

Mystical expressions...

Many have speculated in their meaning... There have been a multitude of theories...

..But the Bible gives us the codes!

On a desolate island a lonely man is standing. He is old and marked by a long life of toil and hardship. But right now none of this occupies him. It is as if he is in another world, and the things that are passing before his inner eyes are of a most unusual character, they may even appear quite frightening...

"...And I 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." 1

What a strange monster! No wonder that many have pondered over the meaning of this beast. Surely God did not reveal this monster to John without having a purpose in mind. John tells us in the beginning of the book he has written in the Bible called Revelation, that he received these visions from God, because God would, *«show unto his servants things that must shortly come to pass.»* We are told that it is a prophetic book, that is to say it reveals events that are going to take place in the future.

Solving the codes

The book of John is written in codes and symbols, and to be able to find the answers to these, we have to find the Biblical way of unlocking the codes. Many have been trying to understand the symbols, and guess what they mean, but without a satisfying result.

The answer is that we have to go to the Bible itself, and if we dig into it, we will find that it solves its own riddles. But it may be necessary to dig deep under the surface, for the explanation of the code may be in found in a completely different place.

Therefore we have to try and understand the whole context, and compare one text with another. Shall we try this method?

«And I saw a beast...»

The first code we have to solve, is what «a beast» actually means in the symbolic Biblical language. It is not explained in the thirteenth chapter, where John describes the beast. Are we able to find the code in another place? We turn back some pages, and to our excitement, there in the parallel prophetic book that Daniel has written in the old testament, we find the explanation: A beast is a, *«kingdom upon the earth.»* Therefore, a beast in symbolic Biblical language must be a kingdom, power or nation!

...rise up out of the sea...

We continue our search for codes. This time we need to understand what it means when it says that the beast came up out of the sea. This may be needed in localizing the beast. The angel actually gives John a very clear definition: *«The waters which thou sawest... are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.»* The power we are searching for has to appear in a place where there are a lot of people, a highly populated area.

«And the beast which I like unto saw was leopard, and his feet feet of were the and his mouth the mouth of lion...» as a

We are also told that the beast has characteristics from some other animals we know: a lion, a bear and a leopard. Does the Bible have anything to tell us in connection with this? If we go back to the book of Daniel, which is a parallel book to Revelation, we will discover something interesting. In chapter 7 he describes four different beasts that ascend out of the sea. The first was like a lion, the second like a bear, the third like a leopard, and then came a fourth one that was difficult to describe, but we might say it looked like a dragon. It is not the visions of Daniel we are studying right now, and therefore I will not go very deep into them. But we find striking parallels between the two visions. If you study the visions of Daniel, you will discover that they reveal history starting from his time and onward to our day. They begin by describing the kingdom that was in power then, Babylon, the rich and mighty «lion-kingdom,» that also was symbolized as a head of gold in the second chapter. Then the «bear-kingdom» Medo-Persia would arise, and the «leopard-kingdom» Greece, with its rapid conquests, would follow. At last a terrible, devouring «dragon-kingdom» would arise. If we take a look at history, we will see that all these prophecies was fulfilled exactly as foretold. I can say, at least for myself, that this strengthens my trust in the Bible. It gives me confidence in the future events the Bible foretells, since all the former prophecies have been fulfilled.

In conclusion: the beast had characteristics from the four antique-kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome.

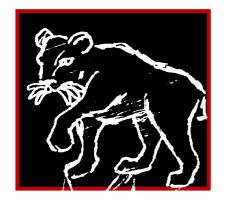
Babylon - the Lion-kingdom

Daniel gives quite a lot of detail about Babylon, since he lived while this kingdom was in power. We get the impression of a rich and mighty kingdom, in fact it was so rich and mighty that the king became exceedingly proud. Instead of giving the glory to the only true God, the One who in reality owns everything, he exhalted himself. He built a huge golden image, that symbolized his own kingdom, and he commanded everyone to worship



the image. Anyone who did

not obey the command, would suffer the death-penalty.



