

## THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

### Revelation: God's Revelation To His Servants Today On Events About To Occur

#### Part IV: "The Things Which Shall Be Hereafter": Events After The Rapture Of The Church

##### C. The Great Tribulation Period, Revelation 6:1-19:21

##### 5. A Second View Of The Great Tribulation Guiding Us To Avoid Group Idolatry, Revelation 11:1-19:21

##### d. God's Guidance To Make Canonical Scripture Our Sole Authority To Avoid Group Apostasy (Revelation 13:11-18)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old Testament is a work by professors at Dallas Theological Seminary where I attended seminary, and I often cite it in my sermons, but one of its authors, Jack Deere **NOW** believes "that just as God used revelatory gifts to give words of direction to His children in biblical days, so He still does today. But . . . (f)or Deere, the words God speaks today through those gifts are simply not on a par with the inerrant, fully authoritative words that He spoke in the past." (R. Fowler White, "Does God Speak Today Apart From The Bible?" in John H. Armstrong, gen. ed., The Coming Evangelical Crisis, 1996, p. 83)

However, if as Mr. Deere claims, God experientially speaks today apart from the inerrant, infallible canonical Bible of 66 books, and that message has errors and is not fully divinely authoritative, how can we discern its truths?

That is a loaded question, for besides trying to discern the alleged truth from alleged error **within** such *evangelical* realms, **other** religious groups like Mormonism and Roman Catholicism add to the canonical Bible's assertions words alleged to be of God and others like Islam, Dan Brown's book, The Da Vinci Code or Liberal Theology claim the 66-book canonical Bible has been corrupted and is no longer reliable for defining God's truth!

***Need:** So we ask, "With today's great differences even among respected professing evangelical Christians on how we are to define God's truth today, HOW does GOD expect US TODAY to DISCERN HIS TRUTH?!"*

- I. **Though Revelation 13:11-18 predicts events to occur after the Church is taken to heaven in the rapture, Revelation 1:1-3 reveals the book of Revelation offers insight for believers who live in TODAY'S era!**
- II. **Accordingly, Revelation 13:11-18 offers God's guidance on our need dependently to make CANONICAL SCRIPTURE our SOLE AUTHORITY in AVOIDING GROUP APOSTASY:**
  - A. Rev. 13:11-17a shows Satan will raise up a false prophet greatly to deceive men in the Great Tribulation era:
    1. Opposite the Rev. 10:1-2 godly angel whose right foot landed on the "sea" of the Gentiles (Dan. 7:3) and his left foot on the land of Israel, pointing to God's Abrahamic Covenant, we last week learned that Satan stood on the *seashore* (Rev. 13:1a, better 12:18) **BETWEEN** that **sea** and **land** to **OPPOSE** God's fulfilling His Abrahamic Covenant! Satan's **opposition** will involve his raising up the Revived Roman Empire from the Gentile "sea" and empowering its antichrist ruler (Rev. 13:1b) to rule the world. Then, Rev. 13:11 KJV shows Satan will raise up and empower another party, a "lamb" from the "land" of Israel.
    2. Yet, this "little lamb" (*arnion*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 868; Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 107), mimicking Christ as God's Lamb (Rev. 5:6), will possess 2 horns of lesser power (Rev. 13:11) than Christ's 7 horns of divine power (Rev. 5:6), but he will speak like a dragon, like Satan (cf. Rev. 12:3, 9) as a **false prophet empowered by Satan**, and he will call men to worship the antichrist!
    3. This "false prophet" (cf. Rev. 16:13) will exercise all the evil power the antichrist has to lead the world to worship the antichrist whose deadly sword wound was healed, Rev. 13:12,14d. The false prophet will do miracles, one of them like Israel's great Old Testament prophet Elijah in causing fire to fall from heaven before onlookers (Rev. 13:13; 1 Kings 18:22-39). Malachi 4:5 predicted God would send "Elijah" before the Messiah, and John the Baptizer fulfilled this prophecy (Matt. 17:10-13), but since Israel rejected John and Jesus and still looks for this "Elijah," Satan will seek to fulfill that expectation via his false prophet!
    4. The false prophet will direct men to make and worship an image of the antichrist who had survived his deadly sword wound, and by then causing that image to appear animated so as to speak, and he will order all men to worship the image or be slain as alleged apostates, Revelation 13:14-15.
    5. The false prophet will then cause all men to receive a mark in their right hand or in their foreheads to be able to buy or sell, Rev. 13:16-17a, a counterfeit mark of God's Ezek. 9:4-7 delivering mark for the godly.
  - B. Yet, **opposite** this **great deception**, as Rev. 13:17b in the Greek text puts antichrist's "name" and "number of his name" in apposition to "mark" (U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 869), that mark thus being either antichrist's name or its number, Rev. 13:18 explains **HOW** God will equip believers **rightly** to **discern the truth** on it all:

