

The wound that was healed

An explanation of Revelation 13:3

Revelation 13:3 is one of those verses in this apocalyptic book that has stretched interpreters for centuries leading to a vast multitude of suggestions about meaning. However, if a common sense, symbolic approach is taken to interpret this book, we can dismiss the speculative ideas of men and come to some conclusions that are more sane and important.

Firstly, this is the immediate context:

1 Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.

2 Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like *the feet of a bear*, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.

3 And *I saw* one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marvelled and followed the beast.

4 So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who *is* like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"

5 And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months.

6 Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.

7 It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.

8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

9 If anyone has an ear, let him hear. Rev 13: 1-9

And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. Rev 13:14

What is the purpose of the book?

The book is a vision of history from a heavenly viewpoint given to John in order to encourage the saints. It explains that there is a continual war between God and the devil and this war is waged on earth. Thus the rise and fall of empires, wars, striving and so on are all repercussions of a more vital but hidden spiritual warfare.

Revelation explains that this warfare on earth is not random but is a part of the divine purpose. What occurs is according to divine decrees and following to a plan. The outcome

is the glory and reign of the Lord Jesus Christ as king and victor over all things. The church will be victorious as the bride of Christ.

The sovereignty of God in history and assurance of victory is meant to encourage the saints who must undergo various trials and tribulations. There is no escaping persecution but it has a purpose and God gives grace.

Thus various cyclic parallel visions are given to John that explain various aspects of this warfare during history. These visions are full of symbols and are an allegory of aspects of the fight.

What is the general point of this passage?

Bearing in mind the purpose of the book and the use of symbolic language, we can say this about the passage.

This is a further explanation of what the saints are fighting against. It shows us the background behind the scenes to secular world empires and governments, civilisation and culture.

This chapter explains the devilish control of society through the symbolism of two beasts that are servants of the devil (symbolised as a dragon). The first beast is the satanic political control of nations; the second beast is the religious control that supports the first beast.

The first beast arises from the sea, the raging flux of nations (17:15); 'sea' here is the mass of society viewed from a political aspect. Some see the 'sea' as uncivilised humanity. [The second beast is from the 'earth', either representing false religion or out of stability, not uncivilised nations. This force causes people to worship the first beast. It is the spiritual, ethical machinery of the antichristian power.]

The first beast = Antichrist as a political world ruler, or much better, the world's wicked political systems. Many commentators consider that the combination of beasts (leopard, bear, lion, v2) symbolises that the world power in the last days is a culmination of older historic world powers; including those referred to by Daniel.¹ However, John is being more general here in describing the beast as a world power while Daniel is prophesying about actual empires. Thus I believe that John is saying that the beast's empire is swift and cunning like a leopard (Hos 13:7), powerful and enraged like a bear (2 Sam 17:8; Hos 13:8) and ferocious and strong as a lion (Jdg 14:18; Ps 7:2). In the past, certain empires had single characteristics of these animals, but the beast itself combines them all. This makes more sense.

Seven heads express different manifestations of antichristian world power in history, which will eventually be perfected in one empire. 'Heads' can refer to empires as expressions of the dragon or the thoughts and designs of the dragon worked out in history. Quite likely it refers to both. In general it is the manifestation of pagan world power.

Ten horns speak of the fullness of power. Crowns represent kingly authority. So, this tells us that there is an end-time (see verse 7) global, antichristian empire that is the

¹ One was present (Rome), one was to come (Rev 17:9-10). Thus we have Assyria, Babylonia, Persia (+ Media, the bear of Dan 7), Greek (Macedonian, the he-goat of Dan 8), and Rome. The missing empire is either Egypt (though Egypt is not recognised as a world power or a major civilisation by the Bible) or Nimrod's kingdom in Sumeria, the first post-deluvian empire (Gen 10:8-11).

culmination of all previous world empires. It has fulness of power (ten horns) and global authority (ten crowns) and is the perfection of the aspects of all previous wicked empires (seven heads).

The blasphemous name on the heads (v1) shows that this kingdom is in opposition to God and belongs to the devil (v2). The blasphemy is not just in the mind of the beast, it speaks blasphemies (v5, 6); the kingdom is full of blasphemy, thus all its manifestations are the opposite of the righteousness of God.

This kingdom speaks for Satan – the dragon – who gives the kingdom its power, throne and authority (v2).

Now many empires and kingdoms have represented power centres of this beast during world history but these were never fulfilled because God restrained the devil from completing his plans (20:2-3). At the end, however, God releases the devil to fulfil all iniquity and bring the world to harvest for sin. Thus there is a final expression of this bestial kingdom when man's sin is allowed to come to fulness and God lets Satan loose to fulfil his condemnation. This final world kingdom is utterly satanic encompassing all peoples, 'all the world marvelled and followed the beast'.

The beast's kingdom is worshipped by the world (v4, 8); they love everything about this kingdom. In the end there is a manifestation of this kingdom as a global empire that is all powerful that no nation could make war with (v4). This must refer to the end-time empire because authority is given to it over every tribe and nation (v7); this has not happened in history thus far.

The 42 months [also 3½ years; 1260 days; a time, times, and half a time] is a repeated Biblical number that often stands for the whole Gospel Age (Rev 11:3, 12:6), but it also has reference to the final time and the Second Coming of the Lord.

The beast makes war with the saints. This has been evidenced throughout history but is culminated at the end when the global antichristian empire tries to kill all believers. The persecution is so great that the beast thinks that all Christians are dead.

So this is the general background to this passage and this must be borne in mind as we try to fathom verse 3.

The severe wound

3 And I *saw* one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marvelled and followed the beast.

4 So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who *is* like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"

12 And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

14 And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.

John makes a point in this passage to mention this wound. It is as if this healed wound is an indicator of the development of the final expression of the beast at the end.

There is a point in history, not ancient history, where something happens to the beast and as a result the whole world follows him. No one can withstand this kingdom. The church is relegated to an underground movement.

This clearly has to refer to the end time manifestation of the beast in a global, totalitarian empire that is completely submitted to the devil. [Aside: It is common in Biblical prophecy that two time periods are mingled together within one prophecy. Jesus does this, for example, in Matthew 24 where there are specific warnings to flee Jerusalem in 70 AD that were part of his explanation about what will happen at the end.]

Therefore, it is extremely helpful and instructive for Christians to know what this healed wound is.

Exegetical details

Mortal wound

The wound would normally be mortal; the Greek word means 'slain';² death should follow this wound but instead the wound is healed. This speaks of some serious waning in power that suggested this form of power was dead and gone but suddenly it was restored.

This is the counterpart of Christ in Rev 5:6, where we read of the lamb as though it had been slaughtered. In both cases there had been actual death, and in both resurrection.

