

The Dragon and His Pawns

Revelation 13

ANNOUNCE

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BIBLE PASSAGE

[Rev 13:1-18 NKJV] 1 Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. 2 Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. 3 And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. 4 So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" 5 And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. 6 Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. 7 It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. 8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. 9 If anyone has an ear, let him hear. 10 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. 11 Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. 12 And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. 13 He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. 14 And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. 15 He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. 16 He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, 17 and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. 18 Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

BACKGROUND

As we find ourselves in the middle of the tribulation period, the 70th week of Daniel, John interrupts our program to give us a panoramic view of the story that's developing. Chapters 12-14 offer us a snapshot of the story of God's redemptive plan.

- *Chapter 12 - The operation of God's prophetic plan*
- *Chapter 13 - The opposition to God's prophetic plan*
- *Chapter 14 - The outcome of God's prophetic plan*

Chapter 13 is a thrilling chapter that outlines the uprising of the final world empire that will usher in the return of Christ. This world empire, unlike the ones before it, spans the entire globe. One might say it is the height of Satan's rule and ownership over the earth. ***It is governed by an unholy imitation trinity: the Dragon, the Beast from the Sea, and the Beast from the Earth.***

- So, let's do our best to unpack what's before us.
- Again, I will slightly divert from teaching this chapter verse by verse and take it more as a whole, pulling out its various aspects.

APPLICATION

Before starting, I believe that the characters we are dealing with in this chapter represent that antichrist, empowered by Satan and supported by a false, supernatural religious system and prophet. What John sees aligns with the theology already preached by the apostles in the early church. If anything, John's vision confirmed what they believed from the prophets, namely Daniel, regarding the events of the final days.

Regarding the antichrist, prior to this Revelation, John understood the prophetic predictions.

The Antichrist has many names in the Bible:

- Antichrist
- The Beast
- The Desolator
- Daniel 7 - The little horn

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- John 5 – the one who comes in his own name whom Israel will receive
- 2 Thessalonians 2 – son of perdition, man of sin, lawless one.

[1Jo 2:18 NKJV] 18 Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist (singular person) is coming, even now many antichrists (spirit of antichrist) have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.

[1Jo 4:3b NKJV] 3b ...And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.

In other words, we should expect to look throughout the past 2000 years of history and see premonitions or artifacts of the spirit of antichrist, which will ultimately be embodied in one person, one empire, one religion, and one financial system.

- From Nero to Hitler, from Max and Linnen to Stalin, from false religion to atheism, all of these foreshadow the coming antichrist who would stand without a restrainer, unopposed in the world.
- There have been many antichrists in history, but none of them have fulfilled the prophetic picture of the final antichrist who will proceed the physical return of Jesus.

APPLICATION

And it has been a bit humorous to see all the predictions that have been made throughout history regarding who the antichrist was or is:

- Nearly every president or world leader since the church began, has been accused by someone of being the antichrist. I even saw someone make a serious case that ***Barney the Dinosaur was the antichrist***. Maybe we should rename him Barney the Dragon.

Now, I personally believe that the identity of the antichrist will only be known to those who are here when he is clearly revealed, that is, the tribulation saints. ***I think the church today should not be looking for the antichrist; we should be looking for Jesus Christ and His soon return to gather us to be together with Him!***

- ***Nevertheless, it does make sense for us to identify the nature of the antichrist because it helps us discern the things that are of Christ and of the spirit of antichrist even today.***

THE ULTIMATE ATTEMPT OF SATAN TO MIMIC AND IMITATE GOD

Satan's unholy Trinity versus the true Trinity:

- Satan takes temporary rule over the entire earth - Jesus will rule every nation, tribe, and tongue, and his rule will never end.
- The beast is falsely resurrected after a deadly wound - Jesus was resurrected after defeating death
- The beast receives the willful worship of all unsaved humanity - One day, every knee will bow to King Jesus
- The Beast makes war against His enemies - Jesus will come back and defeat His enemies
- The false prophet performs supernatural miracles - God is the originator of all miracles
- The beast commissions a being in his own image - God created man in His image
- The false prophet gives the breath of life to that being - God breathed the breath of life into Adam
- He marks his followers - The Holy Spirit seals those who belong to God

The rise of the antichrist and the empire of Satan at the end of the world is Satan's final attempt to become God and overthrow the kingdom of Christ.

1 The Source of the Beast

BIBLE PASSAGE

[Rev 13:1-18 NKJV] **1 Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. 2 Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. 3 And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast.**

APPLICATION

Beasts are on the prowl. Beast is the appropriate term for this coming leader. Like many demonically influenced people today, they have no authentic care or interest in the good of humanity. They are devourers, like the dragon, who use and shred humanity for their own perverted goals. But this beast comes disguised, to such a degree, that those on the earth do not see his true colors. They don't see a devourer; they see a hero. They don't see a tyrant; they see a savior.

