

# Of Kings and Kingdoms

*Charlie Burt*

We read the Old Testament to gain insight into not only God's nature, but also man's nature. Two diametrically opposite wills. The reason for this opposition we understand to be sin—rebellion. But within that rebellion is an attitude of exalting self. "You shall become *like* God," was the serpent's promise. This desire to become god-like has been man's epithet ever since. One example of how this kind of arrogance can remove a person from reality is seen in the kings of England.

The English kings of centuries past had a special room that would answer to our modern bathroom. In this elegant room was a square box that was covered with soft cloth and upholstered padding. In the middle was a hole. Once the king was done with his business, a very trusted servant cleaned him. This crude but clear example is a picture of what can go on in the mind of man. How can a man elevate himself in his mind to such a height? So high that it is beneath him to even wipe his own backside? Did the king give any thought to the mental problems produced in the man wiping him? History implies that the king saw the servant as being privileged to touch his royal person.

Because of man's predisposition towards godhood, God knew the problems Israel would have once they moved away from a theocratic government. When they decided to replace God with a human ruler, Samuel warned them of the consequences:

The people refused to listen to Samuel. "No!" they said. "We want a king over us. Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles."  
(1 Sam 8:19-20)

This was their first real assertion of a desire to "be like all the nations." Saul was their first, then David, then Solomon. After that, Israel did not fare very well with its kings. One would occasionally rise up who was good and the nation would prosper and have peace. But for the most part, they sunk into idolatry under their earthly rulers.

Then came Babylon. The golden head of a statue; a beast out of the sea; out of the earth. Sea and earth. Nebuchadnezzar lay on his bed, thinking, "what will come hereafter? What does the future hold?"

This attitude of rebelling against God's kingdom is seen today in the myriad layers of denominations and cults. Catholics have incorporated Popes, vicars and priests, and have introduced all kinds of empty traditions to confuse humanity's relationship with God. Baptists, Methodists, Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, *et al*, all claim to have their origins from the same bible. But if this was true, they would look alike; they would teach the same doctrines. In truth, they are not products of God's word, they are the products of the four winds of heaven.

The four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea. And four great beasts were coming up from the sea, *different* from one another. (Dan 7:2-3)

The "four winds of heaven" seem to produce empires, kingdoms, and kings. Intrinsicly, they are the thoughts and imaginings of the mind of man. Spirit influences spirit and man devises his schemes

as a result. This is how all of the denominations and cults have come into being. They are the products of human imagination, not from the bible.

Paul spoke of a “form of godliness” seen in the “last days.” That form, however, denies the power of God. Since God’s power is seen in His Word, their form of godliness is not according to that knowledge which He had given us. Catholicism has a *form* of godliness, but not according to the knowledge of God. What knowledge then? Man’s knowledge, human wisdom and its teachings. The thoughts, aspirations, and imaginings come from the sinful heart, a spirit unwilling to humble itself.

Paul also spoke of being tuned in to Satan’s schemes. (2 Cor 2:11) Devices, plans, schemes. Man’s mind. The carnal mind. God saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. (Gen 6:5) All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. (1 John 2:16)

Of the world and of the Father. Two minds.

The conclusion is that the beast of chapter 13 is a child or product of the “sea,” that body of information in man that led to a kingdom, to an empire, to kings. It is that mind of man that rejects God and wants a king so that they could be like the other nations. Israel was still trying to be a kingdom like the Gentile nations. Therefore, their beast—their kingdom—looked like the beasts of the Gentile nations. Here a little, there a little. A piece of leopard, a piece of lion; a little bear. In application today, the attempt has been to imitate God, and thereby become “like God.” Thus, the Kingdom of Jesus Christ has been imitated—pieced together—*kind* of Catholic and *kind* of Methodist and *kind* of church of Christ. Similar, but different. A mixture.

*Like* Babylon; *like* the golden image. The king made a statue and told everyone in the world to worship it. (Daniel 2) It was a representation of the way he saw himself—an image of what reside in his heart. People changed God’s truth into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator. (Rom 1:25) Nebuchadnezzar exalted himself and was humbled by God. It was God’s gift and blessing, for God took time to take interest in him. For those whom the Lord loves he chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives. (Heb 12:6)

The four winds. Four kingdoms. Four beasts. Different and yet all beasts. Out of the sea; out of the earth. Man going about man’s business; fleshly business; carnal business; the things of the world.

The Divine nature is not like gold or silver or stone or an image formed by art and the thought of man. But the false prophet *did* produce an image. And that image took on man’s nature and men listened to it and worshiped their achievements that reached up to heaven. The false prophet had power to give life to the image of the beast, that the image should both speak, and cause as many as would not worship that image to be killed. (Rev 13:15)

“You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies.” (John 8:44)

Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, beholding His signs that He was doing. But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, and because He did not need anyone to bear witness concerning man for He Himself knew what was in man. (John 2:23-25)

Jesus knew what was inside of us: a potential for rebelling against God, a desire for exaltation to god-like status, and an urge to establish an empire that would equal anything the Almighty could build.

A kingdom composed of little kings, all aspiring to be like God.

Man represented in the number '6;' God in the number '3.'

Three sixes.

Man (6) becoming like God (3).

The lust of wanting to be in charge, seen first in Genesis, and described in detail in Revelation.