

The Great Apostate Powers

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Note: This was the last article from Jones to appear in *The Signs*.

AT the opening of the twelfth chapter of *Revelation* there is seen:

Revelation 12

¹ ...a woman clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars:

⁵ And she brought forth a Man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

That “Man-child” is none other than the Lord Jesus (*Psalms* 2:9; *Revelation* 19:15-16; *Luke* 24:50-51; *Mark* 16:9; *Acts* 7:55; *Hebrews* 8:1); and that “woman” is the church of God, in her beauty “fair as the moon” and “clear as the sun”. *Song* 6:10.

And there stood before the woman a great red dragon “to devour her child as soon as it was born.” This “dragon” in his own proper person, is declared to be “that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan.” *Revelation* 12:9. Satan, therefore, is really the one who was ready to destroy Christ as soon as He was born.

How Satan Works

But Satan in this world works through instrumentalities. These instrumentalities are men: and, chiefly combinations of

men in world-powers.

What man, then, was it by whom Satan made his attempt to destroy Christ as soon as He was born? Herod, in his decree for the slaughter of the babies of Bethlehem. But Herod was much more than merely a person; much more than only himself; he was a king of Judea. Indeed, he was more than only king of Judea; for he became king only by a decree of the Roman Senate upon the special advocacy of Octavius Caesar and Mark Antony—two of the Triumvirate who at that time ruled the Roman world.

Herod could not have been king for a day in Judea if he had not been supported by the mighty power of Rome. Therefore Herod, in his place of power, was only the creature and the representative of the Roman Government. Therefore, in and through the person of Herod, it was the Roman power in the world that was the instrumentality that Satan used to destroy Christ as soon as He was born.

In that attempt however, Satan failed of his purpose. Yet he never rested until he had so far as possible, and so far as himself and the power of this world could go, destroyed the Lord Jesus—until he had by the authority of Pilate the Roman governor crucified Him on a Roman cross, and buried Him out of sight in a tomb sealed with the Roman seal.

But even in this final effort, Satan failed. For, from death and the sealed Roman tomb, the Man-child “was caught up unto God, and to His throne.”

Yet, though these attempts of Satan’s were failures, as far as his purpose was concerned, the facts demonstrate beyond all question that the Roman power was the instrumentality of Satan in his aims to destroy Christ; and therefore that the Roman power, under Satan, is that which is symbolized in the “great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns.”

Against the Church

After all Satan's efforts to destroy Christ had been defeated, and the Man-child "was caught up unto God, and to His throne" (*Revelation* 12:5), Satan next turned all his endeavors, still through his world-instrumentality, the Roman Empire, against "the woman," which is the church, and "persecuted the woman which brought forth the Man-child." *Revelation* 12:13.

Revelation 12

¹¹ And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

This persecution Satan continued as long as the Roman power stood. But the Roman Empire fell, and there was a change—not a change in spirit, for it was still the same spirit of the same "old serpent"; not a change in the persecution, for it was only intensified; it was a change in the power, the instrumentality, that Satan used in the persecution.

When the Roman Empire, that had been such an excellent instrument of Satan's will, had fallen and perished forever, in the anarchy of the times, he was for the moment without any efficient power to make his wrath felt against the church and the saints of God. Therefore "he stood upon the sand of the sea," waiting. *Revelation* 13:1 [RV].

A Beast

But he had not long to wait; for presently "a beast" rose up:

Revelation 13

² ...out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

This beast was most gladly welcomed by Satan; for it was so exactly what he had been waiting for, that he immediately gave to it his own "power," his own "seat," which he had so

long held in Rome and his own “great authority” or “a widespread dominion.” *Revelation* 13:2, 4; 2:13.

The beast was well adapted to this great Satanic gift; and immediately it was all alive as the most thoroughly efficient instrumentality that had ever yet fallen to Satan’s host:

Revelation 13

⁶ He opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

Indeed, it only opened its mouth to blaspheme God, to blaspheme God Himself and His tabernacle; that is, all who dwell in His tabernacle in heaven.

⁷ 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.

With such an agent as this ready to do his will, Satan was again all activity, and poured out a perfect flood of persecution against “the woman”,

Revelation 12

¹⁵ ...that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

But,

¹⁴ 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.

Also,

¹⁶ The earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon [“called the Devil, and Satan” verse 9] cast out of his mouth.

