



Psalms 78:2-4

I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark sayings of old... We will not conceal them.

Parables Bookshelf - Series 1.4.4

This issue of PARABLES BOOKSHELF INCLUDES the book *The Mark of the Beast*.

Suffering is a subject most people would rather avoid discussing, much less experiencing. Yet, suffering is a part of this world we live in. Indeed, it is a major part of it. Newspapers are daily filled with stories of suffering.

If suffering was permanently hurtful to man, I have no doubt that there would be no suffering in this world. We must understand that our Father would only have His children to experience those

things that will result in their ultimate good.

Mankind needs suffering to mature spiritually. Apart from suffering, man would remain fleshly, bound to sin. Even Christ had to suffer. This suffering though intense, was for a moment, and will result in a far surpassing joy.

The apostle Paul tells us to look at Christ to gain encouragement to face the suffering that comes our way.

Hebrews 12:1-3

Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the au-

thor and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart.

It is our temptation to grow weary and lose heart. We must therefore look beyond this temporal moment to the things to come. Then we will be encouraged to continue this race we have been called to run.

Food for Thought

“Discontent is a sin that is its own punishment and makes men torment themselves; it makes the spirit sad, the body sick, and all the enjoyments sour; it is the heaviness of the heart and the rottenness of the bones. It is a sin that is its own parent. It arises not from the condition, but from the mind. As we find Paul contented in a prison, so Ahab discontent in a palace.”

Matthew Henry

Scripture Memory

Romans 12:2

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

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The Mark of the Beast

The End of Suffering

With so much attention upon the working of the disciple's cross in the Scriptures it would seem that God is opposed to pleasure, and intent upon making all of His children suffer while in the flesh. It is true that God does not want His children to give themselves over to a pursuit of pleasure, as is revealed in Paul's words to Timothy.

I Timothy 5:6

Whereas she who lives in pleasure and self-gratification [giving herself up to luxury and self-indulgence] is dead even while she [still] lives.

(Amplified Bible)

However, pleasures in themselves are not evil. In one of David's Messianic Psalms we read:

Psalms 16:11

In Your presence is fullness of joy; in Your right hand there are pleasures forevermore.

There is a place for pleasure and a place for suffering. There is a time and a season for all things as the author of Ecclesiastes states in a beautiful poetic form.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven -- A time to give birth and a time to die; A time to plant and a time to uproot what is planted. A time to kill and a time to heal; A time to tear down and a time to build up. A time to weep and a time to laugh; A time to mourn and a time to dance. A time to throw stones and a time to gather stones; A time to embrace and a time to shun embracing. A time to search and a time to give up as lost; A time to keep and a time to throw away. A time to tear apart and a time to sew together; A time to be silent and a time to speak. A time to love and a time to hate; A time for war and a time for peace.

God has not chosen one thing over another. He has not chosen suffering over pleasure. Rather, He has an ap-

pointed time and place for all things. I am convinced that in God's plan of the ages that there will ultimately be much more pleasure than sorrow and suffering, but in this particular age in which we live suffering is appointed unto men. Suffering must come before pleasure as the words of the book of Revelation declare.

Revelation 21:3-4

And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, ***and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.***"

Weeping and death and mourning and crying and pain are "the first things." The creation has been subjected to such pain and futility until the sons of God should

Weeping and death and mourning and crying and pain are "the first things."

come to maturity. Apart from this suffering the overcomers in Christ could not be perfected and brought to the fullness of the stature of Christ. It is impossible for man to be perfected

through pleasure. Wisdom is not learned, nor holiness attained, by giving oneself to pleasure. These things are only won through many trials, temptations and pains. Solomon spoke of the superiority of sorrow over pleasure in this life.

Ecclesiastes 7:2-4

It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting, because that is the end of every man, and the living takes it to heart. Sorrow is better than laughter, for when a face is sad a heart may be happy. The mind of the wise is in the house of mourning, while the mind of fools is in the house of pleasure.

Sorrow is appointed unto the saints in this age, but this sorrow will eventually give way to great joy. The sorrow we must know is not a meaningless sorrow, but it has a great aim in mind. The title of this chapter bears a double meaning. There will be an end of suffering one day as John wrote when he said that the first things will one day have passed away. There is also an

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end of suffering in the sense that there is a goal and final object to which it points. Yahshua hinted at this “end,” or goal, of suffering with His following words.

John 16:20-22

Truly, truly, I say to you, that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will grieve, but your grief will be turned into joy. Whenever a woman is in labor she has pain, because her hour has come; but when she gives birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy that a man has been born into the world. Therefore you too have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you.

When speaking of the suffering and sorrow of the saints Yahshua used the illustration of a woman being in labor. There is great pain in labor, but it precedes great joy. The joy is such that the former pain is not even remembered, and so it will also be with the saints. At this time we will know sorrow, but we must keep the end in sight. This present sorrow is for the purpose of bringing forth a man into the world. It is for the purpose of producing a full stature man child after the image and likeness of God.

Even as God revealed in the first book of the Bible His desire for the man and woman to rule over the beast nature, He also revealed to them that they would have sorrow, but that this sorrow would lead to the birthing of a man who would bear the image of the divine. All of these things are signified in the very first words of Scripture.

After Adam and Eve sinned, Yahweh spoke to them and told them what the world would be like until man should be redeemed and come to a full reflection of His divine nature. To the woman He spoke the following.

Genesis 3:16

To the woman He said:

"I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children;

Your desire shall be for your husband,

And he shall rule over you."

Let us take each line of the above verse and look at them individually to see what they signify. God said to Eve, "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception." Certainly we know that this is true in the physical realm, for the woman has tremendous pain in the process of child birth. We need to consider what this means spiritually as well. Yahweh was declaring in the presence of the man and the woman that mankind would only be able to give birth to godly offspring, offspring in the image and likeness of God by multiplying their sorrow. God was not punishing the man and woman by multiplying their sorrow. God knew that sorrow was the only way in which sinful man could be transformed from the beastly image he had chosen, in order to be brought to a divine reflection of the perfected Christ.

There is great pain in labor, but it precedes great joy.

