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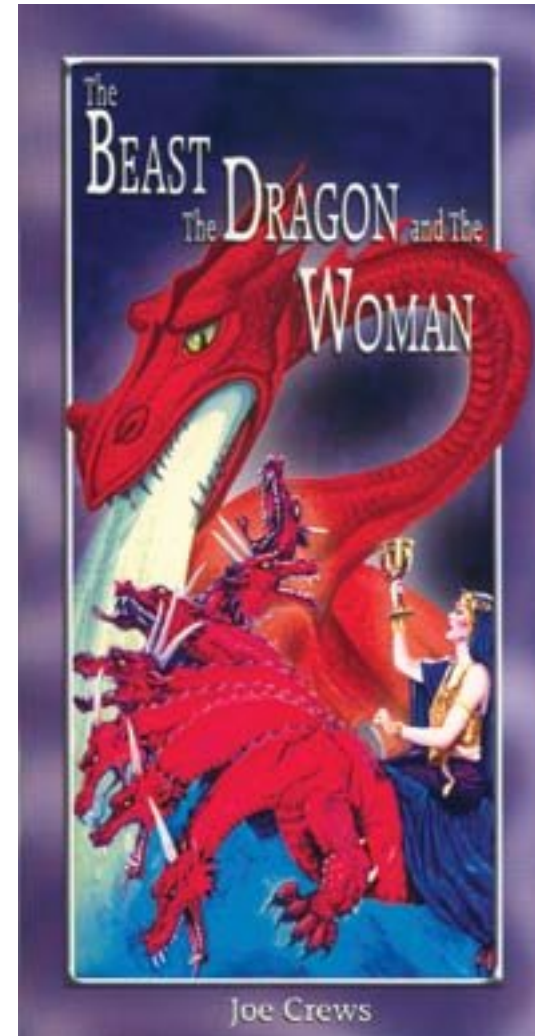
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I. THE BEAST AND HIS BACKGROUND

The most fearful warning of punishment found anywhere in the Bible is contained in Revelation 14:9, 10: "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb."

This description is so alarming and so very unlike all other verses which deal with God's character that we almost recoil in horror. But it points clearly to a time when God's mercy will be withheld from those who have persistently rejected the authority of Heaven. It will be an unparalleled performance on the part of God in His relationship to the human family. For almost 6,000 years His punishing judgments upon the most wicked men have been tempered with mercy. But now the measure of rebellion reaches a point which makes it necessary for God to intervene and to expose the terrible extent of man's treason against God's government.

Right here we are curious to know more about the sin which provokes God's strange act of fiery punishment. Notice that the final issue involves a false allegiance to the beast power, so often referred to in Bible prophecy. At last the world shall stand divided into two great camps: those who worship the true God, and those who worship the beast of Revelation 13. But what issue leads to this massive division of the world's people? After describing the fate of the false worshipers in Revelation 14:9-11, John has this to say in the very next verse: "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." We see here a startling

contrast between those who follow the beast and those who follow the Lamb.

Please note that the issue revolves around the keeping of God's commandments. Those who do not have the mark of the beast are described as obedient to those commandments, and the rest suffer the wrath of God. This agrees perfectly with Paul's statement in Romans 6:16, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"

The highest allegiance is accorded through the act of obedience. At last, the majority of earth's inhabitants will accept the authority of an antichrist counterfeit power, in disobedience to God's great ten-commandment laws. Every individual will be on one side or the other. The Bible makes it very clear that life or death revolves around the final decision concerning the beast of Revelation 13.

Strangely enough, modern theologians have simply ignored the warning message of Revelation 14, relating to the mark of the beast. The interest of multitudes has been destroyed by the influence of pastors who would not take seriously the solemn words of John's prophecy. Often it is dismissed as a confused, insignificant letter, applying only to a local problem in the early church. For some reason the book called Revelation is counted a sealed book, instead of the obviously revealed truth which its name implies. But please note the promise made to those who search out the truth of this wonderful book, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand." Revelation 1:3.

Before delving into John's vivid account of that final clash between Christ and Satan, let us take time to examine the contestants in the conflict. When and how did it get started, and how will it end?

Two Powerful Contenders

Even though the climax in the great struggle takes place in the very end of human history when all the world is arraigned in two opposing camps, the controversy between Christ and Satan has been going on for almost 6,000 years. It started in heaven with the rebellion of Lucifer against God's rule of the universe. The story of that beautiful angel who coveted the position of God Himself is revealed through a number of Old Testament prophetic writings. Isaiah says in reference to this glorious being: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High." Isaiah 14: 12-1.

