

The sixth vial and the world today (3)

Geoff Cave

This article deals with the way in which the philosophy that emerged from the French Revolution can be seen coming from the mouths of the dragon, the beast and the false prophet, and how this will gather the nations "to the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (Rev. 16:14).

IN DEALING WITH the influences coming from the dragon, the beast and the false prophet, it will be useful first to identify the powers that they represent. This cannot be done comprehensively within the scope of this article, but the following is a brief résumé.

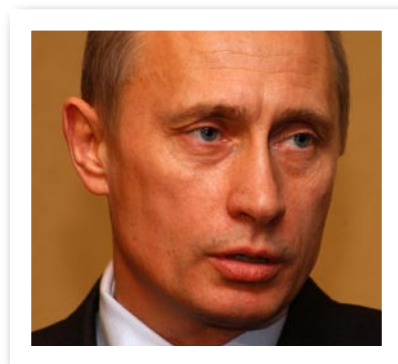
Identifying the dragon

The dragon has always been a strong power that is in opposition to the people of God. It may be described as a multitudinous serpent. In Old Testament times the people of God were the nation of Israel, and Psalm 44:19 records the opposition of the dragon to Israel: "Thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death". Nations described as a dragon in the Old Testament are Egypt (Ezek. 29:3) and Babylon (Jer. 51:34).

In New Testament times the people of God became the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Rome as the dragon persecuted both Israel and the saints. In the fourth century the Emperor Constantine moved his capital from Rome to Constantinople, calling that city *Nova Roma* (New Rome). With the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the headquarters of the dragon moved to Moscow. The clerics there said that Moscow was now the third and final Rome, and thus the latter-day dragon is equated with Russia.

Identifying the beast

When the dragon power moved from Rome to Constantinople it left room for the beast power to arise in the western part of the Roman Empire. The beast has always been an ecclesiastical power that unites with a military power to gain strength. In Revelation 13 we have the beast of the earth, a beast with two horns or powers, representing the situation as it existed for a period of about 1,000 years, with the military power being the emperor



President
Putin of
Russia

Picture: NATO

of what history knows as the Holy Roman Empire and the ecclesiastical power the papacy.

The final phase of this Roman beast power is emerging today as modern Europe. Revelation 17 describes it as a woman sitting upon a scarlet-coloured beast. The woman who controls the beast is the papacy, and the false prophecies that it utters will cause the beast to fight the Lord Jesus Christ, who will destroy this power: "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" (19:20).

Identifying the false prophet

Much has been said about the identity of the false prophet of Revelation. In Old Testament days the false prophets were always individuals who emerged from within the nation of Israel (Deut. 13:1; Jer. 29:8,9; Ezek. 22:28). The following list contains points to note when identifying the false prophet (the references are limited here to the New Testament). He:

- arises from among the true believers (2 Pet. 2:1)
- claims to speak the true message (Mt. 7:15; Mk. 13:6)
- uses deceit to persuade others he is of Christ (2 Thess. 2:10)
- claims to perform miracles as proof of authenticity (v. 9)
- deceives those who have the mark of the beast (Rev. 19:20).

Roman Catholicism	Islam
Claims to follow Christ	Follows Muhammad
Claims to be custodian of Bible truth	Main authority is the Quran
Claims to be 'Vicar of Christ'	Worships Allah
Builds bridges between all faiths, though insisting that the pope must be the head	Has no dealings with other religions
Claims to show signs and wonders	Makes no claims to miracles

Only the Roman Catholic Church fulfils these criteria. Islam is in many ways the very opposite, as the table shows.

Speaking with a froglike voice

The dragon, beast and false prophet all speak with a froglike voice. Consider firstly Russia, the dragon. Russia and the idea of democracy and human rights appear to be poles apart, and yet, when it suits, the teachings of liberty, equality and fraternity are heard from the voice of its leader. For example, Mr Putin in his New Year address to the nation on 1 January 2000 said this:

“Freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, freedom of the mass media, the right to private property—all these basic freedoms of a civilised society will be reliably protected by the State”.¹

Much of what he said was with tongue in cheek to impress other ‘democratic’ nations, but, as the prophecy requires, the dragon speaks with a froglike voice, and it will ultimately use these doctrines to help gather the nations “to the battle of that great day of God Almighty”.