The next line states, "In pain you shall bring forth children." A woman is often uncomfortable during her pregnancy, and she may experience backaches, nausea and other discomforts which can be quite severe at times. But the greatest pain is in the birthing process when she begins to experience contractions. The world has yet to see mankind come to a fulness of the stature of Christ. They have seen only one Man who has yet been perfected through suffering and who was the perfect image and likeness of God. Yet it is God's will that many sons should come forth after the image of Christ. The birthing of these sons will be attended with great pain. Yahshua spoke of the days preceding the revealing of these full stature sons of God in this way:

Matthew 24:4-13

And Yahshua answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you. For many will come in My name, saying, "I am the Christ," and will mislead many. You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. **But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.**

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Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.

What Yahshua describes here to His disciples is very terrible and it speaks of great sorrow and much pain. He uses once more the imagery of birth pangs for a

The church, is depicted as in labor and in pain to give birth.

reason. These tribulations will precede the revealing of the full stature sons of God, and all those who enter into this adoption as sons will have forgotten the things they suffered when they enter into the

glory of Christ. As Paul said, "For I consider that these present sufferings are not worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed in us."

Saints, God's desire, from the very creation of man in the Garden of Eden, has been that man might bear His image and likeness. God will fulfill His desire, and the earth will see these sons who will come forth after the image of God. They will share His glory and manifest His image. They will be the spirit and image of God.

It is impossible for these sons to be revealed apart from suffering and pain. Mankind must pass through the first things in order to attain to the high calling of God. As the words of the song declare, "Some through the fire, Some through the flood, Some through great sorrow, But all through the blood." There is only one way in which to attain to the will of God that man should be formed in his image and after His likeness. The flesh must be crucified that the beast nature might give way to the divine. In the book of Revelation we read of the birth of these full stature sons of God.

Revelation 12:1-5

A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; and she was with child; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth. Then another sign appeared in heaven: and be-

hold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems. And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child. And she gave birth to a son, a man child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne.

The woman, who is the church, is depicted as in labor and in pain to give birth. This birth is that which she was chosen by Christ to accomplish. This birth will be the great fulfillment and highest attainment of her life. What joy it will be when the church, who has so long been barren, finally produces children in the very image and likeness of her Husband who is the Lord Yahshua the Messiah.

The next line of this verse from Genesis states that the woman's desire will be for her husband. The husband that is spiritually signified here is Christ. Even though her desire for her husband will lead her to experience pain, there have been, and continue to be, those who still desire Him. Even the pain of bringing forth children after His image will not turn these ones away.

The last line states, "And he will rule over you." What glorious things this points to. What is in view here is not some domination by a tyrant, but the advent of the kingdom of God. "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done" should be the desire and passion of all the saints. Yes, gladly do we choose for Christ to rule over us! May the beast be cast down and may Christ arise as Lord over all areas of our lives.

We may look at the church today and see her barrenness. We may behold all those who name the name of Christ who are far from manifesting the image of the divine. But the seed of Christ has been sown, and it has been taking shape in hidden places out of sight from the eyes of mankind. One day soon a birth will take place and the world will be amazed to witness the revealing of this overcoming company who have attained to the image and likeness of God.

Christ suffered many things in His life, and through His sufferings He was perfected. As the saints join in

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the suffering of Christ they too will be perfected and be brought to the image of God. This message is revealed in numerous Scriptures.

Hebrews 2:10

For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings.

Hebrews 5:8-9

Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation...

Luke 24:26

"Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?"

Even as it was necessary for the Son of God to suffer, so too those who would be conformed to His image must suffer. As you look at the church today what do you see? Do you see a message of suffering? Do you see all the saints embracing the working of the cross and coming to a greater reflection of Christ? Sadly, and tragically, these things are rare, and most of those who profess to be followers of Christ are not following Him at all. They are living for pleasure while seeking to avoid the suffering that must attend the formation and revealing of the image of God in mankind.

I think it is significant that there is such a great number of women who are aborting their babies in this day. In this is a picture of the church. John describes the church as a harlot, and like a harlot many women have sought out various lovers, and multitudes have become pregnant. Yet these women do not desire to experience the discomfort of pregnancy, or the pain of childbirth. In the same way the church seeks to avoid all that will bring her discomfort or pain. She wants to continue to enjoy the pleasure of her lovers, and she wants to appear attractive in a fleshly way. So she aborts, or casts out, all those sons that are growing to maturity within her womb, caring not whether they perish. She has not set her eyes upon the desires of the

One to whom she is wed. She does not care to produce offspring after His likeness, but only wants to continue in her pleasures and her harlotry.

The wrath of God will surely come upon a people who so treacherously kill their offspring in order to live for pleasure, yet an even greater judgment is reserved for a church who has sold herself to wanton pleasure and who refuses to bring forth offspring after the image and likeness of Christ. A church who aborts all those who are growing and maturing within her and discards them as some piece of unwanted tissue.

Yet, Christ does have a remnant! So much is bound up in these words. Christ does have a remnant who have come out of the great harlot, and more are coming out every day. Great is the patience of God, and as eager as we may be to see the sons of God revealed, we should consider the patience of God to be salvation for many.

Can you see the great error of the church today? A multitude of saints are being turned away from the cross by ministers who tell them to enjoy a good life while awaiting being raptured to heaven. They are not told that they live in an age where suffering must be the portion of all who would be conformed to Christ. The Scriptures state:

Do you see a message of suffering?

II Timothy 3:12

Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Yahshua will be persecuted.

All! None are exempt! But many Christians have made themselves to be friends of the world. A world that lives for pleasure has no problem with Christians who also live for pleasure. As long as the Christians do not inhibit, or speak against, the wanton pursuit of pleasure that the world is set upon, the world will abide these carnal Christians. As the world grows darker and darker she applies pressure to the church to abide more and more darkness. Even homosexuals can find a place in a church that lives for pleasure, and which seeks to satisfy its appetites to the same extent as a lost

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and dying world.

But a remnant have set their eyes on higher things. A remnant fear God and understand that His wrath will be poured out upon those who shrink back from the cross set before them. A remnant are turning away from the pot of stew that could satisfy their raging appetite in order to attain to a glorious and unfading birthright that is the portion of the overcomers in Christ.

At this time we must have sorrow, but our sorrow will be turned to joy. At this time the world must hate us,

For the joy set before the overcomers in Christ they will stay the course...

but one day they will bow at the feet of the overcomers. For the joy set before Him Christ endured the cross and bore the shame. For the joy set before the overcomers in Christ they too will stay the course,

and one day soon they will know such rejoicing that the former things will be forgotten.

