

You're of no earthly value unless you're...

# Heavenly

# Minded

Vol 9 Issue 1

And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. 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.

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Dear Friends,

This issue marks a transition for us as we will no longer be sending out hardcopies in the mail. Our distribution to at least 18 countries from Russia to Iran to Singapore to China to the US to many countries in Europe to parts of Africa continues to grow such that we've now crossed the 120,000 readers mark. As we want to nurture HM's growth, we ask you to send us the email addresses of folks you would like to see receive our periodic notification of new issues. As you know, we have never used this ministry to solicit funds but please do keep us in your prayers!

In this issue, we continue to study through the book of Revelation and Lord willing we'll soon be offering a complete commentary on it by the name of Fire Eyes.

May God bless you as you study His Word and do His will.

Love in Christ,

John and Darlene Dickey



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# His Reign and Wrath

## Revelation 11

Chapter eleven of the Revelation begins a critical bridge from the era in which God's mystery accomplished the salvation of mankind, by the working of His Spirit and the testimony of His saints, unto the time of the full measure of God's wrath. Previously, we read that in the days of the sounding of the seventh trumpet, the mystery will be complete. God uses chapters 11 through 14 to wrap up for us several key elements that, as a consequence, conclude 'in these days of the seventh trumpet'.

Here, in chapter eleven, we deal with the first four -- we see the temple, the city, the testimony and the ark.

*Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, "Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there."* John is given a measuring device that resembles a shepherd's staff or rod. The word for rod, by the way, comes from the word "to smite".

He is told to measure three things, the temple, the altar and those who worship there. The temple is not the same one Ezekiel was told to measure for that is certainly the millennial temple. This is the temple that we believe the antichrist will enable

the Hebrews to build. The altar is probably referring to the altar of sacrifice where the burnt offerings will once again be made. The people who worship there are God's people -- blind, stubborn and without understanding -- but nevertheless, His people. These are the same people who will be inclined to believe that the antichrist is their messiah. They are the epitome of delusional rebellion against God. They, more than anyone, are in desperate need of a waking up. They need someone to jolt them, to speak the truth whether they like it or not.

This angel may be the same one who gave John the little book in the previous chapter or he may be another, but I like the simple statement "the angel stood" for it indicates that what he's directing the apostle to do is important. You might say that this is the last boundary God will establish on the planet before His wrath. In the beginning, He walked with Adam in the garden for the earth was new and 'clean'; but when man sinned, He withdrew to a more distant posture. Later, He chose Abram and 'traveled' with him, leading him to the promised land. After this, He came to Moses and freed the children of Israel from bondage and brought them to this same land which He reserved for Himself giving them specific boundaries. When they rebelled against Him, He ultimately withdrew and they went into captivity.

Now, in measuring the tribulation temple, it's like the last 'line in the sand'. It is the last boundary of

God's patience. He even allows the outer court to be given away.

*"But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months."* Some archeologists have stated that the original placement of the temple on the mount could actually accommodate the Muslim mosque of Omar if the temple compound did not include the former Court of the Gentiles. This may be what the angel is referring to when he tells John not to measure it.

Satan first polluted the paradise of God. He then, in the days of Noah, polluted the earth including man's own gene pool. After the flood, he polluted man's religion (which we'll get to in chapter 17). After God gave it to the Hebrews, Satan polluted the promised land, and he will thence pollute the holy city. His people will trample it underfoot for three and a half years. Now, you might think, 'this is not the only time Jerusalem has been trodden under foot' and you'd be right. This, however, is not mere destruction as was brought to her by the Babylonians and Romans (under God's direction). This is even more than that -- this is the desecration of Satan attempting to take and convert what is God's to become his own. It is absolute pollution.

Thus, along with the temple, it will be the final toxic stench, the 'last straw', the end.

*And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."*

I'm inclined to believe that this period of time will cover most of the last half of the tribulation. Some people think these two will be Moses and Elijah based upon the up-coming signs they'll perform. Others say Enoch will be one of them based upon the fact that he and Elijah were the only two people who haven't died a natural death. In one of our previous letters, I suggested that John the Apostle may be included. Regardless, these two aren't stand-ins or last minute appointees. They have been prepared for this duty. They have been standing in the presence of God which is an enormous honor.

*These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth.* We have to go back to Zechariah chapter four to learn about these olive trees. There, the prophet was given a vision including them. Here's what he inquired and learned:

*Then I [Zechariah] answered and said to him [the angel], "What are these two olive trees—at the right of the lampstand and at its left?" And I further answered and said to him, "What are these two olive branches that drip into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden oil drains?"*

*Then he answered me and said, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord."*

*So he said, "These are the two*

*anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth.”* (Zech 4:11-14)

The two anointed ones in Hebrew is literally the “two sons of oil”. They are in such close association with the oil, that is, the Holy Spirit, they are the ‘sons of oil’.