Medo-Persia - the Bear-kingdom

While Daniel was still alive, the Medes and Persians conquered the once haughty Babylon. So Daniel also experienced life under the government of this power, and so we can find information about it in the Bible. The highest position in the Medo-Persian kingdom, next to the king, was given to Daniel. This made the other princes jealous, and they conspired against him by proposing a law that the king accepted by stamping his own seal on it. Daniel always used to publicly show his faith in God, by three times a day opening his window towards Jerusalem and praying to the God of heaven. The princes had slyly reasoned that if the king would sign the law that, under the penalty of death, no man should worship anyone else other than the king during a period of thirty days, the destiny of Daniel would be sure. And it really did appear like their plans would succeed. Only when it was too late, the king discovered that he had signed the death decree of his dear friend. Indeed it was too late, for the problem is revealed in the words of the sly princes: *«The law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed.»*⁶ A unique characteristic of the Medo-Persian government was their unchangeable laws. A death-penalty was a death-penalty and it could not be changed.

Greece - the Leopard-kingdom

Daniel did not live while Greece was in power, and therefore he does not reveal much of the characteristics of this kingdom. Still we discover at least one remarkable characteristic, both from the visions of Daniel and from history: The speed and fervor of their conquests.





Rome - the Dragon-kingdom

The Roman empire conquered Greece. We are told that the beast we are trying to identify, would receive its power from Rome, and that it would get great authority. Just this fact should indicate which kingdom we are talking about. There is only one power that received its authority from Rome: The Papacy. Beneath a painting in the Vatican, that shows the pope receiving his power from Rome, it says: *«Constantine gives Rome as a gift to the pope»*.

Luther: The pope carries the identifying marks of the Antichrist

The reformers, that had studied the prophecies thoroughly, were not afraid of expressing their convictions. When Luther was truly convinced of the dangers of the papal system he bravely expressed his opinion, even though it could cost him his life: *«Already I feel greater liberty in my heart; for at last I know that the pope is antichrist, and that his throne is that of Satan himself.»* Bold words, but they would prove to be not far

from the truth. He had studied the Scripture, and discovered that *«it is plain that the marks of the Antichrist coincide with those of the pope's kingdom and his followers.»*

But let us not trust Luthers words. Let us study the identifying marks ourselves, and see if they really fits!

Now I want you to take your own Bible, and we will look at the thirteenth chapter of the Revelation, verse by verse. To make it clearer, we will put the identifying characteristics we find into a few points:

Identifying marks of "the beast":

- 1. The beast will receive a deadly wound (v. 3).
- 2. The deadly will be healed (v. 3).
- 3. The whole world will wonder after the beast and worship it (v. 3-4).
- 4. The beast will speak great things and blasphemies. It will blaspheme God, his name, his tabernacle, and them that dwelt in heaven (v. 1, 5, 6).
- 5. The beast will rule for 42 months (v. 5).
- 6. The beast will make war with the saints, and overcome them (v. 7).
- 7. The beast will gain universal power. Everybody will worship it, except those that are on the Lords side (v. 7-8).
- 8. The beast has an image. All that will not worship it, will receive a death-treat (v. 14-15).
- 9. The beast has an image. All that will not receive the mark on their right hand or on their forehead will not be able to buy and sell (v. 16-17).
- 10. The beast has a number: 666. It is the number of a man (v. 18).

Before we can declare: «This is the beast», ALL the identifying marks have to fit. Do all the descriptions fit the papacy? That is what we will now examine!



Has the papacy received a deadly wound?

In the last part of the 17th century, while Napoleon was still at the hight of his power, he sent one of his generals, Berthier, to Rome, and took Pope Pius captive. The pope was then transferred from his residence to France, where he died in exile a few years later. After centuries of great power and progress, it was obvious that he did not have supremacy any longer. The capture and death of the pope turned out to be like a deadly wound to the papacy.



Side 6

Has the deadly wound

been healed?

Just two years passed by. Then Napoleon decided to put a new pope into office. But still the papacy had lost much of the authority it had during the Middle Ages, and many years would pass by until it would reach its previous position again. Today we can see that it is about to reach its goal. In 1929 the Vatican State was established, and since that time its power has continually increased. Never before has there been a

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pope who travels as much, and who has established so many ecumenical relations. He is welcomed everywhere, also by countries that consider themselves Protestant. Are there no more reformers who dare to speak up?

Does the world wonder after the pope and worship him?

I ask once more: Where are the voices of warning? Are there no more Protestants? It

seems like Christianity is sailing into the arms of the papacy quite naively. They are longing for reunion. They want to build bridges. Do they not know that the papacy boasts that it is unchangeable? Do they not realize that they are about to fulfill the goal of gathering all under the wings of the Mother church?

Do they know that the papacy has a plan to use «dialogue» to gather all religions? The world is truly about to wonder after the pope.



Has the papacy spoken great things and blasphemies? Has it blasphemed God, His name, His tabernacle and them that dwell in heaven?