Conformity to Christ, and being partakers of His glory, is the end, the goal, of this working of death and sorrow within us. With great assurance there is a far surpassing weight of glory that awaits all those who endure these momentary and light afflictions that Christ leads them through.

Selah, Pause and consider!

666 - The Number of the Beast

Throughout this book I have endeavored to focus on the spiritual understanding of the abundant symbolism relating to the beast. There has been much debate about the significance of the number which is given to represent the beast, and I believe God would have us to understand this number and not be in doubt about it. That God desires that we should have understanding is revealed in the following Scripture:

Revelation 13:18

Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six.

John declares that it is possible to understand this symbolism. This is not one of those things that God told John to seal up. Instead, we are told that those who have understanding can arrive at the meaning of this number. The number is specifically related to a man, and the number of this man is 666.

Many have set out to decipher this riddle, and they have used various means to do so. One of the most common methods in days past and present is through the study of Gematria. In Hebrew and Greek, as well as some other languages, each alphabetic character has a corresponding numeric value. By summing up the value of each alphabetic character in a name, or title, one can arrive at a numeric value. In this manner many have demonstrated that various persons throughout history, from ancient Nimrod to present day Popes, as well as various world political figures, have borne names and titles whose corresponding numerical value has added up to the number 666.

It is not my intent to disprove any of these associations between individuals and the number 666. In fact, I believe that many of them are valid and correct. Yet, just because we can say that the Roman Pontiffs have borne this number, or we can link it to some other figure past or present, we cannot declare that this is sufficient proof that they are THE Beast. These individuals may be ones who have manifested the beast nature, as have multitudes of men and women down through the ages, they may have even been key instruments of Satan in his warfare against the elect of God, but in this book we want to delve down deeper to the fullest understanding of this symbolism and, with the help of God and the anointing that He has given to His elect, we hope to do so.

One problem I see in declaring that the Popes, or some other individual(s), are the person to whom this number points is that the influence of these men upon mankind has not been universal. I believe that John is speaking of that which is a threat to all men, and which all saints have an opportunity to overcome.

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There have been ages when the Popes held tremendous power over a large portion of the “civilized world,” but even at their zenith they did not have power over all men. With the advent of the Reformation the power of the Popes began to wane, and though they still have considerable influence in the world today, they are not someone, or something, that all men universally strive with.

We have already seen that from the very first chapter of the Bible, both the man and the woman were commanded to subdue and rule over all the beasts. Since Adam and Eve were at the head of the race of mankind, this command was universal and has applied to all those who have been born of woman. Ruling over the beasts is a universal injunction, and no man, woman, or child is exempted from this command of God. Therefore, when we read of the beast, his image, and the number of his name in the book of Revelations, and when we also read that there is a group of overcomers who have achieved victory over these things, what is being declared is something that is universal and in which all the saints must enter into battle and seek the victory.

The struggle against the beast nature began with Adam and Eve when they were met by the serpent, the most cunning of all beasts, while still in the Garden of Eden. This struggle has continued throughout all the ages of man. Because of the universality of this struggle, and in light of God’s injunction for all mankind to subdue and rule over the beasts, I believe that those who are seeking to identify a particular man as the beast are on the wrong track.

You may ask, “Didn’t we read that the number of the beast is the number of a man?” Yes, we did. But we must ask, “What man?” The Scriptures tell us that there have only been two men who have ever lived. These are the first Adam, and the Second Adam, who is also called the Last Adam. The name Adam literally means “man” and it occurs 552 times in the Old Testament. In the majority of instances it is translated as “man,” and only when it is used as a name of a person or town is it rendered as “Adam.” The corresponding word in the New Testament is the Greek word “anthropos” and we find this word occurring 561 times.

It is in the following Bible passage that we read of these two men:

I Corinthians 15:45-49

So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. And just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

The apostle Paul writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit identifies the first Adam as the first man. He identifies Christ as the Last Adam, and he also calls Him “the second man.” Paul further states that, though we have all borne the image of the first man, we are now called to bear the image of the second man. As we have already discussed in this book, not all men attain to the image and likeness of God in this age. Some stubbornly cling to the image of the earthy.

I believe it is these two men that John has in view when he states that the number 666 is the number of a man. This makes the determination of which man it is relatively simple, for instead of billions of men to select from, we have only two. It is very evident from the Scriptures that the beast and His number cannot refer to the Second Man, who is Christ Yahshua, for Christ completely ruled over the beast nature. Christ always lived to do the will of the Father, and the Scriptures do further testify that Yahshua was the very expression of the Father.

The struggle against the beast nature began with Adam...

This leaves us only the first man, Adam, whom Paul describes as being of the earth, earthy. How does this number 666 point to this first Adam? I believe that we can find testimonies of this everywhere throughout both the Scriptures and nature, for God is the architect of both of them and He has set this seal upon the flesh man. However, I will focus upon just a couple of these testimonies.

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Let us begin with the opening chapter of Scripture. We read here that the first man, Adam, was created on the sixth day from the dust of the earth. It is generally accepted that the number six is representative of man, and particularly of the flesh man. The number six is a very interesting number. When we multiply the number six by itself we arrive at the number thirty-six. If we add up the sum of all the numbers from one to thirty-six we find that the sum of these numbers is 666.

In verse 28 of Genesis chapter 1 we read God's command to the man and woman to "multiply." This multiplication is done through the union of the man and

Because Adam and Eve bowed to the beast, all of their offspring were subject to the beast nature...

the woman. Since both Adam and Eve were of the earth, earthy, they could only produce offspring who were also of the earth. They could produce living souls, but their union could not produce life giving

spirits. Therefore, the multiplication of Adam and Eve, flesh man (6) multiplying with flesh woman (6), can only produce more of the same (36). If we are to calculate the value of their offspring by summing them all up we arrive at 666.

Because Adam and Eve bowed to the beast, all of their offspring were subject to the beast nature. They were marked, or engraved, with this nature and became subjected to futility and wrath. It would take the divine seed of God being united with woman to produce a man that was wholly man and wholly God. This man was Christ, who being in the image of sinful flesh was Himself without sin. This Second Man was not earthy (beastly), but heavenly. We must experience a second birth, a spiritual birth that arises from the seed of Christ, in order that we might escape the bondage to the flesh and live as heavenly creations.