1. Great Tribulation believers will be able to discern the real antichrist's name by "counting," for the Greek verb *psophizo* behind the KJV word "count" in Revelation 13:18 means to "count (up), calculate" Arndt & Gingrich, *A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T.*, 1967, p. 900-901, and it appears elsewhere in the N. T. only at Luke 14:28 for counting up or calculating the cost of building a tower, *Ibid.*, Arndt & Gingrich.
  2. Of note, Revelation 13:17 and 15:2 both refer to "the number of his name" (*U. B. S. Greek N. T.*, 1968, p. 869, 873, **so the antichrist's name itself will supply that number, and that number, "the number of a man, is to be counted,"** *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, volume IX, p. 607.
  3. However, many parties from pagan to Christian have practiced divination condemned by Deut. 18:10-11 in using "gematria," the "replacing" of "each number 1-9, 10-90, with the sequential letters" of an alphabet to acquire one's own interpretation on this matter in violation of 2 Peter 1:20, *Z. P. E. B.*, v. Four, p. 460.
  4. Opposite this, John called for a **true calculation**, urging us to use wisdom and understanding, and wisdom **starts** with the **fear** of **God** (Prov. 1:7) that leads one to **heed** Deuteronomy 18:10-11 and **avoid divination!**
  5. So, avoiding "gematria," we note the antichrist will rule a revived **Roman** empire, and the **ancient Romans** **officially** used the **alphabet letters** of "I, V, X, L, C, D and M" in specific combinations for specific values for the numerals 1 to 1,000,000 (*Webster's Sev. New Coll. Dict.*, 1965, s. v. "number"), a system **still** used!
  6. Well, **canonical Scripture** at 1 Peter 2:13 calls us to heed every government ordinance, and **to Great Tribulation believers**, that will **include** the **official Roman numeral system!** We thus **theorize** that men will be able simply to **count up** the **Roman numerals** that appear in the **letters** of antichrist's **name** to find they **total six hundred and sixty-six!** [Even if our view errs, how to figure the number will then be clear!]
- C. Thus, **even then, canonical Scripture will provide all the discernment men will need to know God's truth:**
1. Canonical Scripture at Exodus 20:4-5 in the Ten Commandments tells men **not** to make any image or to bow down to any image in worship, a clear conflict to the false prophet's Revelation 13:14-15 orders.
  2. Also, canonical Scripture at Deuteronomy 13:1-4 warns Israel that if a prophet were to arise in her midst who performed actual miracles, as will the Great Tribulation era false prophet, but with them he was to teach men to heed other gods besides the Lord, they were to view that one as a false prophet and realize God was testing them to see whether they would love and heed the Lord with all their heart and soul!
  3. In addition, canonical Scripture at Revelation 13:18 will give men the insight to identify the antichrist as the actual antichrist by way of counting up the numerical value of his name without using false divination!

***Lesson:*** *Though Satan will empower a very deceptive false prophet to lead the world to worship the antichrist by way of his great miracles performed like Old Testament prophet Elijah, even then will men be able to discern by canonical Scripture that he is a false prophet and that the antichrist is the actual Biblically predicted antichrist!*

***Application:*** *(1) May we trust in Christ to be saved by the authority of John 3:16 in canonical Scripture. (2) Then, since even people facing Satan's great deception in the Great Tribulation will be able to discern truth from error via canonical Scripture, we today must also make canonical Scripture our sole authority to avoid being deceived!*

**Conclusion:** (To illustrate the message . . .)

In our sermon introduction, we noted that great differences exist even among influential professing evangelical Christians and other religious groups on how to define God's truth.

However, the canonical Scripture that Great Tribulation era believers will use reveals the correct view:

(1) Psalm 12:6 ESV claims: "The words of the Lord are pure words, like silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times." What God has communicated to us is completely inerrant and divinely authoritative.

(2) Psalm 119:89 ESV adds: "Forever, O Lord, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens." Once God has given His Word, it is not alterable, but remains absolutely unchanging as forever inerrant and divinely authoritative.

(3) Romans 12:6 ESV claims: "(L)et us . . . prophecy in proportion to our faith," namely, "in right relationship to the body of truth already revealed," *B. K. C., N. T.*, p. 488. Thus, even in the Early Church era with its sign gift of prophecy, the messages spoken by God's prophets were inerrant and authoritative as approved by canonical Scripture.

(4) 2 Timothy 3:15-4:2 reveals that canonical Scripture is sufficient until Christ returns to equip the man of God to perform every good work, meaning no other revelation is necessary beyond the Scripture canon of books.

(5) Malachi 3:6 KJV claims: "For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." God is immutable, unchanging, so He **now** calls us to heed His inerrant, authoritative canon of Scripture.

**May we trust in Christ to be saved. Then, to escape deception, may we use the canon of Scripture as our sole authority for faith and practice. Great Tribulation era saints will do so, and we need to do so today.**