

The Rise of the Little Horn

Before entering upon our analytical review of the rise and fall of the "little horn," it will be well to note again the necessity of close observation in the interpretation of prophecy. The first rule for study is that of "prophetic demand." This rule is sometimes general, and at other times specific. To illustrate: In Daniel 7 four beasts are brought to view, and the angel tells Daniel that they represent four "kings" that should arise out of the earth. (See verse 17.) "Kings" here represent kingdoms, since we know from chapters 2 and 8 that Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome are represented by the symbols.

Prophecy gives a general outline of these kingdoms in chapters 2, 7, and 8. But in addition to this outline there are also given specific identification marks for each kingdom. For instance, the fourth beast had ten "horns," and three of these horns were plucked up by another "little horn." Again: In Daniel 11:14-16, the Roman power is introduced as personified in the pronoun "he," who subdued and finally destroyed the glorious land of Israel. This "he" represents Rome under both the republic and the empire form of government. The Jews and Romans entered into a league in 161 B. c., while Rome was still a republic; but Rome under the empire destroyed the Jewish nation in 70 A. D., and in 134-135 A. D.

Prophecy calls the fourth beast a "kingdom," notwithstanding the fact that for about five hundred years Rome was a republic; and, according to Tacitus the Roman historian, there were eleven different governments in the republic during that time. Among these were consuls, dictators, decemvirs, triumvirs, etc. Prophecy pays no attention to political parties. For instance, when the lamblike beast of Revelation 13 enforces the "mark" of the beast, who knows whether the Republican, Democratic, or some other party will be in power? And who knows whether there may not be a dictatorial power in the government at that time?

Be that as it may, the pronoun "he" is used eight times in verses 11-16, and represents the government irrespective of the political party in control. Hence we conclude that prophecy deals always with "the power behind the throne," regardless of the name by which government is known or the party that is in power. The reader should also bear in mind that the points of this analysis are condensed, and direct quotations from history are given here only to emphasize the conclusions drawn. At the close of this review appears a list of the most important works containing the sources, and books written by well-known church and civil historians, from which the writer of these studies in church history has secured his information.

Summary: First Era (250-395 A. D.)

1. "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." Dan. 7:8.

2. The prophetic demand is that the "little horn" should come up among the "horns" that divided the Roman Empire. We will now see what history declares about this.

3. As early as 250 A. D., the Goths invaded the Roman Empire; and at the battle of Forum Trebonii, in Maesia, the Romans suffered a serious defeat, and the emperor Decius and his son were slain. The successor, Gallus, purchased peace by paying an annual tribute to the Goths.

4. The Goths conducted three naval expeditions, in which they captured Trebizond on the Black Sea, and overran Asia Minor, destroying the temple of Diana in Ephesus. The whole of Asia Minor on its west coast was ravaged by them between the years 250 and 262 A. D.

5. About 271 the emperor Aurelian concluded a treaty with the Goths and Vandals, in which the Romans agreed to withdraw their forces from the great province of Dacia, and give it to the Goths and Vandals. This was the beginning of the dismemberment of the Roman Empire.

6. During the years 270 to 273, the Allemani overran the country from the Danube to the river Po in Italy, and left a trail of devastation wherever they passed through. Aurelian defeated them, but they remained in the northern part of the empire, never retreating beyond the bounds of the Roman Empire.

7. The emperor Constantine gave permission to the Vandals to settle in the provinces of Pannonia and Noricum.

8. The emperor Constantine united the Catholic Church to the Roman state, and became the leader in religious legislation, and in the execution of that legislation, because of his uncontested claim so to do.

9 Says the historian:

"Hence it was not without reason that once, on the occasion of his entertaining a company of bishops, he let fall the expression, 'that he himself too was a bishop,' addressing them in my hearing in the following words: 'You are bishops whose jurisdiction is within the church:

I also am a bishop, ordained by God to over-look whatever is external to the church.' And truly his measures corresponded with his words; for he watched over his subjects with an episcopal care, and exhorted them as far as in him lay to follow a godly life."

10. As a pagan emperor, Constantine was the Pontifex Maximus of the state religion; and now as a nominal Christian emperor he claims the same prerogative, but calls himself a "bishop," which claim was accepted by the church bishops without a protest.

11. In conjunction with the bishops, he issued laws against the heretics, and closed their meeting places, in the East at least. He destroyed the heathen temples in the East, particularly in Egypt. He composed a prayer to God, which all his pagan soldiers were required to repeat every Sunday morning.

12. In the West the Roman Senate was still pagan, and Constantine was very tolerant with them; but he enforced his laws strictly in the East. One of the principal reasons for Constantine's transference of the seat of government from Rome to Constantinople in 330 A. n., was to meet more advantageously the onslaughts of the Goths in Maesia, which is now Bulgaria.

13. During the reigns of the emperors Gratian and Theodosius, from about 376 to 395, Sunday legislation received a great deal of attention, for we find in the Theodosian Code a number of Sunday laws passed and rigidly enforced. The pagan altar of victory was removed from the Senate chamber, and by the year 421 governmental paganism had about disappeared from Rome, though private paganism still flourished.