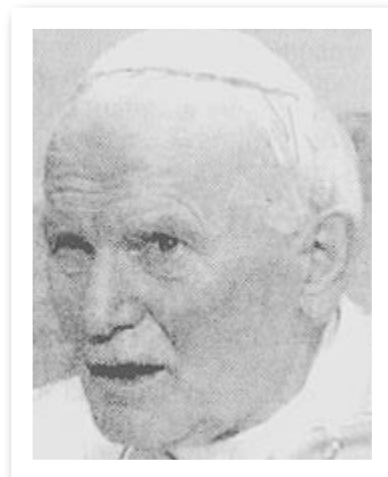
The effects of the beast speaking with the voice of freedom and democracy can be seen readily. Europe is the very embodiment of human rights. Possibly the best example to cite is the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. That court will take up the cause of anyone who feels their human rights have been infringed, regardless of where they live. The court sees itself as the protector of the inalienable rights of every human being. It protects the right to life, the right to liberty, the right to security, the right to a fair trial, the right to respect for private and family life, the right to marry, the right to education and the right to free elections. It also promotes freedom of conscience, freedom of thought, freedom of religion, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and association, prohibition of discrimination, compensation for wrongful conviction and equality between

spouses. (These so-called rights do not in reality exist, as Scripture clearly teaches that we have no rights except to die.)

The false prophet also speaks with the voice of humanism when it suits its cause. In 1998 Pope John Paul II stated:

“Religious freedom therefore constitutes the very heart of human rights. Its inviolability is such that individuals must be recognised as having the right even to change their religion, if their conscience so demands. People are obliged to follow their conscience in all circumstances and cannot be forced to act against it . . . The universal declaration of human rights recognises that the right to religious freedom includes the right to manifest personal beliefs, whether individually or with others, in public or in private”.²

It goes without saying that these teachings are again not to be found in Scripture.



Pope John Paul II

1. *The Times*, 1 Jan. 2000.
 2. *L'Osservatore Romano* (the Vatican newspaper), October 1998.

The frog spirits at Armageddon

In Revelation 16:13 John states, "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet". That which comes from the mouth is usually heard and not seen. The effect is what John sees, as the next verse reveals: "For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty".

The result of these teachings is that the nations gather to fight Christ and the saints at the battle of Armageddon. The beast, dragon and false prophet will each have an agenda to fight Christ, and they will use the doctrines of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity to achieve the desired objective. Just how the froglike spirit issuing from the three mouths gathers the nations is gradually becoming apparent in the world.

The false prophet has already prophesied in this respect. It has said that 'Antichrist' will save the nation of Israel from a northern aggressor and proclaim himself king in Jerusalem. This teaching will be part of the reason for the nations fighting Christ when he appears to the world. He will be seen as the enemy of the human race, one who must be destroyed.

The beast is influenced by the false prophet, and, as Revelation 19:20 shows, they will be destroyed together. However, the beast will have

its own reasons to fight Christ, possibly along the lines of wanting to destroy a despot who does not have a mandate of the people, one who has not been elected democratically.

As Ezekiel 38 shows, the dragon (Gog) will be both leader and protector of a large group of nations all antagonistic to Israel. Exactly how the dragon will use the frog spirits to gather the nations remains to be seen. It is possible that Russia will use as an excuse to invade Israel the claim that the rights of the majority must be protected and the 'aggressor' dealt with. In this respect we note that the leader of Iran has said his nation has a right to develop a nuclear capability, with Russia backing Iran on this issue.

Conclusion

The servants of the Lord must be watching for developments along these and similar lines as the nations prepare for the events which will end up in the removal of all human control and the establishment of the righteous rule of Israel's Messiah over the earth. As different aspects of the prophecy gradually come into focus, we should be encouraged to prepare for the return of the Master in the same way as the brethren and sisters who witnessed the drying up of the Euphrates, as described in the first article.

The final article in this series will consider how the frog spirits can influence believers today. This surely is the most important facet of the prophecy.

[\(To be concluded\)](#)

The throne of grace

Wayne Marshall

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16).

THIS WONDERFUL phrase is found only in Hebrews 4:16. It emphasises that our heavenly Father, the One we appeal to in prayer, is One Who desires to be gracious unto those that call upon Him. The "throne of grace" is therefore reminiscent of the mercy seat in the tabernacle, the place where the Almighty's presence resided amongst His people Israel.

When we consider Hebrews 3 and 4, we find that the whole passage is a sustained exhortation not to walk in the sins of the generation who died in the wilderness, who fell due to unbelief. That generation did not make use of their daily opportunities to develop and manifest their faith. They neither trusted our heavenly Father nor understood what He was trying to achieve through their wilderness preparation. The Word of God is the means of our overcoming this unbelief, firstly because "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17), and secondly because the Word aids us to fight this unbelief in that it is "a discerner of the thoughts