

THE LAST NATION IN BIBLE PROPHECY

Today we're going to discover what the Bible says about the last nation mentioned in Bible prophecy, which is spoken of in the second half of **Revelation 13**, and we'll be reading those verses in a few minutes, but before we do I'd like to give you a quick overview of some of the main points in this chapter. And I'll just warn you right from the start that some of you may not be happy when you find out which nation is the last one mentioned, and more importantly, why it's mentioned.

In the first **10 verses of Revelation 13** it speaks of a beast coming up out of the sea, which represents a nation that is both religious and political; an earthly power of some kind that would make war against God's people and overcome them for a period of time, namely "42 months" as it says in **verse 5**, which is the same as "a time, times, and a dividing of time" mentioned in **Daniel 7:25**, which we found last time represents 1260 years when considering the day for a year principle when calculating time prophecy. And this principle is nothing new, because Bible scholars have recognized this for hundreds of years. Even the Protestant Reformers understood that a day in Bible prophecy represents a year.

So, when you have 42 months times 30 days to a month, as was the case when these things were written, you end up with 1260 days, or years. This is not coincidental, and we know we're talking about the same time frame here as the dark ages, or papal supremacy from 538 AD-1798. And if you're a little baffled by all this, I would advise you to listen to the previous sermon on the platform you're listening to right now titled "What Next?"

The reason I said this beast power is both religious and political, is because it has power to both persecute and demand worship, and everyone on the planet will reverence and honor what this beast power demands except for a small group whose names are registered in the Lamb's book of life. Hopefully that's you and that's me. In the first **3 verses** it says that this beast has seven heads, and one of them would be wounded to death, yet this wound, though apparently deadly, would be healed at some point. We also covered some of this last time when we studied **Daniel 2** and found that it was papal Rome, or that "little horn" that came up among the other horns, or those European nations that were represented by the toes of the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream after Rome fell, three of which are no more because the papacy saw to it that they were destroyed for disagreeing with them about the teaching of a man named Arius of Alexandria, and it had to do with the identity of Christ. You'll remember it was the Ostrogoths, the Vandals, and the Heruli that were completely destroyed, and the only reason I mention this again is because it shows that when church and state unite to push

religious ideas, persecution is sure to follow. Keep that point in mind, because we'll be coming back to it in a little while.

Then in **Revelation 13:11-18** we have another beast spoken of, and the apostle John indicates that it will play a significant role in helping to reestablishing the power of the first beast, the papacy, by assisting in the healing of the deadly wound it received. And so completely will this healing, under the leadership of the second beast, be that the whole world, except for that small group whose names are written in the book of life, are led to accept the first beast's mark in their right hand or in their foreheads, and one naturally wonders, what is that mark? I hate to disappoint you, but I'll be answering that question another time. So at this point let's go ahead and read about the second beast in **Revelation 13** and then we'll break down some of the main points so we can understand what it all means.

In **Revelation 13:11-18**, John writes, "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by *the means of* those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; 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. 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 causeth 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. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number *is* Six hundred threescore *and* six."

Now, there are several important points, or clues we might say, that are given in this chapter to help us determine with absolute certainty what earthly power is being pointed out here. We won't take the time to read it again, but we know from our study last time when we looked at those four world empires in **Daniel 2 & 7**, namely Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome, that beasts in Bible prophecy represent nations, or kingdoms, or political powers, and it's no different here in Revelation. Prophecy is prophecy, and if we allow the Bible to be its own interpreter, as **2 Peter 1:20** tells us to do, then we will always come up with the right answer. And by the way, you might be wondering how the

papacy can be considered a beast in prophecy, or a nation and not just a religious organization.

Allow me to read to you what it says in Wikipedia about this. "Vatican City is the smallest independent state in the world, located entirely within Rome, Italy. Vatican City was established as an independent state in 1929 through the Lateran Treaty, . . . regarding the Pope's temporal power. It serves as the spiritual and administrative center of the Roman Catholic Church, governed by the pope." So without question, the Vatican definitely qualifies as a nation, or a country all its own, and consequently can be represented as a "beast" in Bible prophecy.