The seeds of that selfish revolt of one leading angel spread rapidly to affect the loyalty of other angels. Soon one-third of the heavenly host had joined the disaffection of Lucifer, and the great controversy was under way - a controversy that was to rage for over 6,000 years, and which would finally demand the decision of every living creature in heaven and on earth.

The immediate result of the discord was war in heaven which climaxed in the complete expulsion of Lucifer from the presence of God and the loyal angels. John describes it this way: "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." Revelation 12:7-9.

No more was the fallen angel to be known as Lucifer, signifying "star of the morning," but Satan, which means "adversary." The conflict had now been transferred from heaven down to this earth. Here it will continue until it reaches a desperate climax in the division of earth's multitudes for or against the commandments of God. Just as the

rebellion began by disloyalty to the authority of God, so it will end by a defiance of His authority as vested in the law of His government.

Satan has been here with his evil angels from the time he was banished from the regions of light. With devilish cunning, he has experimented with successive forms of warfare against God and His plan for this world. Through various insidious approaches he has continued his efforts to overthrow the authority of God. The purpose of this booklet is to expose the massive assaults which have been made, and are being made, by Satan against the foundations of truth.

Every generation has witnessed a new manifestation of that evil power in its untiring warfare with Heaven's program to save the world. The final form of the enemy opposition will be that of the beast of Revelation 13. That counterfeit power will be set up in deadly conflict with the commandments of God. The whole world will be called to take sides. The confederation of evil will consolidate for a desperate last-ditch struggle to engage the loyalty of earth's inhabitants. The issues will be clearly revealed, and no one can remain neutral. Obedience to God or to Satan, as manifested through the beast power, will be the only alternatives open to man.

A Life Or Death Issue

Now, with this little background of the contenders, let us look closer at the biblical setting for the last decisive engagement in the great controversy. Please note that the beast of Revelation 13 symbolizes a gigantic antichrist power which attempts to displace God entirely. Here is the description of that power in the language of Revelation 13:1-7: "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. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the

world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations."

We cannot fail to see here an unprecedented scale of opposition to God and those who follow Him. Later in this same chapter, we read that this beast power will exercise so much influence over the earth, that it causes men to receive a mark in their foreheads or hands (Revelation 13:16). Finally, those who have the mark will suffer the terrible wrath of God as described in Revelation 14:9, 10. The wrath of God is further defined in Revelation 15:1 in these words, "Seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God."

The awful nature of those plagues and the extreme sufferings they visit upon those who receive the mark of the beast are fully revealed in the sixteenth chapter of Revelation. We will not dwell on them at this point in detail, but let us remind ourselves again that this issue will involve eternal life or death for all. How earnestly should we seek to understand who the beast represents and how we might avoid that mark! There must be no guesswork or speculation on this vital subject. We must know exactly where the danger lies and how to avoid it.

The average Christian has scarcely even heard about the urgency of this subject. He has not the faintest idea about the beast or his mark, even though his destiny hinges upon the issue. Multitudes of preachers comfort the people in their ignorance of this point. They say, "Don't worry about the beast. It's too complicated to understand. As

long as you love the Lord you will be all right. You can't really know who the beast is." Listen, will God warn us about the fearful danger of this beast - a danger so deadly that it will mean life or death - and then tell us it is impossible to know what it is? Would He say to us, "You will be cast into the fire if you have the mark, but I'm not going to tell you what it is - it's just too bad if you have it"? No, that is not like God. He warns us of a danger that can be avoided. We can know that we are safe from the beast only if we know who the beast is. We can know we are free from the mark only if we know what the mark is.

A Symbolic Animal

Is it possible to understand the mark of the beast? Without fail, we can know and must know. But first we must understand the identity of the prophetic beast itself. Let us establish that this strange, composite animal is not to be taken literally. No one ever saw a creature with the body of a leopard, the mouth of a lion, and the feet of a bear. The prophetic books of the Bible usually deal in types and symbols. This beast represents something. But what does it symbolize? There must be no guessing here. The Bible does not leave any room for doubt. It serves as its own divine commentary and provides the key for understanding the prophecies.

Everything in the Bible description of the beast is symbolic. Consider the water, for example, out of which the animal arises. What does it represent? Read the answer in Revelation 17:15, "And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest ... are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." There can be no quibbling over this point. God clearly explained the meaning of water in prophecy. Once the symbol is interpreted in any prophecy, the rule will apply in every other prophecy. Water will always symbolize people in biblical prophetic imagery.