I Peter 1:23

For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring Word of God.

Let us return to the flesh man and his relation to the number 666. God is the Author of all creation and He

has revealed His marvelous truths through the creation. As modern science has advanced, that which is true science has only served to confirm the marvelous design of God in the creation.

Today, scientists understand that there are certain elements that are found abundantly throughout the universe. One element that is essential to all life, and which is found in all organic life forms is carbon. No other element is linked to life to the extent to which carbon is so linked. Therefore we often hear the phrase "carbon based life forms." The life forms that are dependent upon carbon are of the earth, earthy. Therefore, we should not be surprised if we find in the element carbon a witness of the beast, and even the number of the beast.

All elements are classified by the number of protons, electrons and neutrons that are present within them. No two elements are the same. Only in the element carbon do we find six protons, six electrons, and six neutrons. Thus, the life of all flesh is marked with the numbers 666. Could God have engraved any deeper this stamp upon earthbound life forms? Consider now the following words of the apostle Paul:

I Corinthians 15:50-53

Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.

Flesh cannot inherit the kingdom of God. That which is stamped with the number 666 cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Even after men have been born again of the Spirit they still walk around in bodies of sinful flesh. Therefore, these bodies must be put off before the saints can enter into the presence of God. All that pertains to the beast must be slain.

Is it any wonder that throughout the Old Testament we see ordinances established and practiced whereby a

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beast has to be slain in order for men to enter into the presence of God in the Temple? These things are a symbol of man's need to slay the beast that dwells in his flesh in order to enter into God's presence. These carnal ordinances of the Old Testament were unable to free men from their slavery to sin, and they had to be repeated year after year. Only in Christ has sin been totally atoned for, once for all, that we might be freed from sin and made slaves to righteousness.

At this time, those who are born again are a divided house. The flesh wars against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, and these two are contrary to one another. Flesh cannot inherit the kingdom of God and therefore it must be crucified. Those who walk according to the Spirit have crucified the flesh with its affections and desires, and one day they will lay aside the sinful flesh and take upon themselves glorified spiritual bodies after the image of Christ.

It is 666, the flesh, the beast nature, that must be overcome, and all saints are called to subdue and rule over it. In our flesh dwells no good thing, and we must buffet our bodies and keep them under subjection to the Spirit. It is not a Pope, or some political world ruler, that the saints must overcome, though there be men in abundance who bear the imprint of the beast, and many who are enemies of the saints of God. The greater, deeper, and more universal understanding of the number of the beast's identity is that it points to the first man, Adam, and his sinful nature which became the inheritance of all his children. This number is the number of a man, and all men have been called to put off the old man and put on Christ.

Romans 6:6

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

The universal struggle of mankind is to put off the old man, the first Adam, that is marked with the number 666, and to put on the New Man, even the Last Adam, who is the Lord Yahshua the Messiah. We have dealt much with the beast nature thus far in this book, and in one type presented in Scripture we have seen that God has commanded the man and woman to subdue and rule over the beasts. In another type, we now see

God depicting this as a struggle between two men, the first Adam and the Last Adam. One of these men is of the earth, earthy, and one of the men is from heaven. All men will bow to one of them.

When we read in the book of Revelation that some men will have victory over the beast, his image, and the number of his name, we are reading the same thing that the apostle Paul spoke of when he contrasted the old man and the new man. Paul wrote further of this struggle to the saints in Ephesus.

Ephesians 4:17-24

So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. But you did not learn Christ in this way, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Yahshua, that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old man, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

Paul declares that the new man has been created in the likeness of God in righteousness and holiness and truth. We know these words are descriptive of Christ, and they are descriptive of all those who are being conformed to the image of Christ. We must lay aside the old man who bears the mark 666, who is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and put on Christ. Only those who subdue and rule over the old man with his bestial desires can be said to have attained victory over the beast, his image and the number of his name.

Some men will have victory over the beast, his image, and the number of his name...

Is it not apparent that a man could resist the influence of a pope, or an emperor, or of some other evil despot,

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while still falling short of ruling over the beast nature within themselves? It is the old man that all saints are called to lay aside and to have victory over, with all of its evil lusts and desires. None can attain to the image of God who have not overcome the image of the beastly man. I believe this is the deeper understanding of the symbolism of the number 666 and the man whom it represents.

Beast Men of the Bible

There have been many men and women who have given themselves to sin and to slavery to the flesh, who have been extraordinarily marked by the beast nature. The Scriptures contain histories of many who have failed to subdue and rule over that which God commanded them. In this chapter I would like to look at a few men who stand out as being clear expressions of those who had hearts of beasts, for in looking at their lives we can gain understanding of this lower nature that all saints have been called to rule over.

In the previous chapter we read about the number 666 being the mark of the beast, and it was specifically mentioned that because Adam and Eve bowed down to the beast and became subject to the earthly nature, that all of their offspring have been marked by this

None can attain to the image of God who have not overcome the image of the beastly man.

same fallen and corrupt nature. Some of their offspring have waged war against the sin that was present in their members and have looked forward to the redemption that has now been revealed in

Christ Yahshua, and these have obtained a good testimony that they are righteous before God (Hebrews 11:4). Yet others have not fought a good fight, and they have allowed sin to have the mastery over them.

It is not surprising that the very first son of Adam and Eve was one of those who stand out as “beast men”, for the tragic consequences of sin could not remain hidden long. This first son is a picture of all those who are born of the flesh and who do not walk as overcomers through the blood of Christ, the word of their testimony, and by not loving their fleshly and soulish lives. The first son of Adam and Eve was Cain, and we read the following about him.

Genesis 4:1

Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, "I have gotten a manchild from Yahweh."

Mankind has witnessed billions of births since this first one, but consider for a moment how special it was to witness the birth of the very first offspring of a man and a woman. It must have been a great mystery, and an awesome marvel, as Adam and Eve witnessed Eve's womb beginning to swell and as they felt the first movement of life within her. What a miraculous thing it had to have been to understand that through their union another being would come forth after their own image. When the child was born they must have examined it closely and observed how perfectly it was a miniature expression of man. Eve certainly spoke with amazement and wonder when she proclaimed "I have gotten a manchild from Yahweh."