Now, in most cases when the Bible mentions these various animals, or beasts in prophecy, they are pictured as coming up out of water, or out of the sea, like it says about the papacy in **Revelation 13:1**, and according to **Revelation 17:15**, water represents "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues," or we might say populated areas as was the case with the geographical location where the papacy rose to power. And since water represents populated areas, we can conclude that when a beast, or a nation rises to power out of the earth it means just the opposite, or rising up in a sparsely or unpopulated area. We notice too that this second beast arises about the time when the first beast received its deadly wound in 1798 when Napoleon took the pope captive.

Now, it's not the purpose of this study to spend a lot of time identifying the first beast, because we already know from our last study that it represents papal Rome, or the papacy, but I'll have to mention it from time to time as we go along so we can properly identify the second beast, or the last nation mentioned in Bible prophecy and its connection with the first beast.

So let's go back to the book of Daniel for a minute, because the book of Daniel is a prophetic book that deals with a prophecy that was sealed up until the time of the end. Let's read that in **Daniel 12**. In this chapter, Daniel desperately wanted to understand what the vision he was given meant and what the outcome was going to be. But notice what he was told in **verse 9**, "Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end." So it wasn't for Daniel to know these things, but it is for us to know, because we are living at "the time of the end." And so, the book of Daniel is a prophecy, and the book of Revelation is a revealing of that which was sealed up.

As we saw last time, **Daniel 2** describes four world empires listed as Babylon, Medio-Persia, Greece, and Rome, with the pagan Roman Empire being the legs of iron in the great image Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream, and then we have papal Rome as its successor. And so, when we get to **Revelation 13** we have papal Rome, or the "little horn"

as Daniel called it, being described as the first beast coming up out of the water, or in a populated area, with the second beast coming up out of the earth, or an unpopulated or sparsely populated area about the time the first beast receives its deadly wound. And so, as the first beast is losing its power, there's another beast coming into power, because **Revelation 13:5** says the papacy was given power for 42 months, or 1260 years to make war with the saints, or God's people, and then its power would end, which it did in 1798. That's what history tells us when the papacy received its deadly wound on February 11, 1798 when Napoleon's army took the pope captive, dying in exile the following year.

And so at that time it looked as though papal supremacy had come to an end, but it was only temporary, because as we know, the papacy is alive and well today, which is proof that its deadly wound began to be healed at some point, and again, we know from history that that point was in 1929 when Benito Mussolini signed the Lateran treaty recognizing Vatican City as an independent state, which restored power back to the Pope, who at the time was Pius XI. This is documented history you can research yourself.

So the question is, what nation was coming into power in an unpopulated, or sparsely populated area about the time the papacy received its deadly wound in 1798? This shouldn't be hard to figure out, because there's only one nation that was coming up at that time that fits the description of the second beast to a tee, and that would be the United States of America with its Bill of Rights in 1776 and its Constitution in 1789.

Now, let me remind you of a few important characteristics of this second beast, or this last nation mentioned in Bible prophecy we just read about in **Revelation 13:11-18**, some of which has already been fulfilled and some is yet future. #1, This second beast comes up out of the earth, or a sparsely populated area. #2, It comes up after the first beast and approximately about the same time that it received its deadly wound in 1798. #3, It has two lamblike horns, but it speaks as a dragon. #4, it exercises, or executes, all the power of the first beast. #5, it causes all the earth to worship the first beast. #6, it performs great wonders and makes fire come down from heaven and deceives the whole world by means of these wonders. And #7, it makes an image to the first beast and causes people to receive the first beast's mark.