Its

This refers not to the head but to the beast.

'One of its heads'

This is an important manifestation of the kingdom of Satan on earth. Some take it to be governing authority, that is satanic government; however, 'government' is better suggested by 'crowns'.

The world marvels and follows

This is a significant change in history. Following the beast had been sporadic, though widespread, and for centuries seemed defeated by the church. However, at some point a change occurs in the manifestation of the satanic kingdom and the world is amazed and follows the beast.

'World' is actually 'earth' or 'soil'. The earth follows the beast and is egged on in this by the second beast arising from the earth.

'Who was wounded by the sword and lived' (v14)

This is specifically pointing to a parody of the resurrection of Christ. The beast was murdered then lived again.

'Sword' implies that the wound was the result of war. 'Sword' is *machaira*, a small sword (curved or straight) or large knife.

Interpretations of commentators

Babel

Hoeksema postulates that the wound (Rev 13:3) could be the confusion of tongues, which

² 'Mortally wounded, and his deadly wound'. 'Mortally' = 'death (*thanatos*); i.e. 'wounded to death'. Wounded: is *sphazo* meaning: to slay, slaughter, butcher, to put to death by violence. The same word is used of the death of Christ in 5:6. Therefore 'wounded to death' means 'slain'. 'Deadly wound' or 'deadly stroke' is a compound of *thanatos* (meaning death) and *plege* meaning: a blow, stripe, a wound but also a public calamity, heavy affliction, plague.

ruined the first attempt to establish a world power.³ This, at first, seems a reasonable interpretation, which would mean that after the rise of empires with Nimrod's kingdom, God put a stop to further expansion by confusing tongues after the Tower of Babel. However, though this head was wounded, the setback was 'healed' and 'world' empires again began to arise with Assyria.⁴

However, this is not a fully satisfactory solution. Since there had been several world empires by John's times, and he was living in the strongest of all, the mention of the wound seems to have little significance if it refers to Nimrod. Neither does all the world marvelling make much sense in this case. The world did not marvel with surprise when Assyria rose from the ashes of Sumeria.

It also does not accord with the statement that no one was able to make war with the beast after this event; there is peace in the earth after the complete control of the world by the beast. Throughout history since Babel there have been multiple kingdoms warring against each other; some of these kingdoms claimed to represent Christ.

This would also not accord with Rev 20 which speaks of the devil being chained for a long time, unable to deceive the nations into achieving world empire, and then having a remarkable recovery when God loosed him at the end not the beginning of post-deluvian history.

So, the wound does not speak of the confusion of tongues at Babel.

Nero

Many commentators suggest that this refers to Nero who was the first and archetypical imperial persecutor of the church. After he suffered a mortal wound by his own hand (stabbing to the throat), he died, but rumours arose that he would return (as so often)⁵ as 'Nero Redivivus'. Furthermore there were three pretenders to the throne claiming to be Nero.

The death of Nero was also the end of the Claudio-Caesar dynasty and his death marked a period of convulsion in the empire so that it seemed to be falling apart. However, Vespasian gained the throne and restored order while Domitian later came to power and instigated even worse persecutions against the church.

Nero is far too limited an application of these verses, which are to be relevant to the church in all ages and especially at the end. Neither did the beast appear to die with Nero. The Roman Empire did not die with Nero but got stronger with better emperors. Neither do the myths about his resurrection represent an actual resurrection, which the world marvelled at. Neither did the whole world follow Nero and worship him.

Though a common interpretation, there are simply far too many serious objections to Nero fitting the bill.

³ Hoeksema, 'Antichrist', p5-7.

⁴ There have been other empires, e.g. in China, the Indus Valley or Central America, but the Bible highlights those of Assyria, Babylonia, Medo-Persia and Rome for its purposes in particular.

⁵ The return of a certain powerful king is a common theme in culture. Tolkien's 'Lord of the Rings' is based on this idea. In history we have seen cultures seek the return of King Arthur of Britain, Napoleon of France, Nero and Julius Caesar of Rome, Hitler of Germany, Genghis Khan of Mongolia, and many more. Of course, this idea is often based on a parody of the return of The Lord Jesus Christ.

The Roman Empire

This is another common interpretation, and indeed some aspects seem to make sense; but the problem is that this takes a too literal interpretation and is found wanting.

As an example of something having a fatal wound, the Roman Empire makes sense, it was effectively destroyed in the middle of the fifth century AD; but as having a mortal wound healed makes no sense. As a result, interpreters have to cobble together ideas for a rejuvenated imperial Rome under another guise: viz. Charlemagne's Holy Roman Empire (which was not really a restored Rome at all), the papacy (though centred in Rome is not a restored Roman Empire) or the European Union (which is just a stretch too far).

The papacy

There are multiple problems with this interpretation. First, the papacy did not exist for hundreds of years after John wrote down the vision. This would mean that the chapter had nothing to say to people during that period. This cannot be right.

Second, when did the papacy sustain a fatal wound? Its power was certainly diminished as a result of the Reformation, but its power did not wane. Indeed, with the Counter Reformation its power was extended (e.g. in the New World, i.e. Latin and South America) and its worst expressions of persecution occurred.

Finally, this is just a small part of the expression of the beast. Romanism has no impact whatsoever in huge parts of the world, such as Islamic, Buddhist and Hindu nations or Polynesia and the Americas pre-Columbus. The wound appeared to kill the beast; it was a fatal wound, but these nations suffered no damage at all where the beast was manifested in different ways than in Western Europe.

Summary of views

The list of speculations would be immense. Most common is the death of the Roman Empire (and/or Nero) that recovers later.

- Albert Barnes: the reference is to political Rome. The wound was that the Roman Empire fell and seemed dead but was restored by alliance with the papacy. Roman power now rests in the pope not an emperor.
- Adam Clarke: the fall of Rome. The restoring was the Holy Roman Empire under Charlemagne. 'Earth' refers to the body of the Roman Church, which followed.
- John Darby: Imperial Rome.
- Geneva Bible notes: Nero. [NB the family of Caesars fell with Nero.]
- John Gill: the end of Rome and emperors. [NB Rome was built on seven hills.] The healing was the rise of the papacy afterwards. He also mentions that some see the wound as the Reformation, followed by a recovery of popery. The latter is a very reasonable interpretation.
- Matthew Henry: '*Some think that by this wounded head we are to understand the abolishing of pagan idolatry; and by the healing of the wound the introducing of the popish idolatry, the same in substance with the former, only in a new dress.*' The problem with this is that paganism was not abolished before the rise of the papacy. There was a diminishing of it with the spread of the Gospel, but not abolition. Neither is the papacy the healing of the wound.
- JFB: the Germanic Empire where the Germanic hordes destroyed the Roman Empire, the seventh world power, (after Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome). The mortal wound was when these German tribes adopted Christianity. The healing is the ascent out of the bottomless pit in the future (17:8).

