

Central Study Hour – Sabbath School Lesson Notes

“Preparation for the End Time”: Lesson 10, “America and Babylon”

SABBATH AFTERNOON and SUNDAY: “Deadly Wound Healed”

Introduction: The enemy of God in the end-times is a spiritual force called “**Babylon the Great**,” symbolized by a harlot in **Rev. 17**. The issue is deception and lies constituting false worship that will be forced upon every inhabitant of planet earth. Harlot Babylon is described in **Rev. 17:6** as drunken with the blood of martyrs. Today we are going to identify some of the component parts of Babylon. This is necessary so that we can also help others to escape – to “**come out**” of Babylon. **Read memory text: Dan. 12:1**. We want to be among those people that are delivered. And, the gospel commission means we want to help as many people as possible to be delivered also, *right?*

Identity of the Sea Beast

The land beast in Rev. 13 is thought to be the USA. But to actually understand the evidence for that, we must establish the identity of the first beast, the one from the sea. **Read Rev. 13:1-2, 5-6a, 7**. To sum it up, the beast from the sea blasphemes God and persecutes the saints for 42 months. We know from history that these verses refer to the persecution of the medieval church of the Dark Ages (more on that later). Rev. 13:3-4 tells us how that persecution was stopped, but also what we can expect is yet to come. **Read Rev. 13:3-4, 8**. *What stopped the persecution?* A deadly wound to the beast. But, a warning is given that the wound would be healed, and that this beast would be worshipped as if it were God. **Verses 3+8** both say that all the world will worship the beast....except who??? those written in the Lamb’s book of life.

So, who is this sea beast? Thousands of Protestant Reformers including Martin Luther and John Calvin, and later, John Wesley identified this beast from the sea as the papacy, the medieval church, the papal system. This is not to disparage the people who may be sincere and godly, but to designate the papal system. Seventh-day Adventists agree with the Protestants of history. *Why? What are the clues, the evidence, that suggests that this beast from the sea is the Roman Catholic system?* There are several clues in **Rev. 13:2**.

Read Rev. 13:2. *Where have we seen a leopard, bear, and lion before in the Bible? Daniel 7, right?*

Read or hit highlights of Dan. 7:3-6. The lion represents the ancient kingdom of Babylon. The bear is Medo-Persia which conquered Babylon. The leopard is Greece which conquered Persia. *What empire of ancient history conquered Greece? Rome, right? Read Dan. 7:7-8*. *What beast followed the leopard?* The terrible beast with iron teeth. *What empire followed Greece? Rome. What symbol is used in vs. 8 to show what power comes next after the Roman Empire? A little horn. What power filled the empty seat of Rome when the empire collapsed? The papacy; the succession of popes.*

How do we know that the little horn power does not represent Islam or Communism? In **Dan. 7:8**, the 4th beast, dreadful and terrible with iron teeth had 10 horns on its head, and the little horn grew up on the head among the 10 horns. THEREFORE: since the beast here is the Roman Empire, the little horn must represent a power that rose up out of Rome. Islam rose up in the Arabian Peninsula, a long way from Rome. Communism rose up in Moscow, Russia, even farther away. The papacy is an exact fit as it rose up right in Rome; the right place!

Are there other clues or identifying marks that fit the papacy? Yes, the end of the Roman Empire and the rise of the papacy were at the right time! This terrible beast of Daniel 7 had 10 horns which represent the 10 European tribal kingdoms that replaced the Roman Empire by the year AD 476. The little horn came up among them after these European tribal kingdoms were already there. The papal system matured after 476 and became firmly established in AD 538 by Justinian's decree enforcing Roman Catholic Canon Law under the supremacy of the Pope of Rome. The timing is a perfect fit for the papacy, but not for Islam and Communism.