- **He rises from the sea-** the sea most likely represents the tumultuous sea of humanity. The idea of the sea to the Jew is not a beautiful beach in Hawaii; it's a dangerous storm-tossed environment that causes separation.
 - The beast doesn't just appear one day out of nowhere. He "rises up" out of a period of tumult and separation. The unbelieving world wants to come together

under one banner. They want to create heaven on earth. They want to build a unified global community without Jesus.

- **He comes as a world empire-** He has seven heads, ten horns, and ten crowns. His shape is of a leopard, with the heavy feet of a bear and the sharp teeth and mighty roar of a lion.
 - Beasts in the prophetic realm represent empires that rise and fall throughout history.
 - The Prophet Daniel was given a vision of coming world empires that he, during his life, did not fully understand.
- I believe the image we see in Revelation 13 is what I would call a composite kingdom. That is, a mixture of previous kingdoms coming together in one final empire.
 - Daniel 7 records a vision in which Daniel observes four beasts. Interestingly enough, the total head count of the four beasts is seven.
 - Daniel is looking from the past toward the future, so the order of the beasts is: **a lion (Babylon), a bear (Medo-Persians), the leopard (Grecian), a terrible beast (Romans).**
 - John now sees the future looking back in reverse order. The beast in Revelation 13 has the form of the leopard (the dominating culture like the Greeks), the feet of the bear (the vastness of the Persian Empire), the mouth of a lion (the wealth of Babylon), and the devouring strength of the Roman empire in its ability to conquer the entire earth.
 - The seven heads we will discuss in greater length when we come to chapter 17. But we also see ten horns on this beast as on the terrible beast of Daniel 7.
 - In Daniel seven, the ten horns represented ten kingdoms that consecutively reign within this global empire. An eleventh horn (or leader) arises that ceases control. Historically, this has not been fulfilled.
 - This is what causes many to believe that the beast of revelation is a revived or revised Roman empire that consists of ten world powers that ultimately submit their authority to the antichrist.
 - **[Rev 17:12-13 NKJV] 12 "The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. 13 "These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast.**
- The mortal wound - Many people associate this deadly wound to the final king of Revelation 17, the head of the beast that represents the antichrist. Apparently, at one point in time, the antichrist receives a deadly wound. Some see this as a kingdom that seems to die but then is resurrected, but I see this as Satan's attempt to mimic Christ.

The antichrist has an "apparent" deadly wound by which God allows a satanic miracle to deceive the world into following this "resurrected" leader.

- **Isn't it tragic that they refuse to submit to a truly resurrected Christ, but they gladly give their worship to a falsely resurrected anti-christ?**

[Zec 11:15-17 NKJV] 15 And the LORD said to me, "Next, take for yourself the implements of a foolish shepherd. 16 "For indeed I will raise up a shepherd in the land [who] will not care for those who are cut off, nor seek the young, nor heal those that are broken, nor feed those that still stand. But he will eat the flesh of the fat and tear their hooves in pieces. 17 "Woe to the worthless shepherd, Who leaves the flock! A sword [shall be] against his arm And against his right eye; His arm shall completely wither, And his right eye shall be totally blinded."

2 The Sovereignty of the Beast

BIBLE PASSAGE

4 So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" 5 And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months (3 1/2 years). 6 Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. 7 It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.

APPLICATION

What Nebuchadnezzar, and Alexander the Great, and the Caesars of Rome, and Genghis Kahn, and Napoleon, and Hitler, and Stalin all failed to achieve - a world dictatorship... this future leader will accomplish. For a brief moment, 3 1/2 years, Satan achieves what he had

always hoped to achieve: complete world domination (every tribe, tongue, and nation), the willful worship of humanity, and authority to war against God's saints and overcome them.

- He builds his kingdom on blasphemy against the true God and true Savior and establishes himself as god and savior.

There's a quote by Revolutionary War leader William Penn, **"Those who will not be governed by God will be ruled by tyrants."** Never in history will this be more applicable than in the 42 months prior to Jesus' return. Under the Beast, the world will be ruled by pure evil. And humanity will submit themselves to it out of fear and awe.

One world authority - the erasing of national identity and autonomy. Pope Benedict wrote in 2009:

"There is a strongly felt need... for a reform of the United Nations Organization, and likewise of economic institutions and international finance, so that the concept of the family of nations can acquire real teeth."

