

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 148

THE BEAST OUT OF THE SEA

We often miss the truth because too many of us rely on our intellect to interpret to us the scriptures, instead of looking to the Teacher sent from God, to do His work, and perform His ministry. Even Spirit-filled Christians depend mostly on commentaries and books by the hundreds, written by men, and often men void of the Holy Spirit, as their source of information and understanding of the scriptures, especially on issues of Bible prophecy, and the Holy Spirit is relegated to a back room in our minds, and rarely consulted about anything the scriptures have to say. We need to reinstate HIM to His proper position and allow Him to fulfill the ministry He has come to do — to teach us *all things* and to *lead us into all truth*. Now don't think I am against books, I am not. I have quite a large library myself. I use books. If I were opposed to writings I would not be sending out this article. I would not advise you to not read what others have to say and then expect you to read what I have to say! Many people have been helped by what is written, but far too many saints think that through Bible study, and by searching the scriptures alone, they can come to an understanding of the things of God, and acquire a knowledge of the truth.

Yet, if we are really studying the Bible, in the light of revelation, this is what we will find, for this is what the Bible teaches: that apart from the revelation of the Holy Spirit there is no way that we can search out, nor understand, the things of God, and His ways. Hear what the scripture itself says: *"O the depths of riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how **unsearchable** are His judgments and His ways **past finding out**"* (Rom. 11:33). How can we ever search out the unsearchable, or discover that which is past finding out? Impossible by any human means or methods, but not impossible with God, for with Him nothing is impossible. In all truth, we do not have to search anything out, for the Holy Spirit in us is the Searcher! *"God hath revealed them (the things of God) unto us by His Spirit: for **the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God**. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God **knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God**. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God, **that we might know the things...of God**"* (I Cor. 2:10-12). There is a way, His way, and that is by the working of the *spirit of truth*!

Well do I remember when I was a child in the Pentecostal church, the most intriguing, exciting, and yet frightening sermons I heard were those on Bible prophecy. When a "prophecy preacher" came by for a series of teachings it always drew a crowd! Everyone wanted to know who the antichrist is and when and where he will appear. One tent evangelist came through and announced his subject for a Saturday night: THE GREAT DICTATOR — WHO HE IS, WHERE HE IS, HE IS ALIVE AND IN THE WORLD TODAY! Come Saturday night, every seat was filled and several rows of people stood outside all the way around the tent. Such teaching also filled the altars! But I have learned through the years of walking with God that preaching prophecy to sinners is nothing but time and talent wasted. Unfortunately, many so-called evangelists have not yet learned that fact! There is but one story that can touch sinful hearts: Jesus and His wonderful love (I Cor. 2:1-2). Prophecy is for saints alone. Long centuries ago the Holy Spirit revealed this great truth to the prophet Daniel. *"Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and **none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand**"* (Dan. 12:9-10). Of course any man can

understand the morbid nonsense that is preached as prophecy by the masses today. Anybody can understand the drivel fed the people in books like *The Late Great Planet Earth* or *Left Behind*. Any fool can understand foolishness. But not even the carnal-minded among Christians can understand true prophecy! God does not whisper His secrets to those who will abuse that confidence. Merchandising entertaining and spell-binding books to make money is not evidence of either revelation or depth in God. And so the carnal-minded, even in the church, are without knowledge. The “wicked” of which Daniel wrote are not necessarily those who practice outward sin, but those who have not received a love of the truth and serve the serpent by subscribing to his lies and delusions, however inoffensive they may seem, thus defiling those who listen and dragging them down the road which ends in spiritual stagnation and loss. *“But the wise shall understand, and shall shine as the brightness of the firmament”* (Dan. 12:10,3).

In the thirteenth chapter of the Revelation the awesome prophecy is given of two beasts terrible in power and strength that dominate all the inhabitants of the earth and make war against the saints. As we approach this scene may I say that it’s not surprising that most Christians, at the mere mention of the events that are portrayed in this portion of the book, start conjuring up mental images of grotesque beasts, one world government tyranny, or a super-man antichrist brutally killing the saints or imposing the fearful “mark of the beast” in their right hand or in their forehead, thus forever sealing their doom in eternal hell-fire and damnation. Thousands of churches and teachers use such apocalyptic imagery to frighten people into confessing their sins and “getting right with God.” Very often, their hearers do not truly get converted to a loving and intimate relationship with the Lord; they merely cry their eyes out and beg God for mercy in order to escape His wrath. As soon as the fear factor is discredited or wears off, the so-called repentance often loses its effect.

I would point out here that there are no chapter divisions in the original text of the Revelation, and armed with this understanding it may be clearly seen that the events of chapter thirteen are the continuation of the great drama unfolded in chapter twelve. The chapter begins with the conjunction “and” denoting continuity of thought and action. To show the flow we will begin with the last verse of chapter twelve and continue through the first two verses of chapter thirteen. Thus it reads, *“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. 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”* (Rev. 12:17; 13:1-2).