Another fact from **Dan. 7:8** fits the right circumstances of the history of the papacy's rise to power. Three of those 10 horns were tribes that opposed the supremacy of the pope and some of beliefs of Catholic Christianity. They were the Heruli, Vandals, and the Ostrogoths who would have to be removed and/or defeated to allow the papacy to rise to preeminence. All three tribes were defeated by pro-papal armies, the last one by Justinian's forces under Belisarius in AD 538 from which time the pope had no serious opposition to his rule. **Read Dan. 7:24.** The history fits; the timing, the circumstances, and the place.

Read Dan. 7:21. The little horn represents a power that persecuted the faithful saints of God. This corresponds to the persecution history of the papacy. Millions went to the rack, were burnt at the stake, died in dungeons, or some other form of torture and execution during the Dark Ages.

Review **Dan. 7:8.** Notice the little horn has the "eyes of a man." And in **vs 21** the little horn is called "he" suggesting that a man is at the head. This is not unusual, but its significance will be noted again when we compare this little horn in Dan. 7 to the sea beast in Rev. 13 and see that they are one and the same power.

Dan. 7:25 has more identifying marks that the papacy is the little horn. **Read Dan. 7:25.** Speaking "great words against the Most High" is a serious charge. The Rev. 13 sea beast also speaks "great things and...blasphemy against God" (**vs. 5-6**). In the gospels, blasphemy is described as claiming to be God on earth (**John 10:33**), and also claiming the power of God for forgiving sin (**Luke 5:21**). (For more explanation, go to amazingfacts.org and look for the set of Bible folders finding the one entitled "The Antichrist is Alive Today.")

Dan. 7:25 also noted that the little horn would try "to change times and laws." It's a fact of history that the papacy removed the 2nd commandment forbidding the worship and bowing to images and divided the 10th in order to retain ten commandments. They also claim they changed the seventh day Sabbath of the 4th commandment to the first day, Sunday as God's holy day. (For more detail, see "The Antichrist is Alive Today.")

Dan. 7:25 says the little horn would persecute/rule for "a time, and times and the dividing of time." This is a code that comes out to 1260 (see "The Antichrist is Alive Today" from Amazing Facts). *What is the significance of 1260?* Let's go to Rev. 13 and see if we can find 1260. On the way, let's notice some parallels to Dan. 7.

Note Rev. 13:7. "War with the saints" fits the persecution of Dan. 7.

Vs. 6. "Blasphemy against God" parallels speaking "great words against the Most High" of Dan. 7.

Vs. 4. "Worshipped the beast" corresponds to the little horn trying to be above God by changing His law.

Vs. 18. "Count the number of the beast...it is the number of a man" fits the "eyes of a man" in Dan. 7.

Vs. 5. "Power was given him to continue forty and two months." Using the ancient Jewish month means that we use a 30 day month. So, 42 months X 30 days/month = 1260 days which matches the 1260 in Dan. 7.

But, what is the significance of the 1260 days? If it is 1260 literal days, that's only 3 and a half years which doesn't fit the papacy at all since the papacy ruled for several centuries. HOWEVER, in different places the

Bible (in prophetic language) uses a day as a symbol of a year. **Ezekiel 4:6** says, “**I have appointed thee each day for a year**” (see also **Numbers 14:34**). If we take the 1260 as years and start this time period with AD 538 when the papacy came to supreme power (3 opposing tribes defeated) under Justinian’s decree with Roman Catholic Canon Law, those 1260 years extend to 1798. *What is so important about the year 1798?* The pope was taken prisoner by one of Napoleon’s generals. Thus, In 1798 the papacy was severely wounded as it lost its status as a nation. The unique thing about the papacy is that it had been a church and a nation or kingdom. It had been a political power as well as a religious power. In 1798 it lost its political and state status. It remained a church but without national power. That was the end of the 42 month rule of the beast of Rev. 13.

The wounding of the papacy to end its political rule was prophesied. **Read Rev. 13:3**. So, the deadly wound here is the 9th clue, the 9th identifying mark that the little horn of Dan. 7 and the sea beast of Rev. 13 both fit the papacy in its actions in history.