You may answer the question yourself after reading the following quotations from the Roman Catholic church itself: "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 alone is deservedly called by the name most holy because he alone is the vicar of Christ..." 10



Has the papacy ruled for 42 months?

When we consider time prophecies in the Bible, there is a well known principle that one day in prophecy equals one year in reality.

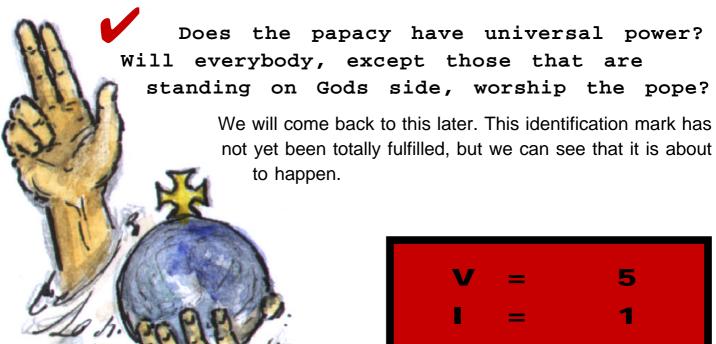
One of the texts for solving this code can be found in the book of the prophet Ezekiel, chapter 4, verse 6. A modern example of this may be the scale on a map. One inch on the map equals x meters in reality. Since we want to know the reality, we need to convert the months into years. So we have to multiply 42 with 30, since we count 30 days in a prophetic month. Then we come to the number 1260. Has the papacy ruled for 1260 years? It is almost unbelievable, but this is actually the case! The year 538 AC is considered as the starting point for the rule of the papacy. After conquering three Aryan nations that were opposing papal supremacy, the pope was declared to be *«the head of all churches»* and *«the punisher of all heretics»*. If If we add 1260 to the year 538, we arrive at the year 1798. It was exactly in this year that the general of Napoleon took the pope captive.



Has the papacy made war with the saints?

History tells us that during the Middle Ages there was a massive persecution of those of different beliefs. Those who would not acknowledge the supremacy of the pope were tortured. Millions of people were slain during the period that the great persecution lasted. But the papacy has changed, some may say. Then we may remember its own declaration that it is unchangeable. When we in addition read the oath of the Jesuits, the «front-soldiers» of the Catholic Church, we can feel the spirit of the Middle Ages:

«...I do further promise and declare, that I will, when opportunity presents, make and wage relentless war, secretly and openly, against all heretics, Protestants ans Liberals, as I am directed to do to extirpate and exterminate them from the face of the whole earth, and that I will spare neither sex, age nor condition, and that I will hang, waste, boil flay, strangle and bury alive these infamous heretics; rip up the stomachs and wombs of their women and crush their infants' heads against the wall, in order to annihilate forever their execrable race...»¹²



What is the image, the mark and the number of the beast?

The number of the beast

Let us deal with the number first, 666 seems to be a mystical expression, and many have tried to unlock the code. Some believe it has to do with the monetary system, the bar codes on products. Others find various names to fit. But there is something that is worth considering. Firstly, we are told that it is the number of a man. Secondly, we know that this is just one of the identification marks, that we cannot separate from the others. All the popes have a common Latin title: VICARIUS FILII DEI.¹³ Translated it means the Vicar of the Son of God, a blasphemous name itself, when we know that the only vicar Jesus has given us is the Holy Spirit.¹⁴ But let us see if we really do get a total of 666, when we add the values of these Latin letters together.

V	=	5
1	=	1
C	=	100
A	=	0
R	=	0
1	=	1
U	=	5
S	=	O
F	=	0
1	=	1
L	=	50
1	=	1
1	=	1
D	=	50 0
E	=	0
	=	1
	=	666



The image of the beast

An image is an exact imitation of the original. To find out what the image is, we first have to know what the special traits of the original are. A typical characteristic of the papacy is that it uses the power of the state to enforce its religious laws. During the Middle Ages this was especially evident as hundreds of thousands were slain because they did not obey the papacy.



The mark of the

beast

The special identification mark of the beast, and also of its image, is that it boldly breaks the commandments of God. While describing the same power Daniel states that it will, "think to change times and laws". 15

Did you know that this is exactly what the papacy has done? Maybe you have not been aware of it, because there

has been a remarkable and disturbing silence concerning these facts. But if you take time to compare God's ten commandments in Exodus 20: 3-17 with the Catechism, you will discover that the second commandment

is completely omitted. This commandment forbids the worship of statues. Of course we can easily understand why this commandment did not suit the papacy, since it uses many statues of Mary and the saints, and crucifixes in its worship. But we cannot conclude that God has to fit His commandments into their worship style. If we will be true Christians, we have to fit into God's commandments, for He as the Creator has seen what is best for us.