Now, earlier in the Revelation, we learned of seven lampstands before Jesus which He said were the seven churches. You see, lampstands are for shining forth light. The light the churches are supposed to shine forth is the truth of the gospel. As both the olive trees and the lampstands, these two tribulation witnesses are constantly supplied with oil and constantly displaying the light.

You may recall that it was James and John who approached Jesus (with their mother) and wanted to be those who would be on the right hand and on the left of Jesus in His kingdom:

*They said to Him, “Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory.”*

*But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”*

*They said to Him, “We are able.”* So Jesus said to them, *“You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared.”* (Mark 10:37-40)

The cup Jesus spoke of is His obedience to God’s will leading all the way to the cross. His baptism is that of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said both of these disciples would know the ‘drinking and dunking’ so to speak. But He also said that they didn’t have a clue about what they were asking for.

Like Jesus, His two witnesses will be totally anointed by the Holy Spirit and will be faithful in their ministry unto death.

Now, in Zechariah’s vision, there was only one lampstand whereas in John’s vision there are two. I suggest that as the seven churches in Revelation chapter one are lampstands, it would seem that the lampstands are representative of God’s witness to the dark world. It could be that the OT prophet saw only one because at the time there was only one corporate witness – the Hebrew people. John may have seen two because of the additional witness to the world of the mostly gentile church. Could it be that one of these two tribulation witnesses will represent the Hebrew people and the other, the church? We’ll see.

*And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner.* The word for harm here is “to act unjustly or wickedly, to sin” as well as “to hurt”. Note also that word “wants”. That means if anyone even intends or seriously considers acting unjustly or wickedly towards these two, he’s going to ‘crash and

burn’. Like Jesus, they will evidently have such discernment that they will be able to know what others are thinking. The word for fire is simply fire -- makes sense since they are lampstands.

*These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.* Although their powers resemble those of Moses and Elijah, I think it is more relevant that they are able to plague the earth “as often as they desire”. It seems that they are given a ‘free hand’ in issuing these plagues and that would be more in line with the time of God’s wrath. That is, their testimonies will challenge the antichrist’s claim to fame – that he is god. People with any sense will wonder, ‘If so-and-so says he’s god, why can’t he stop these two guys from wreaking havoc on us??’ Unfortunately, we’ll see that the whole world will have lost its senses.

*When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.* For three and a half years, these two witnesses will plague the world of Satan-worshipping idiots, perhaps in defense of the remnant of saved

Hebrews still on the planet. But when you’re done, you’re done. And you’re done when you’ve finished your testimony.

When they finish, a senior demon (perhaps Satan) is allowed to kill their bodies and they will lie in the street of Jerusalem. Note that the city is called Sodom and Egypt. Sodom was the place of absolute perversion, and Egypt was the place of captivity. This means that Jerusalem has become the prison pit of perversity under Satan. How tragic and ironic that is when you see what comes next:

*Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves. And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.* Senseless people around the world will celebrate that their ‘god’ has finally overcome and liquidated the two menaces. They will gloat as their bodies lie unceremoniously in the street. They will party and presume they have proven the resilience and ultimate power of man. But just as the band really starts getting hot...

*Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here.”*

*And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them.* Like Jesus, they are resurrected and ascend into heaven. Before the cameras can cut to commercial, they stand up on their feet and rise into the clouds. As a result, knees are knocking hard in Jerusalem and around the world.

*The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly.* Recall that the second woe is coincident with the sixth trumpet warning from God. It began with the death of a third of mankind by an enormous demonically empowered army. It included the conclusion of the mystery of God and the powerful testimony of the two witnesses. The last woe will be the last trumpet which is about to sound.

Don't get confused by the sequence of events or chronology. The actual end of the second woe does not have to precede the beginning of the third. God simply describes it in its entirety before moving on to the next. As a fine but important point of grammar, that word for "past" is in the aorist tense in the Greek. The aorist tense is characterized by its emphasis on punctiliar action; that is, the concept of the verb is considered without regard for past, present, or future time.

*Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord*

*and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying:*

*"We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty,*

*The One who is and who was and who is to come,*

*Because You have taken Your great power and reigned.*

*The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come,*

*And the time of the dead, that they should be judged,*

*And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints,*

*And those who fear Your name, small and great,*

*And should destroy those who destroy the earth."*

Here is the point at which the Almighty, having taken power or authority over mankind because of the sacrifice on Calvary, begins to exercise His right to reign. You may have thought this would begin after the coming battle of Armageddon, but actually His rule over our desperate planet begins here in heaven at the sound of the seventh trumpet. Notice that the acclamation is not that the world has become His but rather that the kingdoms of this world have become His. This is what we witnessed as the Lamb took possession of the sealed scroll in chapter five. The world itself already belongs to Him.

With this trumpet the seven bowls of God's wrath will be poured out. And, God is ready to judge the dead with a focus upon rewarding His

servants, the prophets and the saints (Hebrew believers), as well as the gentile believers – those who fear Your name, small and great. Finally, if the typology follows that of the prophet Daniel, He is ready to destroy those who destroy His special land – Israel.

*Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail.* We noted earlier that as Satan polluted the garden of Eden, the land of Israel, the city of Jerusalem and finally the temple, there remained only one last place that displayed the fellowship of God with man, one place that recognized the Creator's work to save us and love us, just one 'paradise' left. That is the Ark of the Covenant. Here we see that God has removed it to heaven. Perhaps this is the spiritual original of which the earthly was a copy. Regardless, by displaying it at this point, God is manifesting that He has preserved the symbol of His perfect redeemed relationship with us. Satan cannot spoil it.

The ark was where the High Priest alone could worship during the Old Testament and that only on the day of Atonement. It rested within the Holy of Holies surrounded by a thick curtain. The ark in the days of David, you recall, was thought to be the very presence of God but it was really a hugely important symbol of a future event.

The ark was a box, covered with gold which contained three things – the tablets of the Ten Commandments, the rod of Aaron which budded miraculously and a container of manna. All three of these things clearly point to Jesus Christ who fulfilled perfectly God's law, rose miraculously from the dead to new life, Who also descended from heaven, like manna, and Whose 'body' provided our nourishment during the wilderness wanderings of this earthly life.

On top of the ark were two cherubim facing each other. It was at that specific place that Moses spoke to God. It was called the Mercy Seat. That's where God met with man. It pictured the very same thing in a garden tomb. There, where they laid the body of our crucified Lord, dear Mary Magdalene came to worship and pray and what did she find? Two angels, one at the head and one at the feet of where the Lord had lain – for He had risen! This was the fulfillment of the Mercy Seat – the real deal. In Jesus Christ, God met with man and re-established His gracious loving relationship with us.

Note finally, that in this last verse of our chapter it says that this wonderful symbol of God's mercy and love is **seen** in His temple. That's because, with Christ's sacrifice and resurrection, the way is open. There is no more veil of separation. Those who believe may come freely into fellowship with the Almighty God.

# War in Heaven, War on Earth

## Revelation 12

The seventh trumpet has just sounded and in response the elders representing all the redeemed worship God and proclaim that His reign over the kingdoms of man has begun. The very first thing we see after this is the ark of the covenant in the heavenly temple. This can tell us that the most important aspect of the Lord's reign over man is what is symbolized by the ark – man's gracious redemption in Christ, the empty tomb, the communion of God with man, etc. The King's first act is that which is most pressing upon His mind. Even as He is about to pour His wrath upon an reprobate planet, He is mindful of His covenant with the redeemed.

In this chapter and the following two, we are given both background and insight into the consummation of several tumultuous events raging upon earth and in heaven. The seventh trumpet signals their climax and conclusion. Exactly when they began, we are not told, but this is where they wind up because from this point on, the devil's destruction and delusion are being dealt with – the King has taken His authority over man's kingdoms and has begun to reign.

*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. Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth. To understand who this woman is, we must turn to the book of Genesis, to the second prophetic dream of Joseph when he was still with his family in Canaan. In chapter 37, it is recorded, *Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me."* So he told it to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed: Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?"*

Jacob recognized the symbols of Joseph's dream as representing the family of Israel. Thus, this woman would likewise represent this same family who is often referred to in scripture as Father God's wife. This is not Mary the mother of Jesus; remember, John starts off saying that this is a sign. However, she is certainly a part of the group.

God, through His people, His wife, has brought forth a Child – Jesus, His Son.

*And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. We'll see momentarily that this dragon is Satan. Again, John says this is a sign so what we're looking at is a picture of the nature of this horrible being. I'll suggest*

that as the serpents in the wilderness which bit the Hebrews and killed them were fiery, so is devil. Those serpents were symbolic of sin, and it was only when the victims turned their attention to the bronze serpent on the pole (the image of Christ on the cross) that they would be healed. Satan is the fullness of this plague; he is the epitome of sin. He is red because he is stained with the blood of all mankind to whom he has brought delusion, destruction and death.

