



THE BIBLE STANDS

*The Bible stands though the hills may tumble,
It will firmly stand when the earth shall crumble;
I will plant my feet on its firm foundation,
For the Bible stands.*

Supplement to Lesson 23: United States in Prophecy

Here is additional information on the second beast of Revelation 13 as described in lesson 23. Please complete lesson 23 before reading this material.

Revelation 13:11 introduces a beast which has been identified as the United States of America. Notice five identifying details:

1. It is a "beast." Daniel 7:17 tells us that a beast in symbolic Bible prophecy represents a king or political nation.
2. It is "another" beast. It is not identical to the first beast of chapter 13.
3. "Coming up" indicates that it was at that time rising to power as John watched in vision. The context of verse 10 is talking about the period of time when the first beast was taken into captivity--1798. So this nation would be gaining its power right at that time.
4. "Out of the earth." This is in contrast with the beasts of Daniel 7 and the first beast of Revelation 13 which all came up out of the sea. Sea is the gathering together of the waters, and waters in Bible prophecy represent "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." Revelation 17:15. So this nation would arise in an area which was not crowded with many peoples and nations. In Revelation 10:2 the terms "sea" and "earth" refer to the eastern and western hemispheres, respectively.

John Wesley, in his note on Revelation 13:11, written in 1754, says of this beast, "He is not yet come: tho' he cannot be far off. For he is to appear at the end of the forty-two months of the first beast." Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament, 1791 ed., vol. 3, p. 299.

In 1798, when the papal power received its deadly wound, the United States, located in the western hemisphere, was the only great world power then coming into prominence in territory not previously occupied by peoples, multitudes, and nations. Only nine years preceding this, in 1789, the U.S. adopted its national Constitution.

"Is it reasonable to suppose that God would leave out from the prophecies of his Book this whole Western Hemisphere? No, No!" (De Witt Talmage, Selected Sermons, vol. 2, p. 9, 1900.)

5. "Like a lamb." The nations depicted in Daniel 7 (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome) were pictured as ferocious beasts of prey. They were characterized by intolerance, persecution, and oppression. The United States, by contrast, is pictured as a docile, domestic lamb, founded on principles of liberty, equality, and tolerance.

The Voice of a Dragon

It is clear from the text that the United States would not always remain as innocent as it began.

1. "Spake as a dragon." A nation "speaks" through its decrees and legislative enactments. This verse indicates that the U.S. government would act on the principles of the dragon which, according to Revelation 12:9, is Satan.
2. "Exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him." This tells us that the United States will enforce the power of the papacy. It will cause "the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed." The nation will repudiate its principles of religious liberty.
3. "Great wonders." Verses 13 and 14 tell us that there will be supernatural signs which will deceive the world.
4. "Saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live." An image of something is a likeness to it, a duplicate of it. So the characteristics of the papacy will be duplicated in the United States. The papacy has been distinguished historically as a combination of religious and civil power. When the United States begins to employ its civil power to enforce the decrees of religious leaders who are clamoring even now for such enforcement, the United States will have formed an image of the Roman Catholic religio-political structure.
5. Verse 15 describes legal decrees to enforce religious duty, with the death penalty for dissenters. Forced religion, practiced by the papacy during its supremacy, is totally contrary to the principles of God.
6. Verse 16 tells us that it will be the United States which instigates the enforcement of the beast's mark. Lesson 23 documents the fact that the beast takes Sunday observance as the mark of its authority. This is in contrast with the seventh-day Sabbath, which the Creator has established as the sign of His authority.
7. Verse 17 makes it clear that those who obey God and refuse to give their allegiance to the beast and his image, will be prohibited by law from carrying on any business dealings. Their dependence will be totally upon God. Although every earthly support will be cut off, they will trust God for their sustenance. And the promise is given, "His place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." Isaiah 33:16.

Notice what is to be enforced: the mark of the beast—Sunday observance. This will be the deciding issue regarding one's loyalty.

Satan hates the Sabbath because it is the sign of Christ's authority as Creator and King. And in all ages Satan has tried to work through the governments of nations in his attacks against Christ and His people.

Just as in Bible times, so today, the major movements of nations and kings are the battleground of an even greater war—the war which began in heaven between Christ and Satan. In this war we are all involved. These final events of earth's history will be the final climax of the great controversy which has been raging for 6,000 years.

The outcome of that battle is described in Revelation chapter 19. Verses 7 and 8 describe the purification of God's people which will take place during this trying time. Although outwardly it may appear difficult, "yet the inward man is renewed day by day." 2 Corinthians 4:16. Texts such as James 1:3, 4 and 1 Peter 4:1 describe the blessings which come with standing for the right.

Revelation 19 describes the glorification of Christ's church, the victorious return of our Lord, and the destruction of the earthly powers which attempted to enforce disobedience to God's Law.

Then the promise is given that those "which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands;...lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." Revelation 20:4.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

It's time to do a study such as never done before;
The end of time's upon us, even at the very door.
A test will come to everyone who dwells upon the land;
And only by the word of God will anybody stand.

It's what the Bible says that really matters now;
It's what the Bible says that counts.
It's what the Bible says that really matters now;
So teach me what THE BIBLE says.

It may be different from what I've always thought;
It may not go along with what my parents always taught.
But if the Bible says it, who am I to disagree?
The word of God is the standard and the test for every creed.

It's what the Bible says that really matters now;
It's what the Bible says that counts.
It's what the Bible says that really matters now;
So teach me what THE BIBLE says.