

Persecution: What is our reaction?



Persecution of the Church in the United States is coming, be ready in your hearts and minds for it.

Matthew 5:10-12

“Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Matthew 5:43-48

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shall love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them That curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the just and on the unjust. For if you love them which love You, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even The publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

John 15:18-20

If the world hate you, you know that it hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love his own: but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said to you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

II Timothy 3:12

Yes, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

Hebrews 10:32-36

But recall the former days you endured a great struggle with sufferings: partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven. Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise.

Our reaction:

Romans 12:14

Bless them which persecute you; bless and curse not.

Romans 8:35-39

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Peter 4:16

Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

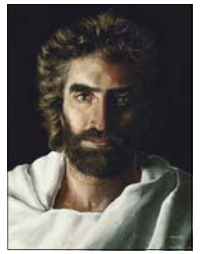
Mark 13:11

But when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.

1 Peter 3:14-15

But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled. But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.

Persecution: What is our reaction?



Revelation - Chapter 13

13:1 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.

13:2 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.

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.

13:4-5 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.

13:6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

13:7-8 **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. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.**

13:9 If any man have an ear, let him hear.

13:10 He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

13:11-12 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

13:13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men

13:14-15 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by [the means of] those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live." "And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

13:16-17 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

13:18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number [is] Six hundred threescore [and] six.

Revelation, Chapter 13

This will begin by giving you the scripture from the King James Version of the Bible, then will go into our description of what the verses mean.

13:1 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.

Revelation chapter 13 begins with a beast (the Antichrist) raising up out of the sea which represents the nations of the world. The beast is the Antichrist or the false messiah. He will be the final world ruler, also known as the little horn in the book of Daniel, chapter 7, v.8. "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." Antichrist

Things during the end times will be chaotic. A time of confusion and uncertainty will cause the people to desperately look for a strong leader that could bring hope and security in a time of fear and apprehension. People will desperately seek a strong, charismatic, authoritative leader who can pull the world back from the very brink of disaster.

Those people will get their wish as a powerful, charismatic leader spouting peace and unity comes on the scene. But he will turn out to be much more than they bargained for. He will be a dictator whose cruelty will be more than any other the world has ever known. This man will be the Antichrist as he will rule the entire world and receive its worship.

Both Daniel and John also saw political systems and leaders that they described using the term "Beast". John sees this beast coming up "out of the sea." This beast is a gentile leader of a gentile system. John didn't call it a beast because it was a Gentile. He called it a beast because it comes up out of the sea of "nations".

In Daniel Chapter 7, the prophet records a dream that he had in which he saw the rise and fall of four gentile world empires. Each was characterized as a beast coming from the sea of nations. So the beast from the sea is the political part of the Antichrist's system. Satan is a counterfeiter. So he has an "unholy trinity" that consists of himself (Satan), the Antichrist (the political, religious beast), and the false prophet, (the religious, political beast). Daniel's Prophecies

The sea here represents the Gentile nations of the world, from which this beast comes. The beast is the Antichrist, the false messiah (Matt.24:5, 24: 1 John 2 v.18). He is the final Gentile world ruler, also known as the "little horn" (Dan. 7:8, 20, 21, 24, 25) the willful king (Dan. 11:36), the coming prince (Dan 9:26), and the man of sin (2 Thess. 2:30).

This "sea" means large numbers of people. One writer says unstable nations of peoples. This beast has to do with the powers of this earth opposed to Christendom.

These "heads" show dominion. We have said before that "ten" has to do with world government and "horns" show power. We know then that this has something to do with the world government and rulers of that. "Crowns" show dominion. This "blasphemy" denies the true God. It doesn't matter who the "I" is here, but it is probably John.

It is not difficult to understand where their power comes from. "Upon his heads the name of blasphemy". This beast has the ten horns of power. This is the personification of what Satan does with this world power. The personification of evil is when it takes over governments and the people who are heads of those governments.

13:2 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.

His resemblance to a leopard, a bear, and a lion refer to the first three beasts in the vision of Daniel 7 (representing the empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece). This Beast includes the people and cultures of the three previous empires, and is an outgrowth of the Roman Empire itself.

The description of the Beast connects it closely both to the dragon (Satan, 12:3) and to the fourth beast of Daniel 7 (the Roman Empire, Dan. 7:7, 23), though his actions show him to be somewhat distinct from both. (The horns and heads are identified in Chapter 17).

As the first scripture indicated a beast with seven heads, the other two, earlier empires was Syria and Egypt. To make the next scripture easy to understand, I will name the 6 again. They are Syria, Egypt, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. These are the 6 empires of the past.

We will revisit this again in Rev 17 verses 8 to 14 which begins: The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they beheld the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. Be sure to read the next 5 verses as well in chapter 17.

Just so you know, the sixth beast is Rome. They were, and then they weren't as they were no longer a force, but will be prominent again during the end times.

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.