Now, what about the other parts of the strange, apocalyptic beast? What do they represent? In order to understand the beast we must go back to the Old Testament book of Daniel and compare Scripture with Scripture. The books of Daniel and

Revelation explain each other. They fit together like a hand and glove. Please notice that Daniel had a vision very similar to that of John. It is described in Daniel 7:2, 3: "Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another." He saw the prophetic water just as John did, but Daniel saw four beasts arising instead of only one.

We have already found out that water symbolizes peoples or multitudes, but what do the animals represent? The answer is found in verse 17, "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth." There it is. So plainly worded that no one can question or doubt! God says that animals in prophecy represent nations. Just as we have the American eagle and the Russian bear in our modern political vocabulary, God used animals long, long ago to represent countries also. Then, to be more explicit, God added this in verse 23, "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth." If the fourth animal represented the fourth empire of history, then the first three would have to represent the first three empires.

This explanation becomes more simple and clear when we remember that there have only been four world empires in the earth since the days of Daniel. These kingdoms are referred to often in Bible prophecy and are called by name in some related prophecies of Daniel. Refer to Daniel 8:20,21 and Daniel 11:2 for examples of this. In the second chapter of Daniel the same four world kingdoms are symbolized by four metals in the great statue of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Those four empires are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome.

Four Empires Of History

Will you take a closer look at these animals, one by one, as they arose in the prophet's vision? The first was "like a lion and had eagle's wings." Daniel 7:4. Here we have represented that grand empire of Babylon, so well symbolized by the king of beasts. It was one of the wealthiest, strongest nations ever to exist on the earth. Notice that this

animal has wings. Wings are used in prophetic terminology to symbolize speed. And sure enough, Babylon arose very quickly to take its place as a ruler of the entire world.

From 606 B.C. until 538 B.C. Babylon continued to exercise her extensive authority. But a change was to take place. Daniel saw the second beast, "like unto a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it." Daniel 7:5. After Babylon came the kingdom of Medo-Persia in 538 B.C., the second world empire.

The bear is raised up on one side to represent the fact that Persia was stronger than the Medes. Those two powers were allied together in their domination of the earth. The three ribs probably symbolize the three provinces of that kingdom - Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt.

Then in 331 B.C. Medo-Persia went down, and the third world empire arose. According to the prophecy, "dominion was given to it." Verse 6. It was "like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads." Verse 6. Any schoolboy who has studied his lessons carefully in ancient history will know that Greece arose as the next world ruler. Alexander the Great came marching from the west, laying the world at his feet in a very short time.

The four wings of the leopard denote the exceeding speed with which Alexander subdued the nations. Within eight years he had completely subjugated the world and sat down to weep because there were no more worlds to conquer. But he could not conquer himself; he died as a young man of thirty-three in a drunken debauch. At his death the kingdom was divided among his four leading generals: Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus and Ptolemy. The four heads of the beast represent those divisions of his empire. This brings us to the year 168 B.C. and the downfall of the Grecian empire in that very year. So far, every detail of the prophecy has been fulfilled exactly.

The Terrible Fourth Beast

Now let us notice the rise of the fourth beast, which is "the fourth kingdom upon earth." Verse 23. Although Daniel had seen living wild beasts like those portrayed in the first three prophetic symbols, he had never seen anything resembling the fourth terrible beast. This is the way the Bible describes it: "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it ... and it had ten horns." Verse 7.

As we have already learned, this symbolizes the fourth world empire, which was the iron monarchy of Rome. The extension of its cruel domination of the earth has been well documented in the pages of ancient history. But this powerful nation was also to be divided, as verse 24 indicates, "And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise." Please notice that this is God's interpretation of the ten horns on this animal. Rome would be divided into ten distinct areas.

By following the course of history we discover that the exact fulfillment did come in the year 476 A.D. Fierce tribes came sweeping down from the north country, and overwhelmed the territory of western Europe, dividing it finally into ten parts. Those parts, of course, correspond to the ten toes of the great image of Daniel 2.

All students of history are well acquainted with the names of those tribal conquerors of western Europe in 476 A.D. They were the Anglo-Saxons, Alemanni, Heruli, Vandals, Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Suevi, Lombards, Burgundians and Franks. Seven of those tribes are still in existence to this very day, having grown into modern nations. They survive on the map of Europe as significant twentieth-century powers. Three of them disappeared from the stage of history, as we shall learn in just a moment.

The Little Horn

Now we are prepared to read the next verse of the prophecy and find out the meaning of the little horn in the vision of Daniel. "I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things." Verse 8. Here we must be very, very careful, indeed. We must not make the mistake of falsely identifying the little-horn power, because it will prove to be the great antichrist power of history.