But it is not just the second commandment that the Catholic Church has omitted.

The Law of God: Ex. 20: 3-17

1.

Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.

2.

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the

Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

3.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

4

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work: but the Seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou nor thy dauther, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day. Wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.

5.

Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

6.

Thou shalt not kill.

7.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

8.

Thou shalt not steal.

9.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

10

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's.

The Law of God

as changed by man in the catecism

1.

I am the Lord thy God, Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me.

2.

thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

3.

Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day.

4

Honour thy father and thy mother.

5.

Thou shalt not kill.

6

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

7.

Thou shalt not steal.

8.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

9

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife.

10

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's goods.

Something that is perhaps even worse, is that they have removed the seal of God from his law! In times gone by, a seal was used to confirm a law. A ruler placed his seal on a law to show that he accepted it, and that it could not be changed by anyone other than himself. As long as the seal of God is placed on his law, it is in reality impossible to change it.

A seal contains the name, title and dominion of a ruler. In the middle of the law, in the fourth commandment, we find this information. You may find it yourself in verses 8-11. But all these verses are removed from the Catechism. Did you notice that these verses contained a command about "holy time," the exact thing that the papacy would "think to change!"15 We read that we should keep the seventh day holy. Another place God says that this day, that the Lord calls the Sabbath, should be a sign between Him and His people.¹⁶ But this mark the Catholic Church has removed, and instead they have substituted it with their own day of worship, Sunday. Do you know what they themselves say about this? «Of course the Catholic Church claims that the change was her act... And the act is a MARK of her ecclesiastical authority in religious things.»17

In the forehead or in the right hand...

But what does it mean that we are to receive the mark in our forehead or in our right hand? The Bible still uses codes (symbolic language), but if you turn over to Deuteronomy, chapter 6, verses 5-8, the Bible gives us a definition. The forehead is a symbol of what takes place in our minds (decisions, conscience, etc.) The hand represents what we do. It seems as if some will accept the papal decrees with their intellect and conscience, while others will just by their actions obey the papacy, to escape punishment.

A strong message

I know that this information may be hard to swallow. Am I trying to say that Sunday is the mark of the papacy, "the mark of the beast?" Do I mean to say that a time will come when no man can buy or sell, except they who are willing to keep Sunday holy?

Actually, my opinion is of little importance, but let us consider in more detail what the Bible has to say. It is the message of the Bible that I want to share.

A new beast

In the second part of the thirteenth chapter of Revelation, we suddenly discover a new beast. We are told that it is this beast that will work for the papacy, to enforce its doctrines and laws. At first glance the beast looks quite harmless, it has two horns like a lamb. Young, cute and innocent. Jesus is actually symbolized by a lamb!¹⁸ This power/nation must have had good, Christian principles to begin with. The way in which it appears is also completely different from that

of the other beasts (kingdoms/powers/nations) that the Bible describes. Usually they ascend out of a tempestuous sea, like the beast that we have identified as the papacy. In contrast, this beast ascends out of the earth. We found out that the sea was a symbol for multitudes of people, and so the opposite has to be an unpopulated area. The word used for coming out of the earth, actually means to grow forth like a plant. It looks like this nation will gradually develop in a scarcely populated area. It cannot be a nation in the "old world" (Europe, etc.). They came forth by war and bloodshed. Which nation peacefully grew forth at the end of the seventeenth century (when the papacy received its deadly wound), which is the period that John is in his vision? There is no other nation except the United States that fits this description.

It had «two horns like a lamb»...

What do the two horns then represent? We know that America has two important principles: Republicanism and Protestantism.

Their foundational laws also promoted civil and religious liberty, and the separation of church and state. The state would not enforce laws concerning religion.

...but «spake as a dragon»...

Despite its good beginning, to our astonishment we are told that the lamb-like beast will speak like a dragon. What a contrast! How does a nation speak? Through its laws. It seems as if America will in the future reveal the traits of Satan in its lawmaking, which

is the opposite of liberty of conscience. It also says that it will use all the power of the first beast to cause all the earth to worship the first beast. In other words, America will cooperate with the papacy in enforcing the claims of the papacy. It will gather all nations under the umbrella of papal supremacy. But more than that, we are told that the lamblike beast will perform great signs and wonders to deceive people into worshipping the first beast. It will even make an image of the beast, and "cause that as many as would not worship the beast should be killed." In addition, it will also enforce "the mark of the beast," and those that will not obey the papal command, will not be able to buy or sell. What does all this mean in practical terms? What role will the USA play in the future?