In the last book of the Bible we read of a manchild that is birthed, one who is to rule the nations with a rod of iron. This manchild will be fashioned after the image of God, bearing His likeness. Perhaps Adam and Eve had such high hopes for Cain. After all, the serpent had said that if they ate of the forbidden fruit they would be like God. They may have hoped that their son would also be like God. Yet this was not to be, for Cain too submitted to the beast nature, rather than subduing and ruling over it.

Genesis 4:3-7

So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to Yahweh of the fruit of the ground. Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And Yahweh had regard for Abel and for his offering; but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell. Then Yahweh said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it."

The beast nature is essentially selfish, and seeks its own welfare while considering little about the welfare of others. Cain was jealous of his brother Abel, for

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Yahweh showed more consideration to his offering than Cain's. The beast nature within was manifesting. Something that did not look like God was present within Cain's being. An evil that did not originate in God was dwelling in Cain's flesh, and Yahweh warned Cain that He must master it.

The language that Yahweh used in speaking to Cain alludes to the beast nature. Yahweh declared, "sin is crouching at the door," and the image here is that of a wild beast that is prepared to spring upon its victim. The words would be fitting of a lion that lies crouching as it awaits its prey, and truly there was something bestial that was seeking an opportunity to overcome Cain.

Yahweh also spoke to Cain and said, "You must master it." This command is a mirror of the words He had spoken to Cain's parents before they sinned.

Genesis 1:28

Replenish the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.

To master the sin that sought to have dominion over him, Cain would have to subdue it and rule over it. Like his parents, however, Cain failed to heed the command of God and he too listened to the voice of the beast. This time, however, the beast was not external to man, for the poison of the serpent had entered mankind's flesh and it now performed its deadly work from inside his being.

Genesis 4:8

And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

Having failed to subdue and rule over the beast within, Cain acted in a manner that was contrary to the divine nature. Far from laying down his life for his brother, Cain rose up and slew him. The very words used here are once more a picture of what occurs within sinful man when he does not subdue and rule over the beast. We are told that "Cain rose up." Cain's flesh rose up and gained dominion over him. What a contrast this is

to the Son of God who "laid down" His life for others.

Yahweh once more approached Cain to confront him with his wickedness.

Genesis 4:9-15

Then Yahweh said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" And he said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to Me from the ground. Now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you cultivate the ground, it will no longer yield its strength to you; you will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth." Cain said to Yahweh, "My punishment is too great to bear! Behold, You have driven me this day from the face of the ground; and from Your face I will be hidden, and I will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me." So Yahweh said to him, "Therefore whoever kills Cain, vengeance will be taken on him sevenfold." And Yahweh set upon Cain a mark, so that no one finding him would slay him.

Is there not a great parallel between what is revealed here in this son of Adam and Eve giving himself to the rule of the beast nature and receiving a mark by God, and in that which we read in Revelation?

Far from laying down his life for his brother, Cain rose up and slew him.

Revelation 14:9

Then another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand he will also drink of the wrath of God."

Yahweh proclaimed judgment upon Cain for his sin. Yahweh's wrath was poured out because Cain bowed down to his bestial impulses. God then set a mark upon him. Many students of Scripture have theorized about the form of this mark that was placed upon Cain, yet in one sense it most certainly points to the mark that all are said to receive who worship the beast. Once

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more, from Genesis to Revelation we see a continued theme of man's struggle against the beast nature. To receive the mark of the beast is to come under the judgment and wrath of God.

Tragically, the entire earth soon became filled with men and women who were given over to the beast nature. Mankind gave themselves continually to such evil that God poured forth His wrath and destroyed the entire earth with a flood. Yahweh found only one man in the earth who was righteous, and this was Noah. The rest were given over to the same violence that rose up in Cain.

Genesis 6:13

Then God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth."

The earth today is also filled with violence, and because of this we know that the day of God's wrath is not far off. Those who would be delivered from the wrath to come must put off all violence, all wickedness, all unrighteousness, and clothe themselves with the Lord Yahshua the Messiah.

The earth today is also filled with violence...

Let us look now at another man who also struggled with his brother and who bore the unmistakable imprint of the beast.

Genesis 25:21, 24-26

Isaac prayed to Yahweh on behalf of his wife, because she was barren; and Yahweh answered him and Rebekah his wife conceived... When her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. Now the first came forth red, all over like a hairy garment; and they named him Esau. Afterward his brother came forth with his hand holding on to Esau's heel, so his name was called Jacob; and Isaac was sixty years old when she gave birth to them.

Esau must have been an incredible sight to behold. Nearly all babies come forth with very smooth skin, lacking any abundance of hair. Yet of Esau we are told that his entire body was covered as with a hairy garment. We have a further description of the hairiness of Esau in Scripture. When Jacob was encouraged by his mother to deceive Isaac and thereby receive the blessing of the firstborn, Jacob knew that, although his father was nearly blind, he might feel of his skin and be able to tell that he was not Esau.

Genesis 27:11-16

Jacob answered his mother Rebekah, "Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man and I am a smooth man. Perhaps my father will feel me, then I will be as a deceiver in his sight, and I will bring upon myself a curse and not a blessing...." Then Rebekah took the best garments of Esau her elder son, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. And she put the skins of the young goats on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck.

Esau's hair was so thick that it was akin to the hair of a young goat. Even on his hands and on his neck he was covered with thick, coarse hair. There appears to be some symbolism here, for in the gospels we read of Yahshua comparing the righteous and the wicked, and He depicts the wicked as goats. Goats are certainly very bestial creatures. There is nothing that stinks quite as bad as a billy goat, and they are also known for their great sexual appetite, hence the expression "randy as a billy goat." Throughout history man has associated goats with excessive appetites of a low and base nature, and they are known to eat virtually anything without discrimination. Therefore we see Pan, the part man and part goat god of revelry, being attended by sensuous women and an abundance of wine. Further confirming this same type of spirit being present in Esau, we read of his wives and how displeasing they were to his parents.

Genesis 26:34-35

When Esau was forty years old he married Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite; and they brought grief to Isaac and Rebekah.

So displeasing were these wives of Esau that Rebekah

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spoke the following:

Genesis 27:46

Rebekah said to Isaac, "I am tired of living because of the daughters of Heth; if Jacob takes a wife from the daughters of Heth, like these, from the daughters of the land, what good will my life be to me?"