Now, to me one of the more interesting characteristics about this second beast is that it's said to have two horns like a lamb, but in stark contrast it begins to speak as a dragon. I think you will agree with me that there's a big difference between a gentle lamb and a fierce dragon. In fact, there's hardly no animal on earth that is more harmless and peace loving than a lamb, that's why the apostle John refers to Jesus as the Lamb of God in **John 1:29**. And so, because the Bible uses the symbolism of a lamb to describe Christ, this lamb like beast would also symbolize the fact that this second beast would be essentially

Christian in nature. Is that fair to say? or at least it starts out that way. But again, **Revelation 13:11** says this lamb like beast is going to speak as a dragon, which is a symbol of Satan himself, according to **Revelation 12:9**. So there's going to have to be quite a transformation in this second beast in order for it to go from being lamb like to a dragon.

And of course this second beast represents the United States of America, and it's not just conjecture or speculation on my part, because when we look at the history of how the United States came to be, it's like no other nation that has ever existed. It arose out of a sparsely populated area about the time when the first beast, or the papacy, received it's deathblow by Napoleon's army, just like the Bible says would happen. And unlike other nations, America advanced to power without the overthrow of any other nation. Yes, there was the American Revolution with Britain for seven or eight years, but that was because they wanted to get out from under British rule, but once that was solved, the United States became its own country and for the most part the acquisition of land was made through purchases rather than by conquest and had no history of being an aggressive power when it was first founded. And so, the war with Britain wasn't over the land itself, but over the kind of government America wanted to have. All these characteristics are in keeping with the fact that America was a Protestant nation, because it's a principle of Protestantism that individuals have the right to choose their own destiny without interference from a kingly government power such as they left in England. Because don't forget, the main reason our forefathers came here was because they were looking for "a church without a pope, and a state without a king." (***The Great Controversy, page 296***)

Now, according to **Revelation 13:1**, the first beast, or the papacy also had horns, but its horns had crowns, and crowns represent kingly power, but the horns on the second beast had no crowns, but were lamb like. In other words, the strength of the United States has been in its unique form of government. While the European nations were ruled by kings who united with the papacy by giving their armies to do its bidding and persecuting dissenters, the United States has a totally different type of system. From the beginning the American government was a Constitutional Republic in form and a Protestant nation in religion, and it's in these two separate and distinct entities that America has become a great and powerful nation. And if we forget that there's supposed to be a separation between church and State, we do it to our own detriment.

And here's another important point, there's a fundamental difference between a Republic and a Democracy, and many Americans are all mixed up about this today, as well as some of our law makers. To put it very simply, a Republic is a form of government that follows the rule of law, regardless of what the majority wants, and a Democracy is a form

of government that follows what the majority wants, regardless of the rule of law, which could potentially end up being mob rule. And this is one of the reasons each state has a certain number of electors when we vote for a President and vice President, it's to keep the majority in check, which is today becoming more and more liberal and progressive. The Electoral College is why a person can win the popular vote and still lose the election, as has happened a few times in the past, most recently between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump during his first term, and if this system ever goes away, we're going to be in more trouble as a nation than we're already in.

And the Electoral College system isn't something new, it's 238 years old and was established as part of the United States Constitution in 1787, because our forefathers were smart enough to know that without the Electoral College system, if a candidate was elected simply by majority vote, that would be the end of our two party system and would insure that the majority would run away with every election thereafter. And again, that would tend to develop into a nation like the one our forefathers escaped from.

And here's something else, we hear all the time from Democrats about how the Republicans are trying to destroy "our Democracy." You can't listen to the news today without hearing this over and over again, but what they fail to understand is that the United States has never been a Democracy, but was founded as a Constitutional Republic. If you're as old as I am you'll remember reciting the pledge of allegiance in school that says, "and to the republic for which it stands," and whether right or wrong, making the Pledge of Allegiance mandatory was struck down by the Supreme Court back in 1943, but that's not the point. The point is, the pledge shows us the kind of government that we've always had, and there was a time when people knew that, but not so much anymore, which is evidenced by the fact that a self-proclaimed socialist was just elected to be the next mayor in New York City, the financial capital of the country. And recently this same thing happened in Seattle, Washington's largest city. And so, this is not a good trend.