John has been moving around quite a bit in his visions, beholding things happening in the heavens, and those transpiring on earth, as also in the wilderness. The closing verses of chapter twelve position John in the “earth” for that is where “the remnant of her seed” is located. The woman herself had been in the earth until she fled from the face of the serpent far away into the wilderness. So John is not now called up to heaven again, but is placed in the earth, upon the sand of the sea, that unique spot where earth and sea meet. The picture reveals what is going on in the earth-realm, the soulical, cultural, moral, and religious dimensions of human society. ***And it shows just what power and means it is through which the dragon makes war with the remnant of her seed.*** So as soon as the dragon goes to make war with the remnant of her seed, John is found standing in this earth realm, but he stands facing the sea.

This “sand of the sea” is the realm of earth in closest proximity to the sea — in fact washed by the waves crashing upon it with the ebb and flow of the tides. Call to mind that the term “the sand of the sea” was used to refer to the seed of Abraham in Genesis 22:17, and to Jacob’s seed in Genesis 32:12. So the sand of the sea has a connection with the people of God. The seed of Abraham and Jacob, that is the *fleshly* Israel, is a fitting type of “the remnant of her seed,” the “great multitude” of the Lord’s redeemed people. The sand of the sea signifies the realm of earth where abides “the remnant of her seed,” the rest of the Lord’s people who are not identified as part either of the manchild company of overcoming sons of God or the woman-bride of Christ. Though they are counted as the Lord’s people, they dwell in an exceedingly fleshly, carnal, and worldly condition, as close as one can get to the unregenerate state of the wicked and yet not be in it!

“Epic” — “thrilling” — “bound to hold your attention!” Words like these are often used to describe books, plays, and screen productions, and without doubt these terms can be applied to the visions John saw as recorded in chapter thirteen of the Revelation! John beholds how out of the sea there emerges a frightful monster, a beast, indeed a *wild beast*, as it is in the Greek, ferocious and ravenous of nature. If we compare the term “beast” with the term “dragon” it is clear that the beast out of the sea is *not* the same as the dragon who is in the earth! The beast is not Satan! The “dragon” has been cast into the *earth*, but now a “beast” rises up out of the *sea*. Individually, the beast represents the same thing as the sea out of which he rises, that is, the body-realm, the carnal nature of the flesh man, the natural man, the wicked man, man at the lowest level of his being, the man of sin who is motivated, dominated, and controlled by the satanic spirit. YET THIS BEAST IS SOMETHING MORE THAN THAT! The scene here is not merely one of state of being, but of *manifestation, expression, action, organization, proclamation, and power!*

The beast doesn’t remain hidden beneath the turbulent waters of the sea, but rises up into the earth-realm in visible manifestation. He walks, speaks, acts, and accomplishes. The beast blasphemes God and makes war against the saints. Remember the dragon went to *make war* against the remnant of her seed? Ah, here is how he does it! This is the carnal nature, the man of sin, *manifested* in a visible, organized, and powerful apparatus! In meditating upon these things a strange and wonderful unfolding pervaded my spirit and the truth of this became exceedingly clear. It is my deep conviction that this beast signifies the outward expression of THE WORLD SYSTEM OF MAN. This is the beast lurking beneath the surface of the deep, which rises up from our sea (fleshly nature) having many heads (manifestations of authority), many horns (organized powers), and spewing blasphemies from its mouth. It is a ferocious and vast system originating right out of human nature! And this system relentlessly makes war against the spiritual life of God’s people!

In many instances the pictorial language of the Bible is similar to the manner of speech customarily employed by man. Throughout millenniums, beasts of one kind or another have been used to symbolize kingdoms, or governments. A couched lion was the symbol of the Pharaoh’s right to rule over ancient Egypt. Today we have the British lion, the Russian bear, the Chinese dragon, the American eagle, and many more. In like manner, the Holy Spirit uses beasts to represent kingdoms, or governments. In the seventh chapter of Daniel’s prophecy, four beasts are depicted, to represent four kingdoms, which are interpreted by most Bible teachers as Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. What a lucid picture a wild beast is of a selfish and cruel government exploiting the people under its control and appropriating their resources for the furtherance of their own selfish ends!

