part, they will say, "[You] have made us kings and priests...and we shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:10). Christ will reign with them, *not in heaven*, but on the earth! (Rev. 20:4).

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says about these 144,000 standing on Mt. Zion, "It is reasonable to conclude that *this is the same group mentioned in Rev. 7:4-8*, except that here they are *in a later period of the Tribulation*. Chronologically the vision anticipates the triumph of the 144,000 *still intact at the time of Jesus Christ's return from heaven to earth*. In contrast with many others who become martyrs, *these people live through the period*." This fits those in a place of safety during the Great Tribulation who will rejoice in the Millennium (Rev. 12:14-17).

The new song is taught to the 144,000 on Mt. Zion as a victory song. *Expositor's* explains, "At any rate, that the 144,000 are singing 'before the throne' (v. 3) is *not* an objection to *seeing them as the earthly Zion*; it is not the redeemed who are singing *but the angelic harpists*...This 'new song' should be related to *the 'new song' in Rev. 5:9, also sung by the angelic choirs*. It is the song of redemption and vindication. What was seen in Rev. 5:10 as *secured for the redeemed by Christ's death* (i.e., that 'they will reign on the earth') *has now been realized on Mount Zion*. ...The 144,000 who were 'redeemed' or 'purchased' (Gk. *agorazo*) 'from among men' *must be the same* as those 'purchased' from all the earth's peoples in Rev. 5:9 and *those sealed in Rev. 7:4-8, who have washed their garments in the blood of the Lamb* (Rev. 7:14)."

These redeemed brethren are now described in symbolic terms as "virgins." Paul uses the same analogy, "For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have *betrothed you* to one husband, that I may present you as *a chaste virgin to Christ*" (2 Cor. 11:2). As Mounce notes, "The 144,000 are here pictured as *the promised bride of Christ*, who, as they await the day of marriage, have *kept themselves pure* from all defiling relationships with the pagan world system. They have resisted the seductions of the *great harlot Rome* with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication" (p. 267).

Since these faithful brethren have persevered in the truth and followed Christ's teachings, they are part of the First Resurrection and are called *firstfruits*. As James 1:18 brings out, "Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of *firstfruits* of His creatures."

John goes on to say, "Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—saying with a loud voice, 'Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.' And another angel followed, saying, 'Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.' Then a third angel followed them, saying... 'If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, 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. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.' Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus" (Rev. 14:6-12).

So the gospel will go out to the world for a final time through these three angels. The first preaches about the world needing to recognize the true God as the Creator of everything (versus what Evolution teaches). As Mounce notes, "The eternal gospel calls on people to fear and honor *the Creator*, for the hour of judgment is at hand. God has revealed Himself in nature so that people are *without excuse* (Rom. 1:19-20)...Now we hear one last call for civilization to *repent and give Him glory*" (p. 271).

A second angel proclaims the fall of Babylon, a symbol for the religious capital of the empire of the Beast. In John's day, it was ancient Rome, in the final days, it points to again being Rome, head of the religious power that is described in Rev. 17. As *Believer's Bible Commentary* points out, "The second angel announces Babylon's fall. This anticipates chapters 17 and 18. Babylon represents...*apostate Christendom*, which will be a vast commercial and religious conglomerate *with headquarters in Rome*. *All nations* will have become drunk with the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

The third angel warns of those who willfully partake of the mark of the Beast. They will eventually be thrown into the lake of fire, which is the second death (Rev. 20:14; 21:8). They will be totally burnt up and the smoke of their fiery death will not be stopped, as Babylon's similar fate is a symbol of total destruction: "They said, 'Alleluia! Her smoke rises up *forever and ever!*'" (Rev. 19:3). As Christ said to the incorrigibly wicked, "Depart from Me, you cursed, into *the everlasting fire* prepared for the devil and his angels" (Mt. 25:41). Who are those that are spared of this punishment? It is those who have persevered, refusing the mark of the Beast, and "who *keep the commandments of God* and the faith of Jesus" (Rev. 14:12). That means keeping *all* of them!