In addition, he has seven heads (with seven diadems) and ten horns. There will ultimately be seven devilish empires that reign over the Hebrews – The Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Medo-Persians, the Greeks, the Romans and the antichrist. Recall from our studies in Daniel chapter seven that these ten horns are those ten kings that will turn their kingdoms over to the antichrist and reign with him during the tribulation. This sign shows us that it is the devil who has been allowed by God to abusively reign over them at certain times.

*His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. We know from Job that the stars are pictures of the angelic host. Herein, we see that in his rebellion against God, he drew a third of the angels of heaven into his sinful ways and cast them down. The Greek word here for "threw" is interesting because it means "to throw or let go of a thing without caring where it falls".*

Satan has loyalty to no one. He doesn't care about those he perverts whether it's men or angels. His demons ended up on earth as a base of operations so to speak but, along with the dragon, have had access to the heavens as we'll soon see.

*And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. Perhaps, you remember from the gospel accounts of Christ's birth how that Herod wanted to know the moment He was born so that he could slay Him.*

*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. In this, we see clearly that the male Child is Jesus Christ. Psalm 2 and Revelation 19 both show that He will use this rod of iron.*

*Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days. Flashing forward from the resurrection of Jesus and His ascension to God's throne until the time of the tribulation, here, the redeemed of Israel flee into the wilderness where God will provide for them for three and a half years. This will likely start at the mid point of the tribulation when the antichrist places the abomination of desolation in the temple, declares*

that he is god and begins to radically persecute “the woman”.

We can get some additional insight into this event from the book of Mark. In chapter 13, His disciples asked Jesus about the sign of His second coming and part of His answer was:

*For in those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be.*

*But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers in heaven will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect (chosen ones) from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven. (Mark 13:19,24-27)*

This says that when Jesus returns in glory at the conclusion of the tribulation, He will gather together His faithful ones who are both in heaven (the faithful from throughout the ages, the church who was raptured prior to the tribulation, those who got saved and were martyred during the tribulation) and on earth. But keep in mind that this is prophecy directed at the Hebrews. We must be careful that we don't make the mental 'slip' of letting the disastrous doctrine of substitutionalism slither in. When we keep our focus primarily upon

Israel, prophecy makes much more sense.

With that in mind, consider that phrase “farthest part of earth”. What does the “earth” (ge in the Greek) usually refer to in prophecy? It is the same symbolism as in the book of Daniel – it's Israel. At the end of the tribulation, the only believers that will be left on earth will be the ‘remnant’ of Israel.

Now we just learned that these Hebrews will be taken to their wilderness shelter on eagle's wings. Letting the Bible ‘interpret itself’, we are reminded of God's words to the children of Israel under Moses' leadership:

*You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. (Ex 19:4)*

Where were they brought? Into the wilderness of Sinai where God miraculously cared for them. Lo and behold, the farthest part of the nation of Israel today includes much of this same wilderness. I'll suggest that it will be somewhere in this area that God will again shelter and miraculously care for His people through the worst times of the tribulation.

*And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. 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.*

Now it would appear from scripture that Satan was fallen from his lofty position in heaven long before this for he was clearly filled with sin and engaged with destroying man even back at the beginning in the garden of Eden. Job records that Satan came before God and when asked about his activities, said that he had been walking to and fro on the earth. So although this planet became his perdition home, he has still had “a place” in or access to heaven and has used it to continue his crimes against God and all creation. But, now that ends. He and his demonic horde are defeated by the archangel Michael and his army of angels once and for all, and as a result, they are cast to the earth, the implication being that they are confined here as well. Satan is no match for Michael let alone Jesus. Jude records that they also struggled over the body of Moses.

There are actually four times in the Bible that Satan falls:

- From glorified to profane (Eze 28:14-16)
- From having access to heaven (Job 1:12, Zech 3:1) to restriction to the earth (Rev 12)
- From the earth to bondage in the bottomless pit for 1,000 years (Rev 20)
- From the pit to the lake of fire (Rev 20)

This battle occurs at the mid-point of the seven-year period, as described by Daniel. *At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as*

*never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered. (Dan 12:1)*

*Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. The word for devil is derived from the verb which means defaming or slandering. Finally, the incessant accusations are silenced. You'd think that Satan would have given up after realizing his demise at Calvary. But, he's not rational, he is completely insane. Consumed by the fire of sin, he just doesn't get it, and consequently, he persists defaming you and I. Day and night he has continued; on and on and on.*

And we give him plenty of ammunition, don't we? But the issue was forever settled at the cross. Satan's rambling accusations ever since are only an annoyance to the Lord and the heavenly host. But unfortunately, that's not always the case on planet earth. We and the world too often take heed to his slandering while God calls on believers to overcome.

