

85 THE SECOND BEAST OF REVELATION

Introduction: We have made the case that the zealots were the beast of Revelation (P.P. #28, #36-#42), and we will seek to show that the second beast was the rebel priests who took control of the temple for the full duration of the war. They would have provided a powerful air of legitimacy to the anti-Roman rebellion. When they took control, along with non-priestly combatants, they had access to the temple's vast treasury, issuing coins for the new government, beginning in AD 66. In addition, the zealots hired "prophets", presumably, to assure the people of a favorable outcome to the war.

1. The second beast passages. Revelation 13:11-15.

A. Scripture: *"I saw another beast coming up out of the land. He had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke like a dragon. He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence."* Rev 13:11-12.

A. Comment: The second beast has a benign appearance, associated with the priesthood, but he upheld the tyrannical ideology of the first beast.

B. Scripture: *"He makes the land [ge] and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast..."* Rev 13:12.

B. Comment: He caused the Jews (dwellers of the land) to adopt the ideology of the zealots. (P.P. #51, #52)

C. Scripture: *"...whose fatal wound was healed."* Rev 13:12

C. Comment: The zealot movement was almost lost with the death of the 7th zealot leader, but he was replaced by a successful eighth leader, not of the zealot dynasty, infusing new energy into the rebels' cause. (P.P. #52)

D. Scripture: *"He performs great signs, even making fire come down out of the sky to the land in the sight of people. He deceives my own people who dwell on the land because of the signs he was granted to do in front of the beast..."* Rev 13:13-14

D. Comment: In the Old Testament, fire from heaven was bestowed on prominent men of faith, however, the second beast's "great signs" were a deception of John's people, the Jews. The second beast's counterfeit "great signs" gave power to the first beast in the eyes of the Jewish people during the Roman and Jewish War.

E. Scripture: *"...saying to those who dwell on the land [the Jews], that they should make an image to the beast who had the sword wound and lived. It was given to him [second beast] to give breath to it, to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak..."* Rev 13:15.

E. Comment: With the pre-war rout of the Syrian Roman legion, the zealots returned from battle to Jerusalem, "running and singing" with an abundance of Roman weaponry. This stunning victory of the eighth leader, swelled their ranks and would have provided ample material to create a potent heroic mythos for the rebel cause.

F. Scripture: *"...and cause as many as wouldn't worship the image of the beast to be killed."* Rev 13:15

F. Comment: Here is where the zealots' true colors showed through. They murdered those who disagreed with them. Josephus reports: "...if any one did but afford the least shadow of suspicion of such an intention [to defect to the Romans], his throat was cut immediately." Wars 5.10.1.

2. The dragon is a symbol of the despotic might of Egyptian power, recalling Israel's slavery and oppression.

A. "The Egyptians ruthlessly made the children of Israel serve, and they made their lives bitter with hard service... and in all kinds of service in the field, all their service, in which they ruthlessly made them serve." Ex 1:13-14

B. "Thus saith the Lord Yahweh; Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lies in the midst of his rivers..." Ezek 29:3

3. Josephus reported of Ananias and other high priests stealing the tithes of ordinary priests.

"...took away the tithes that belonged to the priests...so that [some of the] priests died for want of food." Ant. 20.9.2

4. The zealot philosophy stated, "God is to be their only Ruler and Lord."

"These men [zealots] agree in all other things with the Pharisaic notions; but they have an inviolable attachment to liberty, and say that God is to be their only Ruler and Lord." Josephus, Antiquities 18.1.6.

