

IS THE UNITED STATES THE SECOND BEAST?

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Recently, I was given a copy of a small pamphlet entitled *The United States In Bible Prophecy, The Day Of The Dragon Is At The Door* by Steve Wohlberg. I had never seen the pamphlet before nor had I heard of Mr. Wohlberg, so anything I say in this paper is not a personal attack on him, but is a response in general to a belief expressed in his writing and held by so many in the world today.

Mr. Wohlberg concludes in his writing that the United States is the Second Beast of Revelation 13 and the First Beast of that chapter is the Roman Catholic Church. The pamphlet gives his discussion drawing that conclusion. I believe the work was done sincerely and with no intention of leading anyone astray. He writes so we can “*get ready for the ‘great day of the Lord’*” (page 29).

After reading the pamphlet and thinking about what so many others have taught about this subject and what they refer to as “the end times”, I could not help but think of the little boy who believed there was a monster at the end of his bed because he had been told there was one there. Everywhere he looked he saw a monster although the facts would prove that no monster existed. Those who see signs in everything around us and try to make the Bible point to something happening in our time today are much like the little boy – they see “end times” in everything around them because they have been taught that everything points to that although the facts presented in God’s word prove that they are wrong in their thinking. Like the little boy, they do not check the facts but continue to believe what everyone around them is telling them.

Much of the concept of the “end times” and the “signs” supposedly seen in the Bible are based on assumptions stated as fact and offered with no proof for the interpretation. For example, Mr. Wohlberg on page 10 of his pamphlet offers the statement that the “two horns like a lamb” in Revelation 13:11 must refer to the special teaching of the true lamb, Jesus, and this teaching must be two-fold in nature. Then he goes on to show that it is the teaching of the separation of church and state to which this is referring. The only “reason” for this assumption is “*real lambs do not have horns*”. There are some problems with this assumption and “reason”.

1. Lambs do have horns. In some species of lambs, both the male and female have horns; in some species, only the males have horns; and in some species, neither have horns.
2. The statement made in Revelation 13:11 is “like” a lamb, drawing a comparison, not an actuality. The figure presented in this passage is of a hideous beast, and from this verse one cannot conclude anything about the teaching, if there is any teaching, of this beast.

One thing overlooked by most concerning the Second Beast of Revelation 13 is that he gets his power from the First Beast (vs. 12) and this Second Beast causes others to worship the image of the First Beast (vs. 15). If the First Beast is the Roman Catholic Church, then the teaching would have to be that the United States gets its power from the Roman Catholic Church and causes its people and others to worship the Roman Catholic Church. The Pilgrims who came to this country came for religious freedom and to get away from being controlled by a state religion. It seems to me the facts of history show that our country does not get its power from the Roman Catholic Church and certainly does not cause others to worship the Roman Catholic Church.

Contextually, Revelation 13, which was written to the seven churches of Asia in the First Century (Revelation 1:11), is showing the early church the one who makes war with them (Revelation 13:7) and the one who helps the First Beast (Revelation 13:12ff). The First Beast gets his power from the Dragon (The Devil, Revelation 12:9), and the Second Beast gets his power from the First Beast (Revelation 13:12). The one making war with the saints during the First Century was the Roman government and the one enforcing the worship of the image of the Roman government (emperor worship) was the branch of the Roman army known as the Concilia. There is no mystery here as they would have well understood what was said, and we can if we look at the book through the eyes of the First Century and not through the eyes of much false teaching about “the end times”.

Mr. Wohlberg on page 9 of his pamphlet offers the conclusion that “*“waters” in prophecy represents myriads of people*”. He draws this based on Revelation 17:15 which states that the waters John saw were peoples, nations, etc. The only thing that can be drawn conclusively from this statement is that in Revelation 17, “waters” represented myriads of

people! We cannot conclude that every time water is used in prophecy it always represents a whole lot of people.

From this erroneous conclusion, Mr. Wohlberg on page 10 states that because Revelation 13:11 says the Second Beast would come up out of the Earth, this *“must apply to a sparsely populated, wilderness region”*. Yet, he offers no proof of this conclusion. He states, many believe, and a whole system of belief is founded on statements that are erroneous and without proof. To be honest, the United States is not the Second Beast of Revelation 13, nor is it any beast or nation mentioned in the Bible.

More could be said of this pamphlet and the belief in general, but suffice it to say that the whole doctrine of “end times” (Armageddon, the Rapture, etc.) is based on assumptions made by those who already believed the doctrine and then “made” the Bible “prove” their case. Certainly, this is putting the cart before the horse.

To be fair with God’s word and with your soul’s salvation, we want to encourage you to study the Bible with an open mind (Acts 17:11) and let the Bible speak! God’s word gives us all the information we need to make our lives right with God and to one day dwell eternally with God. However, we will be eternally lost if we continue to believe false doctrine and walk in those errors (2 Thessalonian 2:11,12).

Paper compiled by Charles Coats