It is evident that Esau did not choose his wives wisely. He did not look at their character, but must have chosen them for their external beauty. In one instance after another Esau demonstrated that he was a slave to his natural appetites. Nowhere is his bondage to the flesh more apparent than when he sold his birthright for a bowl of stew. This was such a low and detestable act that Esau is used by the apostles as an example of one who embodies all that is evil.

Hebrews 12:15-16

See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God..., that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal.

Pictured in the life of Esau are all those of the race of mankind who live for temporary pleasure while despising the true riches of God. Esau represents men and women whose eyes are on things of the earth, and whose god is their belly. Interestingly, Esau is even described as smelling of the earth (Genesis 27:27). In the same way, those who mind earthly things, and who live to enjoy the pleasures of the earth, take upon them the scent of the world that they love so much. The saints of God are admonished to have a much different focus.

I John 2:15-17

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world -- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life -- is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

Both Cain and Esau responded with murderous hatred

when they observed their brothers obtaining favor and a blessing while they did not. Esau swore to kill Jacob after their father had died. Yet the favor of God, the blessing and the birthright, cannot be obtained through such bestial actions. Only by subduing and ruling over the beast nature can man find favor with God and receive the birthright and the blessing that belong to the sons of God. Those who live as children of the devil will receive wrath and judgment along with him.

Let us look now at one final man who was clearly given in Scripture as a type of those who have hearts of beasts. This is the great king Nebuchadnezzar who ruled over the Babylonian Empire from 604 BC until 561 BC. He is spoken of in Scripture more than any other pagan king, and he ruled over the empire whose name has become synonymous with confusion and mixture and the works of man. In the book of Revelation we find Babylon being spoken of as representing all that is evil, bestial and worldly, and the voice of God is crying out for His people to come out of Babylon lest they participate in her sins and partake of her plagues (Revelation 18:4).

Ancient Babylon is noted for her splendor. She was located in what is now Iraq, and there was once an inland sea that came close to her location, but now it is all barren desert. One of the seven wonders of the ancient world was the hanging gardens of Babylon. Babylon was an exceedingly rich and luxurious place, filled with all of the wealth and splendor of the world. Over this empire King Nebuchadnezzar ruled for 43 years. It was this same King who laid siege to Jerusalem and who burned the city with fire and carried off the treasure of the Temple.

Esau represents men and women whose eyes are on things of the earth, and whose god is their belly.

Babylon's triumph over the people of God is a symbol of the many men and women who have been called of God, but who have been taken captive by the allure of the world. These have been removed from a place of worship to Yahweh to be taken as slaves to a far away place that is focused upon trafficking in the goods of the world. Some who have found themselves as slaves in Babylon have mourned over the destruction of the

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Temple, which is a symbol of mankind who was created to be a temple of God, and they have grieved over the slavery and bondage of the people of God. Yet many more have become comfortable in Babylon, and even when they have been given the opportunity to leave, they have chosen to remain.

Babylon is a picture of all things that appeal to the natural man, and we should not be surprised that her

Babylon is a picture of all things that appeal to the natural man...

greatest ruler was a beast man. God gave a dream to Nebuchadnezzar revealing that he was going to be given over fully to the beast nature because he would not honor and glorify God, but chose instead

to glory in self. We read of the fulfillment of this dream in the book of Daniel.

Daniel 4:29-33

Twelve months later he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon. The king reflected and said, "Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?" While the word was in the king's mouth, a voice came from heaven, saying, "King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you, and you will be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place will be with the beasts of the field. You will be given grass to eat like cattle, and seven periods of time will pass over you until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes." Immediately the word concerning Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled; and he was driven away from mankind and began eating grass like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.

King Nebuchadnezzar manifested one of the most pronounced attributes of the beast nature, which is pride. Instead of walking humbly before God and acknowledging Yahweh's role in granting him sovereignty and bestowing upon him majesty and splendor, King Nebuchadnezzar brazenly attributed all of these things to his own power.

There are few men or women who have ever possessed authority and splendor to the extent of King Nebuchadnezzar, but even in lesser things there is a great temptation to manifest a similar attitude. Many men have boasted of being "self-made men." Many business leaders have boasted of their prowess in building a successful company, or of rescuing a faltering company and making it profitable. Many artisans boast of their skill in crafting some masterpiece, of writing a best seller, or authoring some work that is a critical success. An actor may be proud of his attainments on the stage or on film. In every venue of life those who attain some measure of success are tempted to credit themselves.

The saints may admit the error of such conceit, but even in the church this boasting is present. Churches vie with one another to build the biggest, or most ornate, sanctuaries. They strive to demonstrate the most growth as they count nickels and noses. Some boast of having the oldest church in the area, or having the most illustrious ministers to preach in their pulpits. Others seek to top their building with the highest steeple in town. The ministers and attendants then walk around and boast of that which they have built through their own power and might.

Is it any wonder that so many of those who have once stood as proud examples of spiritual attainment have suddenly been brought low by some unrestrained lust for sex or money? God still abases the proud and is determined to have all men walk in humility and meekness before Him.

In each of the three men we have looked at we have seen a different manifestation of the beast nature prove to be the occasion for their downfall. In Cain it was his envy and jealousy. In Esau it was his unbridled appetites. In Nebuchadnezzar it was his pride. In each instance the flesh rose up, resulting in God bringing them low. It is no coincidence that we see Nebuchadnezzar on the roof of his palace when he is speaking such prideful thoughts. Esau and his descendants also settled in high places, even in Mount Seir, which is in some places called "the mount of Esau" (Obadiah 21).

The beast nature crouches within every man awaiting an opportunity to rise up and take control. Yet those who allow it to do so are brought low, even as this once

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mighty king began to go on all fours and to eat grass like the cattle. God is able to make men into kings, yet when they do not submit to Him or walk humbly before Him, He will give them over to the heart of a beast.

As we look at the society around us, we see many men who have been given over to the heart of a beast. When we capture a wild animal we often place them in a cage to keep them from injuring people. Likewise men place those men and women who act beastly in cells with iron bars. The prisons of the world are filled with rapists and murderers and thieves and embezzlers and extortioners and kidnapers and pedophiles and liars and all manner of violent and lustful and covetous men and women. Yet, the simple fact of living outside of these prisons is no proof that men and women are subduing and ruling over the beast within.