I would draw your attention to the fact that the expression “*I...saw a beast rise up out of the sea*” is literally in the Greek, “*I saw a wild beast ascending out of the sea.*” My friend Jonathan Mitchell, in his splendid expanded and amplified translation of the New Testament correctly renders the expression, “...and then I saw a little animal (or beast) *progressively climbing up* (or repeatedly ascending) from out of the midst of the sea.” John did not say, “I saw a beast *ascend*,” as a limited, one-time event, but *ascending* — denoting a continuous action. It is ongoing. It is constantly being fulfilled. By way of illustration, let us suppose I am talking with my wife on my cell phone while standing in front of Niagara Falls. I say to Lorain, “I see the water flowing over Niagara Falls — it is awesome!” Now, I would not mean by that description that the only time water flows over Niagara Falls is at the precise moment I happen to be there. By no means! I am simply describing an on-going action — the water has been flowing for eons, is now flowing, and shall continue to flow. But for one brief moment in time I stood transfixed before a constant, unceasing scene. That, my beloved, is exactly the idea John describes when he says, “I saw a beast *ascending* out of the sea.” It cannot be bound by, nor does it predict or specify, any actual historical or future event. Instead, the beast is ascending, he is *always ascending* out of the sea of *human corruption*. Why are so many human organizations, institutions, and governments *corrupt*? Think about it! There is your answer. The world system of man — government, economics, commerce, military, education, science, art, entertainment, medicine, religion — these and many more are at all times and in all places arising out of the mind, imagination, heart, and will of the natural man. It never ceases! The oppressive world system pervades every area of human activity. (Jonathan Mitchell’s translation of the New Testament may be ordered online from Amazon.com. Go to Amazon.com and type in the New Testament by Jonathan Mitchell, or you can visit www.jonathanmitchellnewtestament.com to read sample passages, and then order from Amazon via that web site).

The “end time” teachers want you to believe that this beast is a specific world government or world ruler who will suddenly emerge at some future date, take over a large portion of the world for seven years, and fight against God. By focusing attention on a future world empire controlled by some brilliant mad-man, who inscribes an actual number on the hapless citizens of the world, they distract the Lord’s people from the present reality which is lived out in the experience of each of us. And while Christians are busy chasing their fantasies of dreadful world events yet to come, the wild beast is busy wreaking havoc in the daily lives of untold millions of believers. John tells us that “*the whole world was **astonished** and followed the beast*” (Rev. 13:3). Truly we can all agree with this inspired statement when we see by the spirit that this wild beast represents the carnal, humanistic, deceived, corrupt, and evil **world system of man** that stands in stark contrast to the **glorious, golden City of God!**

Haven’t you known people who were so sold-out to their vocation, to money, houses, lands, education, ego, position, power, religious works, or some pleasure that they had no place in their heart for God? Such people are mesmerized by the spirit of the world and live under the authority and domination of the world system of man, not under the authority of the mind of Christ. The fact is that the world system, with the idolatrous church system as its cohort, deceives the masses of people into worshipping (paying homage to, selling their soul to) this beast — even to the very elect! We will never understand the mystery until we are thoroughly conscious of the fact that the beast is *within us* in the form of our own fleshly nature and carnal mind — the troubled sea from whence he emerges.

Are you, dear friend, a dweller in the heavens, or an inhabiter of the earth? If you are looking after those things that are coming on the earth, if you mind earthly things, then you will live out your life on the level of your vision and you will be captured by the bestial system of this world. The overcoming sons of God who are sealed with the mind of Christ have *discerned* in their spirit the ominous and destructive influence of the dragon’s manifestation in the bestial system of the world, and they have resisted it with patience and endurance. They knew from the moment they received their call to sonship that they were fighting a spiritual battle and they put on the whole armor of God so that having fought to the end they might stand and remain victors on the field! Oh, yes! And these overcome the beast and they don’t belong to the earth anymore. They belong in the heavens where they dwell! They are looking after the things their Father is doing, they mind heavenly things! What is happening in the heavens is all that pertains to these victorious ones! They belong to the heavens where they walk with God in the spirit!

The wild beast is described in the text just as John must have beheld it in his vision. What he saw he describes first. Naturally, the heads appeared first of all, and John tells us it was a beast having seven heads. Then John notices the horns upon the heads and informs us that there were ten of them. He further notices as details in the description that the ten horns each had a crown, ten royal diadems, and that on the heads were names of blasphemy written. Finally, as the beast lumbers up out of the waters, making its way onto the beach, he tells us that its general appearance was like that of a leopard, while its feet were like those of a bear, and its mouth a lion’s mouth. Let us prayerfully consider the meaning of this highly symbolic picture. The *sea* is the birthplace, the source, the origin, of this beast. Throughout the book of Revelation we have seen the great truth that almost all the events in the book take place in one of three dimensions: HEAVEN, EARTH, and SEA.

