

James Rafferty Q2 L5 2025 Wednesday *April 30* Between Land and Sea

The land and sea imagery in the Bible, especially for prophecy, can be very instructive. Consider the case of the symbols of *land* and *sea* in Bible prophecy, which are contrasted sharply.

“Symbolically, when earth and sea are juxtaposed, *earth* often represents the ordered world, or even the land of Israel, while *sea* refers to the Gentile nations that menace it as the sea menaces the land.”—Beatrice S. Neall, “Sealed Saints and the Tribulation,” in *Symposium on Revelation*, Book 1, ed. Frank B. Holbrook, (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1992), p. 260. In this thinking, the *land* is a place of stability, established on the government of God; the *sea* represents the unstable turmoil of nations established on human pride.

With the idea expressed above as the background, read Revelation 12:15, 16 and Revelation 13:1, 11. Notice the juxtaposition between water and earth. How are they used, and what can they teach us about how to understand prophecy?

ISAIAH 59:19:

19 So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and His glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.

4 Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself. Exodus 19:4

Notice that the dragon uses *water* to persecute the woman (the church). As we have seen, in prophecy water often symbolizes worldly governments and the turmoil and chaos that often attends them. Hence, we can see how Satan was able to use the masses, prodded by their leaders, to persecute God's people through much of church history.

Also, Seventh-day Adventists have understood Revelation 12:16 to refer to the migration of persecuted believers to the New World. If our understanding of *land* and *sea* is correct, what does this say about the founding of the American Republic?

Could we consider it to be “the earth” in the same way that the “Promised Land” was—a place set aside for God's people? Could this be why the land-beast first appears to be lamblike? Though America has never been the “New Israel” as some of its early founders liked to see it, for a long time it has been a land of religious freedom for millions of the world's religiously oppressed.

Unfortunately, this lamblike beast will one day speak “like a dragon” (*Rev. 13:11, NKJV*). The United States, so long a beacon of religious freedom for the persecuted, will become the dominant religious persecutor! This is another example of what happened when humanity chose to rule itself instead of being ruled by God.

THE US IN BIBLE PROPHECY:

CLUE NUMBER 1:

IT AROSE AT THE RIGHT TIME. NOTICE THE CONTEXT OF THE PROPHECY IN VERSE 10 OF THE CHAPTER:

“HE WHO LEADS INTO CAPTIVITY SHALL GO INTO CAPTIVITY; HE WHO KILLS WITH THE SWORD MUST BE KILLED WITH THE SWORD. HERE IS THE PATIENCE AND THE FAITH OF THE SAINTS.” (REVELATION 13:10, NKJV).

HERE WE HAVE THE PROPHETIC HISTORY OF THE FIRST BEAST OR KINGDOM INTRODUCED IN REVELATION CHAPTER 13. THE PAPAL POWER RECEIVED A DEADLY WOUND WHEN, IN 1798, THE POPE WAS TAKEN CAPTIVE BY GENERAL BERTHIER AND THE PAPAL GOVERNMENT WAS ABOLISHED. THIS NEXT BEAST OR POWER IS PREDICTED AS RISING TO PROMINENCE IN THE TIME FRAME OF THE CAPTIVITY OF THE FIRST POWER. THAT WOULD BE THE LATE 1700’S, WHICH IS THE VERY PERIOD WHEN THE UNITED STATES, AS A NATION, WAS IN ITS INFANCY.

CLUE NUMBER 2:

IT AROSE OUT OF THE EARTH, A LESS POPULATED AREA OF THE WORLD. WE FIND THIS TO BE CLEARLY INDICATED IN REVELATION 12. IN VERSES 6 AND 14, THE WOMAN, GOD’S CHURCH, IS DESCRIBED AS FLEEING INTO THE WILDERNESS OR A DESERT PLACE TO ESCAPE THE PERSECUTION OF THE DARK AGES. THE PERSECUTION IS DESCRIBED IN VERSE 15 AS A FLOOD OF WATERS. THIS REPRESENTS THE “PEOPLES,

AND MULTITUDES, AND NATIONS, AND TONGUES” OF EUROPE WHO WERE TRYING TO WIPE AWAY THE FAITH OF THOSE WHO FOLLOWED THE BIBLE INSTEAD OF THE STATE RELIGION. THE KEY VERSE, REVELATION 12:16, READS:

“AND THE EARTH HELPED THE WOMAN, AND THE EARTH OPENED HER MOUTH, AND SWALLOWED UP THE FLOOD WHICH THE DRAGON CAST OUT OF HIS MOUTH.” (REVELATION 12:16).