- People's New Testament: *'This deadly wound of the head was a deadly wound of the beast itself. See Rev 13:12. This wound was given by the sword; that is, by war. See Rev 13:14. It is in Rev 13:14 suggested that the beast was restored after the wound by the efforts of the second beast first named in Rev 13:11. The symbolism implies that a mortal wound was inflicted on the power represented by the beast; that when it was dead, or about to perish, its power was restored by the arts of the second beast.'*
- AT Robertson: It *'refers to the death of Nero in June 68 a.d. by his own hand.'*
- Scofield Study Bible: the end of Roman imperial government. The healing is the restoration of imperial government over a federation of ten kingdoms.
- PE Hughes: the wound was the spread of the Gospel under the apostles. The healing was the persecution of the church by the world after the initial success of the Gospel.
- John Walvoord: the Roman Empire that will be revived in the future.
- Henry Alford: The pagan Roman Empire crushed by Christianity.
- JPM Sweet: Nero. Then he adds that it was the testimony of Jesus and the saints that wounded the beast's head. Sinfulness of humanity restores its power.
- GB Caird: Nero. The empire was restored with the accession of Vespasian. Caird also refers to a 'reincarnation' in a new future emperor.
- Michael Wilcock: possibly Nero originally but more generally the demise and rebirth of political systems.
- Richard Brooks: political and worldly systems that come and go, such as: the persecutor Nero dies but is replaced by a greater persecutor (Domitian) later.
- Geoffrey Wilson: probably Nero. The chaos that followed his suicide seemed like the end of Rome until it was restored by Vespasian.
- RCH Lenski: the death-stroke of the world's antichristian power by Christ's victory and coronation. He does not satisfactorily explain the healing of the wound, but simply mentions that the beast comes alive again and continues his devastation.
- W Hendriksen: the beast is all antichristian governments. The wound means that one of the seven empire expressions of the beast ceased for a while then grew again. This is Rome and particularly the death of Nero who had persecuted Christians. The recovery is the resumption of persecution under Domitian.
- GR Beasley-Murray: [New Century Bible Comm.] Head refers to a ruler, that is Nero and the healing refers to the many myths that he had revived. [New Bible Comm.] Possibly Julius Caesar, but the resurrection aspect better applies to Nero.
- J Trapp: the wound applied to Rome, possibly the invasion by the Goths. He also suggests that it refers to the schism in the Roman church in 1378 or the effect of the Reformation. The healing refers to the activity of the Sorbonists, Jesuits, Trent-fathers and other papal bodies.
- M Poole: head refers to the leopard, one of the pagan emperors. The wounding to death is the conquering of pagan emperors and the abolishing of paganism by Christian emperors. The healing was the restoration of pagan idolatry in the Roman Church.
- The IVP Bible Background Commentary on the NT: Nero.

The limitations of many interpretations

Most of the interpretations are far too narrow, limited and worldly. We can dismiss all mentions of Nero and Rome, or even the papacy. Some of the commentators come close to what I consider to be correct.

The beast is the entire antichristian power in the world opposed to God. It is the force and strategies of Satan via various agents in waging war against God and the saints like a wild beast.

Rome was just one manifestation of this bestial system. Nero was an even smaller figure in it. The false doctrine of the Roman Catholic system came much later than John's time and only represents one part of the pagan attack on God. We must not limit what God is trying to tell us with a western mindset. This chapter must be relevant to all Christians, at all times, in all places, but still have reference to the world after the creation of the final antichristian state.

Parallel information in Revelation 17

7 But the angel said to me, 'Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns.

8 The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

9 Here *is* the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits.

10 There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, *and* the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time.

11 And the beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.

12 The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast.

13 These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast.

14 These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those *who are* with Him *are* called, chosen, and faithful.'

15 Then he said to me, 'The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.

16 And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire.

17 For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled.

18 And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.' Rev 17:7-18

We have no space here to get into fine detail in expounding this passage; we can simply draw the following points.

The mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns.

The woman is carried by the beast; that is the beast and the woman go together. The beast is the political power of anti-Christianity while the woman is the sinful seduction of it. The one strengthens the other.

The beast

The mention of seven heads and ten horns shows that this is the same beast as in chapter 13. Ten horns refer to completeness of power. Ten diadems or crowns (13:1) refers to regal power or despotism.

‘The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is’ (v8).

This is parallel to the wound of the head of the beast that was healed. The beast seemed dead (was and is not) but then arose again.

‘Bottomless pit’ (or ‘abyss’): in chapter 13 the beast rose from the sea, or the multitude of peoples, here it rises from the abyss. This term is used to show how deep the beast fell, how bad was the wound. The beast originally rose out of the people of the world (as in the rise of empires in history); then it suffered a deathblow; then it rose from the depths.

The narrow view is that the ‘was’ includes the empires of Nimrod, Assyria, Babylonia, Medo-Persia and Greece. The source of these empires is the abyss and their destiny is perdition; i.e. the eternal destruction of hell. The ‘is not’ refers to the fact that these empires fell.

The more encompassing view is that the ‘was’ refers to the deathblow given by the ascension of Christ to the world system empowered by Satan followed by the gradual diminishing of paganism as Christ’s victory was applied in the Gospel.

The marvelling of sinners refers to the surprise that, a) pagan world empires can arise again, despite the destruction of previous ones (‘perdition’ = ‘destruction’). The forms of heathen world empire change but all go to destruction. Better is b) we shall see that the deathblow was the victory of Christ on the cross, followed by the impact of the Gospel in the world. It seemed that paganism was finished; but at the end it is re-energised by Satan for a final expression. This resurrected manifestation at the end causes the earth to marvel in wonderment. Men glory in the apparent invincibility of the beast.

In actual fact, at the end both views apply; there is as resurgence of outright paganism and a totalitarian pagan world empire where anti-Christian paganism is enshrined.

Here is the mind which has wisdom (v9).

Cf. 13:18. The multitude of interpretations over centuries show that many have not used wisdom. To understand this passage (as also regarding the number 666) one must have the wisdom of God. The means shutting out all prior agendas.

‘The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits.’ (v9)

Mountains are typical of kingdoms in the Bible. These could be seven (i.e. perfect) expressions of the kingdom of the beast, antichristian political power. The heads are also kings (v10).

The allusion of the mountainous aspect also carries the idea of invincibility and power, something that cannot ordinarily be moved. [Note, however, the power of faith, Matt 17:20.]

