

Mark of the Beast

Every vision in the Bible is figurative, none are literal. Joseph's visions in Genesis were figurative, Ezekiel's visions were figurative, so were Isaiah's, Daniel's and Zachariah's were too and so was Peter's vision of unclean animals. Since Revelation is also a vision, that book is also primarily figurative. But before we discuss the Mark of the Beast, we need to determine what the figurative word "beast" actually means. (details on figurative language may be found in "The False Prophet," downloadable from this site).

There are three beasts in Revelation: the Leopard-Bear-Lion "beast," the "beast" with Two Horns and the Scarlet "beast". These three "beasts" are not real beasts because the word "beast" (when used in a prophetic sense) means something other than a wild animal. From Daniel 7, we recognize these prophetic "beasts" to be world empires that existed during and after Daniel's time.

1. The first beast in Daniel 7 was a Lion. History shows this Lion beast to be a figurative picture of the Babylonian empire. (Babylon controlled the Holy Land from 606 to 536 B.C.)
2. The next beast in his vision was a Bear. History shows this Bear to be a figurative picture of the Medo-Persian empire. (Medo-Persia controlled the Holy Land from 536 B.C. to 332 B.C.)
3. The third beast was a Leopard. History shows this Leopard to be a figurative picture of the Greek empire (Grecian rulers controlled the Holy Land from 332 B.C. to 65 B.C. when Rome took control).

So as far as Bible prophecy is concerned, beasts = empires. Babylon was the Lion, Medo-Persia was the Bear and Greece was the Leopard. Each of these empires controlled the whole known world, from India to Greece and even into North Africa. In other words, the whole Middle East. Now lets pan forward to 95 A.D., where John, a New Testament prophet, foretells the future of the Middle East during our era. In his vision, guess what John sees? Another beast, and we now know what "beasts" mean:

Revelation 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."

Beasts = Empires, but this empire is a Leopard-Bear-Lion so it isn't just one of the above empires, it's all three rolled into one. In other words, it's the descendants of those earlier empires, in the same geographic location, the Middle East. Looking back at the history of the area, we can now identify this new empire as the various Islamic countries that have controlled the Middle East, and particularly Jerusalem, ever since the 1st Jihad. Some might claim that the Islamic states in the Middle East do not constitute a real "empire" because they are not united under one government. However, The God of the Bible is more concerned with the spiritual realities in a land than He is with how many earthly governments it has. All Middle Eastern states are united under one religion, Islam, and all Moslems subscribe to the central Islamic goal of world

conquest for their religion. Quoted below is part of Revelation 13, with a few words inserted (by me) to explain the figures . . .

Revelation 13:1-5 "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast (an empire) rise up out of the sea (of people), having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns (various rulers of various countries), and upon his heads the name of blasphemy (this empire stands against the God of the Bible). 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 (Leopard-Bear-Lion gives the reader a positive ID, it's the Middle East): and the dragon (Satan) gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. And I saw one of his (the Leopard-Bear-Lion's) heads as it were wounded to death (the first Jihad was defeated at the battle of Tours and the battle of Vienna); and his deadly wound was healed (the rise of Islam today and the new Jihad): and all the world wondered after the beast (this Islamic empire). And they (the people of the Middle East) worshipped the dragon (Satan) which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast (the Islamic empire), saying, Who is like unto the beast (the Islamic empire), who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power (over Jerusalem) was given unto him to continue forty and two months."

And here is how you can prove the above to be the correct interpretation. Construction of the Islamic Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem began in 688 A.D.. Jerusalem was freed of Islamic control in 1967 A.D.. Applying the prophetic days of Ezekiel 4:5-6:

1967A.D. - 1278.34 years = 688.66 A. D. An exact historic fit; so the interpretation is true.

Revelation 13:6-9 "And he (the Leopard-Bear-Lion) opened his mouth in blasphemy against God (by saying God has no Son), to blaspheme his name (by trying to change the name of the Creator of the Universe, I AM, to that of a local Arab deity), and his tabernacle (God's temple mount in Jerusalem), and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him (the Islamic empire) to make war with the saints (the Christians and Jews), and to overcome them (during the 1st Jihad): and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations (of the Middle East). And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb (Jesus, the Son of God) slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear."