In order to avoid all mistakes of identity, it would be well first to consider the nine characteristic marks described in the prophecy itself. These marks of identity will enable us to be absolutely sure of the interpretation. We dare not guess or speculate concerning the historical identity of this "little horn" of prophecy.

First of all, the little horn came up among the ten. This places it geographically in western Europe. Second, it came up after the ten arose, because it came up "among them." Since the ten arose in 476 A.D., the little horn would have to begin its reign some time after that date. Third, it would uproot three of the ten tribes as it came to power. The eighth verse says that before the little horn, "there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots."

Fourth, the little horn would have "eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things." Verse 8. This indicates that a human being would be at the head of the power represented by the little horn. Fifth, "he shall be diverse from the first (horns)." Verse 24. This means that the little horn would be a different kind of power from those purely political kingdoms which preceded it. The sixth characteristic is revealed in the first part of verse twenty-five, "And he shall speak great words against the most High." Another verse says, "speaking great things and blasphemies." Revelation 13:5.

At this point let's define from the Bible the meaning of blasphemy. In John 10:30-33, Jesus was about to be stoned for claiming to be one with the Father. The Jews who

were going to kill Him said, "For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." According to this text it is blasphemy for a man to be accorded the place of God.

Now let's read another definition of blasphemy. Jesus had forgiven a man his sins, and the scribes said, "Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?" Mark 2:7. Clearly, Jesus was not a blasphemer, because He was God and He was able to forgive sin. But for a man to make such claims would constitute blasphemy, according to the Bible's own definition.

Now we come to the seventh point of identity, found also in verse twenty-five, "and shall wear out the saints of the most High." This tells us that the little horn is a persecuting power. It will make war with God's people and cause them to be put to death. The eighth mark is also given in verse twenty-five, "and think to change times and laws." Apparently, in its bitter opposition to the God of Heaven, in speaking great words against Him, this power also seeks to change the great law of God. This move of the little horn could only be an attempt to make a change. Obviously, the moral law of God can never be altered by man.

A Rule Of 1260 Years

The ninth, and final identifying mark, in verse twenty-five, tells us exactly how long this little horn would exercise authority in the earth, "and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time." Here we are faced with a strange expression. It is actually a prophetic term which the Bible itself explains. In Revelation 12:14, we read these words concerning the same time period, "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent." Now read verse six, which describes the same event. Instead of saying, "a time, times, and half a time," it says, "a thousand two hundred and threescore days." Thus we see that the two periods of time are exactly the same. By comparing these

Scriptures, we understand that a time is a year in Bible prophecy, times is two years, and half a time is half a year. This gives us a total of 3 1/2 times, or 3 1/2 years, because 3 1/2 years is exactly equal to 1,260 days. We are using, of course, the Bible year of 360 days.

We are now ready to apply another great principle in the interpretation of prophecy. Please notice that always in measuring prophetic time, God uses a day to represent a year. In Ezekiel 4:6 we read the actual rule, "I have appointed thee each day for a year." Further support of this is found in Numbers 14:34. This method of reckoning time must always be applied in the study of Bible prophecy. This means, then, that the little-horn power would rule for 1,260 years, instead of merely 1,260 days.

An Exact Fulfillment

We have before us now a list of nine specific characteristics, which have been lifted out of the seventh chapter of Daniel in description of the little-horn power. There is only one power in all history which meets the description given here. In other words, God closes every other option, and forces us to the only possible conclusion: the Catholic Church alone fulfills all the points of identity established in Daniel 7.

Let us take a quick look and notice how clearly this is done. First of all, the papacy did arise in western Europe, at the very heart of the territory of the pagan Roman Empire - in Rome itself. Second, it did come up after 476 A.D. It was in the year 538 A.D. that a decree of Emperor Justinian went into effect which assigned absolute preeminence to the Church of Rome. These are facts of history that can be verified by any authoritative historical source.

Third, when the papacy arose, it was opposed by three of the tribes which had taken over at the collapse of the Roman Empire. The Vandals, Ostrogoths and Heruli were Arian powers who strongly opposed the rise of the Catholic Church. The armies of Rome marched in to uproot and completely destroy these three tribes. The last of the

three was destroyed in the very year 538 A.D., when Justinian's decree went into effect.

Fourth, the Catholic Church did have a man at the head of its system. Fifth, the papacy was a diverse kind of power from the other political kingdoms before it. It was a religio-political system quite unlike anything which had been seen in the world before that time.