This was the time when, for twelve hundred and sixty years, Satan, through the instrumentality of the Papacy, poured out his wrath against the church of Christ and upon the saints of God,

Revelation 6

⁸ ...to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth,

Daniel 11

³³ ...by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, [even for] many days.

This “time, times, and a half” (*Daniel* 7:25, 12:7, *Revelation* 12:14), “forty and two months” (*Revelation* 11:2, 13:5), “a thousand two hundred and threescore” (*Revelation* 11:3, 12:6) years, in which “the beast” [the Papacy] “was empowered to work its will” (*Revelation* 13:5), ended in A. D. 1798. At that time the beast was “as it were, wounded to death” (*Revelation* 13:3); the power of the Papacy was broken, her dominion was taken away, she was left as a widow and sorrowful, and Satan’s power was again crippled, and his wrath seriously hindered.

Another Instrument of Satan

But, lo! help was coming; for just then there was seen:

Revelation 13

¹¹ ...another beast coming up out of the earth; and [though] he had two horns like a lamb, [yet] he spoke as a dragon.

And this one, though strong on his own part, uses his power to revive and restore the power and working of the beast. For:

¹² He exercises all the power of the first beast before him, and causes the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

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

¹⁴ And deceives 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.

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ And he causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand or in their foreheads,

¹⁷ 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.

A Warning Message

Thus this beast and the first beast unite in compelling all to worship the first beast. But against all this God sends a great threefold message of warning to all the people of the earth, pleading with them that they worship not the beast neither his image, and:

Revelation 14

⁹ If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

¹⁰ The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation.

Instead of their worshipping the beast, God calls them to:

⁷ ...worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters,

and to

¹² ...keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

Through all the time of this later interval Satan's wrath had been against the church of God as much as before, but there was no power by which he could make it effective. Now, however, in this combination of the beast and his image he forms again the power that for a while he had lost; and again he is active as before.

Now "the dragon" is not only "wroth with the woman," but, with his restored beast and his image, he goes forth anew:

Revelation 12

¹⁷ ...to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Wrath of Satan

In this his last war, his wrath is especially “great,” because “he knows that he has but a short time.” *Revelation* 12:12. But still he does not prevail. Still they overcome him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony.

But his wrath is so great, and, even though he has all the allied powers of the beast and his image, his case becomes so desperate, that in very person he appears and takes command of his forces.

But lo! presently heaven is opened, and there appears also in His very person One “called Faithful and True,” sitting upon “a white horse,” and “the armies of heaven” follow Him, also “upon white horses,” “and in righteousness He does judge and make war.” *Revelation* 19:11.

Victory of God’s People

Revelation 19

¹⁹ And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army.

²⁰ And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had the mark of the beast, and them that worshiped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

Revelation 15

² And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

The persecution is ceased. The conflict is ended. The war is

over. The saints are triumphantly victorious.

Thus it is seen that at the birth of Christ, Satan entered upon a war that, with but two short intervals, he keeps up until the very world's end. There are employed as his instrumentalities in this war, three mighty world-powers: the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, or the image of the beast.

This war is in three great stages, according to the three mighty world-powers that are the earthly agents in it—Pagan Rome, to A.D. 476; Papal Rome, A.D. 538-1798; and apostate Protestantism allied with the revived Papacy, as the beast and his image, at the last and till the end.

These three stages are marked in the twelfth chapter of *Revelation*, in:

- (1) the attempt to destroy the Lord Jesus, and the persecution of the woman immediately after the Lord's ascension to heaven;
- (2) the flood of persecution poured out against the woman in "the wilderness;" and
- (3) his wrath and war against the woman in "the remnant"—the very last of "her seed."

In the first stage he used the dragon, or Pagan Rome, as his instrumentality. In the second stage he used the beast, or Papal Rome. And in the third and final stage he uses the image of the beast, or apostate Protestantism, in alliance with Papal Rome. This final stage is the most desperate, for he has the full use of his two mightiest powers.

But throughout the whole war, from the very beginning to the very end, there is victory to Christ and His people; for:

Thy saints, in all this glorious war,
Shall conquer though they die.

But in the final stage His saints obtain their triumphant victory without dying; for just as "the beast and the false

prophet” go from this earth “alive into a lake of fire” (*Revelation* 19:20), so in their victory over the beast and the false prophet, the saints of God go alive from this earth to the “sea of glass.” *Revelation* 15:2.

O joy! O delight! Should we go without dying;
No sickness no sadness, no dread, and no crying;
Caught up through the clouds with our Lord into glory—
When Jesus receives His own.