

**Text: Rev 13.1-18**

## Outline of Revelation (1.19):

1. The things you have seen (the vision of Christ) Rev 1
2. The things which are (the letters to the churches) Rev 2-3
3. The things which must come after these things (Rev 4-22)
  - a. The overture: the scene in heaven (Rev 4-5)
  - b. The seal judgements begin (Rev 6)
  - c. (Parenthesis): the believers of the Tribulation (Rev 7)
  - d. The seventh seal which reveals the seven trumpets (four in chapter 8)
  - e. The fifth and sixth trumpets (Rev 9)
  - f. (Parenthesis): Voices in heaven (Rev 10)
  - g. (Parenthesis): The Two Witnesses | the seventh trumpet (Rev 11)
  - h. (Parenthesis): The Long War Against God<sup>1</sup> (Rev 12)
  - i. (Parenthesis): The Beasts (Rev 13)

This chapter deals with Satan's chief instruments for deceiving men and dominating the world during the tribulation period. These instruments are described as two terrible beasts.

**I. The beast out of the sea (1-10)**

## A. Identification (1-2)

1. The presence of the dragon implies a direct connection: the beast that appears is summoned by the dragon (1a)
2. The source 'sea' is likely symbolic
  - a. Sea often a symbol for evil or the abyss in ancient world
  - b. Elsewhere the beast is said to come from the abyss (17.8)

Note: we identified the beast out of the abyss seen in Rev 11 as the dragon, Satan. Others make them one and the same. (11.7)

- c. Rev 17.15 identifies the sea as the nations, the "sea of humanity," making this figure a Gentile
3. Correspondence of characteristics
  - a. Ten horns, seven heads

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<sup>1</sup> I borrow the title of Henry Morris' book of this same name for our chapter heading here.

- b. See dragon, 12.3
- c. See last empire of Daniel's vision (Dan 7.7-8)

Note: In Daniel's vision, the 10 horns represent 10 rulers, see also 17.12-13.

"In Revelation 13 and 17 the beast is the world ruler, whereas in Daniel 7 the little horn on the beast was the world ruler."<sup>2</sup>

- 4. The blasphemous names = complete antagonism towards God
- 5. The four animals = the four beasts of Dan 7
  - a. Leopard
  - b. Bear
  - c. Lion
  - d. Dragon = beast great and terrible

The beast receives his power and authority from the dragon – the beast and his empire are the final manifestation of Satan's plan to rule in the place of God. This implies that the previous empires are also animated by Satan.

## B. Conspiracy (3-4)

- 1. One of the heads is slain and revived (3)
  - a. This is one way Satan gains the admiration and loyalty of the world for the beast
  - b. These heads have been interpreted as nations or as individual rulers
  - c. One of them is given a fatal wound, but miraculously recovers to the relief and admiration of all
  - d. This one will become the worldwide dictator

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<sup>2</sup> John F. Walvoord, "Revelation," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983), 960.

2. The results of the 'resurrection' (4)
  - a. They follow the beast
  - b. They worship the dragon
  - c. They worship the beast

These results mark the high point of Satan's program against God, frequently attempted, realized in the future, albeit briefly.

#### C. Activity (5-8)

1. Authority given to the beast (5)
  - a. Source of authority ambiguous, it will appear to come from the dragon (mouth speaking blasphemies)
  - b. But ultimately it is from God, who limits the scope: 42 months
2. Blasphemy uttered against God and all that belongs to God (6)
3. Antagonism to the saints coupled with authority over every nation will intensify the persecution against believing people during Tribulation (7)

Note: authority over every nation indicates this is yet future, for no dictator has ever had this kind of power.

4. Worldwide worship (8)
  - a. From all unbelievers all over the world
  - b. Description of believers serves to encourage concerning the security of the faithful

#### D. Warning (9-10)

1. Warning to be observant (9)

The fact that present day believers have so many interpretations of these verses indicate they are yet to happen – enough details are given that interpretation is unmistakable once fulfillment occurs.

The warning also indicates that the book is written for a particular generation, compare Mt 24.15, "let the reader understand."

## 2. Warning to be secure (10)

- a. The plan of God will not fail, despite persecution (captivity, sword)
- b. The saints will discern and persevere to the end

## II. The beast out of the earth (11-18)

### A. Identification (11-12)

1. He appears to be a specific individual like the first beast
2. He arises out of the earth, unlike the first beast [lesser power, acc. to commentaries]
3. He may have a gentle appearance [horns like a lamb], but his voice links him to the dragon
4. He is subordinated to the first beast, acting in his behalf and under his authority
5. He leads the world to worship the first beast
6. This connects him to the first beast as the later mentioned 'false prophet' (16.13, 19.20, 20.10)

### B. Religious Activity (13-15)

1. He performs signs (like Moses) to confirm his false message (13)
2. He deceives the people of the earth, leading them to worship and to build a 'beastly temple' (14)
3. He gives breath to the image of the beast, making it seem to be alive, using it to persecute those who resist (15)

### C. Economic Activity (16-18)

1. He causes all (probably all classes rather than all individuals) to receive the mark of the beast (16)
2. He requires the mark of the beast to conduct ordinary economic activity (17)
3. Another identifying warning: the number of the beast's name, 666 (18)

“I think that neither the identity of the Antichrist nor the number of his name will be evident until he appears and fulfills prophecy. Then wise believers will be able to calculate his number as well as identify his person. Until then both aspects of Antichrist’s identity will remain a mystery.”<sup>3</sup>

### Conclusion:

The Dragon and two beasts represent a counterfeit Trinity. “The dragon seeks worship that belongs only to God. The first beast seeks to rule the world, which is Jesus Christ’s prerogative. The second beast glorifies the first beast, which is a counterfeit of the Holy Spirit’s ministry of glorifying Christ.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Tom Constable, *Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Rev 13.18.

<sup>4</sup> Constable, Rev 13.8.