Perhaps in Nebuchadnezzar more than any other man we see the end of those who fail to subdue and rule over the beasts within. God has revealed through him an incredible picture of a man going from kingly glory to beastly depravity. Even the highest can be brought low, and all who do not humble themselves before God will be abased.

As those who are called of God, we should all recognize that within us are the seeds of our own destruction. It is by the grace of God that we are not overcome by the raging appetites of the fallen flesh, and the sin that dwells in our members. Let no man think more highly of himself than he ought, for we are all prone to temptation, and we have laid upon us the necessity of exercising dominion over our fleshly passions. Let us encourage one another in these things. Let us not condemn others for their failures, but rather let us seek to restore them to a reflection of God.

Galatians 6:1-4

Brethren, if any person is overtaken in misconduct or sin of any sort, you who are spiritual [who are responsive to and controlled by the Spirit] should set him right and restore and reinstate him, without any sense of superiority and with all gentleness, keeping an attentive eye on yourself, lest you should be tempted also. Bear (endure, carry) one another's burdens and troublesome moral faults, and in this way fulfill and

observe perfectly the law of Christ (the Messiah) and complete what is lacking [in your obedience to it]. For if any person thinks himself to be somebody [too important to condescend to shoulder another's load] when he is nobody [of superiority except in his own estimation], he deceives and deludes and cheats himself. But let every person carefully scrutinize and examine and test his own conduct and his own work. He can then have the personal satisfaction and joy of doing something commendable [in itself alone] without [resorting to] boastful comparison with his neighbor.

(Amplified Bible)

The nature of God is humble and it seeks the welfare of others. Observe how Christ left His place of honor and glory and condescended to rescue man from his slavery to the beast nature, and to lift him up that he might bear the image of God. Even so, we should seek to lift up men and women and to direct them to their high calling in Christ to bear the image and likeness of God. Should we find a brother or sister acting as a beast, let us remind them that they were called to bear the image of the divine.

The nature of God is humble and it seeks the welfare of others.

At the same time we must be discerning of those who willingly give themselves to sensuality while refusing to acknowledge the debauched nature of their behavior. Our Lord cautioned His disciples to not cast their pearls of truth before swine, for the swine would only turn and rend them.

Once the Lord has opened one's eyes to see the great struggle between the beast nature and the divine nature, it is amazing to learn of the symbols of this conflict that are present everywhere throughout the pages of Scripture. From the opening chapter, to the closing book, we find in the Bible types and shadows, and even plain speech, all revealing God's design for man to bear His image, and the adversary's plan for man to be imprinted with his own likeness.

These three men, Cain, Esau and Nebuchadnezzar, stand as illustrations of the peril that threatens all who will not avail themselves of the great grace that is

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available through Yahshua the Messiah. The distance between God's image and that of a beast is great, and great has been the fall of mankind. Yet God, in His mercy, would lift us up to heights previously unknown. He would have all men to be partakers of His own divine nature.

The Mark of the Overcomers

As you have read this book with its focus upon God's command for men and women to subdue and rule over the beast nature, you may have considered your own life and the struggles that you have known within your own body as the flesh and the spirit have warred one

God never asks men or women to do that which is impossible.

against the other. Most people, myself included, have had certain areas that they have struggled with for years. For one person it might be an independence in the spending of their money. For another it may

be a problem with lust. Yet another may struggle with anger, and another with a critical spirit. Perhaps you have struggled with a tendency to gossip, or a rebellious attitude, or with jealousy, covetousness, or envy.

In my own life I have seen victory in a number of areas, but there are still some strongholds to be pulled down. As you have read this book, perhaps you have thought of some area in your own life that you have experienced conviction in time after time, and you have desired the victory, but you have found yourself coming back to God repeatedly to confess your transgression and to ask for His forgiveness once again. You may have even come to doubt that victory is an attainable goal while you are still clothed in this sinful flesh.

I want to encourage you by saying that complete victory is attainable. Every fleshly impulse can be conquered, every stronghold can be brought down, and you can attain conformity to the image of God in your life. Though you may not see any examples of men or women today that have reached this place of conformity, this crucified life of complete surrender to the will of God, and though the majority of ministers may tell you that such a hope is a vain dream, let God be true and every man a liar. God has said that He will have men and women in His image, and He will ac-

complish what He set out to do. He will finish the work that He has begun.

God never asks men or women to do that which is impossible. Where He commands obedience He will give sufficient grace to obey. Since God has commanded men and women to subdue and rule over the beasts, we must agree that it is possible to obey God. Through His Son, Yahweh has made a way for all men and women to attain to the high calling of God. What sinful man could not do because of the weakness of the flesh, God did in sending His Son to condemn sin in the flesh. The Scriptures declare that the power of sin has been broken and those who have been immersed into Christ Yahshua have been freed from sin. The saints are now able to present their members as slaves to righteousness. He whom the Son has set free is free indeed.

Satan works to keep Christians in bondage through the power of deception. Many have been deceived regarding God's will for them to rule over the Adamic nature. They do not discern that the cross of Christ changed things in a very fundamental way. They may believe that they now have forgiveness for their sins, while not believing that they have power over sin. The Scriptures testify that the saints have both.

Romans 6:5-7

For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin.

I Peter 2:24

He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness...

Romans 6:2

How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

Romans 6:11-12

Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive

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to God in Christ Yahshua. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts...

Romans 6:14

For sin shall not be master over you...

Romans 6:22

But now since you have been set free from sin and have become the slaves of God, you have your present reward in holiness and its end is eternal life.

(Amplified Bible)

Colossians 3:3

For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

I John 3:9-10

No one born (begotten) of God [deliberately, knowingly, and habitually] practices sin, for God's nature abides in him [His principle of life, the divine sperm, remains permanently within him]; and he cannot practice sinning because he is born (begotten) of God. By this it is made clear who take their nature from God and are His children and who take their nature from the devil and are his children: no one who does not practice righteousness [who does not conform to God's will in purpose, thought, and action] is of God...

(Amplified Bible)

With many more similar words the Scriptures do declare that those who are born again of the Spirit of God, and united with Christ in His death and resurrection, have been set free from the bondage of sin. They are now able to exercise dominion over the beast nature. The book of Revelation testifies that there will be a company of overcomers who have attained victory over the beast, his image, and the number of his name.