I believe this means the apparent death of the Antichrist himself and the healing of the "wound" the apparent resurrection of the Antichrist.

Others tend to believe it to be the decline and apparent disappearance of the old Roman Empire, then the revival of the new Roman Empire.

This revival causes amazement throughout the world.

13:4-5 "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."

Eventually the Beast turns this unbridled animosity toward all the people of God, as Rev. 13 v.5-7 makes clear: "And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. The Little Horn Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. And it was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them." Earlier John makes it plain that the beast's power and authority and kingdom are given to him by Satan. (v.2). And John also tells us something revealed to no one else:

This is the beginning of the Great Tribulation which Daniel spoke about in when the sacrifice and the oblation ceases. This is called the Abomination of Desolation . Also see Matthew 24 verse 15.

He speaks blasphemy against God. The power and authority of the Beast come from Satan himself. Satan has his own false "trinity": Satan acts as the Father, the Antichrist as the Son, and the False Prophet as the Spirit who attempts to bring glory to the Antichrist (v. 11,12).

13:6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

"The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty two months. It is Satan's secret desire to have other creatures worship him. The Jews accused Jesus of blasphemy because He said He was God, and He was crucified for blasphemy. But declaring that one is God is blasphemous only when untrue.

In the case of Antichrist during the Tribulation period, it will be untrue, but such supernatural powers will be given him by the devil himself that he will appear to have Godlike characteristics and thus deceive many human beings.

Thus during the first 3-1/2 years of the Tribulation the Antichrist will be merely a man endowed with demonic power, but during the last 3-1/2 years, he will actually be Satan himself, clothed with the Antichrist's body as the antichrist is the second person to be indwelled by Satan. Judas was the first. Remember Satan is not divine. He does not have the power to create, that is, to make something out of nothing.

He can only take what God creates and manipulate it or manufacture it into something else. He can, however, indwell individuals. Even his demonic imps have that power.

13:7-8 "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." "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

The unbelievers of the world will be deceived into believing that the Beast is a god (2 Thess. 2:4 11). Only those whose names are written in the book of life will refuse to worship the Beast. The Beast will persecute the saints of God, and exercise power throughout the world. The Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world in the sense that Christ's redemptive death for mankind was part of God's plan from eternity past.

The Power of the Beast - "He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them." Today the world is prepared for a one world governmental philosophy. That philosophy, propagated by Satan and advocated by the intellectual, godless, atheistic leaders of world governments today, is rapidly spreading across the earth.

As already seen, humankind has just about come to the conclusion that the only solution to the problem of continuous war is a one world government.

That government will be the devil's government, established during the Tribulation. In the midst of that time he will assume control himself and, as verse 7 tells us, will exercise power over "every tribe, people, language and nation."

Satan's "authority" will be all but unlimited, and almost everyone on earth will worship him. This is the very thing Satan has sought from the beginning, worship from angels and men. Of course, believers in Christ will not worship Antichrist, because they will have their names written "in the book of life of the Lamb."

This book of life of the Lamb contains the names of all those who have called on the Lamb of God for salvation. Book of Life of the Lamb

13:9 If any man have an ear, let him hear.

You see, this again, is a warning not to let this go in one ear and out the other, but to take heed to this warning. This is emphasizing a very important truth.

13:10 He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

This is just another way of saying, whatever you sow, you will reap. Those who teach false doctrine causes his neighbor to go into captivity and so will those who teach it.

In Matthew Jesus taught Peter that they that take the sword shall perish with the sword when he cut off Malchus's ear. (i.e. don't return evil for evil). End time believers are to depend on God and not to take matters into their own hands. This scripture is for the believers alive at that time during the Antichrist's persecution.

God will punish those who do evil. The Beast and his followers will be overthrown and judged. Patience (Gr. hupomone) is perseverance or endurance. Those who have genuine saving faith will endure all the persecution of the Beast because they are God's saints.

13:11-12 "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon." "And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed."

Verses 11-12 couples the three evil personages of the Tribulation that are the opposite counterparts of the person of God. Just as the dragon has already been anti-God and the first beast is anti-Christ, so the second beast will be anti-Spirit. His capacity in working for the worship of the Antichrist will correspond with the present ministry of the Holy Spirit. This second beast is the False Prophet. He will not seek to cause people to worship himself. He will not court his own personal prestige but will work purely for the purpose of getting others to worship the Antichrist. This evil scheme will be used by the devil and his 2 cohorts to deceive people during the Tribulation. They will victimize many individuals because they will traffic in amorality.

In these 2 verses 5 characteristics chart the role of the False Prophet.

"Then I saw another beast, coming out of the earth". Many Bible teachers suggest that his coming up out of the earth indicates that he will not come up out of the sea of peoples, as the first beast does. That is, he will not be of mixed nationality; that he comes out of the earth (around Palestine) may indicate that he will be a Jew. This points to an apostate Jew who, during the first 3-1/2 years, will lead Israel to make a covenant with Antichrist and deceive them by hiding his apostasy until the middle of the Tribulation period, at which time he will serve his purpose by revealing his apostate beliefs and practices.

