



Three Angels, One Message Presentation Seven: "Seven Faces of Apostasy"

We've seen that the "beast" that has the "mark" which must be avoided, is the "beast from the sea" brought to view in chapter 13 of Revelation. We noted the six identifying clues that make it clear that no other organization on earth can possibly be the subject of this prophecy except the historical papacy. Remember! This is talking about the system of the papacy. God has His people in all faith communities, including the Catholic Church. Jesus loves Catholics! But the hierarchy of the papacy, because of her claims to equality with God, her claim to be above the sacred Scripture, her distortions of Bible truth and her persecution of God's faithful, comes under divine indictment. The message of Revelation is calling God's people out of "Babylon" with its false teachings, into the simple and pure truths of Scripture. In this study, we will see that there are 6 other Scriptural references to this power, using various symbols. Three of these are in the Old Testament; three are in the New Testament.

1. Daniel 7's "little" horn is the first. Take careful note that this "horn power" came just as the fourth beast, representing pagan Rome, was declining. This is crucial! This means that any other entity (a "future" Antichrist or Antiochus Epiphanes, a Greek ruler who reigned in the 2nd Century B.C.) cannot be the "horn power" of Daniel 7. It came up when Rome went down. We must look for an entity that came to power in the 4th to 6th Centuries A.D., which the papacy did. This power had "eyes like a man," indicating it relies on human wisdom, instead of the wisdom of the "seers," God's prophets. It persecuted the saints and attempts to change God's holy law (7:25), fulfilled by the papacy's attempt to change the Ten Commandments. It makes boastful claims against the Most High and reigns for the same 1260 prophetic "days" (literal years, 538 A.D. to 1798 A.D.) as the "beast from the sea" in Revelation 13. This can be no other than the historical papacy.
2. Daniel 8's "horn power" mimics many of the same characteristics of the horn of Daniel 7. It would persecute God's people (8:10, 24) and raise itself against God (8:11, 25) and "cast truth down to the ground." 8:12. Eventually, it will be "broken without hand," that is, without human hand. It will come to its end at the coming of Christ.
3. Daniel 11's "king of the north" (in the latter verses of the chapter) is the third picture. It "exalts itself" and "speaks blasphemies against the God of gods" (11:36), persecutes God's people (11:33, 44), and mounts an assault against God's kingdom (11:41, 45), fulfilled in the papacy's attack against God's holy law, the Ten Commandments. Eventually he will "come to his end, and none shall help him." 11:45.
4. In the New Testament Paul foretold an "apostasy" after the kingdom of civil Rome was "taken away" (2:7) and the rise of a "man of sin" in II Thessalonians 2, 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." 2:4. This is called the "mystery of iniquity" (2:7, KJV), which is man attempting to become God. On the other hand, the "mystery of godliness" describes the sacrificial miracle of God becoming man in order to save us. I Timothy 3:16. The "man of sin" will come to his end and be destroyed by the "brightness of His coming." 2:8.

5. In the book of I John another term is introduced, "Antichrist." John said that the spirit of Antichrist was already at work in his day, in denying Scriptural truth. 2:18; 22; 4:3. In defining the term Antichrist, we must recognize that John wrote in the Greek language. The prefix "anti" in Latin means "against" as in "anti-slavery." But in the Greek language the prefix "anti" has the primary meaning of "in the place of" or "instead of." See, for example Matthew 2:22, which says, "When he (Joseph) heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of ("anti") his father,..." Also, in Mark 10:45 we read, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom

for (“anti”) many.” The meaning is not “against” but “for” or “in place of.” In the Greek Old Testament, there are more than 100 uses of “anti” in this sense, that of being “in place of,” or “instead of.” Thus Abraham on Moriah offered a ram caught in a thicket “instead of” (“anti”) Isaac. Genesis 22:13. Thus David wept at the news of his son Absalom’s death, “O my son Absalom—my son, my son Absalom—if only I had died in your place!” II Samuel 18:33. There are literally scores of occurrences when it is reported that a king reigned “in place of” his father or predecessor. The clear meaning of “anti” is therefore “instead of” or “in place of.” When John coined the word Antichrist, we must factor that meaning into the term. Don’t look for an entity that is outwardly “against” Christ, but is seeking to take His place! Is this not exactly the claim of the papacy? The pope calls himself the “vicar of Christ,” which has the very same meaning, in Latin, as “anti” does in Greek. If the pope were to express the title “vicar of Christ” but say it in Greek, what would that title be? It would be “Antichrist.” It has always been Satan’s ambition to take the place of God, and he is now exercising that ambition through the system of the papacy. “We hold on earth the place of God Almighty.” Encyclical Letters of Leo XIII p. 304.

6. The specifications of Revelation 17’s “harlot” are fulfilled in the historical papacy. John (17:2) saw a “woman” (representing a church) sitting on (oppressing or supported by) a “beast” representing in this context civil authority. This is the illicit union, the “fornication” of which Revelation 14’s beast is guilty; the union of Church and State to enforce religious dogma, so prevalent in the Middle Ages. This woman is “full of the names of blasphemy” (17:3), a characteristic we’ve seen many times in the other portrayals. She is called “Babylon,” incorporating all the characteristics of ancient and spiritual Babylon: apostasy, unbelief, defiance, laying claim to being the “gate of the gods,” confusion and persecution, being “drunk with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.” (17:6). Essentially, these characteristics, exhibited in the historical papacy, can be seen as the elevation of “self” which led Lucifer to sin in heaven. This “harlot” is called the “mother of harlots,” indicating that she has daughters, representing those churches which have imbibed of her unscriptural teachings and will cooperate with her in the last battle against God, His kingdom, His law and His saints. No wonder that just after John saw this prophetic picture he heard the call, “Come out of her, My people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.” Revelation 18:4.

Jesus said that all things should be confirmed by two or three witnesses. Matthew 18:16. We have seen in Scripture not merely two or three, but seven “witnesses” identifying the same system, the papacy, as being the subject of God’s indictment. Because Satan has infiltrated this system and used it to withhold the Scriptures and elevate itself above the Word of God, introducing false teachings such as the “immortal soul,” “never-ending hell fire,” penance, purgatory and even changing the Ten Commandments, God must warn His sincere people against these corrupt practices and teachings.