

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

The Beast from the Sea

Revelation 13:1-10

INTRODUCTION:

This is the most sensationalized chapter in the book of Revelation. This chapter puts us face to face with this monstrous character referred to as the beast. It also tells us of the "mark of the beast" and the number of the beast which is "666". These three descriptions are among the most sought out questions as to their identity. They have led to some pretty ludicrous theories as to who and what these descriptions refer to.

We have brushed up against the beast previously, but we have not had a formal introduction to him as we will have in this chapter. Back in chapter 11, you might recall that the beast came out of the abyss and he waged war on the two witnesses, who were a picture of the church, and he overcame them and killed them. In this chapter we are going to see a recapitulation of that event (a retelling of the story from a different perspective).

Everyone who reads Revelation wants to know "Who is the beast?" They try to figure it out as it fits within their perspective of the end times.

So this morning, we want to identify the who or the what that this beast represents.

I want to remind you that John is not trying to veil things or hide things from the people of God. This book, by its own name, is intended to be a revelation. It is not a concealing. It is an opening up of things that have been hidden. Granted, some things are still blurry under this obscurity of visions, but nevertheless, by studying and tracking these visions back to the Old Testament and relating those visions to completed history, we can confidently conclude what is being shown in these visions.

Our scripture this morning is Revelation 13:1-10. It is going to describe the beast from the sea. Starting in verse 11, we will be introduced to another beast, the beast from the earth. Rather than try to deal with both of these beasts at one time, we will take the first beast week and next week take on the second beast.

All Stand and Read Scripture

Revelation 13:1-10 (NASB)

13 And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore.

Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns *were* ten diadems, and on his heads *were* blasphemous names. ² And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like *those* of a bear, and his mouth like

the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority. ³ *I saw* one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed *and followed* after the beast; ⁴ they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?" ⁵ There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him. ⁶ And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, *that is*, those who dwell in heaven.

⁷ It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him. ⁸ All who dwell on the earth will worship him, *everyone* whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain. ⁹ If anyone has an ear, let him hear. ¹⁰ If anyone *is destined* for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints.

Prayer

Our Father, we thank You that You have revealed these things to us. Though they are wrapped in the mystery of vision and symbol, we thank You that You have not left us without a guide. Your word leads us and points us to those things that are true.

We thank You that we are able to gather together and study these things. We pray that you will allow our eyes to see and our ears to hear what you are trying to tell us in this passage. Allow Your Holy Spirit to give us insight and clarification. We pray that these words will provide the endurance and the faith that we need in the face of the beast.

Please allow me to speak in a manner that is clear and accurate. May the message honor our Lord and Savior, Who was willing to come to this earth to die for us on the cross. May the message invoke a stronger desire within us to serve Him.

In Christ's Name we pray. Amen.

Last week we saw this vision of Satan as a powerful red dragon. A dragon that has a tremendous intellectual capacity and widespread authority. We saw that the dragon had been defeated at the cross and was cast out of heaven to the earth. He was full of rage, because he realized that he had but a little time left. So he went out to make war against the woman. The "woman" represented all those who "**keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus**" which is the church.

This war will be fought during the great tribulation, the last days, the 3 1/2 years, the times, time, and half a time, the period of time between the first and second coming of Christ. During this entire period, Satan is going to be pursuing (or persecuting) the church. He will be trying to drown the church in a sea of deception or false teaching. But through all of this, God, as He has promised, will protect us in the wilderness just as He did for the Israelites. Despite the power of Satan, God will give us spiritual protection. That is something that God will not allow him to take from us. We realize that the conflicts that we face here on this earth is a spiritual conflict.

Ephesians 6:12 (NASB)

¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the

powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

This is who our battle is against. This is where we left off last time. Now we see the dragon standing on the sand of the seashore.

BODY:

I. THE BEAST FROM THE SEA.

Revelation 13:1-2 (NASB)

13 And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore.

Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns *were* ten diadems, and on his heads *were* blasphemous names. ² And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like *those* of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority.

This beast is similar to the dragon in that he has 10 horns and seven heads, and yet clearly he is a different, and a lesser creature than the dragon, because the dragon is the source of his power, throne, and authority.

The beast is described as a conglomeration of wild animals. He has the appearance of a leopard, feet like a bear's, and a mouth like a lion's.

This is an obvious reference to Daniel 7 where the beasts represented successive earthly kingdoms. The Lion represented Babylon. The Bear represented the Medes and the Persians. The Leopard represented the Greeks. Then there was a terrible beast that represented Rome.

Notice the similarities:

- In Dan. 7:3 the four beasts "came up from the sea." In Rev. 13:1 John sees "a beast coming up out of the sea."
- In Dan. 7:4 the first beast is like a lion. In Rev. 13:2, the beast has a mouth like a lion.
- In Dan. 7:5 the second beast is like a bear. In Rev. 13:2 the beast has feet like a bear.
- In Dan. 7:6 the third beast is like a leopard. In Rev. 13:2 the beast has the appearance of a leopard.
- In Dan. 7:7 the fourth beast, "frightening and dreadful, and incredibly strong," has 10 horns. In Rev. 13:1 the beast has 10 horns.
- In Dan. 7:8, 11 a little horn emerges and speaks arrogantly. In Rev. 13:5 the beast speaks blasphemies.

It appears that the beast in Revelation is combining all of these kingdoms into one kingdom that is worse than all of the kingdoms in Daniel combined. These kingdoms appear to be all of the Satanic regimes that will exist in the last days. We know from

scripture that there will be many antichrists during this time. However, there is some indication here that the world may end up having a one world government rule by THE Antichrist.