*And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. There are three components to our victory over Satan and his lies –*

- through faith in the finished work of the cross, that is, the blood of the Lamb
- through the honest recollection of God's faithfulness in their lives, that is, their testimonies
- through the sincere desire for heaven, for the promised new life in eternity, so much so that death is only the doorway to the Lord's embrace.

*Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Heaven is elated, but...*

*Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.* This is the third and final woe – not only will the following period be one of God's wrath but also the devil's. People left on earth who are not among the protected remnant of Israel are going to get it from both sides so to speak. There'll be no where to turn. And Satan knows the Word; he realizes that his time is short. 'If I'm going down, I'm gonna take you all with me,' is his attitude.

*Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child. But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.* Again, this is midway into the tribulation.

It is why Jesus said to the Jews, *Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.* (Mat 24:15-21)

Whenever we read of eagle's wings, it speaks of God's miraculous provision for His people. In Egypt, He split the Red Sea and carried them "on eagle's wings" throughout their wilderness wanderings. (Deut 32:11) No one knows for sure where this last days hiding place is and that's a good thing. When the time comes, they will know where to go. It is a place that God has reserved and prepared.

At the end of the tribulation, when Christ returns with his saints, it looks like He will provide a way for the last of the remnant who have apparently stuck it out in Jerusalem to get to the safety of this place. Zechariah wrote: *And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, Which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be*

*split in two, From east to west, Making a very large valley; Half of the mountain shall move toward the north And half of it toward the south. Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, For the mountain valley shall reach to Azal.* (Zech 14:4,5)

Azal is a Hebrew name which means "a place He has reserved". I'm inclined to believe that it will be the same place the "woman" has been taken to and nourished for the three and a half years.

*So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth.* Unlike the torrents of living water that spring forth from the innermost part of the sincere believer, this unholy quaff will come out of the mouth of the serpent. As such it surely pictures a flood of lies and deceit. People will believe the most outrageous lies.

We are also reminded of the days of Noah and the literal flood that swept the world. Like Noah and his family, the remnant of Hebrew believers will find safety in a place prepared for them.

As with other passages we've studied in Revelation and in Daniel, "the earth" likely pictures the land of Israel. It could be that the believers who remain in

Jerusalem, perhaps as a resistance to the rule of the AC, counter the lies of the dragon with their own truth. It could be that the rest of the Hebrews in Israel, though unsaved, remain loyal to their brethren and effectively counteract the lies spewing forth from the one they thought was their messiah.

*And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.* Just as Pharaoh of old was frustrated in his attempts to crush the Hebrew nation, so a last days pharaoh (under the dragon's control) will be "provoked to rage". While the same types of judgments are raining down on him and planet earth as did upon ancient Egypt, he will, over the next three and a half years or so, seek to destroy any and all who believe both Hebrew and gentile.

This protégé of the dragon is the "son of perdition" also known as "the beast" and we'll learn more about him in the next chapter.

***Personally, I have no expectation that politics or science or religious fervor will solve the mess we've created in this world. I do anticipate the imminent return of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who will make all things right. That is the blessed hope.***

# He's Just a Man

## Revelation 13

There are two entities in this chapter which God wants us to know about. They are both termed beasts as descriptors of their nature. From the time he knew of our creation, Satan has desired to destroy mankind for we were made in the image of God. We are triune beings composed of spirit, soul and flesh. As such we are representative of the triune 'nature' of the Lord – Father, Son and Spirit.

The devil's own unholy trinity is displayed in this chapter as the dragon, the beast and the false prophet. We can also look at them as the counterpoints (though NOT equals) to Jesus and John the Baptist. In either case, we're dealing with evil counterfeits and herein, God will expose them, for their end is an eternal lake of fire.

*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.* God told Abraham that his descendants would be as numerous as the sands of the sea. John's position upon these sands may be a reminder that the focus of this terrible time is indeed upon those people. The sea, as we covered in other chapters, is representative

of the gentile nations as it is in Daniel's prophecies as well.

Now previously, we witnessed a dragon having a similar description, but this creature, though similar, is distinct. This "beast" arises out of the sea or the gentile nations. Having seven heads and ten horns reminds us of the dragon and it should for we will learn soon that it is the dragon (Satan) who gives this beast his power. As with the dragon, the seven heads point to the seven empires that have ruled or will rule over the Hebrews – the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Medo-Persians, the Romans and the antichrist. Each of these kingdoms were antichrist (that is, in place of Christ) in the sense that the true ruler of the Hebrews is Jesus Christ. Thus, the seven heads tell us that the antichrist will carry on the tradition of devilish oppression over God's people regardless of his initial promises.