Throughout the scriptures the sea is a type of the inner storms and turbulent nature of the Adamic man. The prophet Isaiah penned these inspired words: “The *wicked* are **like the troubled sea**, which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked” (Isa. 57:20-21). Jude also described wicked men when he said, “These are **raging waves of the sea**, foaming out their shame” (Jude 13). The beloved John on the isle of Patmos, had a vision of a great whore sitting on *many waters*. The angel revealed the meaning of the many waters, saying, “the waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are **peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues**” (Rev. 17:15). I think there could be no better symbol by which to represent the people and society of any day than by the waters of the sea. At times the human race is calm and peaceful, then rough and boisterous, and then dangerous and treacherous. Have you not noticed how that at one election the people will whimsically submerge some political party or some candidate in a great deluge of disgust and in the very next election raise them to the superlative crest of popular favor. To attempt to pacify the people is as difficult as it would be to pacify the waters of the sea.

Man could accomplish no more than the legendary Canute who tried to sweep back the waves. Nothing seems more futile, so restless as this human sea!

No one can dispute the fact that it is this restless, turbulent, raging, evil heart of the fleshly man that inspires every evil and devilish perversion, and has filled the world with ever increasing confusion, faithlessness, immorality, falsehood, fraud, hatred, bigotry, violence, tyranny, oppression, greed, cruelty, strife, war, and bloodshed. Ah, the *sea* is the *lowest realm* on earth, and this vast sea of fleshly Adamic humanity represents mankind at his lowest point — as bad off as man can be! Individually it speaks of the lowest aspect of our human nature and life — the *body* with its passions and lusts. Collectively the sea represents *society* as it is guided by physical desires and impulses and aspirations that are restless, driving, compelling, and raging out of control! A lot of people, especially here in America, like to think that our society and our government have been born right out of God and the Bible. But I do not hesitate to say that all *human government* is part and parcel of the *beast that ascends out of the sea*! As one simple illustration of this fact someone said, “If you think taxation without representation was bad — you should see taxation now *with representation*!” Oh, yes, the same old beast is stomping on us!

There are wars and rumors of wars and terrorism that strike fear into the hearts of men. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain! Men’s hearts are failing them for fear in looking after those things which are coming upon the earth. It is more than a raging sea of evil — it is a virtual *tsunami of self-destruction*! As we look at the sad earth today, it is plain for every eye to see that, flowing from the corrupt minds of the corrupt rulers of every corrupt government on earth (and they all are!), taught in the schools, practiced in business and in the courts, and propagated by the media and Hollywood, we find the evil fruit of sin and death manifesting itself. Everywhere on the planet mankind is being overwhelmed by its evil until the earth is filled with violence and the thoughts and imaginations of men’s hearts are only evil continually.

The natural man is not getting better, as some affirm. The unregenerate man, old Adam, *is corruptible*. That means not only that he is dying, but that he is *continually being brought into a worse state and inferior condition* leading to destruction. He is on a never-ending *downward spiral* into oblivion. Is not this the terrible danger of the hour in which we live — enough bombs stockpiled to not only blow planet earth into smithereens but twenty more like it! And all in the hands of unpredictable, corruptible men, and terrorists everywhere on the prowl. You may suffer from the illusion that human nature has improved during the past seventy-five years since the horror of the Holocaust and the savage warfare in which fifty million men, women, and children were blown into eternity, but you are mistaken. Human nature *never improves*, old Adam can *never reform*, for his is a *corruptible nature*, growing steadily more vicious, deceitful, and immoral. The *sea* has never for long become calm, my friend, and the *beast* has never been tamed!

The famous preacher of London, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, once described that traumatic moment when he came face to face with the beast within his inner sea. He wrote, “There was a day, or shall I say a night, when as I walked abroad, I came hard upon a spot which shall remain forever engraved in my memory. For there before me lying on the ground I saw the form of a man, or, shall I rather say, a body, a corpse. As I drew closer with bated breath I discovered to my absolute horror that it was a friend of mine. Yes, it was my closest friend. As I looked down into his face and saw the expression of pure agony that marked his dead countenance, I wondered who could have done such a wicked thing as this. Then I saw that his hands were rent by gaping holes, made evidently by large iron spikes, and thus also were rent his feet. His side was ripped open and his back was red with the marks of scourge. Around his brow there were puncture marks where blood had trickled down into his eyes and left its paths upon his face.

“‘Who could have thus injured this one who never injured anyone but all his life went about doing good?’ Then there began to well up within me a feeling of anger and resentment. Who, indeed, could have done such a thing as this? If I could but lay my hands upon them they would feel the sting of my wrath! Could I devise some torture for them, that they should know it full well. If, indeed, this were some criminal, some injurious person, some murderer, then we might say that he had received his due reward, but who could have harmed this one: the holiest of holy, the gentlest of the gentle? As I thought on these things, suddenly I heard behind me the sound of a footfall and I knew instinctively that the murderer had returned. I whirled around and reached out to grab him, but in the darkness I could see no one. I knew that he was there

and I groped for him in the dark. I could not feel him, but I could hear his breathing ever closer to me. Finally, I realized as I groped blindly in the blackness, that he was even closer than my hands. Suddenly I realized that I had him and as I cried out, 'Aha, I have you!' I discovered that my hand was on my own breast. And, lo, the murderer was in my heart! I was filled with an overwhelming sense of vileness and wretchedness as I realized that right there before my murdered Beloved, I was harboring the murderer in my own bosom! I fell to my knees and I wept the words, 'Twas you, my sins, my cruel sins, his chief tormentors were. Every crime was a nail and unbelief the spear'" — end quote.