Let's keep in mind that any kingdom must have a king, so it's probably best to understand the beast may ultimately be a person who rules over a kingdom that will try to destroy the church. Other passages of scripture support the interpretation of the beast as a person. In Rev. 19:20 we are told that the beast is taken, along with the false prophet, and cast into the lake of fire, where later they are joined by the dragon and tormented night and day forever (Rev. 20:10).

Is it possible that the beast is actually referring to all of the antichrists and not a single person? Possibly.

In addition, Paul warns us of a coming "man of lawlessness" (2 Thess. 2:3), and the apostle John affirms a teaching throughout the church of a future Antichrist (1 John 2:18).

So who is this beast?

The beast out of the sea is the Antichrist (Rev. 13:1). And the beast out of the land is the false prophet (Rev. 13:11).

Regardless if the beast is one person or several, this is what we know about the beast...

- He comes out of the abyss, a special place where some demons are confined until judgment day, and out of the sea, which symbolizes chaos and confusion. Whether the beast is a human being, an regime, or both, he is connected to and empowered by demonic and worldly forces.
- God is sovereign over the beast's power and influence. The beast can do nothing to the saints except what the Lord allows.
- The beast hates God and God's people. His violence toward the saints exposes a deeper animosity toward God.
- His victory is hollow. He ultimately is cast into the lake of fire to be tormented night and day forever.

The dragon gives him his power, authority and throne. This dominating beast is of the same flesh and bone as other humans and yet rises above them on the wings of the dragon.

The Satan is not able to manifest himself in human flesh as the Son of God does, so he inhabits the flesh of a naturally born human and infuses him with power. He will never rule all human beings, so he grants his earthly authority to a willing beast who wields Satanic power over every living unbeliever. And the evil one will never sit on the throne of David, so he places a puppet king on a worldly throne and pulls the strings. Later we'll see not only that the beast operates under the power of Satan; he rules the world by the permissive will of God.

II. THE IMITATOR OF CHRIST.

Revelation 13:3 (NASB)

³ *I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the*

whole earth was amazed *and followed* after the beast;

As we struggle with the identity of the beast, it appears best to see him as an imitator of Christ. Satan is the great counterfeiter, the father of lies, the deceiver from the opening chapters of Genesis in the Garden of Eden until the end of Revelation, where he is at last thrown into the lake of fire.

Compare the beast with the Lamb of Rev. 5:6. John describes Jesus as One like a slain Lamb. The beast is described as one who has a head that **appeared** to have been slain and the fake wound appeared to be healed. As a result...

Revelation 13:4 (NASB)

⁴they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?"

Christ died on the cross and defeated the dragon. Yet Satan continued to wreak havoc upon the earth. Satan uses that logic to deceive the unbelieving people of earth to suggest that the cross obviously accomplished nothing. This calls to mind the warnings of Jesus concerning the deception of Satan.

Matthew 24:4b-5, 11, 24 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

⁴... "See to it that no one misleads you. ⁵For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many. ...¹¹Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. ...²⁴For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.

John records that the world's unbelievers ask two rhetorical questions: "Who is like the beast?" And, "Who is able to wage war against him?" The implied answer is: **No one**.

Throughout history, people have followed charismatic figures out of fear. In the last century alone, we have seen brutal beasts such as Joseph Stalin, Adolf Hitler, Fidel Castro, Saddam Hussein and Kim Jong Un in North Korea. They have murdered tens of millions of people, yet they never lacked for cheering throngs, ticker-tape parades, and weeping mourners at their funerals.

In stark contrast, Jesus is worthy of worship because He is the Lamb who was slain. Take note, this Antichrist commands the world's worship, but he is not worthy of it.

Revelation 13:5-6 (NASB)

⁵There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him. ⁶And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, *that is*, those who dwell in heaven.

The dragon, who has given the beast his power, authority and throne, also gives him great speaking skills and he uses them to blaspheme God, His name, and His dwelling.

So far, the emphasis is on the work of Satan, manipulating the beast. But things begin to turn in verse 7, where it becomes clear that God permits the evil to take place.

III. THE WAR AGAINST THE SAINTS.

Revelation 13:7 (NASB)

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

Satan plots, amazes, destroys, and deceives – all the while attracting the worship of the world's lost. And the whole time God permits it, even the slaughter of the saints. However, Satan can do nothing without God's permission.

Revelation 13:8 (NASB)

⁸All who dwell on the earth will worship him, *everyone* whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.

Only unbelievers – those who have rejected Christ – will embrace this counterfeit Messiah and worship him. Their names are not written in the Lamb's book of life, nor were their names ever written there. In contrast, all believers have had their names recorded in the Lamb's book of life from the beginning.

Does that mean that our life is predestined and rigged? God is sovereign. He knows all things. He has all power and authority. He created people in His image and gave them the ability to make choices for which they are held responsible.

Though the beast-worshiping unbelievers of Revelation 13 are excluded from the Lamb's book of life, they would never have signed their names anyway – even if the Son of God opened the pages Himself and offered them a pen.

CONCLUSION:

This section concludes with a cautionary message:

Revelation 13:9 (NASB)

⁹If anyone has an ear, let him hear.

These words echo similar words Jesus used to underscore the importance of what's being said. Jesus ends each of his letters to the seven churches in Asia Minor with the words, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." After explaining the parable of the wheat and tares in Matt. 13:43, Jesus said, "He who has ears, let him hear".

Revelation 13:10 (NASB)

¹⁰If anyone is *destined* for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints.

The Holy Spirit through John is encouraging persecuted saints to persevere, even to the point of death. They already have been promised spiritual protection and eternal life with God in heaven. However, God's people will be persecuted and even killed. If that is their destiny, it is still God's will that it be done. And in the end, the blood of the martyrs will be avenged and the wicked will be judged.

This is the Day!