We need to believe that such a victory is not only attainable, but it is what God expects and demands of His children. If His children are obedient they will walk in this victory. Only the children of disobedience will fail to crucify the flesh and will fall short of attaining conformity to the image of Christ.

We are not to think, however, that this victory is handed to the saints on a silver platter. Christ is the believer's victory, but the saints must follow wherever He leads. There are battles to be fought, strongholds to be torn down, giants to be slain, and wild beasts to be subdued.

Consider the imagery that God has provided for the saints through the Israelites of old who were led by Joshua (a type of Yahshua the Messiah) as they went in to possess the land of promise. God told them that He was going to give them wells they did not dig, vineyards they did not plant, and houses they did not build. He promised to bring them into a land flowing with milk and honey. He spoke words of comfort and assurance to them, letting them know that if they followed Him fully that no enemy could ever stand before them.

*Christ is the believer's
victory...*

Deuteronomy 11:22-25

“For if you are careful to keep all this commandment which I am commanding you to do, to love Yahweh your God, to walk in all His ways and hold fast to Him, then Yahweh will drive out all these nations from before you, and you will dispossess nations greater and mightier than you. Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours... No man will be able to stand before you; Yahweh your God will lay the dread of you and the fear of you on all the land on which you set foot, as He has spoken to you.”

God did not give us the history of Israel and of her battles that we might be entertained with stories of peoples and nations from long ago. He gave them to us for our instruction. These things are a symbol of the spiritual battles that the children of God face today. It should comfort us to know that God has said that no enemy will be able to stand before those who love God and keep His commandments. We should be emboldened by the promise that every place we set out foot will be given to us.

Christ, our Captain, has not delivered us from some of our enemies, but from all of our enemies. He did not

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free us from anger while leaving us enslaved to lust. He did not loose us from the bondage of pride while leaving us enslaved to covetousness. He conquered every foe, and, if we will follow Him, He will lead us into victory over all things to which we have been bound.

Joshua led the children into the promised land, and they began well, destroying Jericho, and then Ai, and then many other strongholds and fortresses while dispossessing the inhabitants of the land. Yet they did not make a complete work of removing all enemies from the land.

I have often heard testimonies given where people have borne witness of God miraculously delivering them from some addiction, or besetting sin, when they first came to Christ. Some have been immediately delivered of a drinking habit that had persisted for many years. Some were delivered of drugs, or from cigarettes, or from pornography. Many did not even pray for deliverance. They merely believed in Christ, confessed faith in Him, and were baptized. Their salvation experience was attended with a mighty deliverance.

God may drive some enemies out of the land without our raising a finger...

Yet I have never heard any person testify that they were set free from all things in this way. God may drive some enemies out of the land without our raising a finger, as He also did with the Israelites, but He will not dispossess all of them in this way.

Joshua 24:12

Then I sent the hornet before you and it drove out the two kings of the Amorites from before you, but not by your sword or your bow.

God does deliver us from some enemies in our flesh in such a miraculous manner, and others He gives us a quick victory over as we follow Him. Yet some enemies are less easily vanquished. God has a reason for this, and He revealed His mind to the Israelites.

Judges 3:1-4

Now these are the nations which Yahweh left, to test Israel by them (that is, all Israel who had not experienced any of the wars of Canaan; in order that the generations of the sons of Israel might be taught war, those who had not experienced it formerly). These nations are: the five lords of the Philistines and all the Canaanites and the Sidonians and the Hivites who lived in Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal-hermon as far as Lebo-hamath. They were for testing Israel, to find out if they would obey the commandments of Yahweh, which He had commanded their fathers through Moses.

God wants His children to be delivered from all bondage to the flesh. He wants them to rule over all the beasts in the land. The reason that He doesn't dispel all enemies from the land at the moment of the saint's new birth in Christ is so that He might test them to see if they will obey Him. He tests the love of all Christians in this way, for Christ said, "If you love Me you will keep My commandments." We must learn warfare in order that we might prove our love for Christ.

If we understand this purpose of God, it will bring us to view our temptation to sin in a new light. We will not lightly sin if we understand that disobedience is evidence of a lack of love for Christ. The apostle John wrote the following:

I John 5:3

For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

I John 4:18

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

It is the disobedient who are punished. John therefore says that those who are perfect in love have no fear, for to be perfect in love is to be perfect in obedience. The obedient need not fear any punishment.

Let us begin to think of obeying God in terms of loving

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Him. If we love Him we will crucify the flesh. If we love Him we will subdue and rule over the beast nature. The Lord allows us to be tried by the presence of sin in our flesh that we might prove our love for Him.

The highest manifestation of the divine nature is love. If we love Him and love one another then we have become like God. We bear His image and His likeness when we walk in love.

If we say we are not able to walk obediently in all things before God, we are actually saying that we are not able to walk in perfect love. Yet God has given us sufficient grace to walk in love all the time. We need never choose to walk apart from love.

The mark of the overcomers is love, whereas the mark of the beast nature is selfishness. Those who attain victory over the beast, his image, and the number of his name are those who love God. Those who receive the mark of the beast are those who love self.

Which mark will you receive?

*If we love God we will
subdue and rule over the
beast nature.*

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PARABLES PRECEPT—The Hebrew Alphabet



(Image source: Ancient Hebrew Resource Center's Website)

The Hebrew letter depicted above is Ayin. According to Jeff Benner, in his book *Ancient Hebrew Lexicon of the Bible*, it is an image of an eye. The letter represents the idea of seeing and watching, as well as knowledge, as the eye is the window of knowledge.

The word Ayin, in the ancient Semitic languages means eye,

making the identification of this letter more certain. Our English letter that corresponds to the Hebrew Ayin is the letter O.

Although I believe there is substantial evidence to support the fact that the early Hebrew language was developed by forming words out of letters that were actually pictures relating to the words, this is not true with English. Modern English is an evolved language, and it is

formed of a mishmash of many languages. In English we have words of Latin, Greek, German, French, and Spanish origin, as well as numerous other languages.

Consider what it would be like if we took our English words and tried to derive an original meaning for them based upon the letters serving as pictures. The Word MOM would be a picture of an eye surrounded on both sides by water.

We see, that this same reconstruction of English cannot be accomplished, for too many changes have occurred over the years, and its association with a primitive alphabet is very much obscured.