Heads also carries the idea of thoughts, plans, designs, strategies etc. The seven implies that these thoughts are attempting to be as perfect as God is.

Many commentators accept a double meaning (hence the call for wisdom). As well as the various expressions in history, the seven mountains are claimed to specifically refer to the Roman Empire (Rome was built on seven hills), which was the current expression in John's day. However, hills are not mountains and Rome is too narrow an interpretation.

However, all this is too limited again. Seven is the number of perfection; usually perfection in divine things. This is referring to the perfect expressions of power of the beast in an attempt to be divine. This is the manifestation of Satan (the dragon) in world history through expressions of complete power (horns) in an attempt to usurp divinity.

Note the chief sin of man from Eden onwards was to seek to be his own god in rebellion to the Creator. 'The lie' is that man can be god. The 'mystery of Babylon' is the indwelling of Satan claiming to be God (see elsewhere in this paper). The seven heads of the beast is the same thing: the expression of antichristian power seeking to be God. These heads carry the harlot; the seductive power of sin that entice rebellion to God.

Everything in the final expression of satanic men on the earth is about man trying to be a god. This is already being worked out in the Luciferianism of the global elite and the occult expressions of Talmudic Judaism.

To summarise the beast:

- The numbers seven and ten must not be taken literally. Allocating these to specific kings in Europe is a poor explanation.
- Limiting the heads and kings to specific empires is too narrow and limiting. Limiting them further still to Rome alone is surely a mistake. The symbolism must have an impact to all history and to the whole world.
- The chief point is referring to the fulness of antichristian world power that rebels against God and seeks to be its own god.
- The beast has fulness of power (10 horns) and perfection of blasphemous expression, particularly in thoughts and plans (seven heads). The mountains refer to seemingly invisible earthly power (something rising from the earth, reaching towards heaven), and possibly this expression in a kingdom.

The woman

The enticing, idolatrous world system (woman / Babylon⁶) functions through these kingdoms and systems (heads) and persecutes the church. The woman's job is to lure people away from God. The woman / harlot symbolises temptation; Babylon represents the centre of commerce, culture, pagan religion, the arts and sciences as a focus of wickedness.⁷ The woman encapsulates what sinful people worship.

To summarise:

- The beast is the antichristian political world power submitted to Satan (the dragon) which persecutes the church throughout history.

⁶ Rev 17:5, 18, 19:2-3.

⁷ It has to be noted that Jews hold many of the top positions that control the world as heads of central banks, global corporations, high echelons of the USA, top figures in finances bodies and so on. Modern Judaism is based upon the Babylonian Talmud and the practices and doctrines of rabbinic Judaism comes straight out of the Pharisaic academies centred in Babylon. Modern Judaism is Babylonian, which is why it is filled with occult pagan ideas and proclaims Jewry as its own god.

- Mountains or heads (13:1) are individual kingdoms and empires as expressions within this world power or the thoughts and designs of this world power expressed in power structures (which includes empires).
- The woman / harlot is the temptation of sin within this world power to lure people away from God. Worldly seduction. The golden cup she holds is full of abominations (17:4). These are the temptations found in the world.
- The woman is also Babylon, which represents the world power as a centre of wickedness in commerce and culture; luxury, vice, hedonism and pride. The Babylonish civilisations of the world are sources of devilish temptation; i.e. the lusts of the flesh. [Note that all the technological developments of civilisation always tend to make even greater sources of sinful temptation.]
- The woman is intimately connected to the beast so that she sits on it.
- The beast and the harlot / woman / Babylon have been expressed throughout history. They were present in John's day and are present today, the form changes but the results are the same. At the end the beast will dominate the whole world.
- The harlot tries to lure saints away from God and entices sinners to persecute the church. Thus she was 'drunk with the blood of the saints' (17:6). In John's day this was fulfilled in the cruel martyrdom of Christians in the Roman amphitheatres for sport. Christians are commanded to get out of her (18:4); that is have no fellowship with the wicked systems of the world.
- Babylon's fall occurs throughout history and has been seen whenever a concentrated form arose and then fell (such as in world empires). Rome was one concentrated form of Babylon, filled with lust and wickedness, luxury and hedonism, vice and power. Yet it fell to barbarians. At the end, the worst expression of Babylon will fall, finally, with the Second Coming of Christ.

Comparison of the two women in Revelation

The woman clothed with the sun [c12]	The woman / harlot / Babylon [c17]
Is the church of Christ, the body of Christ.	Is the false church or embodiment of Satan (not just religion).
Is the covenant people.	Is the sinful world's system.
A bride.	A harlot.
Comprises of the saints.	Persecutes the saints.
Principle of self-sacrifice like Christ.	Principle of hedonism, selfishness, pride, lust.
Is persecuted by the beast.	Rides on the beast.
Jerusalem.	Babylon.
Serves God.	Serves Satan (the dragon).

'There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, *and* the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time.'

These are expressions of the beast in world empires led by kings (it is not referring to specific kings). The five fallen are: Assyria, Babylonia, Medo-Persia and Greece but the fifth is arguable, probably Nimrod's Sumerian kingdom as a prototype of wicked world empire (Egypt is not recognised in the Bible as a world power).

The 'one is' refers to Rome, the empire present at the time of writing. The one yet to come refers to a future world empire that lasts a short time.

The empire to come is variously interpreted; such as: the Holy Roman Empire, the papacy, the Germanic tribes that conquered Rome or even the European Union. These are not indicated here. It is referring to the final expression of the beast in a brief world domination under a global totalitarian government at the end.

In general, these are the manifestations of satanic government on earth that represent the thoughts and designs of Satan.

‘And the beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.’

This is a comment on the wounding of the beast, which seemed to kill it. Being eighth refers to being one of the seven that was resurrected (8 = resurrection). This kingdom is the full manifestation of Satan, who is condemned to perdition.

The gist of this is that the eighth and final world empire is noticeable for being a principle thought to be dead but now resurrected (in my view an utterly pagan empire where man seeks to be a god, see later). This is the final world government in opposition to God.

‘The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast.’

Ten refers to fulness, the fulness of authority and power (horn) refer to kings that were yet to come after John’s time. This is the rise of fulness of power submitted to the beast and Satan.

‘Kings’ need not be taken literally. John has already referred to the rulers of world empires; here he is emphasising the fulness of power in the world. The powerful figures have no kingdom but have great authority for short periods (‘one hour’); they rise, rule and then fall. These are all the powerful people that really rule the world in various departments: bankers, globalists, heads of world corporations etc.

They are all working for the beast in their individual capacities. Thus the true goal behind their operations is the destruction of the church (v14).