The scriptures speak of two corporate men — a heavenly man and an earthly man. The humanity that functions in its own conceptions and ideas, bears the image of the earthly. The lowest of this humanity is pictured as dwelling in the sea. They are bestial, they have a beastly nature. The desire of a beast is to *nourish itself* and to *multiply itself*. It has no understanding of any higher thing. It has its own spirit, whereby it lives, and grows, and consumes itself, and that is all it does. Those who have no desire to know God or do His will make up the great sea of humanity; everyone has gone his own way. They know nothing of the will of God, the ways of God, or the word of God. They have no spiritual, pure, godly, righteous, divine or heavenly life in them. They have no conception of these things, nor do they care. Human government originates out of this sea of mankind. It is earthly, sensual, and devilish. But the heavenly man has come to a new reality! He is man in the likeness and after the image of God! Human government does not flow from this man — the Kingdom of God flows from him! The society of this celestial realm is governed by righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost! Its scepter is the will of the Father, its law is the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, its educational system is the living word of God, its military wields the sword of the Spirit, and its social program is *love one another!*

Now let us consider a little further this beast that comes out of the sea. We have said that this beast, when he manifests on earth, is the world system of man. Yet — is he not a beast *in the sea* before he ascends *out of the sea*? May God grant that we may truly see that this beast *in the sea* is the bestial nature of the natural man out from which the world system emerges! The wise man once said, "*I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that **they themselves are beasts***" (Eccles. 3:18). The apostle Peter also mentions the natural man, likening him to a brute beast. "*But these, as **natural brute beasts**, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of things that they understand not: and shall utterly perish in their own corruption*" (II Pet. 2:2). As Peter suggests, the natural man possesses animal-like qualities. We often hear people likened to animals! Animals follow their instincts relentlessly, oblivious to discipline. These characteristics are evident in some familiar expressions. A woman who quietly slips around maligning others has been called "catty." A man who pursues women indiscriminately is called a "wolf." A treacherous man is a "snake in the grass." A grouchy old man is "an old bear." A man who preys on those who are in difficult financial straits, who loans money at exorbitant interest rates, is called a "shark." A coward is called a "chicken." A cunning, tricky, deceitful man is called a "fox." A dull person is an "ox," a stubborn person a "mule," a glutton is a "hog," a filthy man is a "pig," and a foolish person is an "ape."

The story is told of two friends who early one morning discussed the events of the coming day over a fresh cup of coffee. A noisy flock of crows flew overhead, reminding one of the men of an interesting fact about crows. "Crows watch out for each other," he said. "When a flock feeds in a cornfield, two sentinels stand guard at each end of the field. They warn the others in special 'crow language' of any approaching danger. If something should happen because the two guards got careless and failed to warn the flock, the retribution is savage, for crows do not know the attribute of mercy. The rest will viciously attack and kill the two who didn't do their job." "I've never heard that before," said the other man, "but it reminds me of an unusual trait that chickens have. Chickens are perfectionists. A man who raises them told me that if one chicken is smaller than the rest or has an open sore anywhere on its body, the others will attack it and peck it to death. They can't accept the different, the sick, or the wounded." What in the world do these two stories have to do with the beast out of the sea? Before you conclude that this point is strictly for the birds, let me hasten to make the point. This message is not about birds at all, but about the natural man who lives and acts out of a *bestial nature!*

My earnest prayer is that God will give understanding to mature minds to hear what the Spirit saith unto the elect of the Lord. I defy anyone to give me a geographical, physical, historical point of reference to

chapter thirteen of the book of Revelation. Ah, I have heard hundreds! There are as many *guesses* as there are commentators, I suppose. But let us consider. “*And I stood upon the sand of the sea...*” The question follows: Which sand of what sea? If you wish to speak words that are generic, you could not make a more generic statement than this: “I stood upon the sand of the sea.” In contemporary terms we would say, “I went to the beach!” Yet John did not literally stand upon the sand of any beach in the whole world, for this was a *vision*. What sea was he looking at? Although John was on the isle of Patmos it wasn’t the Aegean Sea he was gazing across. No beast ever came up out of the Aegean Sea having seven heads and ten horns! He was looking at the sea of the world, the sea of humanity, the vast empire of the darkness and wickedness of mankind, for on another occasion we receive the explanation of the symbol, “*The waters which thou sawest...are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues*” (Rev. 17:15).