However, I don't want to leave the Republicans out either, because there's also a problem on their side of the aisle, and we're beginning to hear a lot about it lately, and that is that some of them don't believe there's any such thing as the separation of church and state in the Constitution, and that includes our recently converted Catholic Vice President, which goes directly against the First Amendment which says, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." And if you want to know how some people are trying to make this fact go away, or why they believe there is no separation of church and state mentioned in the First Amendment, I suggest that you listen to the sermon titled "The Rise of Christian Nationalism," because it's very clear that the First Amendment forbids the government from favoring one

religion over another or restricting an individual from practicing his or her religious beliefs. Because in **Revelation 13** the Bible states plainly that America will become an image to the papacy and will rule accordingly. And if we want to know how the second beast will rule when the image is made, or when the lamb begins to speak as a dragon, all we have to do is look at how the first beast ruled. Does that make sense? The union of church and state is a slippery slope, because when the church controls the state and tells it what to do, liberty will end with enforcement; conscientiousness will end with coercion; and faith will end with control.

Making an image to the first beast means that America becomes the spitting image of the papacy, and apostate Protestantism and the papacy combined will work hand in hand to fulfill what the papacy tried to accomplish in years gone by, namely world dominance in matters of religion, and all but that small group who have their names registered in the Lamb's book of life will do what they're told, because of a death threat mentioned in **Revelation 13:15**. And because most people today don't have the faith of the martyrs of old that were tortured and burned at the stake by the papacy for 1260 years, they will cave to the pressure. And what do you suppose America will mandate that all people must do or be killed? That's a serious question, and that will be part of our subject next time, so stay tuned> But I'll give you a hint, it has something to do with God's Ten Commandment law, and I'll leave it right there for the time being, because we don't have time to prove that point today.

Now, having said all this, am I thankful to be a citizen of the United States of America? You bet I am, because it's the greatest nation on earth, and I believe our Constitution is an inspired document and I wish people would stop messing with it, but at the same time it's not a smart choice to deny what God says is going to happen. We could wish for a different outcome than the Bible outlines in detail for this great country, but that's not going to change the outcome; it's just not. It makes me sick to think that my country will speak as a dragon, but again, God's word is going to be fulfilled whether we like it or not, and if we think there's going to be a different outcome we're only fooling ourselves, and all indications are that this speaking as a dragon will happen very soon, and even now we can see things heading in that direction if we're paying attention. So we better get our priorities straight and put God first in our lives while we still have opportunity to do so and stand for the truth though the heavens fall.

You see, America was established upon an individual's belief in God and the Bible as their rule of faith and practice, and I put great emphasis on the individual rather than the nation, and we'll find out why in a minute, but it's the squandering of these individual Christian values that have led to the general deterioration of the kind of corrupt society

we have today. And as a result, this squandering of values have led many conservative Christians to believe that we can only restore our national greatness by a restoration of our founding principles, and there's an element of truth to this, but what they fail to realize is that it has to happen on an individual bases and not be legislated by government, because you can't force people to be good. The only way for that to happen is to receive the new heart that Jesus promised to give to all who will repent, confess their sins, and receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Master, and anything short of this will fail to bring about the desired results, because forced obedience can only lead to government tyranny. We've seen this story played out before and it's the very reason those who boarded the Mayflower in 1620 were trying to escape from.

You've probably heard the old saying that insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results, and this is the way it is with those who think that a union of church and state is the solution to America's ills, and unfortunately that's what **Revelation 13** says will happen, and the thinking of many conservative Christians today is that we need a theocracy in America like Israel had during Old Testament times. So let's explore that idea for a few minutes to see if it has any validity.

As you know, a theocracy is simply a government that is governed by God, which inevitably means that for a nation to be a theocracy, it would require all of its citizens to follow one religion. Sounds good on the surface, doesn't it? However, Iran and Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia claim to be a theocracy, and how would you like to live in any one of those nations? And the Vatican claims to be a theocracy. The question is, if America is to be a theocracy, who's religion is it going to be? There are a multitude of Christians having differing ideas of what the Bible teaches, and well over 200 denominations and religious organizations today, and they all have differing views, and if the majority were to claim to be a theocracy, what would happen to those who disagree? The same thing that happened in the past, they would be persecuted and eventually killed, that's the way it works, and human nature isn't any different today than it was yesterday, except a little more degenerate, because we're that much farther removed from the tree of life.