"He had two horns like a lamb." The Lord Jesus Christ is often referred to in the Gospels and in the book of Rev. as "the Lamb of God". As such He has taken away the sin of the world. The False Prophet coming on the earth will look like a lamb with two horns. Lambs do not have horns, which are symbols of authority; instead, they are meek and mild animals. The Lord Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves" (Mat. 7 v.15) The False Prophet will come to Israel in sheep's clothing, but God terms him "a beast".

"He spoke like a dragon" suggest that he will derive power of speech from the devil who is the dragon. This False Prophet will deceive human beings by acting like a lamb; but really he will speak the words of Satan.

"He exercised all the authority of the first beast on his behalf." The close relationship between these two world leaders is seen in the fact that the False Prophet will be given power by the Antichrist himself. His whole purpose will be to work toward the complete dominance of the earth by the Antichrist, including a form of religion satisfactory to the Antichrist.

"He made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast." The False Prophet's basic purpose and operation with all of this power from the Antichrist and speech from the devil will be to drive people to worship the Antichrist. When indwelt by Satan in the midst of the Tribulation, the Antichrist will be so deceived about himself that he will deem himself God and seek the worship of human beings. (2 Thess. 2 v.3-8) This form of worship will be propagated by the second beast or False Prophet. He may well be described as the high priest of the Antichrist's religious system during the Tribulation period.

13:13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

The False Prophet will deceive unbelievers of the earth by means of wonders and miracles, accomplished through satanic power. He will produce the miracles of Elijah and as a false Elijah as he will lead people to worship a false messiah.

13:14-15 "And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by [the means of] those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live." "And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed."

The False Prophet will cause an image of the Antichrist to be built and will have power to "give breath to the image of the first beast". In the midst of the Tribulation, after the Antichrist has been slain and resurrected, the False Prophet will cause people to build an image like Nebuchadnezzar's image and will demand that it be worshiped. Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

By some mysterious means unknown in the previous history of the world, he will give life to that image. How long it will manifest life we are not told. What characteristics it will have we are not told. Possibly the only characteristic it will manifest is that it can "speak". (v.15) This speech will be caused by the False Prophet, who in turn will get his authority from the Antichrist and the dragon, Satan himself.

He will issue an order that all who do not worship him will be killed. Rev. 20 v.4 tells us that many will be slain by the guillotine.

Everything the false prophet does is calculated to increase the power and authority of the Antichrist. That is not surprising, for he receives his own power and authority from the Antichrist.

13:16-17 "And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:" "And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."

This is the Mark of the Beast," one of the most often quoted and least understood end time prophecies of the Bible. The word translated "Mark" means, literally, "graven." It conveys the sense of being "branded." Mark of the Beast

The custom of the Hebrews, when they took a slave for life, was to mark them by driving an awl through their ear. (see Exodus 21v.6)

In John's day, slaves were branded by their owners in a similar fashion. Accepting the mark of the Beast means you are sold into slavery, to Satan.

Without a mark, a person will be unable to engage in routine commerce. Notice here, it does not say you cannot live. It says you cannot buy or sell. DO NOT TAKE THIS MARK; Jesus will help you.

Anyone who accepts this mark during the Tribulation has already made his choice, and that choice will permanently disqualify its wearer from heaven. Remember when you get the mark you MUST swear allegiance to the Antichrist as god.

It isn't merely economic, it is a worship system. Accepting the mark is tantamount to a rejection of Jesus. This is a permanent, irreversible rejection.

Many currently worry that they will accept the mark accidentally, such as the case with national ID cards. This is not so. To accept the mark of the beast, one will knowingly agree to renounce God and to accept this mark. Without the mark, no one will be able to buy or sell and will fear they and/or their family will die. But to accept the mark means eternal death.

"If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or upon his hand, he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the lamb." (Rev. 14 v.10)

13:18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number [is] Six hundred threescore [and] six.

The False Prophet will use this mark as a means of forcing people to worship Antichrist. He will demand that everyone have his mark on their foreheads or on their hands in order to buy or sell. One can scarcely imagine the pressures of having to possess such a mark in order to secure the necessary food for his family.

There are many views on what the 666 stands for but no where is it given in the bible as to what it means exactly.

I was told by programmers when I was reading various chat groups before Y2K began that some computer programs begins with a starting coding of 666. That's why there are many who today will not receive any type of computer chip implanted into them. Nor do they want any sort of a national ID which is again is something that is computer driven.

Many think that the Antichrists name (first, middle and last) each will contain 6 letters each.

I personally believe that when that time comes, those with discernment of the Word will know exactly what it means.

We do know that to accept the mark is to accept Antichrist as God and thus deny God. Only those who walk with Christ will be able to understand why taking of this mark can not be done even if it means death to their physical body.