Now, can you not see that the beast that rose up out of the sea is not natural. What John saw come up out of the sea represents the physical expression and manifestation of the nature and spirit that creates the turbulence in the sea. We must ask, “What kind of a beast ascends up out from the sea?” First, it is only at the end of the chapter that we discover that John wasn’t seeing a *beast*, but he was seeing the manifest nature of *mankind*! Meditate prayerfully, my beloved, upon these inspired words: “*Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of **the beast**: for it is the number of **a man***” (Rev. 13:18). The number of A MAN! The great truth is that there have never been but *two* men upon this earth — the first Adam and the last Adam, the first man and the second man, the carnal man and the spiritual man, the earthly man and the heavenly man! Thus the Lord has revealed that the beast is a metaphor for the manifest nature and worldly organization of the NATURAL MAN!

You can look for a beast in the ancient pagan Roman empire or in the so-called Holy Roman Empire, or you can look for a beast in Brussels, Moscow, Jerusalem, or Washington D.C., but that is not the beast you should be concerned about. It’s the one lurking in your members, the bestial nature of the flesh man! None can deny that there are motions of sin that are alive in our members. Even though I was walking with God I used to sin, and I didn’t sin because I wanted to, I tried to stop many times, but the force of sin was stronger than my human will. It was like the little four-year-old rascal in Sunday School who blurted out, “Oh, I wish it weren’t so easy to be bad!” Let me assure you, my friend, sin is not just an act — sin is a *force*, a *power*. When Adam sinned and released sin into the world, he didn’t release *actions*, he released a *nature* that *causes* the actions. Let us now take special heed to Paul’s teaching in Romans 7:15-18. “*For I do not understand my own actions, I am baffled, bewildered. I do not practice or accomplish what I wish, but I do the very thing I loathe. Now if I do what is contrary to my desire, that means that I acknowledge and agree that the Law is good and that I take sides with it. However, it is no longer I who do the deed, but the sin which is at home in me and has possession of me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot perform it. I have the intention and urge to do what is right, but no power to carry it out.*”

On the other hand, righteousness is not just something you do — it is a spirit, a force, a power, an inward *nature* that *causes* you to do! Those who grow up into the nature of the Christ have released within them the very life-force of the Christ who causes them to do righteousness as automatically as they formerly did sin. When doing righteousness becomes *natural* for you, then you are both living and walking *in the Spirit*. Once I sinned because I couldn’t help it, I had to; and now I am doing righteousness because I can’t help it, I have to! It’s my *nature*, the law of my life, I’m captivated by it! It is indeed wonderful! The inspired apostle put it this way, “*For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus **hath made me free from the law of sin and death***” (Rom. 8:2).

Let me reiterate again that it is this *bestial nature* of man out of which arises the *bestial systems* that dominate the whole of mankind. Let us see how this is so. The following observations are based in part upon the writings of another with whom my spirit bears witness. One of the greatest dangers to the people of God proceeds from the many counterfeits the world provides — fellowships and brotherhoods galore. Man is not naturally social; but he does desire some kind of connection with other humans, which is a different thing. Man by nature lives in a herd, as cows or wolves do. He is not a solitary animal, like a cat. You will find, therefore, that because of the herd instinct men would rather live with people whom they hate and detest, constantly slander, backbite and endeavor to injure — they would rather live and quarrel every day — than live alone. Loneliness they cannot stand. So, by a tyrannous instinct we are driven to form cliques,

groups, and clubs, and our behavior in these cliques and groups is the same as that of beasts in herds. The individual beasts in a herd will fight with one another for a piece of flesh; bulls will strive for their mates to the death, until a common danger or enemy threatens their herd. Then, for a while, they will drop their quarrels, and fight or flee together, united by a common fear, and a common hatred.

Is that not precisely the way in which members of a nation behave! In time of war we are a nation; in time of peace we are a mob. We fight with one another, one party against the other; we throw mud, criticize, condemn, strive, abuse, detest, impeach, and hate one another until some common hatred or common fear unites us, and then we stand together only as long as that fear and hatred last. What we call patriotism, is at its roots very little else but the instinct of the herd. The nations are herds, and the armies and navies and air forces are their teeth and claws. In time of war, under the drive of this Adamic instinct, men will give their life-blood for the nation; in time of peace they will cheat their government out of every dollar they possibly can, and their country is the very last thing they work for. They will work for greed, for gain, for advantage, for their partisan agendas, for power, always for SELF! And they will step on everybody they have to in order to climb the ladder to the top.