The ten horns are really speaking of the fulness of power of the beast in world history; antichristian force, pagan authority. In the end all expression of power gathers to support the beast for the last battle but are defeated and go to perdition.

‘These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those *who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.*

The world’s powers, being manifestations of the beast under Satan, persecute Christians, the expression of the Lamb. They were responsible for the death of Christ.

The Lamb is the Victor.

In every expression of the satanic empires and powers, Christ prevails and overcomes. The same will be true of the final expression. [See Rev 11:11, 16:14ff, 19:11ff; 2 Thess 2:8.]

Lord of lords and King of kings

This is not referring to the kings of the beast or any human royalty. Christ is not the Lord of these but their judge and executioner. [He is sovereign over all authority, but the picture here is one of Christ leading a triumphal march, followed by submissive, loyal kings.]

The called and chosen of God, the elect, the Lord’s people, are said to be kings in their own right by virtue of the authority Christ gives them as co-heirs with him.

You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people. 1 Pt 2:9

‘Royal’ means ‘kingly’ (cf. Exod 19:6).

And has made us kings and priests to His God and Father. Rev 1:6

And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth. Rev 5:10

They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. Rev 20:6

Three times Revelation refers to believers as kings reigning with God through Christ. Jesus is Lord and King over all these delegated kings. Thus the immediate addition of 'those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.'

Then he said to me, 'The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.'

No lengthy comment necessary. 'Then he said to me', begins a separate sub-section. The mention of a list of four things refers to the earth ('four corners of the world'), thus peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues of the whole earth.

'And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire.'

The world system of sin, idolatry and selfishness is not treated well by the beast that it dwells in. Those in the world are repeatedly damaged by the rule of antichristian powers.

At the end, the principle of worldly evil (Babylon) will end. There comes a time when sinful, worldly people, who had been infatuated with the worldly system of sin, suddenly see the truth that the seduction of the world is nothing but a vapour that vanishes – but it is too late; the end comes then.

Precursors of this occur throughout history. Note Judas who was beguiled by silver but then hanged himself. Note the large number of rich people who committed suicide. Note Solomon who had been tempted by worldly pleasure but later said that all was vanity.

The pleasures of sin are ephemeral and unsatisfying and lead to self-loathing. Sin breeds worse sin and in the end the result is disgust. The natural end of commitment to ever-deeper sin is self-hate and ruin. In God's plan the world comes to this conclusion (see next verse).

'For God has put it into their hearts to fulfil His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled.'

The prior loyalty of the expressions of the beast is to Satan and his plans. Yet there comes a time when this stops and people realise their sin – too late.

'And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.'

The woman is Babylon, the harlot, the world of pride, hedonism and idolatry.

'Mystery' (17:5) refers to Babylon as a principle that works within man; a parody of 'Christ in us'. It is 'the course of this world' (Eph 2:2); the influence behind all politics, commerce and false religion. 'Harlot' refers to her enticing man to follow her. In the end, Babylonian principles rule the earth. Babylon is the selfish wickedness used by Satan to unify the human race (note Babel).

[Aside: Note that Satan is not Lord of the earth, that is Christ; 'The earth is the Lord's'. Satan dominates the world and rules it through sin. He controls those in the earth through controlling temptation. His means of getting people to submit to his will is harlot Babylon, the enticement of the flesh. By controlling the heart of kings, he thus controls the world.]

Conclusion

This supports what we learned in chapter 13 and adds more information. Another viewpoint is also given in chapter 20, which I will mention in the conclusion.

A better interpretation - Paganism

Paganism; what is it?

Paganism is all the characteristics of anti-Christian religion, faith, ethics, and behaviour.⁸

The Latin *paganus* meant 'civilian', meaning, in Christian Latin, one not enrolled in the army of Christ.

This is a synonym of the word 'heathen'. This is an Old English word from *hæthen*, of Germanic origin; related to Dutch *heiden* and German *Heide*. It is generally regarded as a specifically Christian use of a Germanic adjective meaning 'inhabiting open country', from the base of 'heath'. The Latin *paganus* also meant 'villager, rustic', from *pagus* 'country district'. Together they imply one not of Christ but someone out in the wild country; someone uncivilised and not following Christ.

Paganism is a good substitute for what the beast is. The beast is paganism: everything opposed to Christ in religion, ethics, politics and behaviour. Thus we have pagan countries, pagan religion, pagan social customs, pagan magic, pagan behaviour, pagan thinking and so on.

The pagan beast

Paganism is all that the beast is. 'Paganism' is a summary of the beast as antichristian powers and is also a feature of a 'head' of the beast – an important central expression in culture of satanic principles.

For hundreds of years before the appearance of Christ, paganism held sway over the vast majority of the world, with the exception of Israel. Yet even within Israel there were multitudes of times when the Jewish nation submitted to pagan idolatry and deserted God. Paganism was a seemingly unstoppable force.

Paganism is centred in idolatry – having something else as the centre of worship and submission rather than the true God. This idolatry is expressed in multiple forms that are as different as chalk and cheese, but they are all expressions of the beast.

Christian idolatry

Pagan idolatry can be very religious and even appear as 'Christian'.

Roman Catholicism is a big centre of pagan idolatry where multiple images are worshipped instead of Christ. These idols include: worship of Mary, which is the biggest idol and whose worship is included in formal papal dogma. The pope is worshipped, though this may not be formalised it is certainly a fact in day-to-day practice. Saints are worshipped and praying to the saints for grace is a central Roman doctrine.

Many Christian sects are centres of pagan idol worship, such as the Mormons, who even have a substitute scripture. The JW's do not worship Christ and thus worship a modalistic form of god that is not the true God. Christadelphians do not worship Christ and thus

⁸ Historically the word meant the opposite of Christianity; however, many modern dictionaries have changed the meaning to refer to non-monotheistic religions.

worship something other than the true God. Arians do not worship Christ. Unitarians do not worship Christ.

Arminians do claim to worship Christ and the true God but their god is a far lesser god than the God of the Bible. The Arminian god is not sovereign over men and cannot save his elect; he is dependent upon the frail will of mere men. The Arminian doctrine also suppresses many attributes of the true God. Extreme forms of Arminianism, such as Open Theism, have a god that does not know the future and cannot control history. Many famous Charismatic leaders have submitted to Open Theism.

Apart from false Christianity, there are numerous forms of pagan religion.

Religious idolatry

There are thousands of expressions of pagan religion in the world today.

All the major non-Christian faiths are pagan by definition. These worship something or nothing other than the true God of the Bible. Listing and evaluating all these would be pointless.

Then there are thousands of minor religions that are opposed to Christianity. We could mention Jainism⁹ or Baha'i¹⁰ for example. All polytheism is pagan.

