

Five Words Destroying Freedom

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Tonight we begin our study with a text that sounds as if it were taken out of a modern mystery story. It has all the earmarks of suspense. Listen carefully.

“And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.” Revelation 13:3.

In the past meetings we have spent our time studying events that have already taken place in history and been prophesied of in the Bible. As we have covered each of these amazing predictions and have seen how each has come to pass as God foretold, our confidence in God’s Word has increased.

Tonight we come to a new phase. We have arrived at a place in the study of this prophecy in which we shall find that the beast is actually affecting the very life of each one in this meeting tonight. In other words, we will be coming down to the events of our own day.

In our previous lectures you will recall that we discovered that this beast was made up of a portion from each of the preceding world powers that have continued through the centuries. It has the head from the lion, representing the pagan sun worship of old Babylon. It has the feet from the bear, continuing the pagan philosophies of Medo-Persia. Likewise it has the body of the leopard, with its pagan teachings of the Greeks. Finally, it has ten horns, representing the doctrines of pagan Rome as it divided into ten kingdoms. Here indeed is a cartoon depicting the pagan religions that infiltrated each succeeding world power through the centuries of time.

Most important of all, we found this beast to be dominated by a little horn, for the little horn and the beast of Revelation 13 are one and the same in their purpose and characteristics. This power we discovered to be that of the Roman Catholic system, which is now widely acclaimed throughout the world.

May I refresh your memories tonight with the serious indictments that the Word of God gives in pinpointing the power?

1. It was to arise among ten divisions of the Roman Empire (Daniel 7:8).
2. It would destroy three of the ten kingdoms (Daniel 7:8).
3. It would speak great words against the Most High (Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:6).
4. It would wear out the saints of the Most High (Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:7).
5. It would be guilty of blasphemy (Revelation 13:6; Daniel 7:25).
6. It would attempt to change the divine law (Daniel 7:25).
7. It would exercise its power over all kingdoms and tongues and nations (Revelation 13:7).

Now in addition to these seven most important points there are four more that God has clearly pointed out, so there would be no mistake or reason for doubt as to just who this power represents. First permit me to list them; then we will study each in detail.

8. The dragon would give his power, his seat, and his great authority to this beast (Revelation 13:2).
9. It was to continue in world domination for a period of 1260 years (Revelation 13:5; Daniel 7:25).
10. It would receive a mortal wound (Revelation 13:3).
11. It would amaze the whole world, for its deadly wound would be healed (Revelation 13:3).

When we are finished tonight there will be no question in your mind that this is indeed the papal power, as prophesied by God.

SECTION 2

Let us go to our text now for study of the first of these four parts.

“And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.” Revelation 13:2. In our previous studies we have learned that the dragon is Satan. Notice that he is to give his power and his seat and his great authority to the Papacy. Just how was this to be accomplished? By passing it on from generation to generation. When old Babylon went down to destruction, the dragon transferred all his power to the new kingdom of Medo-Persia, which followed Babylon. Likewise, as nations came and went, he simply passed on his

power, his seat, and his authority to the new nation taking its place in the world. Thus we have the sequence-Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and finally, papal Rome.

Please note how carefully every word of this prophecy has been fulfilled. It says the dragon gave him his power. The dragon's power has always consisted of force. He compels. It is so vastly different from that of Christ, who says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Throughout all history the dragon power has been the civil arm of government enforcing pagan philosophies. The Church of Rome willingly accepts the fact that she received her temporal power from the Caesars who ruled pagan Rome. We read from her writers the following:

"Long ages ago, when Rome through the neglect of the Western emperors was left to the mercy of the barbarous hordes, the Romans turned to one figure for aid and protection, and asked him to rule them; and thus, in this simple manner, the best title of all to kingly right, commenced the temporal sovereignty of the popes. And meekly stepping to the throne of Caesar, the vicar of Christ took up the scepter to which the emperors and kings of Europe were to bow in reverence through so many ages." - REVEREND JAMES P. CONROY, American Catholic Quarterly Review, April, 1911.

Now what about his seat? It is no secret that when the Bishop of Rome took over his power from that of pagan Rome he sat in the very seat of the Caesars; that is, he ruled from the same city.

In the year A.D. 330 the capital of the Roman Empire was moved to Constantinople, which left the Western Church to pick up her leadership from the very seat of the Caesars. Let's listen to the quotation from an article quoting the pope himself in 1922.