Nor are the nations the only herds of men and women. Men in great trade unions, in political parties, in businesses and corporations, in bureaucracies, and a hundred more behave in the same utterly irrational and bestial way; and, alas! the same mark of the beast is evident upon all the religious systems of man, including the church system. Who does not know of the jealousy, bitterness, backbiting, slandering, accusations, and political in-fighting that can break out, even among those who pride themselves in being the most spiritual among the Lord's people? Who does not know how good work can be hindered by the fact that this person cannot work with that person, and brother Smith will be insanely jealous of brother Brown when he begins to assert himself in the congregation, because then he will no longer be a big frog in a little pond? Consider the doctrinal debates, the excommunications for "heresy," the glint of hatred that comes into the eyes of those who encounter the other side of a church split — those who now become members of another herd. A pair of black wolves will tear a white wolf to pieces for exactly the same reason, or unreason, that one church clique hates another church clique. Both of them will give reasons to justify this animal instinct of viciousness! Through my many years of ministry some of the most hateful and hurtful words and actions I have witnessed have been among believers in the churches!

Paul Mueller wrote of this "beast out of the sea," pointing out that the scriptures refer to him as "Leviathan, the piercing serpent or dragon in the sea, which also represents the Adamic nature, which is to be wounded, and then he is to be slain or destroyed. Thus it is written, *'In that day the LORD with His sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and He shall slay the dragon that is in the sea'* (Isa. 27:1). 'Leviathan,' from the original language, is 'a wreathed animal, i.e., a serpent, especially the crocodile or some other large sea monster, also a symbol of Babylon' (from Strong's Concordance). I believe 'leviathan,' the crooked, piercing serpent, to be the seed of Satan; it is the carnal nature in all of us. It is that carnal, sinful, deceptive and corrupt nature within all mankind that has produced the three-fold realm of the great harlot, Babylon, which now fills the whole world with its sinful, corrupt, and counterfeit systems. As a sea monster, or a sea serpent, 'leviathan' dwells within the whole human race; it is that power of Satan that leads people, especially our leaders, to lie, deceive, and destroy. We know that 'leviathan,' or the man of sin within us, is a sea monster, for 'his father' is *'the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan'* (Rev. 20:2). Jesus explained how those 'tares,' or how 'leviathan' the sea monster, got into the human race in one of His parables (see Matthew 13:24-30). 'Leviathan,' therefore, is the son of Satan, the seed of the serpent.

"Both the 'beast' and the 'false prophet' are ruling the nations in the world today! There is not a nation or a people on this earth today, except for the elect, who are not ruled by sinful, old Adam, or 'leviathan,' the sea monster and the 'false prophet,' who is in league with Satan, the great dragon, the sea serpent, or the venomous, destructive 'beast.' Therefore, a spiritual war must take place to unseat those two evil entities, clear the earth of their unholy reign of evil, terror, and destruction, and establish the Kingdom of God in all the earth as a theocracy, or as the only government in all the earth! The anointed Word of God tells us of the destruction of those two entities: *'Both of them were hurled alive into the fiery lake that burns and blazes with brimstone'*" — end quote.

In Revelation 13:1-2 the Spirit describes in graphic pictures what this terrible beastly nature is all about. In the various beastly forms John saw, which make up the one beast, we see the characteristics of human nature as manifested through the agency of the world system of man.

“He was like a leopard.” The leopard is one of the most beautiful of animals. His coat is sleek and exotic of color. His spots are a delicate cream color set against a background of exquisite brown. He is one of the most graceful in his movements, agile, swift, and dexterous. But he is also one of the most cold-blooded, cruel species ever known! Is that not an apt portrait of the world system of man in all its glittering allure and its ultimate spiritual destructiveness!

“His feet were as the feet of a bear.” In comparison to the size of an animal, the bear has the largest and the strongest foot of any animal extant. No other animal has such strength of grip in its paws. He rises above all that opposes his reign and tramples upon all who stand before. The spirit of the world is the spirit of Self-interest, Self-exaltation, and greed which steps on and crushes anyone or anything that is in ones’ way to hinder his mad scramble to dominance — to position, fame, gain, prestige, or power. Ah, the world looks as beautiful as a leopard, but its feet are very ugly and ruthless, opposite to its outward appearance. Its systems, whether business, politics, finance, religion, or otherwise, will “use” you, usurp your time and strength, consume your wealth, burn out your health and soul, and then cast you aside as dispensable refuse. It will crush you to death! It has the feet of a bear.