Now we take a look at the sixth characteristic - the speaking of great words and blasphemy against the Most High. Does the papacy meet this description? We need only to be reminded that the Catholic Church has ever attributed to itself the power to forgive sins. As to the great words, let me quote from an article by F. Lucii Ferraris, contained in the book *Prompta Bibliotheca Canonica Juridica Moralis Theologica*. This book was printed at Rome and is sanctioned by the Catholic encyclopedia. Listen to these claims: "The Pope is of so great dignity, and so exalted, that he is not a mere man, but as it were God and the Vicar of God. The Pope is, as it were, God on earth, chief king of kings, having plenitude of power." Volume VI, pp. 25-29. These are only a few of the words which the Bible defines as blasphemy. Thus, the papacy meets the marks of identity as the little-horn power.

Coming now to the seventh point of identity, we find that history supports the prophecy concerning papal persecution. Everyone who has any knowledge of the Middle Ages is acquainted with the fact that millions of people were tortured and killed by the Catholic inquisitions. From a book written by a Catholic cardinal, which also bears the sanction of the Church, we read, "The Catholic Church ... has a horror of blood. Nevertheless when confronted by heresy ... she has recourse to force, to corporal punishment, to torture. She creates tribunals like the Inquisition. She calls the laws of the state to her aid. ... Especially did she act thus in the 16th Century with regard to Protestants. ... In France, under Francis I and Henry II, in England under Mary Tudor, she tortured the heretics." *The Catholic Church, The Renaissance and Protestantism*, pp. 182-184.

We could multiply statements like this from historians, both Catholic and Protestant, that describe the horrible tortures of the papal authorities upon Protestants. Thus we can see the complete fulfillment of this description of the little horn.

The eighth mark, as given in verse twenty-five, concerns the attempt to change God's laws. Does this apply to the papacy? Please note this: the Catholic Church has removed the second commandment from her doctrinal books and catechism, because it condemns the worship of images. The tenth commandment is then divided so that they still have ten commandments. But two are against coveting, and there is none against idolatry. In this way, the papacy has thought to change the law, but unsuccessfully. God's law cannot be changed.

Finally, we come to the ninth identifying mark, which tells us exactly how long this papal power would exercise its authority in the earth. We discovered that it would be for a period of 1,260 years. Is this according to the record of history? Remember, that we have noted how the papacy began its reign, by order of Justinian, in 538 A.D. By counting down 1,260 years from this date we are brought to the year 1798. In that very year the French general, Berthier, marched his armies into Rome and pulled the Pope off his throne. He was carried away into exile, and all the properties of the Church were confiscated.

The French Directory government decreed that there would never be another Bishop of Rome. As far as the world was concerned, and by all outward appearance, the Catholic Church was dead. After exactly 1,260 years, in fulfillment of the prophecy, she lost her control of the world. Thus, the final point is clearly fulfilled in the papacy, and in it only.

The Beast And Little Horn Identical

You may be wondering what all of this has to do with the beast of Revelation 13. We are now ready to identify that strange, composite animal described in the book of

Revelation. Let's read the description of that beast once more, which has the body of a leopard, the feet of a bear, and the mouth of a lion. "And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies." Verse 5. Notice, please, that this beast is doing exactly the same thing as the little horn of Daniel. Verse five continues, "And power was given unto him to continue forty and two months." How long is forty-two months? Exactly 1,260 prophetic days or years - the same as the 3 1/2 times of Daniel's prophecy.

Concerning the beast, we read further, "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them." Verse 7. This beast is also a persecuting power. In other words, the beast of Revelation 13 is the very same power as the little horn. Both are symbolic of the papacy. This is God's graphic illustration of the papal power, as it came up to exercise arbitrary authority over the earth for 1,260 years.

Further similarity is found by reading Revelation 13:3, "And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast." As we have already established, the deadly wound was given in the year 1798 A.D., when the French armies carried the Pope away into exile. But that wound was to be healed, and finally the whole world would give its allegiance to the papacy again. That prophecy has been fulfilled very, very vividly before our eyes.

It was in the year 1929 that Mussolini executed the Concordat of 1929 with the Pope, restoring the properties that had been taken away from the Church. At that time the Pope was actually made king once more, and the Vatican City was set up as a political sovereign power. From that

day to this, the strength of the papacy has been advancing with tremendous strides.

At this present time most of the countries of the world have political representatives at Vatican City. The incredible influence of the papacy in world affairs is attested to by the

headlines in today's newspaper. Almost every utterance of the pope is published to the ends of the earth, and millions and millions of people look to the papal power as the greatest influence in politics today. Yes, the wound has certainly been healed, and the world continues to follow after the beast.



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