"What the Pope himself thinks of the relationship of Rome to the Papacy is quite different. In his first Encyclical Ubi Arcano (December 23, 1922) he wrote of 'Italy, our own dear native land, the country where the hand of God, who guides the course of history, has set down the Chair of His Vicar on earth, in this city of Rome which, from being the capital of the wonderful Roman Empire, was made by Him the capital of the whole world, because He made it the seat of a sovereignty which, since it extends beyond the confines of nations and States, embraces within itself all the peoples of the whole world.' "-Translated by the Very Reverend James H. Ryan in The Encyclicals of Pius XI (St. Louis: Herder, 1927), page 44. Quoted by W. W. Rockwell in Current History Magazine, August, 1929, page 827. (Italics supplied.)

This now brings us to the last part of this verse "and the dragon gave him his seat and great authority." What has always been the authority of Rome? It has been her religion. These doctrines and claims have been handed down through centuries and centuries of tradition. Her teaching of penance, of celibacy in the priesthood, of sprinkling, purgatory, the mass, the use of holy water, et cetera, constitute the authority of the Church. Thus we see clearly the fulfillment of the specifications laid down by God.

SECTION 3

In the same chapter of Revelation, in verse 5, we come to another amazing prediction.

"And power was given unto him to continue forty and two months." Revelation 13:5.

We have a blackboard here, so let's do a little arithmetic. A Bible month is composed of thirty days, and since there are forty-two months mentioned, we find that thirty times forty-two equals 1260 days. Now there is a Bible rule for us always to remember in studying prophecy. This is that a day stands for a year. "I have appointed thee each day for a year." Ezekiel 4:6.

So 1260 days equal 1260 years. God is being very explicit now. This power is to continue for 1260 literal years. When did the Papacy come into being? You will recall that it rose in the year A.D. 538 when it destroyed the last of the three little horns and thus assumed supremacy over the other seven. Now if you will add 1260 years to the year 538 you will find that it brings us to the year A.D. 1798. We would expect something tragic to happen to the Papacy in this year, according to the prophecy. This is most easy to discover. Volumes have been written about it, for on February 10, 1798, the exact year predicted by God, the Papacy received a mighty blow. Berthier, the French general, entered Rome and took the pope prisoner.

But note how carefully God has pointed out these details. The Scripture describes this event as follows: "And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death." Revelation 13:3.

Let us turn again to Current History magazine of August, 1929, to a letter written by the pope himself. In it you will note that he declared himself to be the head of the papal organization. "That the Holy See is the supreme organ of the Catholic Church throughout the world and that, therefore, the Holy See is the legitimate representative of the organization of the Church in Italy cannot be said, excepting in the sense in which it is said that the head is the supreme organ of the human body."-Page 848. (Italics supplied.)

But what is even more astounding is the fact that the Papacy uses the very same word as is found in the Scripture in referring to this incident as the wound. Again we quote from the pope's letter.

"We say that our hopes have been disappointed because the long negotiations, although they had not always been easy, had opened our soul to the brightest hopes, and what of all things we least expected were expressions that are heretical, worse than heretical, regarding the very essence of Christianity and of Catholicism. Efforts have been made to heal the wound." - Full text of the pope's letter in Current History, August, 1929, page 847.

Isn't this tremendous? God says, "and the deadly wound was healed." The pope wrote, "Efforts have been made to heal the wound."

Perhaps it would be well to pause here and ask how it was possible that such a wound could be inflicted on the Papacy with such a deadly effect.

For more than a thousand years the Papacy was recognized as the world leader. Kings bowed down in reverence. Her every demand was obediently answered. Nations went to war at the command of this power. Men willingly died for her. What change came about that made possible the wounding of such a power? Permit me to give you the answer. The Papacy went so far in leading the world deeper and deeper into paganism that thinking men began to stop and ask questions. So many of the divine truths of God were adulterated with paganism that men like Wycliffe, Huss, Jerome, Luther, and other mighty leaders arose and began to ask the Church for a reform. Being denied, a movement known as Protestantism developed among the peoples of Europe. This grew to such an extent and power that Berthier, the French general, dared to do what no other person had ever dared to do for more than a thousand years. In the year 1798 he personally took his troops into Rome and took the pope prisoner. It was Protestantism that prepared the way and made possible the deadly wound.

SECTION 4

Such prophecy and its fulfillment is very intriguing. But now listen to this: "And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast." Revelation 13:3. Wonder of wonders! The wound was to be healed. As time went on and the world was engulfed in the first world war, Protestantism suffered greatly. Throughout Europe there were signs of its deterioration. A new spirit of liberalism arose, making possible the rise of such men as Mussolini and Hitler. From the very beginning of the dictatorship of Mussolini, both the church and the state determined to settle the Roman question. On February 11, 1929, a concordat was signed restoring the place of the Papacy, thus healing the deadly wound.