The beast also has ten horns and I'm convinced they are upon one head – the last one. They are the ten kings (note the crowns) who will give their power to the beast and will rule with him during the tribulation period. (See also Dan 7:20-24)

There is also a blasphemous name upon the heads. We don't know for certain what name this is, but we do know that it is repugnant to God. In the Bible, names are frequently symbolic of the nature of the person or thing. From this, it is clear that all the antichrist kingdoms that have ruled over His people

throughout history have been blasphemous to God.

*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.* In our lesson from Daniel seven, we learned that the imagery of the leopard, the bear and the lion probably refers to entities contemporary with the beast, specifically, the United Nations, Russia and the 'de-winged' US. Therein, I suggested that the removal of the wings from the lion could refer to the rapture of the church.

If that is the case, the quartet seen in Dan 7 will likely, after the rapture, coalesce into some kind of conglomerate power with the antichrist in charge. As we consider this beast, we know it is a man but it is also, in a sense, his kingdom. It is like a leopard (the UN) indicating a global or at the very least a multinational scope of power. His feet or means of transportation is like a bear (Russia) and this could refer to Russia's enormous supply of oil and gas which Europe is increasingly dependent upon. His mouth is like that of a lion. This could mean that the beast is loud and confident and/or that he, as the 'mouthpiece' of his empire, is from the country which the de-winged lion represents.

Satan gives him his power, his throne and great authority. Now, it is only by God's permission that Satan has ever done this

throughout history with any kingdom, but when he (the devil) tried to tempt Jesus in the wilderness, one of his claims was that all the kingdoms of man had been given to him and he in turn gave them to whomever he wished. Jesus did not contest this. Power is the word "dunamis" and means the power resident within someone; throne is the word "tronos" and means his position, in this case at the 'top of the food chain' so to speak; great authority is "megas exousia" and means his great ruling authority. It implies that, like Nebuchadnezzar, he may have absolute dictatorial power, ultimately not being subject to any law but his own.

*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.* That little "as if" could mean that it is all an act. In any event, recall that the heads represent the myriad kingdoms that have each risen up out of the sea, (that is, the gentiles) over the sand of the sea, Abraham's descendants. This beast embodies all seven; that is, he is of the same spirit. Here, one of the heads has previously suffered a mortal wound. I'll suggest that this could picture that the antichrist and/or his empire itself, the last head, will suffer a mortal blow somehow and yet arise 'from the ashes'. Remember that according to Daniel's vision of Dan 2, the Hebrew people will be, at this time, jointly ruling over Jerusalem with



the revived Roman empire (the clay mixed with the iron). As such, the antichrist at the top of this revived entity will have reason to defend Israel or at least to appear to do so.

This has intrigued me for the first word for wounded means “slaughtered, butchered, put to death by violence”. It is not a wounding that was accidental or just happened to become life threatening. It is a slaughtering, violent, intentional thing. With this in mind, I’ve often wondered if the antichrist might somehow maneuver to take credit for the miraculous deliverance that God will provide Israel when Russia and her Muslim allies attack as described in Ezekiel 38 and 39. Let me explain.

In that passage, God makes it clear that as a result of His divine intervention against Gog, Israel will once again turn to Him. However, it may be inappropriate to interpret “Israel” too broadly. You see, there are and will be two Israels –

- the redeemed and the stiff-necked
- the ‘sand of the sea’ and the ‘earth’
- the children of faithful Abraham and the unbelieving children of the flesh.

Paul wrote, “...they are not all Israel who are of Israel; Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children...They which are the children of the flesh are not the children of God.” (Rom 9:6-8) and, “Know therefore that they which

are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.” (Gal 3:7)

It may be that the AC will deceive the world and especially the carnal Hebrews into thinking that he, upon interjecting himself and/or his forces on behalf of Israel, has suffered a deadly blow (to himself or to the empire) but will ‘miraculously’ arise and assume the credit for saving them. After this war, with Russia and her Magog allies humbled, she could certainly be forced to provide his empire with all the oil and gas needed.

In addition, “all the world” can be misleading unless you realize that the word for “world” is the same word for earth and as such is consistently representative of the land of Israel. Recall that John, as a believer, is standing with the “sand of the sea”. What this could be saying is that all those of Israel who are not saved will marvel; they’ll be in awe of the one who has apparently rescued them from annihilation. Finally, they will ardently follow him as their messiah. At the same time, Eze 38 and 39 make it clear that in the eyes of “many nations” and of the spirit-filled Israelis (the true Israel), God will rightly be glorified.