5. The zealots believed they were justified in killing those who preferred peace with Rome rather than war.

A. "...a company of deceivers and robbers [zealots] got together, and persuaded the Jews to revolt, and exhorted them to assert their liberty, inflicting death on those that continued in obedience to the Roman government." Wars 2.13.6

B. During the war, "... the heads of the robbers [zealots], although they were seditious one against another in other respects, yet did they agree in killing those that were for peace with the Romans..." Wars 5.1.5

6. The governor of the temple persuaded priests to violate Mosaic Law and prevent gentile worship. (Fall AD 66)

"Eleazar, the son of Ananias the high priest, a very bold youth, who was at that time governor of the temple, persuaded those that officiated in the Divine service to receive no gift or sacrifice for any foreigner. And this was the true beginning of our war with the Romans." Wars 2.17.2

7. Gentiles were to be treated equally with Israelites in the worship of Yahweh.

"If a stranger lives as a foreigner with you, or whoever may be among you throughout your generations, and will offer an offering made by fire, of a pleasant aroma to Yahweh; as you do, so he shall do. For the assembly, there shall be one statute for you, and for the stranger who lives as a foreigner [with you], a statute forever throughout your generations: as you are, so shall the foreigner be before Yahweh." Num 15:14-15

8. Temple priests turned from their divine service to make preparations for war in the fall of AD 66.

"...those that ministered about the temple [priests] would not attend their Divine service, but were preparing matters for beginning the war." Wars 2.17.4

9. After a week long civil war, the zealots still had control of the temple in AD 66 continuing until the fall of AD 70.

"...the seditious part [zealots] had the lower city and the temple in their power." Wars 2.17.5

10. The sacrifice failed because no priests were fit to serve in the summer of AD 70 (likely wounds, emaciation).

"...[for on that very day, which was the seventeenth day of Panemus, [Tamuz,] the sacrifice called 'the Daily Sacrifice' had failed, and had not been offered to God, for want of men to offer it, and that the people were grievously troubled at it." Wars 6.2.1.

11. Priests with physical defects, could not offer gifts to Yahweh.

God said, "Say to Aaron, 'None of your offspring throughout their generations who has a defect may approach to offer the bread of his God.'" Lev 21:17

12. Even after the Romans captured the temple, rebel priests continued to resist, AD 70.

"As for the priests, some of them plucked up from the holy house the spikes that were upon it, with their bases, which were made of lead, and shot them at the Romans instead of darts." Wars 6.5.1

13. The temple priests were put to death by Titus for their participation in the war, fall of AD 70.

"The priests that were pined with the famine came down, and when they were brought to Titus by the guards, they begged for their lives; but he replied, that the time of pardon was over as to them...So he ordered them to be put to death." Wars 6.6.1

14. Background for "fire from heaven": Yahweh approved of David, Solomon and Elijah's heart and sacrifice.

A. David's sacrifice: "David built an altar to Yahweh there, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called on Yahweh; and he answered him from the sky by fire on the altar of burnt offering." 1 Chr 21:26

B. Temple dedication: "Now when Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and Yahweh's glory filled the house." 2 Chr 7:1 (also 1 Kgs 8:54)

C. Elijah's sacrifice: "Then Yahweh's fire fell and consumed the burnt offering, the wood, the stones, and the dust; and it licked up the water that was in the trench." 1 Kgs 18:38

15. The zealots hired false prophets.

A. Josephus reported the zealots hired many false prophets to keep the people propagandized.

"Now there was then a great number of false prophets suborned [induced to lie] by the tyrants [zealots]." Wars 6.5.2

B. One false prophet caused 6,000 people to perish in a temple fire during the siege of Jerusalem.

"A false prophet was the occasion of these people's destruction, who had made a public proclamation in the city that very day, that God commanded them to get upon the temple, and that there they should receive miraculous signs of their deliverance...that they should wait for deliverance from God; and this was in order to keep them from deserting, and that they might be buoyed up above fear and care by such hopes." Wars 6.5.2

Note: Preterist Papers #36 to #42 pertain to the zealot beast.

Note: P.P. #52 "The Seven Kings of Revelation" P.P. #53 "The Three Fallen Kings" (about the Ten Kings)

Note: Josephus' "The Wars of the Jews" is indicated by "Wars". "The Antiquities of the Jews" is indicated by "Ant".