An overview

On the basis of what we have studied about the beast, the image and the mark, we can gain the following overview:

America will have a change of character, and become one of the supporters of Rome. The country that once was considered as the country of liberty, will by its laws oppress the conscience. With the aid of the state it will enforce laws that require all to worship

on the day that the papacy has substituted as the day of rest, Sunday. Those that are not willing to obey, will not be able to buy or sell, and they will even be threatened with death.

There will be an enormous spiritual war, and almost the whole world will bow to the papal institution of Sunday. But there will be a little group of people that will refuse. Revelation chapter 15

In Revelation, chapter 15, verse 2, we are told that they that gained the victory and are standing on the lake of glass in heaven, gained the victory over the beast, its image, its mark and its number.

Of course we want to be among that group! The result of being on the other side stands in stark contrast. It is dreadful. In stead of coming to the sea of glass, the Bible tells us that they will end up in another sea, the lake of fire, where all evil will at last be destroyed.¹⁹

Motivation

But how can we obtain the right motivation, so that we can be able to meet the difficult choices and go through the conflicts and trials that we will have to meet? Then

it will not help to only understand the logic, be fearful of the punishment, or realize the advantage of being on God's side. We have to experience something personal and internal that will

> motivate us. We must understand the spiritual warfare, and the role we have to play. An unseen world must open before us. We must behold Jesus, who was willing to descend from His exalted position as the King of the universe, to become a tiny fetus in the womb of a poor woman.

Watch Him as He patiently bears the shame that is thrown at Him, the unbelievable ungratefulness of those He loves so much and has come to save. Watch Him as He struggles in His last battle against the forces of evil. It is so dark that He is afraid of loosing the battle, that everything is in vain, that He will forever be separated from God, and that man may never be reunited with the rest

of the harmonious universe. But

He overcomes. He overcomes as

a criminal nailed to a cross – by

those He loved and came to save.

Then we see the Devil. Once he was an exalted angel of God, but he was not satisfied with his position. He wanted to become like God. To become God himself. Boldly he proclaims that his government would be better than God's. Already now he attacks the law of God, it is unjust and impossible to keep, he declares. His methods are so deceptive that even many of the angles are deceived.

Finally the Bible tells us that there was war in heaven! Satan must be expelled, but in His great love God does not destroy him. He must have a chance to show what his government is like. With great fury he continues his work... And sadly enough, he is able to obtain a foothold on our planet.²⁰ By being disobedient to God, humanity has in reality chosen the Devil as their leader. The consequences of this choice are clearly foretold: death. We are condemned to destruction.²¹

But now the scene changes again: We can see Jesus - hanging on the cross, gathering his last strength to shout, "It is finished!" He has himself taken the punishment of death. Once more a way to heaven is opened, we may be reunited with God.

His whole life, from the manger to the grave, has been a repudiation of the devils accusation that God's law is impossible to keep. Even though He was God, He came to this earth as a man. He placed Himself at our level, and met the temptations and trials this involves. He met them in the power of God, and obtained the victory!²²

The key to victory

Here lies the key for us to be victorious too. We have been promised to be able to obtain victory like Him. We can also overcome every temptation that meets us, and "be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" ²³, as Paul expresses it. We can reach unbelievable heights and live a victorious life! We can keep the commandments of God, and in this way be delivered from sin, that holds us captive. But if we just try this by ourselves, in our own strength, we will soon have to give up, and realize that it is impossible to meet the demands of God's law. Paul tells of this fact in his own experience. ²⁴ But fortunately there is a solution. "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me" ²⁵, Paul continues. God has inexhaustible sources of power, and if we just are willing to cooperate with Him, there is no limit to how much we can attain. Then we can meet the threats of poverty and death. We can be laughed at, scorned or flattered, and still keep the faith. We can uphold the law of God in a time of lawlessness and unbelief. We can be among the victorious group that John describes, "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." ²⁶

Kind regards, Silvia Struksnes

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- O Charta Oecumenica
- Watch out for the Charismatic Movement
- O Watch out for the Ecumenical Movement
- O Israel in the End of Time

Send your request to:

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