The Deadly Wound to be Healed

Rev 13:3 warned that the deadly wound would be healed leading all the world to follow after the beast. Many people have scoffed at this. About 70 years ago, Joseph Stalin mocked the pope asking how many divisions he had in his army. *So, how could the Roman Papacy come to have the power described in Rev. 13:3-4?* It must have a helper! *Who would be that helper?*

MONDAY: “The United States in Prophecy”

Read Rev. 13:11-12. *What marks help us to identify who this power is? Why do we believe this beast with two lamb-like horns is the United States of America? 1.)* It’s all about the timing. This beast arose at the time the sea beast received its deadly wound in 1798. *Wasn’t the USA just rising up at that time?*

Share highlights from the 3rd paragraph of the narrative (“About this point in history...”). **2.)** it came from the earth and not the sea meaning this nation rose up where there were not already kingdoms or empires. This fits the history of the settling, colonization, and founding of the United States of America.

Note that a lamb is a symbol of Jesus in the Bible. **3.)** So, the beast with lamb-like horns would have a strong connection with Christianity. This fits the roots of the establishment of America and its religious freedom.

4.) The land beast is an economic power as revealed by **Rev. 13:15** where it exercises power over who can buy or sell. The USA is an economic superpower that regularly exercises economic pressure or even sanctions to force other nations to comply with its principles.

5.) Enforcement of the mark of the beast on the whole world (**Rev. 13:16**) could only be achieved by a nation that has great political and cultural influence on the world; a superpower as is the USA.

Read the 4th paragraph from *The Great Controversy* p. 440.

Share from the last paragraph of the narrative. We are not there yet!

Read Rev. 13:12. It will enforce worship of the papacy in some way!

TUESDAY: "An Issue of Worship"

Share from the 2nd paragraph of the narrative drawing the parallel of Rev. 13 with Dan. 3 and the fiery furnace.

Read Rev. 14:9-10a, 16:2 (and more if time). *What do these verses tell us about how crucial the issue of worship will become? It's a life and death matter*

Ask the question at the bottom of the page. Answer: Test everything by Scripture

WEDNESDAY: "Babylon the Great"

The Old Testament prophesies about ancient, literal Babylon are written in a way to symbolize, to become types of the end-time spiritual Babylon.

Read Jer. 51:6-7. *Do these two verses sound like Revelation?* (if desired, compare **Jer. 51:6** to **Rev. 18:4** and **Jer. 51:7** to **Rev. 17:4** and **14:8**).

Read Rev. 17:5-6. *Why is a harlot a good symbol of evil, end-time Babylon? A pure woman represents God's people, God's church (See **Jer. 6:2** and **Rev. 12:1-6**), whereas, a harlot women represents an unfaithful church. This one even kills God's faithful people.*

Read Rev. 17:3. A beast represents the power of a physical kingdom. So, "the woman who rides on the scarlet beast [is] symbolizing an illicit union of religious and political powers," the union of church and state.

Briefly note the contrasting parts of the pure woman of Rev. 12 with the harlot of Rev. 17 in the quarterly.

Read or share highlights of the final paragraph.

THURSDAY: "Come Out of Her, My People"

Share highlights from the long 1st paragraph. Note that all that has changed. The USA has become the superpower that prophecy foretold it would.

Read the 2nd paragraph in the middle of the page ("No question....").

Read Rev. 18:1-4. *How many nations are deceived and join Babylon? All nations. "These verses paint a bleak political, moral, and spiritual picture of the world. They show the malevolent influence of false religious teaching in the world."*

*What do **verses 1-4** teach us about our mission to the world? What is hopeful about these verses in Rev. 18?*

Share the hope in the last 2/3 of the bottom paragraph ("At the same time....").

Ask the two questions in the box at the bottom of the page. Answer: We should never judge people or look down on them. We should share the truth with them as kindly as possible to encourage them to "come out" of Babylon.

Conclusion: From Friday's page.

Read the quotation from *The Great Controversy*, p. 582. Comment as desired if time.