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

[Dan 11:36-39 NKJV] 36 "Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done. 37 "He shall regard neither the God of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above [them] all. 38 "But in their place he shall honor a god of fortresses; and a god which his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things. 39 "Thus he shall act against the strongest fortresses with a foreign god, which he shall acknowledge, [and] advance [its] glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and divide the land for gain.

Perhaps the EU is an image of the direction the world will go.

Here we have a powerful picture:

- The only ones not duped by this satanic deception are those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.
- **The tribulation saints will be terrorized by the beast, but they won't be tricked; they will be destroyed, but they won't be deceived.**
- **Salin from the foundation of the world - before the world was formed, God's plan of Salvation was already determined, and all those who belong to Christ were known by God.**

[2Ti 2:19 NKJV] 19 Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

[Eph 1:4 NKJV] 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

[1Pe 1:20 NKJV] 20 He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you

BIBLE PASSAGE

9 If anyone has an ear, let him hear. 10 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.

A STATEMENT TO THE TRIBULATIONS SAINTS

1. Of God's justice upon those who terrorize the saints: Those who lead God's people into captivity will themselves go to captivity. Those who kill God's saints with the sword will be killed with the sword; in other words, God will get the final word against his enemies.

2. Of the fate of the tribulation saints: That when the tribulation saints are led away, they should not resist. when they are killed with the sword, they should not fight back. Instead, they should accept the sovereignty of God, be patient, and have faith that even though they experienced suffering on earth, they will ultimately receive the Lamb's reward in heaven.

3 The Support of the Beast

BIBLE PASSAGE

11 Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. 12 And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. 13 He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. 14 And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. 15 He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

APPLICATION

Here, we find that there is clearly a religious/spiritual aspect to the Beast's kingdom, not merely a political one. Satan's desire has never been merely for control, but for worship.

- The next beast that arises from the earth is a counterpart, or should we say partner in crime, to the antichrist. Notice, like Satan, he disguises himself with horns like a lamb, but the dragon inspires his speech.
- In some ways, he attempts to mimic the ministry of the Holy Spirit. He exercises the authority of the beast as the HS comes in the authority of Christ. He performs supernatural signs and wonders to attract attention to the beast as the HS performs miracles to testify to Christ. He builds his own church to worship the beast as the Holy Spirit has drawn the church to Christ. He seeks to breathe life into the idolatrous image of the beast like the HS breathes life into His church.
- He replicates the supernatural miracles of the two prophets who were killed by calling fire down from heaven in front of people.

Revelation 19 calls this beast "The False Prophet." Truly, this beast is a false prophet, another evil imitator. But unlike the Holy Spirit, nothing is holy about what this beast does.

- He draws worship, not by love, but by force.
- Like Nebuchadnezzar did with those who would not bow to his self-imaged idol, the beast kills all those who don't comply.
- Wickedness and deception are behind his miracles.

"He was granted" - the supernatural wonders only took place because God allowed it. He granted it to the false prophet in order to deceive the world. Why? Because it is a form of God's judgment to allow humanity to accept the end of their willful rejection of the gospel.

The form of worship is just like the idolatry of the past, but now the idol actually lives!

- **The earth makes a monument, some sort of image to the beast. But this image gets life!**
- **Somehow, at this point in time, the connections between cloning, artificial intelligence, and technology come together to create an image of worship with deadly power. The image begins to process, think, and speak the lies of the beast. It also has the power to seek and destroy those who will not bow and destroy them.**
- **Hey! Your phone will show you advertisements of things you just talked about in your house. Satellites track your every movement. Corporations know your every online activity. We already have the systems in place to determine exactly what everyone is doing and force compliance and consequences.**

WARNING

[Mat 7:15 NKJV] 15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

[Mat 24:11-12 NKJV] 11 "Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. 12 "And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

Today, there are false prophets that operate in the Spirit of antichrist, and they seek to deceive the world spiritually. Some are obvious, but others are more subtle. And some seek to deceive by way of experiences and deceptive signs. This is why it's so essentially crucial for every believer to have their faith grounded and rooted in Christ and in His revelation (that is His word).

There are two kinds of approaches today that people take regarding their faith. **The first is placing experience at the foundation and scripture as secondary, defined by my experiences. the second is to have God's revelation at the foundation and all my experiences are defined by scripture.**

The ultimate post-modern philosophy is that you have a truth that is true to you based on your own experiences, and if you can fit God into that paradigm, wonderful; if not, no big

deal. Ultimately, people will give themselves to the antichrist because they are not rooted in the truth.

- **[2Th 2:9-12 NKJV] 9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, 12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.**

4 The System of the Beast

BIBLE PASSAGE

16 He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, 17 and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. 18 Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

QUOTE

““The interpretations of this number form a jungle from which escape is apparently hopeless.”

unknown