Now although it’s possible, I don’t think this “deadly wound” refers to an isolated assassination attempt because of what we read in the next verse:

*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?”* As

we suggested above, the result of this supposed resurrection is that the reprobate Jews will begin to worship Satan and his protégé, the antichrist, just as Jesus predicted when He said, “*I am come in my Father’s name, and you receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him you will receive.*” (John 5:43) Note, however, that their praise of the beast is directly attached to his apparent military prowess. They clearly consider him a military genius. I don’t see how a survived assassination attempt would provide this kind of regard. If, however, the carnal, delusional Jews (those who were not sealed and saved in chapter seven) mistakenly think he is responsible for wiping out the overwhelming armies of Gog...that, I can see causing this awe and the lauding of his military capabilities.

Whether it happens in this way or not, Satan and his antichrist will indeed be adored by many, especially the deceived of Israel.

Recall that Jesus is called the “last Adam” in reference to the first Adam in the garden of Eden. That relationship is based upon them being the only two men to live on this planet in a sinless state. As the counterpoint to Christ, the antichrist, has a first and last relationship as well. Nimrod was the first conqueror and gatherer of men against God. He helped found the anti-gospel, false religion of Babylon. (More on that in chapter 17.) The antichrist is thus the last Nimrod for he does the same thing.

*And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months.* I’m inclined to believe this is speaking of the first three and a half years of the tribulation, the period when heaven is silent (see chapter eight). During that time, the AC uses his masterful oratory skills to wow everyone and to make increasingly blasphemous claims. This verbal tirade against all things right and good will come to a crescendo when the AC ‘crosses the final line’ and proclaims to the world that he is divine.

*Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.* This will be the midpoint of the tribulation when he stands in the temple of God and claims he is god. (See 2 Thes 2:4) He will put in place the abomination of desolation which we’ll consider more in a moment. This brings us up to the days of the trumpet warnings, the seventh of which is the beginning of the outpouring of the vials of God’s wrath.

*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. 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.* These

saints are specifically Hebrew believers but probably include gentile Christians who get saved during this time as well. We also have confirmed here that Satan, who we know has given the AC great authority, will be holding back nothing – in the spiritual realm, he'll give the beast authority over the whole world. At the same time, in the political realm, this probably shows that the nations of the world, perhaps through the UN, will also give authority to him to rule over them. Everyone on the planet apart from the persecuted saints will just adore this guy.

*If anyone has an ear, let him hear. 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.* This is the great admonition to everyone concerning this supposed savior. Though he will for a time seem to be exceedingly successful in capturing and killing the remnant of believers of the outlawed faith in Jesus Christ, he's going to go down. His day is coming, and in fact, this is what will give hope and thus patience to the saints.

*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 is our second beast. He arises out of the earth – that is, unbelieving, carnal Israel. He has two horns like a lamb which to some seems to indicate that he will be an

imitation Christian. Some have suggested that this could be an apostate pope. Since the lamb is used extensively in Hebrew worship, it could also mean that he's a religious Hebrew with a wicked heart. He will definitely be the 'religious' promoter of the first beast.

*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.* Unlike the Holy Spirit of God, this counterfeit counterpart is not omnipresent. He has a limitation to his authority – it is only in the presence of the AC who is specifically empowered (probably possessed) by Satan that he can use this authority. His power or authority is not his own but derived from the first beast, the antichrist.

*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.* His parlor tricks will deceive those on earth, but he can only do them in proximity to the beast. Remember, Satan is not God's counterpart. He's only an angel and a fallen one at that. There are limits to his power.

This false prophet spreads the word that everyone should make an idol in the image of the beast to

celebrate that he was wounded by the sword and yet lived. Again, this whole resurrection thing may be contrived. Note, though that the word for sword here is what we would call a scimitar. This could again, refer to the AC supposedly defending the Jews against Gog and the Muslims hordes for a scimitar is and has been a common weapon and emblem for the Islamic people.

It does seem, however, that the Islamic practice of beheading is utilized by the AC during his rule so it may be that after the war an 'olive branch' of reconciliation to the Muslims will lead to their involvement in his persecution of the believers.

*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 Greek word for breath is pneuma which indeed usually means breath (and sometimes spirit) but would be better translated here as "animation". In Rev 9:20 it says that the deluded people of the world will continue to worship demons and idols that cannot see or hear or walk – it specifically omits speak because this idol can do that. But this will be no voluntary religion. Like Nebuchadnezzar with his own golden idol, everyone will have to bow or be killed. Even now, university of Arizona scientists have achieved the technical breakthroughs necessary to create

3D holograms so the technology will certainly be available to create this talking animated idol.