But getting back to Israel: yes Israel did have a theocracy with the God of heaven as leader, but because they rejected God as their leader, there were to be no more theocracies, period! And we'll see in a minute that the Scriptures bear this out.

As individuals who believe in the God of the Bible, we should all be willing to be under His theocracy, or His rule individually, and again I emphasis individually, and not as a nation, because we have examples that a national theocracy here on earth will never work, and the prime example is Israel! After a certain point, the theocracy that Israel was under was

dissolved, and never again was there to be a nation that would be a theocracy, and that includes America or any other nation. Turn with me please to the gospel of **John** and we'll see the exact moment when Israel ceased to be a theocracy with no more to follow.

Here in **John 19** Jesus is before the judgment seat of Pilate who had Him scourged, and there were the Roman soldiers who put a crown of thorns on His head and a purple robe on Him and slapped Him in the face and spit upon Him and abused Him every way imaginable, and when the chief priests and officers saw the way Jesus was being treated they also chimed in and said, "crucify Him, crucify Him." If you remember, Pilate wanted to release Jesus, because he said, "I find no fault in Him," but the religious leaders would have none of it, and they became like a pack of demons.

Now notice what it says in **John 19:14, 15**, "And it was the preparation of the Passover, and about the sixth hour: and he (**Pilate**) saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered (**and said what?**), We have no king but Caesar." That very day the religious leaders chose a robber in Barabbas and a heathen king in Caesar in place of the Prince of Life to rule over them, and at that point their theocracy was over. This was a confirmation of what Jesus said just a few days before He was crucified as He stopped momentarily overlooking Jerusalem and said of the Jewish nation, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." In other words, God's presence was withdrawn from the Jewish people and their temple and He was no longer their leader. So when the Jewish leaders said, "we have no king but Caesar," that was like putting the final nail in Israel's theocratic coffin. **(See 12MR 414.2)**

Notice also what it says in **Ezekiel 21:25-27**. Because of Israel's sin and rebellion against God, under whose theocracy they were at the time, God tells Ezekiel what will happen in the future, not only to Israel, but to the three kingdoms that would come afterward.

Beginning with **verse 25** it says, "And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel (**speaking of Zedekiah, Israel's last king**), whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: (**from Zedekiah and consequently from Israel**) this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. (**Now listen carefully to this next sentence**) I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him."

The “Him” spoken of here is Jesus; this is a messianic prophecy of the coming of Christ whose right it would be to reign, which was a divine decree concerning the throne of the house of David from which Christ descended. But before He would come, the crown would not only be removed from Israel, but afterward from the three successive kingdoms that followed, namely Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. That’s why God says, “I will overturn, overturn, overturn it” three times. *(See RH November 23, 1905, Art. A, par. 6)*

You see, at the time of this prophecy, Israel was already under servitude to Babylon, so it’s the other three nations that followed that would be “overturned,” or overthrown. We saw last time when we studied **Daniel 2**, that Daniel and his three companions were already captives in Babylon, so there would be only three more “overturning’s,” not four before “He would come whose right it is” to reign as the rightful king. And what was the last kingdom to be overthrown? It was Rome, and it was during the rule of Rome that Jesus came, whose right it was to reign as King, and Jesus was very clear as to the kind of kingdom He would have. In **John 18:36** Jesus said to Pilate, “My kingdom (**My literal tangible kingdom**) is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.”

You see, when Jesus came into this world He set up a spiritual kingdom made up of all who would accept Him as their Saviour and be registered in that book of life we read about, but His literal kingdom isn’t going to be set up here on earth until this present heaven and earth are burned up and made new like it says in **Isaiah 66:22** and **Revelation 21**.

