

"Watchman, what of the night?"

"The hour has come, the hour is striking and striking at you,
the hour and the end!" Eze. 7:6 (Moffatt)

The Divine Viewpoint in Meaningful Symbols

(Excerpt from wwn7(01))

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Page 6

Prophecy is given from the viewpoint of God. When God describes a power as a "little horn" with "the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things" (Dan. 7:8), i.e., "great words against the most High" (v. 25); when He depicts the same power as a "beast" with "a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies" (Rev. 13:5); when He defines this power as "that Wicked (One)" [ὁ ἀνομῶς - "he in whom all iniquity has fixed its abode" - Thayer] (II Thess. 2:8), he is not speaking of a saintly character, regardless of how Billy Graham, James Dobson, or the secular press report him to be. If indeed, we would truly accept the significance of God's symbolization of earthly powers; we could keep our thinking straight in regard to events taking place before our very eyes and not be deceived.

The same forthright divine viewpoint is stated concerning the second beast of Revelation 13. It comes "up out of the earth" (ver. 11), while the first beast arose "out of the sea" (ver. 1). Its center of activity then will be the area (nation) represented symbolically by "the earth." It presents a conflicting contrast in its symbolism: it "had two horns like a lamb," but "spake as a dragon" (*ibid.*). In the symbolism of Revelation, the "dragon" is used as a symbol of the "Devil" or "Satan" (12:9); while the "lamb" is used to define Him as He "had been slain" (5:6) but Who is "alive for evermore" (1:18). It is safe to conclude that within the confines of, and period of existence of, this second beast there will be enacted the final scenes of that great controversy which had been vividly symbolized in Revelation 12:7-9, 11 (cmp. with 13:15).

This second beast was to exercise "all the power of the first beast before him" (13:12). The first beast's power has been extensive, and was received from "the dragon" (13:2). There is noted a reciprocity between the two. One of the heads of the first beast "was slain to death" (13:3); but the second beast "causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast" *after* an event occurs - "the deadly wound was healed" (13:12), in other words, the wound to the particular head. It should also be observed that the clause in the KJV which reads - "and all the world wondered after the beast" (13:3) - in the Greek text reads - "and wondered all the earth (symbolic?) after the beast."

Verse 13 is a pivotal verse. It reads:

And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.

Is this something that will be literally fulfilled, or is it a reference directing the "one who reads" to a specific experience delineated in history and the final prophecy of the Old Testament so that he may determine its meaning? The incident is clear as to emphasis and purpose. Elijah had summoned the nation of Israel to Mt. Carmel along with the prophets of Baal. To the people, gathered in answer to the summons of Ahab, Elijah challenged, "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord is God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him" (I Kings 18:21). Then Elijah made a proposition: "The God that answereth by fire, let Him be God" (ver. 24). In the very prophetic description of the events leading to the final confrontation in the great controversy between Christ and Satan, the reader is directed to the confrontation on Mt. Carmel. Who is to be worshipped - "the first beast" (Rev.13:12), or "Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of water"? (14:7).

Into this final picture is projected another factor. The final prophecy of the Old Testament reads:

Behold, I will send Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. (Malachi 4:5-6)

Nowhere can one find in the confrontation on Mt. Carmel, or in its national context any reference to an issue involving "family values." It is, however, interjected into the final picture by the prophecy in Malachi, as well as by prophetic symbolism in Revelation. A staff writer for *The Washington Post* began a series of articles in the Sunday edition, April 15, 2001, noting that the Bush administration believes that "government can and should play a large role in molding

the private behavior of the citizenry." The article continues:

The Bush administration is devising proposals to strengthen American families, using grants to promote "responsible fatherhood," marriage counseling to prevent divorce, character education for children and tax credits to promote two parent homes and adoption. (p. A01)

Wade Horn, who has been nominated as the assistant secretary of health and human services for family support, "views the administration's efforts as four-pronged: strengthening fatherhood, strengthening marriage, strengthening community organizations that help families, and seeking a role for religious organizations in building communities." Prior to his appointment, Horn headed the National Fatherhood Initiative, whose core objective "is to change the idea we have of culture" (*ibid.*)

Two things need to be kept in mind as we seek to evaluate this from the Divine viewpoint: 1) Malachi's prophecy indicates that if the voice of "Elijah" is not heeded, the earth will be smitten with "a curse." Revelation reveals that this will happen. (Rev. 15:1). Further, the "beast" which "maketh fire come down" is, in reality, the "false prophet" who with the beast seeks to make war with the "King of kings, and Lord of lords" (19:19-20; see also 16:13-14). We need to understand the view of God on human events, and knowing, accept by faith, that which may not so appear in our evaluation as God reveals it to be.

Another factor of prophecy is that this second beast will cause "the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast" (Rev. 13:12). Another staff writer for *The Washington Post* wrote a day later that "since taking over the White House, President Bush and top advisors have been insidiously cultivating Catholic voters in an attempt to realign a once-Democratic constituency in much the same way that the Republican Party in the 1970s and 1980s won over southern evangelical Protestants" (p. A02).

Citing Bush's actions in this attempt, the staff writer notes that he has met with the Archbishop of St. Louis, the Bishop of Pittsburgh, and Cardinal McCarrick of Washington. "His staff has created an informal advisory group that includes *Crisis* [a conservative RC magazine] publisher Deal Hudson and Princeton University political scientist Robert George. Perhaps most important, Bush has incorporated language familiar to Catholics - what strategists call Catholic 'buzzwords' - into speeches". ...

"The effort to recruit Catholic voters has led to a striking change in the political climate in Washington. George noted in an interview last week that 'in 1960, John Kennedy went from Washington to Texas to assure Protestant preachers that he would not obey the pope. In 2001, George Bush came from Texas up to Washington to assure a group of Catholic bishops that he would.'" (*ibid.*)

Bush's attempt to woo conservative Catholic voters has already led to the support of Paul Weyrich, head of the Free Congress Foundation. "Weyrich wrote that he recently asked senior Bush advisor Karl Rove to tell the president 'that he has mastered the art of Catholic governance.' Rove, according to Weyrich, replied, 'That's pretty good for a Methodist.'" (*ibid.*)

If we cannot see in the turn of events, the fulfilling of the prophecy of Revelation 13, we have lost our spiritual perception. If we cannot understand how heaven views these events, then we have lost our faith. Faith to be genuine must be based in the Word of God (Rom. 10:17), accepting current events as God sees them to really be.

Note: Rome never changes, although its face may. Today a former "stage actor" wears the Triple Crown. The Biblical word for "stage actor" in the Greek is 'υποκριτης. Jesus used the word to describe religious leaders of His day. (Matt. 23:27-28)