*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.* Much speculation has surrounded the recent creation of the embedded RFID-style chip. The Greek word used here for "mark" means something imprinted or engraved. Like firmware, these chips are indeed imprinted with specific information. They even contain small transmitters which allow for tracking of the chip. Here is a description taken from Hoovers of one of the companies involved with this technology:

*Digital Angel (formerly known as Applied Digital Solutions) can get under your skin. The company is best known for its VeriChip technology -- computer chips that can be embedded under the skin and read by a remote sensor to check vital signs and diagnose medical problems. Its VeriChip subsidiary markets the technology for medical use in humans. VeriChip won FDA approval for its product in 2004. It acquired wireless identification product provider eXI Wireless in 2005. Digital Angel gets about two-thirds of its sales in North America.*

Of course, another possibility is a tattooed name or number. Whatever the case, everyone,

without exception is going to be forced to take this mark or find themselves excommunicated from the economic system. There are three imprinting possibilities mentioned – a mark, the beast's name and the number of the beast's name. Perhaps these will represent echelons of privilege in the beast's kingdom.

*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.* Let's try to set aside all the nonsense we've all heard associated with this verse and take a sober look at it. First of all, the information given is clearly not to be dismissed for the Spirit expressly says, "Here is wisdom." The Bible says that the beginning of wisdom is the fear of God, so if you're a believer, you should take special note – this is important.

"Understanding" is defined as "the capacity for spiritual truth, the higher powers of the soul, the faculty of perceiving divine things, of recognizing goodness and of hating evil." Does that sound like the spiritual lame brains who will be following the AC?? Of course not. This admonition is given to born again believers in Christ.

In ancient times, people would count with small pebbles. The word "calculate" or 'count' is derived from the word for these stones. The Greek Lexicon defines it as:

- 1) to count with pebbles, to compute, calculate, reckon
- 2) to give one's vote by casting a

pebble into the urn  
3) to decide by voting

Herein, the Lord tells His people to count or calculate the number of the beast specifically because it is the number of a man. Now, the antichrist will be promoted as god, but his number is that of a man. Why would the Lord tell his people to count or calculate this number and then just give it? Clearly, there is something to be gained in the process.

Many have looked to the system of Hebrew numerics wherein each letter and annotation of the words has a number associated with it. The inherent difficulty with this is that there are many interpretations of these values, many approaches, and as a consequence, many claims that some significant so and so is the AC. The problem is compounded when the name is not of Hebrew origin. That seems to me like a recipe for personal interpretation and error and indeed, it has been.

1 Kings 10:14 says that Solomon received yearly six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold. Perhaps this suggests that the Antichrist, like Solomon, is a good man who becomes corrupted. Keep in mind, though, that we are told to calculate the number. In other words, we're not told to simply look for 666 but rather to expect that we'll have to somehow count or calculate it.

It is the number of a man. If, at the point of his open blasphemies, the AC's number is already commonly known as 666, then giving us the number doesn't make as much sense – there's no reason

to calculate it. If, however, calculating this 'number of his name' before it is known openly, using 666 as the answer, leads to identifying a specific person, then it does make sense. If that be the case, the believers would then be assured that although this man comes to exhibit seemingly supernatural powers or even claims to be from another world, he's just a man. He is not divine. Like King Cyrus of old (see Isa 44:28, 45:1) God has foretold his appearance.

You see, his supposed divinity will be the major delusion of the world during this time. Thus armed with the truth, God's people will be able to stand strong in face of the flood of lies that will come.

Because the definition of this calculating involves voting, I think it is quite possible that the AC will arise to power by way of election. However, this number does not refer to the number of votes or electoral supporters or such – remember, it is "the number [that when calculated is the same as or equal to] of his name". It may be that a voting process which uses a number, that when calculated is equal to his name, will emerge.

2 Thes 2 makes it clear that it won't be until after the Holy Spirit (and presumably, the church) is taken out of the way that the AC will be revealed. I have my suspicions as to who this man may be, but the people who will really need to calculate his number are those who, in those last terrible days during the tribulation, will be

faced with amazing, deceptive displays of Satanic power.

The irony in this is poignant. Consider, as we wrap up this lesson, the following passage from the Gospel of John:

*Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?"*

*The Jews answered Him, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God." (John 10:31-33)* The Jews of old were blind to the truly divine power of Jesus and incensed that the people considered Him as divine. In contrast, the modern carnal Jews will be impressed with the Satanic power of the AC and incensed when people fail to think of him as divine. As Jesus said, men love darkness rather than light. Be strong in your faith, brethren. Don't be taken in. That AC -- he's just a man!