If a person knows their Bible at all, they know that when Jesus was here, He didn’t interfere with the earthly government that was in power at the time. He said, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesars and unto God the things that are Gods.” Jesus didn’t interfere with the government because He didn’t care about the evils that were going on, but because He knew that the remedy to a broken society couldn’t be fixed that way, and it can’t be fixed that way today. The cure has to reach men individually and must regenerate the heart. His kingdom could only be set up by the implanting of Christ’s nature in humanity through the work of the Holy Spirit.

What all this means is that there will never be another national theocracy after Israel rejected Christ. Israel is not under a theocracy today, nor will any other nation ever be. That was tried and the reason it didn’t work is not God’s fault, but because man’s nature is fallen because of sin and would never be able to keep the law of God without a heart transplant; that’s the remedy that every individual must have. The problem is, only the

few will come to the great physician for that spiritual surgery, and a nation as a whole never will, because the majority will never come.

You may have heard of the term Replacement Theology, because it seems to be a popular thing lately. Replacement theology is the idea that the Christian church has replaced Israel as God's chosen people, and this idea is Scriptural, because as we have seen, Israel rejected Christ who is the head of the church. Now this doesn't mean that individual Jews can't be saved, because they can, just like anybody else if they accept Jesus as their Saviour, but it will never happen as a nation, because that time is passed. If you'd like more information about this I would suggest that you listen to the sermon titled, "Who Are The True Israel of God," and I think you'll see my point.

And so, any theory that puts forth the idea that there will be another theocracy where both civil and religious authority will be given to a nation here on earth, would be a false theory, and if tried it will utterly fail as it has done in the past. So when we hear of those who are floating this idea today from various religious circles, or from government officials about a union of church and state under theocratic rule in order to make America great again in a moral sense, we can know that we are headed for big trouble right here in the land of the free and the home of the brave, because when that happens, and Bible prophecy indicates it will, then freedom as we know it will be no more and religious persecution will begin as America enforces the mark of the papal beast.

Now, it's about time to stop, but there are still a couple more points I'd like you to consider before we close, and it's this: it has always been the practice of the papacy, whenever possible, to exercise her authority through civil government to further her own ends. That's the way it was in the past and it's the boast of the papacy that it never changes. In other words, she believes her past persecutions were justified, and as soon as she has the power to do so, she will do it again. And regardless of the kind of relationship a church may have had with Christ in the past, when that church seeks to use the civil authority to force the consciences of men, that church has left its relationship with Christ in favor of having an unlawful and adulterous relationship with the world. This is what it says about the whore of Babylon, or the papacy, in the first half dozen or so verses of **Revelation 17**. And in **2 Corinthians 11:2** the apostle Paul says Christ is the husband of His church, and whenever a church would then connect herself to the governments of the world to force its will, it's like a wife being unfaithful to her husband, and whenever a church does this, she has left following Christ in favor of following the dragon. The Protestant reformers of the 15th century all understood and believed that the papacy was the antichrist spoken of in **1 John** and **2 John** and the whore of Babylon in **Revelation 14, 16, 17, 18**. But how different is the attitude of so called Protestantism today.

Friends, we have to realize that for the United States to become a persecuting power would require a radical change of government policy, and to most of us that seems unthinkable, I know, but as people and nations depart farther and farther from God's word, they become more and more dependent upon their own power, which without Christ is absolutely worthless. And whenever a people withdraw from God's Spirit, disaster always follows.

When we see calamities all around the world, it's natural for religious leaders to tell their people that these things are the result of failing to uphold religious standards, and they are correct, but they fail to remember that God's invitation in **Revelation 22:17** is, "whosoever will, let Him come" to me, because heart religion is the only religion that's acceptable to God. But rather than looking to God for the power to live Godly lives, people are going to look instead to the state to use force to try to bring us back to God, and that will not work.