Then there is liberal religion, sometimes posing as Christianity. This is where a sect has lost all its Biblical principles and has subsumed them under something else, such as humanism, politics or secularism. For example, the Society of Friends (Quakers) started as a Christian sect and had some godly followers; but over the centuries it has now become completely liberal and humanistic. Its meetings are little other than secular gatherings of people devoted to peace.

The occult

The expressions of the occult are far too numerous to list here; whole encyclopaedias have been written to explain this. Thus, for example, the occult includes all forms of witchcraft (black, white, Wicca, shamanism, witch-doctors, voodoo), necromancy, Satan worship, animism, mysticism, Gaia worship, nature worship (pantheism), magic (multiple forms including casting spells), divination (e.g. Tarot cards), spirit worship, spiritualism (e.g. clairvoyance), ancestor worship and so on.

Some formal religious systems incorporate the occult within their dogma, such as the worship of ancestors in Japanese Shinto¹¹ or the animism¹² of many primitive religions (e.g. Australian Aboriginal religion).

⁹ Jainism is a non-theistic religion founded in India in the 6th century BC by Vardhamana Mahavira as a reaction against the teachings of orthodox Brahminism. Its central doctrine is non-injury to living creatures. Salvation is attained by perfection of the soul through successive lives (reincarnation). There are 3.6 million adherents in India, mostly found in Gujarat and Maharashtra states. There are two major sects: the white-robed *Svetambaras* and the naked *Digambaras*.

¹⁰ Baha'i (also Bahai) a monotheistic religion founded in the 19th century as a development of Babism, emphasising the essential oneness of humankind and of all religions and seeking world peace. The Baha'i faith was founded by the Persian Baha'ullah (1817–92) and his son Abdul Baha (1844–1921).

¹¹ A Japanese religion dating from prehistoric times based on the worship of ancestors and nature-spirits. Things that inspire awe [trees, rocks, dead warriors] are believed to enshrine *kami* ('spirits'). In early times each clan had its *kami*; with the supremacy of the Yamato, its sun-goddess, Amaterasu became paramount. Shinto is adaptable, emphasising high standards of behaviour and daily rituals rather than on doctrine, stressing ritual purity. The name 'Shinto' was adopted in the 6th century AD to distinguish it from Buddhist and Confucian cults. During the 5th century AD, the spread of Confucianism introduced ancestor worship to

Secular idolatry

Again this takes many forms. The enticing idol is usually built upon the root predilections of people.

Thus the hedonist has the idol of self-pleasure, which takes multiple forms (e.g. fornication, gluttony, alcohol etc.). The control freak is enticed by power, and such people often become politicians, heads of corporations or military officers. The deviant is beguiled by extreme obscenity (such as bestiality, necrophilia or paedophilia). The selfish do-gooder is centred in good works that make him feel better and are really done for pride. Such people often become philanthropists or champion good causes but remain selfish rather than having a true spirit of philanthropy¹³ (celebrities often show this trait). The greedy worship the idol of money and possessions. The cruel worship violence. We could go on and on.

The point

All paganism is something that is opposed to, or separate from, true Christianity. As such, it is the manifestation of the beast, which is the summation of all that is opposed to God and in submission to Satan. Anything, religious or otherwise, that turns a person away from worship of Jesus or obedience to God's law, is a manifestation of the beast and can be called pagan.

Over the centuries Satan inspired multiple forms of paganism to entice men away from the truth; and this process is still going on today. The worst expression of this is where occult practices and idea have been introduced into the Christian church to deceive many, this has especially occurred within the Charismatic Movement. However, pagan occult expressions have been found in many Christian sects and cults for hundreds of years. A classic case of this is the extreme occult practices of the Shakers that even absorbed the idolatry of Native American Indian shamans.

The question of the heads, kings and mountains

As with many Biblical prophecies there are shades of meaning and consequential fulfilments. The mountains (kingdoms) and kings in general refer to the expressions of the beast in history, antichristian world powers generally. This is why they are not named specifically. Heads are the expressions, thoughts, designs strategies of Satan in history, which are collected in power centres such as empires, but today are centred in power systems such as banks, corporations and finance sectors as well.

However, Revelation also makes clear that there is a final world government that is the culmination of all previous governments and empires; a totalitarian, global antichristian rule that is the perfect expression of Satan's thoughts and plans.

The head that was wounded refers to a centre of satanic thoughts and expression in history; an important focus of what Satan desires. Paganism is a good word for this.

Shinto, and in the 6th century Buddhist beliefs were incorporated. During the 19th century, state Shinto appeared with emperor worship as a descendant of Amaterasu. Shinto is regarded as the religion of life, while Buddhism is seen as that of death; marriages are therefore celebrated according to Shinto, while Buddhist rites are used for funerals.

¹² The attribution of a soul to all creatures, inanimate objects, and natural phenomena. The term denotes the belief that the world is animated by spirits who are capable of harming or helping a person's interests. Animistic belief gives rise to all manner of ways in which the spirits may be propitiated or evil avoided. Often a shaman is required.

¹³ The desire to promote the welfare of others expressed especially by the generous donation of money to good causes. Origin from Greek philanthrōpos, i.e. 'man-loving'.

Thus the wound that was healed can refer, in general, to the collapse of paganism in history followed by its recent rebirth. However, more specifically, there is a final world empire where paganism comes to fruition.

If the mountains, heads and kings are expressions of pagan power, the healed wound can also refer to the final, global, antichristian empire that sums up all paganism. This could also refer to the wound being considered as the death of world empires; it seemed as if the idea of a pagan world empire had vanished, but now a pagan world empire arises, resurrecting the idea of a global despotic kingdom. This is a pagan kingdom.

So, the resurrection could be a) in general, the rebirth of paganism throughout the world; b) more specifically, a pagan world empire.

Christ the Victor; the deadly wound to the beast

The only character that has ever been powerful enough to set back the entire system of the beast is the Lord Jesus Christ. The victory of Christ over Satan is plainly stated in the NT, such as:

Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. Jn 12:31

Of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. Jn 16:11

Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. Col 2:15

Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Heb 2:14-15

So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. Rev 12:9

He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is *the* Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. Rev 12:2

The deadly wound to the beast, and thus to Satan, was made by Jesus Christ. This brought release of the elect from the clutches of the devil, transferring them out of his kingdom of darkness into the light. It also gave a testimony to the world as a whole.

The testimony of the church to the Gospel of Jesus was so powerful that it was said that the whole world was turned upside down. The birth of Christianity brought the gradual apparent destruction of paganism in whole continents.