14. Prophecy says that the "little horn" was "diverse" from the other horns, and so it was. Of the barbarian tribes who invaded Rome, seven were Arian and semi-Arian, and three

were pagan. The "little horn" was Catholicism mixed with paganism united to the Roman state.

15. The first era therefore covers the time from the first invasion of the Roman Empire by the barbarians, 250 A. D., to the death of Theodosius, 395 A. D., which year marks the final division of the empire, the sons of the emperor dividing it between them—Arcadius in the East and Honorius in the West.

SECOND ERA (395-527 A. D.)

16. In 445 A. D. the Roman emperor in the West, Valentinian III, by imperial decree made the bishop of Rome head of all the Western bishops. Leo the Great was pope at that time, and claimed and exercised all the prerogatives this decree included, calling himself the "Vicar of St. Peter."

17. In the year 484, Pope Felix II (some say III) refused to accept the Eastern emperor's "Henoticon," and as a consequence excommunicated the patriarch Acacius in Constantinople, and he in turn excommunicated the pope of Rome. This ended communion between the Eastern and Western churches for many years.

18. The successors of Acacius tried without success to be reconciled to Rome. The Roman pontiff Gelasius, 492 to 496, wrote an epistle to the bishop of Dardania, in which he says:

"Non reticemus autem quod cuncta per mundum novit ecclesia; quoniam quorumlibet sententiis ligata pontificum, sedes beati Petri apostoli jus habeat resolvendi: utpote quod de omni ecclesia fas habeat judicandi, neque cuiquam de ejus liceat judicare judicio: siquidem ad illam de qualibet mundi parte canones appellari voluerint, ab illa autem nemo sit appellare permissus."

Translated, the epistle reads:

"For we do not keep silence about anything that the whole church has made known to the world; since the see of St. Peter the apostle has the right of releasing the bonds imposed by sentences of any bishop whatsoever: and inasmuch as the divine law has to be the judge of every church; nor is any one of them permitted to pass upon the judgment: as indeed the canons were intended to be called upon from any part of the world, for that decision, so from it none may be allowed to appeal."

19. The title of this epistle shows that it was given in order to uphold the decision by the Apostolic See in excommunicating Acacius, the patriarch of Constantinople.

20. Gelasius, the pope, successfully maintained that the pope could not be judged by any human tribunals, and that from the decision of the pope there was no appeal. In other words, "Rome has spoken; the case is ended." Again and again the assembled bishops and presbyters in the councils held at Rome shouted to Gelasius, "In thee we behold Christ's vicar." This epistle was written about 495.

21. During the years 498 to 506 there were two opposing popes in Rome, each supported by his own party. The Imperial party chose Laurentius as their pope, and the other party chose Symmachus. So violent was the strife between these two parties that it became necessary for Theodoric, the king of the Goths, to protect both popes by his troops, for the streets of Rome were flowing in blood as a result of the conflicts. Finally, to end the strife,

Theodoric issued a decree in the year 506, which made Symmachus the lawfully elected pope.

22. However, the party that supported Symmachus had several synods in Rome in which a deacon, Ennodius by name, and who later became bishop of Pavia, made numerous speeches upholding the claim that from the vicar of Christ, the pope, there was no appeal, and that he could not be judged by any man. These Roman synods were held between the years 500 and 503.

23. In the year 527, as a result of the "Formula" written by Pope Hormisdas, and presented to the Eastern Court in Constantinople, the patriarch of Constantinople and the emperor surrendered unconditionally to the claims of the pope of Rome. Thus the East and the West were once more united as a church after thirty-five years of separation.

24. The noted church historian, Dr. Henry C. Lea, writes of this event as follows:

"For the time, Constantinople was thoroughly humbled. Her sacraments were administered at the dictation of the Holy See; her Patriarch was but the local representative of the Pope, and Rome alone controlled the communion which was the Christian's only hope of grace.

"The proud boast of Gelasius, made thirty years before, seemed to have received its fulfillment, 'Everything is committed to the decision of the Apostolic See. What the Apostolic See affirms in its synods is to be received; what it rejects is to be rejected; and by itself it rescinds whatever is wrongfully decided by any synodical assembly.'—Gelasii Tomus de Anathematis Vinculo. Yet Rome could not foresee how humbly, in little more than a quarter of a century, she would submit to the denial of all her claims by the second general council of Constantinople, after the prosperous reign of Justinian had restored the imperial power; nor that the long-silent church of Africa would dare in 550 to excommunicate Pope Vigilius for his cowardice in the affair of the Three Chapters."

25. From the time of the imperial decree of Valentinian III, which made the pope the head of the churches in the West, 445 A. D., the popes had increased in power in the church up to Pope Hormisdas, 514-523 A. D. But their triumph was of short duration. Pope Hormisdas was the only pope, up to this point, who had enjoyed such dominion in the universal church. Yet, notwithstanding this union, the pope and the Western Catholic Church were still under Arian control.