At a recent national prayer breakfast, President Trump gave a call, "to bring religion back bigger and better and stronger than ever. . . to bring God back into our lives," but again I ask, whose religion will it be? He said, "God has a special plan and a glorious mission for America, and that plan is going to happen." And I have to wonder what he thinks that plan is, because I'm pretty sure he isn't thinking about a lamb like beast speaking as a dragon, do you? He probably good intentions when saying these things, I'll give him that, but without a knowledge of what Bible prophecy teaches, the leaders of this nation, whether it's this current administration or the next, will inevitably be found to be working at cross purposes with the God of heaven when the prophecy of **Revelation 13** meets its complete fulfillment.

And here's the other thing I'd like for you to consider before we wrap this up, and it's very tricky. We read earlier that Satan is able to give power to the second beast of **Revelation 13** to do miracles, which people will think come from God, and will be evidence to them that God is working in their behalf when it's that of another spirit. Let's read it again in **Revelation 13:14, 15**, "And he **(the second beast, or the United States of America)** doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by *the means of* those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast **(the papacy)**; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, **(which means to do things the same way the papacy did in the past by persecuting those who differ from them. And how do we know it's the papacy? Because it's the beast)** which had the wound by a sword, and did live."

Friends, just because a person performs miracles is not the way to tell whether or not it's God doing those miracles. So there has to be another way to test these things, and what would that be? Jesus said, we are to live "by **(what?)** every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God," and that would be by listening to what holy men of old were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write down in this book we call the Bible. And if it doesn't agree with this book, it's not God, plain and simple.

There are several instances in the Bible that tell us plainly that the devil has the power to fool people by miracles and the like. In **2 Corinthians 11:13-15**, it speaks of "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness."

Also you may remember when the magicians in Egypt were able to turn their staffs into snakes like God enabled Moses to do. Also **Revelation 16:14** talks about "the spirits of devils, working miracles," and in **Revelation 13:13, 14** that we already read speaks about the second beast having power to do miracles and bring down fire from heaven for the purpose of deceiving people. So we should be aware that these types of things are no evidence that the God of heaven is doing them. So don't be fooled! The very fact that we have been warned that the devil and his agents will perform miracles should be evidence to us that God will not work in that way just before Jesus comes, but rather by a thus saith the Lord, regardless of what are eyes may see and our ears may hear or what our senses may sense.

2 Peter 1:19 says, "we have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well to take heed, as unto a light that shines in a dark place." And **Isaiah 8:20** says, "To the law and to the testimony (**to the ten commandment law and the testimony of all the prophets**): if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

And so God directs us to the Scriptures as our safeguard against the influence of false teachers and the deceptive power of the spirits of darkness, and Satan will use every possible trick to prevent people from obtaining a knowledge of the Bible, why? Because it plainly reveals his deceptions, and he is right now putting forth his utmost efforts for a final struggle against Christ and His followers. The last great deception is soon to open before us friends, and we're told that Satan, through the efforts of the two beasts of **Revelation 13** working in corrupt harmony are going to perform miracles in our sight. And again, the only way to tell the difference between the true and the false is by the Holy Scriptures. By their testimony every statement and every miracle has to be tested, or we will surely be fooled, and if we are fooled when we are given clear guidelines as to what is true and what is false and we don't take advantage of it, it will cost us dearly in the end.

Well, if you're still listening, because remember, I told you at the beginning that some of you are not going to like what you hear, and if that's the case with you, I'm sorry, but this is what the Scriptures of truth reveal is in store for one of the greatest nations that has ever existed on this planet. A nation that started out like a lamb, but ends up speaking as a dragon. I wish it weren't so, but it is so, because **Titus 1:2** says God cannot lie. And even though this sad news is all true, you know what, we have something more wonderful than ever to look forward to, because **2 Peter 3:13** says, "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth (**why? Because there's something terribly wrong with this one**) a new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." And that's when we will have a theocracy here on earth once again.

I'd like to leave you with the encouraging words of the beloved disciple John in **Revelation 21:1-5**. He writes, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. (**Praise the Lord!**) And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, write: for these words are true and faithful." And again I say, praise the Lord, how about you?