Not many do hear, but It is now apparent that 1.3 billion people are being terribly deceived by Satan. The God of the Bible and the god of Islam are not the same beings because the God of the Bible said, "they worship the dragon" (Satan). We should pray for Moslems, not hate them. If they don't turn to Jesus, their eventual fate could be the greatest tragedy in all human history.

We'll skip the Two Horned beast, which is about the Western nations that forcibly seized control of Jerusalem during the Crusades and the British Mandate (Two Horns is not the message of this letter so for details on Two Horns, please read Chapter 12 of "The False Prophet"). But I mention Two Horns because for years I taught that Two Horns gave the Mark of the Beast. I was wrong. A more careful study of the passage led me to realize that the Mark of the Beast is given by the "image of the beast," the revitalized Islam now in the Middle East. (Some eschatologists believe the Ka'aba stone in Mecca to be the "image of the beast" and though I think differently, they could also be right.)

Revelation 13:16 "And he (the Leopard-Bear-Lion) 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 (Islamic) beast, or the number of his name."

Like the rest of the church, I used to teach that above verse was a worldwide prophecy. Wrong again. It just doesn't fit scripture. This whole Leopard-Bear-Lion prophecy is about a middle eastern empire. "That no man might buy or sell" is about conditions that have existed for Christians and Jews in Islamic countries ever since the 1st Jihad. One only needs to watch the nightly news or read a newspaper to see how true this is. But to understand the mark given by the Leopard-Bear-Lion, we need to read about other marks in the Bible.

In 606 B.C., when the Kingdom of Judah was about to fall, the prophet Ezekiel saw spiritual marks in a vision. He watched when an archangel said . . .

Ezekiel 9:4 & 6 " . . . Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof . . . Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house of the Lord."

Later, the writer of Chronicles, a historian, saw the same event, but he didn't see the mark:

2 Chronicles 36:17 "Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand."

So why was Ezekiel able to see spiritual marks, but the writer of Chronicles wasn't? Well, the writer of Chronicles saw things as they were in the material world. Ezekiel saw angels in his vision, so he was seeing into the spiritual world, and don't all Christians also have a mark (aren't we sealed) by the Holy Spirit? (2 Co 1:22, Eph 1:13, Eph 4:30) But you don't see that seal on anyone, do you? Then in Revelation:

Revelation 7:3 & 14:1 "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads . . . And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb (Jesus) stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads."

These seals are on the foreheads of every believing Jew of the Christian Era, but you don't see them, do you? Of course not, they are only visible in the spiritual world. They are not physical marks, but spiritual marks, and that's the key to understanding the Mark of the Beast. Since the Lord's marks on His servants are only visible in the spiritual world, it is reasonable to conclude that Satan's marks, given to the servants the Leopard-Bear-Lion are only visible in the spiritual world. This is not "spiritualizing" as some would claim, but accepting that figurative language demands a figurative interpretation. Scripture goes on to say . . .

Revelation 14:9-11 " . . . If any man worship the (Islamic) beast and his image (the Kaaba stone?), 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 (Jesus): And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the (Leopard-Bear-Lion) beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."

So will Islam fall? The God of the Bible says so. As written earlier, it will be a spiritual tragedy of unimaginable proportions, and it will happen because the followers of the Leopard-Bear-Lion have been deceived into rejecting the Son of God who sacrificed Himself for all mankind on the Cross of Calvary. Scripture adds the following:

Rev 13:18 "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the (Leopard-Bear-Lion) beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six," i.e., 666.

Many books have been written about that number, all speculative, but about 20 years ago a former Muslim who could read Arabic told me that 666 was the number of the Koran. I believed him, sort of, and promptly forgot about it. Then about two months ago, another friend told me there were many Islamic sites on the Internet claiming 666 to be the number of the Koran. (You can find these sites yourself by searching: Quran 666.)

Suddenly, the last piece of the Leopard-Bear-Lion puzzle fell into place! Now look at the above verse again:

Rev 13:18 "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the (Leopard-Bear-Lion) beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six."

The number of a man! So what man has led a billion and a half people away from the Savior of the world? What man said, "God forbid that He should have a son." Is this not Muhammad, the prophet of the Leopard-Bear-Lion? According to the Bible, the end for him and his followers will be grim indeed:

Revelation 19:20 "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."

May our beloved God, who sacrificed His Son for all mankind, take the blindness from their eyes.

Ellis Skolfield