IT WAS THE EARTH THAT HELPED THE WOMAN ESCAPE THE PERSECUTION OF EUROPE. HISTORY TESTIFIES TO THE FACT THAT AMERICA BECAME A SANCTUARY FOR THE FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS OF THE WORD OF GOD. THE COUNTRY OF AMERICA EVENTUALLY ESTABLISHED FREEDOM OF RELIGION FOR ALL FAITHS AND SWALLOWED UP THE PERSECUTING FLOOD OF THE NATIONS OF EUROPE.

CLUE NUMBER 3:

IT IS DEPICTED AS A NEW NATION, “ANOTHER BEAST.” THE UNITED STATES BROKE AWAY FROM ENGLAND AND ALL ITS EUROPEAN ROOTS AND EVENTUALLY BECAME A NEW NATION, A SEPARATE POWER. THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE WAS SIGNED IN 1776 AND, IN TWO SHORT CENTURIES, IT HAS BECOME A SUPERPOWER OF THE WORLD.

CLUE NUMBER 4:

IT IS A DEMOCRACY. NOTICE THAT THIS SECOND KINGDOM IS DESCRIBED AS HAVING TWO HORNS. HORNS ARE A SYMBOL OF A KINGDOM'S POWER, BUT NOTICE THAT THESE TWO HORNS HAVE NO CROWN UPON THEM. COMPARE THIS TO THE FIRST BEAST OR KINGDOM DESCRIBED IN VERSE 1 THAT HAS "UPON HIS HORNS TEN CROWNS" (REVELATION 13:1). THIS NEW KINGDOM OF AMERICA WOULD NOT BE A KINGLY POWER AS THOSE FOUND IN EUROPE. AMERICA WOULD BE MARKED BY BOTH RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL LIBERTY AND THESE PRINCIPLES WOULD BE HER STRENGTH.

CLUE NUMBER 5

AND THIS IS THE ONE THAT TAKES US TO THE VERY TIME IN WHICH WE LIVE: THIS KINGDOM WAS TO HAVE A WORLDWIDE INFLUENCE. NOTICE HOW VERSE 12 DESCRIBES THIS SECOND KINGDOM: "AND HE EXERCISETH ALL THE POWER OF THE FIRST BEAST BEFORE HIM, AND CAUSETH THE EARTH AND THEM WHICH DWELL THEREIN TO WORSHIP THE FIRST BEAST, WHOSE DEADLY WOUND WAS HEALED." (REVELATION 13:12).

WE COULD PROBABLY SAY WITHOUT HESITATION THAT THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A TIME IN ITS HISTORY WHEN AMERICA HAS SO COMPLETELY FULFILLED THIS ASPECT OF BIBLE PROPHECY AS IT DOES PRESENTLY. OF ALL THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD TODAY, THERE IS NO OTHER THAT IS IN A POSITION TO FULFILL THIS ASPECT OF PROPHETIC UTTERANCE.

CLUE NUMBER 6

IT IS A LAMB-LIKE POWER. IN THE BIBLE AND ESPECIALLY IN PROPHECY, A LAMB SYMBOLIZES JESUS CHRIST. TO DESCRIBE THIS SECOND POWER IN REVELATION 13 AS HAVING TWO HORNS LIKE A LAMB IS TO ASCRIBE TO IT CHRISTIAN QUALITIES. THIS NEW POWER WAS TO BE A CHRISTIAN POWER, A NATION ADHERING TO THE PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIANITY AS OUTLINED IN THE BIBLE.

FREEDOM IS ONE OF THE CHIEF PRINCIPLES OFFERED BY CHRIST:

“IF THE SON THEREFORE SHALL MAKE YOU FREE, YE SHALL BE FREE INDEED” (JOHN 8:36).

“BUT THE HOUR COMETH, AND NOW IS, WHEN THE TRUE WORSHIPPERS SHALL WORSHIP THE FATHER IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH: FOR THE FATHER SEEKETH SUCH TO WORSHIP HIM” (JOHN 4:23).

IT WAS UPON THESE PRINCIPLES THAT THIS GREAT NATION OF AMERICA WAS FOUNDED, BUT PROPHECY PREDICTS A TERRIBLE CHANGE.

CLUE NUMBER 7

THIS POWER WILL CHANGE IN CHARACTER FROM A LAMB TO A DRAGON.

“HE HAD TWO HORNS LIKE A LAMB, AND HE SPAKE AS A DRAGON.” (REVELATION 13:11).

HOW DOES A NATION SPEAK? A NATION OR KINGDOM SPEAKS THROUGH ITS LAWS OR LEGISLATIVE BODY.

THE PREDICTION OF BIBLE PROPHECY IS THAT THE NATION OF AMERICA, ONCE THE DEFENDER OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, LAMB-LIKE, WILL ONE DAY BECOME THE PERSECUTOR OF GOD'S COMMANDMENT-KEEPING PEOPLE, DRAGON-LIKE (SEE REVELATION 12:17).