Even during the Dark Ages when Romanism ruled the world by superstition and dogma there was a steady growth of true Christianity across the world, and particularly in Europe. Note, for example, the prevalence and missionary power of the British Celtic church after the fall of Rome and before Catholicism had taken over kings, or the testimony of the Waldensians¹⁴ in France, Piedmont¹⁵ and elsewhere after the 13th century.

After the Reformation, paganism received an even greater deathblow as the claims of Christ in the Gospel and the truth of the Bible was preached in a rejuvenated manner. Everywhere that Protestantism spread paganism was crushed. All the societies that

¹⁴ A puritan Christian group founded c.1170 by Peter Valdes (d.1205), a merchant of Lyons.

¹⁵ A region of NW Italy, in the foothills of the Alps; capital, Turin.

embraced Protestantism prospered significantly due to the liberty that it promoted. Thus Protestant nations developed into empires (mercantile and political) that spread across the world bringing Christianity with them, opening the door for missionary workers.

By the Victorian Age paganism was considered dead and buried, a thing of the past in civilised nations and an ongoing task for missionaries in the few remaining primitive nations. By the 1950s even the most obscure, hidden, stone-age tribes that remained began to convert to Christianity, such as the Aucas¹⁶ in the Amazon basin.

Some external features of paganism had even been outlawed by Parliament; such as:

- Witchcraft: the first Witchcraft Act was in 1542, with several successive acts (1563, 1604, and 1735).
- Homosexuality: Historically, homosexuality was a feature of pagan worship rites and initiations. Sodomy was criminalised in Britain by the Buggery Act of 1533; until 1861 it carried the death penalty. Two men were given the death penalty as late as 1861.
- Incest: The Incest Acts of 1567 in Scotland. In England and Wales incest was considered under Canon law and punishable by penance, except during the Protectorate under Cromwell when it was punishable by death. It became illegal under the Incest Act of 1908 (consent being irrelevant).
- Bestiality (Zoophilia): many pagan rituals involve bestiality to this day. Many politicians have done this, such as initiation into the American Skull and Bones society. Throughout history, certainly by the Middle Ages, bestiality was punishable in Europe by death. In England bestiality has been illegal since 1290.

Societies that developed under the influence of Christianity, and subsequently Protestantism, sought to introduce Common Law to legislate according to divine principles laid down in the Bible. This has been the case since even earlier than Alfred the Great, who built on existing Common Law. These laws, civil and criminal, sought to eradicate all the social and religious aspects of paganism that had flourished in pre-Christian times.

Thus paganism began to diminish more and more. First by the original apostolic proclamation of the Gospel and the huge numbers of new churches springing up all over the Roman Empire. Second by the influence of Christian principles within society emanating from the large number of Christians, both ordinary and those with influence (such as chiefs, kings, princes, judges, and so on). Finally by the actual imposition of laws based on Biblical principles that criminalised pagan activity, such as witchcraft, necromancy or ritual homosexuality.

Over time, the influence and power of paganism was gradually destroyed more and more. By the modern age it seemed that paganism was a thing of the past in civilised societies. By the Victorian Age paganism was deemed to be virtually dead, save for a few primitive animistic tribes and not counting the major non-Christian religions.

The difference had been enormous and not understood by modern people. Without Christian missionaries, paganism would have still prevailed in many far-flung countries where appalling acts used to be commonplace. When one liberal attacked the activities of missionaries for destroying indigenous culture, he asked a tribesman in South Africa what difference Christianity had made to his people. The tribesman said, *'You are standing here safe, talking to me. Before the missionaries came, I would have killed and eaten you'*. Point made.

¹⁶ Or Huaorani; 'Aucas' was the original defamatory name ('savages'). These came to fame after the 1955 martyrdom of Ed McCully, Peter Fleming, Roger Youderian, Nate Saint and Jim Elliot, which prompted a further successful missionary effort by the spouses Rachel Saint and Elisabeth Elliot.

The wound healed; the resurgence of paganism

Sadly, all this has changed for the worse; much of the deterioration having taking place in less than the last 65 years. The most shocking thing has occurred; paganism has revived; not only is it not dead but it is now becoming the predominant force in society while Christianity is in steep decline.

We could first point to specific legal issues:

- The witchcraft acts were repealed with the enactment of the Fraudulent Mediums Act of 1951.
- Sodomy was legalised between consenting adults in Britain in 1967 (Scotland 1980; N Ireland 1982; Isle of Man 1992) following the Wolfenden Report.

We could then start considering all the negative changes that have been occurring in society.

- Paganism is the fastest growing religion in the UK according to census statistics.
- Paganism has had such resurgence that it its modern form is called 'Neo-paganism' by academics.
- Witchcraft is now completely accepted as a norm. Witch's shops are found in the high streets of towns, even in conservative towns like Worthing, not just Glastonbury. Covens are multiplying throughout the land. Some cities, like Brighton, have had dozens of covens for decades.
- Features of occultism have become so widespread that they are even found in so-called churches; examples would be: spiritualism, clairvoyance, faith-healing, visualisation, emotional healing, fetishes, spells, charms, necromancy, false prophecy, curses, tongue-speaking, ecstatic utterances, falling down, making animal noises, and so on.
- Various aspects of the occult have become mainstream; such as occult products on sale in shops and TV channels (e.g. Tarot cards, I Ching sticks, the Book of the Dead, gemstones for healing, Ouija boards).
- Divination is a popular feature of newspapers (e.g. astrology).
- Children have learned (from books, comics and movies) to engage in occult activities from a young age, such as using Tarot cards or having seances.
- Almost every other film on television these days is about an occult subject, such as witches, vampires, werewolves, zombies, possession by evil spirits or ghosts.
- Homosexuality is not only accepted as normal but is legalised and made a national institution by legal Gay marriages. Gay Anglican priests have been accepted.
- Following the support of homosexuality, lesbians, transvestites and cross-genders [LGBT] are now becoming widely accepted.
- The media and many aspects of the arts (such as theatre) are now almost totally dominated by homosexuals.
- Feminism, which is a vehicle for paganism, has overturned society. Equality of the sexes is a good thing but the aims of the original feminists went much further and many embrace goddess worship. Others sought a social war with men. Today white males do far worse in school than girls and jobs for men are often harder to find than jobs for women; especially in the north. Feminism has led to infants being without their mothers, who are at work.
- A cult of death is found in many aspects of society (note the many films that are simply devoted to torture or hideous forms of death).