The Church of Rome declared that the Roman question was finally settled. "The Treaty ends with the Pope's recognition of the legitimacy of the dynasty of Savoy, and his solemn declaration that he is fully satisfied with the independence guaranteed him for the carrying out of his spiritual primacy. The Roman Question is finally settled."-The Question Box, page 167.

Now we have two more questions for our consideration tonight. First, just how complete has been the healing of the wound? Suppose we translate the Italian system under the Papacy into our American system under democracy. Now, I say "I suppose." It is possible. I hold here in my hand a copy of an article written by William Attwood, of the New York Herald Tribune, in The Nation, appearing August 28, 1948. It is titled "It Could Happen Here." You judge for yourself as I read it.

"If the United States should eventually come under the dominance of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, what changes in the religious and political conditions would likely take place? Many Americans who do not understand the papal philosophy shut their eyes and ears and say: 'There would be no difference from our present system.' However, let individuals with such opinions consider the facts: In no Catholic-dominated country, either today or in the past, has religious liberty ever been fully and freely given. In view of conditions in Spain and in Italy in this 'enlightened' year, let us imagine what the parallel situation might be in America if Catholicism were in a strong majority.

"First, the United States would be required to have a full ranking ambassador at the Vatican. This would give a religious organization equal representation with Great Britain, France, China, and other secular governments. It would make a complete break in the wall of separation of church and state which has safeguarded the nation through its rise and growth. A concordat would be made between our government and the papacy, giving the Catholic Church many prerogatives. The concordat might begin: 'The Catholic religion is the only religion in the state' (meaning the United States).

"Second, all public schools in the nation would teach 'Christian doctrine according to the Catholic tradition.' This would mean that Catholicism would be taught in all state schools by church approved teachers.

"Third, all Catholic priests (and no other clergy but Catholics) would receive pay checks from the Treasury Department at Washington, D.C. Their salaries would come from taxes paid by Americans of all creeds and from those who had no religious faith whatever.

“Fourth, Protestant denominations would be in a desperate plight. Church buildings would be damaged and destroyed by groups of Catholic Action youth. Protestants in all the forty-eight [fifty] states would be persecuted for their faith. Two FBI agents would be stationed at the door of every Protestant church during services. They would be there to protect worshipers, but their presence would mark the church and intimidate some who would like to attend. It would be difficult to hold Protestant funerals because of prejudice and bigotry.

“Fifth, Federal officers would legally prosecute any American accused of ‘oral or written offense against the pope.’ Magazines such as The Nation would be banned and the editors jailed because they had written articles on doctrinal points that were considered anti-Catholic in nature.”

Are these situations mere fantasy? We are thankful they do not exist in the United States today, but every situation described here exists in Catholic-dominated Italy or Spain at the present time. Every quotation in the above paragraphs is taken from the Lateran Treaty or the Concordat between the Vatican and Italy. The actual condition of postwar Italy is pictured by William Attwood in this article. We have merely shifted the condition from Italy to the United States, in order that the impact might be more forceful upon our readers. Doesn't this call for some serious thinking on our part? The Word of God said the deadly wound would be healed. But it adds another fact. “And all the world wondered after the beast.” Revelation 13:3.

SECTION 5

We would be amazed if we could see the great parade of ambassadors that yearly visit the Holy See, streaming in from countries all over the world. One of the greatest of all marvels is that France, who was so bitter against the Roman Catholic power and who actually brought about the deadly wound, has now reversed itself. Even England, who for four hundred years had been staunchly Protestant in nature, now has its ambassador at the Holy See. One by one the nations are bowing to the beast, and this is affecting our lives today.

Take the movie industry, for instance, and consider the number of pictures that are developed for the screen and television that portray a Roman Catholic priest. We find that the Catholic press is among the greatest in the world, touching every major newspaper and providing enormous amounts of news slanted to its doctrines. Today the Papacy is recognized around the world as a leader in the fight against Communism.

There are nations today that are wholly dominated by the papal power. Truly the words are fulfilled as God wrote. “And all the world wondered after the beast.”

In conclusion, I am certain that you have but one more question-What is coming next? We will let the Bible answer this also.

“And he exercises all the power of the first beast before him, and causes the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.” Revelation 13:12-17.

Friends, this is sad news. Force is again to be used in this old world. The worship of the beast, the worship of his image, under a penalty of death is the new order to come.

What place will the United States of America have in this picture? In our coming lectures we will discover just what part this great nation will have in the closing conflict between Christ and Satan. You cannot afford to miss this subject. Bring your friends. Find out how your life will be affected. Be prepared to meet God unafraid. The end is near. Pray for us young people, that we may be faithful in delivering God's last warning message.

We want to be ready ourselves, and we want you to be ready too. Let us pray.

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