“His mouth was as the mouth of a lion.” The lion startles the forest with his deep-toned solemn roars. And there is mighty power behind that awesome roar! The lion is the largest and most majestic of the feline family. The *voice* bespeaks the *word*, the *propaganda*, the *edicts*, the *pronouncements*, the *rules*, *regulations*, *laws*, and *creeds* of the world system of man. The pronouncements of the leaders of the world’s systems, of kings, presidents, prime ministers, generals, terrorists, scientists, educators, doctors, popes, archbishops, bishops, preachers, self-appointed apostles, and self-styled prophets have often shaken mighty empires and filled nations and peoples with consternation. Where this beast opens its mouth and begins to talk, be it in politics or commercial life, in the market or in the science class, in the media or in the pulpit, in the courts or in government bureaucracies, there everything must be silent and bow. And everything *is* silent and *does* bow before this beast! When, for instance, the state declares a law to be valid, no one asks, “What does God say about this?” When the courts ban God and His word from the halls of every government institution, when the courts remove prayer and the Bible and discipline from our schools, when the school boards decree condoms to be made available to ten, eleven, and twelve year old students without parental consent, when the states legislate gay-marriage, when religious leaders hand down edicts to be obeyed upon pain of excommunication or death, to mention only a few milder examples of the lion’s roar — the ruthless power of government — *the adoration of man’s order rules supreme*. The mouth of the lion has roared, and everyone is frightened into obedience!

The world system is made up of those *earthly things* which *seduce* men from God. Put it all together, and it is those *purposes*, those *pursuits*, those *pleasures*, those *practices*, and those *places* where God is not considered, consulted, nor wanted. It might be religious, it might be cultivated, it might be refined, it might be intellectual, but it is all anti-Christ and controlled by the spirit of the dragon. And, my friend, it matters not which world system it is — the religious world system, the educational system, the political, scientific, social, economical, or entertainment and pleasure — there can be no doubt in any spiritual mind that Satan is the god and ruler of them all!

So every day mankind moves in this sphere of these world systems, inhaling and inevitably exhaling the atmosphere of these false values and worldly deceptions of the carnal mind and the human intellect. You see, the beast bombards mankind — the men, the women, the young people and the children that make up this world — through the eye-gate, the ear-gate, and the mind-gate with his *lies* and *errors* about the origin of life, the meaning of life, the purpose of life, the nature of God, the destiny of man, truth, righteousness, sin, judgment, hell, and a thousand other things. He bombards them with his *insinuations*, his *imitations*, and his *counterfeits*. He bombards them with *dishonesty*, *false values*, *false images of God*, *worldly wisdom*, *lewdness*, and *wickedness* as being the true way of life. He goes about bombarding them with *corruption* and *impurity* as acceptable lifestyles, making a joke of sin, and goes about calling evil good, and good evil; putting darkness for light, and light for darkness; putting bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter (Isa. 5:20).

And what means does the beast use to bombard us with these things? My beloved, he uses false preachers and teachers, political rallies, the editorial pages of newspapers, the magazines, the billboards along our streets and highways, the television screens, radios, movie theaters, school class rooms, psychiatrists and psychologists, and even bombards us with lies from person to person! The beast is working — the lion is roaring — in each and every one of these ways as they give their *thoughts*, their *ideas*, their *impressions*, their *opinions*, their *views*, their *beliefs*, their *convictions* on all the subjects and circumstances that confront mankind. All of this is controlled by the beast and has his mark upon it, for in most cases they are half-truths, and often no truth at all! All are passing their *judgments*, their *evaluations*, and drawing their worldly *conclusions* about the true nature of all things, about good and evil, about the world and how to govern it. This roar of the lion pierces the hearing of all men at all times TO KEEP HUMANITY CONFUSED AS TO WHAT THE TRUTH REALLY IS!

What confusion! So many *voices*, all telling of their hopes and aspirations, their dreams and expectations! You can turn the dial of a radio or flip the channels of the television and find a hundred different voices telling you what truth is; and how are you ever going to sort it out? At all times and in all places these things bombard the eye-gate, the ear-gate, and the mind-gate of mankind; and they meet with reception in the affections because every natural man is *earthly minded*. Only as God in His sovereign grace and power comes to a man and rescues him from this mass of confusion — only then is he *given power to become a son of God!* “*And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship (pay homage to) him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*” (Rev. 13:8).

These ruling people, orders, agencies, institutions, judges, presidents, law enforcers, preachers, teachers, “experts” in this field and that, are spoken of as the very high authorities of this world system, as though there existed no higher authority to which they also were subject. One and all are members of the *body of the monster* out of the sea which has received its great might from the dragon, that beast which is so powerful and mighty that even those who call themselves Christians pay their homage before it. This earthly, fleshly, carnal, material, temporal, animalistic tendency reigns supreme, to which everyone must bow, and to which the masses of mankind do bow willingly. But that mouth which speaks such great things is also the mouth that devours everything! He looks so majestic in his rule, that sleek leopard, that roaring lion! But he’s not for he also eats his prey. So it is with the world systems of man, ruling in pride and pomp, yet within they’re full of evil and devouring. All is used to feed this hungry beast — the poor, the widow, the orphan, the people’s time, their money, their liberty, their sons and daughters, their spiritual life, their very souls — all are devoured by him and are his food and support!

To be continued...

J. PRESTON EBY