- The theory of evolution has dominated all aspects of society and is proudly championed by the BBC and academics.
- Pagan religions have become a flood in the land. Britain now has multiple Hindu temples, Buddhist centres, Islamic mosques, Baha'i centres and so on.
- Freemasonry (which is witchcraft) has gained almost total power in mainstream institutions, such as the police force, magistrates, the judiciary, and politics.
- The Anglican Church even had an archbishop that was an avowed Druid.
- Many environmentalists avidly worship Gaia, the earth goddess.
- Many town councils have outlawed Christian festivals and introduced pagan ones, such as Divali,¹⁷ Ramadan¹⁸ and Chinese new year.
- Many councils sponsor outright pagan events, such as the burning of the clocks on Brighton beach.
- Halloween has been introduced in recent decades and is now a permanent feature.
- Occult themed books, such as the Harry Potter or the Twilight series, have been amongst the most popular works of fiction of all time.
- Sexual perversion, of all kinds, is on the rise. Pornography of the most extreme kind is now available to anyone at the click of a mouse button. Young children are becoming exposed to hard-core porn and are being taught explicit aspects of sex while at primary school. Gonorrhoea is now becoming untreatable.
- Paedophilia and satanic ritual abuse of children is a ticking time-bomb underlying many aspects of the establishment. There is huge evidence that there have been long-term paedophile networks in operation amongst high-level establishment figures (the judiciary, the police, the BBC, social workers, politicians, the military and the secret services).

Without any shadow of doubt, the paganism that was considered extinct by Victorians is now more prevalent in British society than it has ever been in history. Only in the prehistory of Albion, with the little-known rituals and customs of the ancient Britons before the Celtic invasion,¹⁹ was there anywhere near the paganism in society that is rife now.

Within less than 100 years, Britain has gone from being a formal Christian society with every institution based on Christian principles (courts, legislation, the BBC, education etc.) to being an outright pagan social system, with some aspects being immersed in Satanism.

Things have occurred in my lifetime that previous Britons never thought possible. These have usually been achieved through a drip-feed, stealth strategy that brought big changes slowly over long time periods. Some items that facilitated these changes were immigration, television, movies, propaganda in education, the drug culture, the 60s liberation movement, feminism and evil legislation. Two thousand years of history has been overturned within my lifetime.

¹⁷ Divali ('Feast of Lights', from Sanskrit *dīpavālī*) is a five-day Hindu festival celebrated towards the end of October, which marks both a new Moon and a new year. It takes its name from the lamps (*dīpās*) which are lit at this time. The festival is particularly associated with Lakshmi, the consort of Vishnu and goddess of prosperity. The festival is also celebrated by the Sikhs.

¹⁸ The ninth month of the Islamic calendar, commemorating the revelation of the Koran; Ramadan is prescribed as a time of fasting during the day for all healthy Muslims.

¹⁹ Such as that evidenced by Stonehenge.

In Victorian times 95% of Britons identified themselves as Christian. Even if that figure contained many superficial believers, most people went to church, children were brought up on Christian ethics, schools were based on Christian principles and Christ was treated with respect. Even hardened male sinners would take off their hat when entering a church or praying at a funeral; today Charismatic church leaders wear hats/scarves in a meeting.

Today about 40% of people identify themselves as Christians; but of that number only about 41% read a Bible, pray or go to church; so about 16% are Christian; probably fewer still are genuine believers. In some surveys only 10% are nominated as 'Christian'. Schools have prohibited Christianity from the classroom and assembly. In many places pagan ethics and religion dominate the classroom. Evolution underlies geology and biology lessons and creationism is forbidden.

Now it is this resurrection of paganism, not just in society but also in the various forms of power in the world (governments, banks, corporations and institutions), that correlate with the healing of the wound of the beast. The final expression of pagan empire (itself a resurrection of something thought dead) will come on the back of the current proliferation of paganism in society.

The wound that was healed is the current domination of paganism after being defeated for 2,000 years.

Aside: the lie of humanism

Changes in social culture, plus supposed advances in society, are usually on the back of a claimed humanism and a reversing of Christian principles, which are alleged to have shackled people. This humanism is supposed to be more humanitarian, tolerant, loving, permissive and liberal, often with a ridiculing of Christianity.

In fact what occurs is a separation of ethics from absolute principles (i.e. God's law) and with that comes the possibility of unprincipled libertarianism, or the freedom to do absolutely anything at all. Thus societies become unprincipled.

Sometimes serious tragedies can result. For example, the 'humanitarian' legislation to allow almost unlimited abortions on demand have meant that literally millions of unborn babies have been killed, each one a living soul. Many thousands of women have also suffered the consequential terrible guilt and depression from knowingly having terminated a life.

Modern liberal society has given us unlimited, easy access pornography to people of all ages; massive drug abuse; unrelenting foul language in the media; blasphemy posing as education or culture; unending extreme graphic violence in the media, entertainment and gaming industries. The focus on hedonism has given us a colossal rise in diabetes, obesity, STIs, early deaths, cancer, broken marriages, damaged children and increased mental illness. We could go on.

The claimed liberty of smashing the ethics and absolutes of God's law, as expressed in Christian mores, has not brought freedom at all; it has just brought bondage to sin. Man needs boundaries and the best boundaries are those set by God's law.

Conclusion

Rev 20 is a commentary on this subject (remember that the visions in Revelation are a series of parallel, cyclical subjects).

1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

2 He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is *the* Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;

3 and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

5 But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection.

6 Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

7 Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison

8 and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number *is* as the sand of the sea.

9 They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. Rev 20:1-9

Rev 13:3-4	Rev 20
One head of the beast mortally wounded.	The binding of Satan. Restricted from fulfilling his plans for world domination.
The wound healed.	The release of Satan from prison.
The world worships the beast.	Deceiving the nations.

The idea is that the activity of Satan in the world, i.e. paganism and particularly the paganism focused in world empires, was stopped for a long time by the activity of God. Satan was chained and restricted from fulfilling his plans for society in the world.

At the appointed time, God releases Satan from prison so that he can fulfil his objective to dominate the world with paganism and form a new world empire devoted to paganism.

This world empire, fully antichristian, will be the consummation of man's sin, which will result in the Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to judge the devil and all his followers.

My contention is that this release from prison occurred in the mid-to-late 19th century, the time when the current rot in society began. From that point pagan ideas began to impact first the church (liberalism, modernism, humanism, evolution, sects, heresies) and then the rest of society (secularism, humanism, evolution, liberal ideas, feminism etc.).

We are currently in the flowering of paganism in Britain where Christianity is in severe decline and the expression of pagan ideas and practices is greater than ever before in history. The way is paved for the final expression of Satan in a totalitarian world government.

Nevertheless, the point of Revelation is to strongly proclaim the victory of the Lord Jesus Christ. The final expression of the beast, of a satanic power centre in the world, is but for a short time. The Lord Jesus is returning; and when he appears he destroys the beast, and the dragon, with the breath of his mouth.

Glory to God.

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